

ROMANS

ROMANS 1:1-17 — INTRODUCTION AND THEME

It is not known how, or when, the church at Rome was founded, but probably by Jews who received the Gospel in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (~~400~~ Acts 2). We shall see later that neither Paul nor any other apostle had as yet visited that metropolis, although Paul had a great desire to do so; and it was natural that he should wish to announce before his coming the distinctive truths which had been revealed to and through him. He would desire the Christians in Rome to have his own statement of the great doctrines of grace so assailed everywhere by legalistic (Judaizing) teachers.

He was now in Corinth doubtless on his third missionary journey (15:22-29), and Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, the seaport of Corinth, was about to visit Rome (~~500~~ Romans 16:1); a circumstance of which he avails himself to send this letter.

It opens, as is usual in Paul's epistles, with a greeting or salutation (vv. 1-7), in which is given the author's name and spiritual relation to Jesus Christ, his official designation and the object of it, and an announcement of the church or persons addressed. It is Paul who writes, and he is a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. As such he has been made a messenger of the Gospel of God (v. 1). This Gospel, which means "good news" or "glad tidings," was not altogether new because it had been promised through the Old Testament prophets (compare v. 2 with ~~800~~ Galatians 3:8). It concerned the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, an account of Whose Gracious Person and work follows (vv. 3-5). The testimony of this Gospel committed to Paul, was world-wide including them at Rome (vv. 5-7).

The salutation is followed by a thanksgiving (vv. 8-12) for the "faith" or standing in grace of the church at Rome (v. 8), which leads to an expression of the apostle's longing to visit them (v. 10); not merely for social reasons, but spiritual benefit (vv. 11-12). It is here we learn that he had not visited them before, and that no other apostle had done so, for if so, the "spiritual gift" (v. 11) would doubtless have been imparted; while

on the other hand it was a Pauline principle not to build on another man's foundation (~~4510~~ Romans 15:20-21; 2 Cot. 10:14-16).

The thanksgiving is followed by a statement of the theme of the epistle, for it is more than a personal letter, a treatise, in short, on the great subject that had been committed to Paul (vv. 13-17). "Let" (v. 13), is obsolete English, meaning "hindered." "Barbarian" (v. 14), signifies "foreigner," the Latins (Rome) were foreigners to the Greeks. "Unwise" is to be taken only in a comparative sense. The Greeks regarded themselves as the "wise" people of the world, cultivated in human philosophy, while all others were unwise by contrast. That which Paul is ready to preach at Rome is the "Gospel" (v. 16), called as we saw in verse 1, "the Gospel of God." The words "of Christ," (v. 16), are omitted in the Revised Version. It is the "Gospel of God," i.e., "the widest possible designation of the whole body of redemptive truth." This might be called the theme of the epistle, unless we prefer to take that which is the essence of the Gospel as inferred from a later verse, "The Gift of God's Righteousness."

This Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The dynamic He uses to lift men out of the death of sin into the life of righteousness, for "salvation" means just that, including, as another puts it, "the ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing and soundness." And the essence of its power lies in this, that "therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith" (v. 17 RV). It is very necessary to understand that phrase "a righteousness of God," which is the key to the epistle, and does not mean the righteousness which God is in His own nature, but a righteousness which he gives to men freely, on the exercise of their faith in Christ. To quote Lange's Commentary, it is the righteousness which proceeds from God, i.e., the right relation in which man is placed by a judicial act of God." Or to quote the *Scofield Bible*, the righteousness is "Christ Himself, Who fully met in our stead and behalf every demand of the law, and Who is, by the act of God, 'made unto us... righteousness' (~~4010~~ 1 Corinthians 1:30)." As it is written, "He that is righteous by faith shall live" (Hab. 2:4).

QUESTIONS

1. By whom presumably, was the church at Rome founded?
2. Why may Paul have wished to write this letter?
3. What gave him the opportunity to send it?

4. Divide this lesson into three parts.
5. What leads us to think Paul had never visited Rome?
6. What is the theme of the epistle?
7. What other theme is preferred by some?
8. What ideas does the word "salvation" include?
9. Does "righteousness of God" mean what God is, or what God gives?
10. Give the definitions of that phrase in the *Scofield Bible*.

ROMANS 1:18-3:20 — MAN LOST BY NATURE

We saw in the last lesson that man if he would be saved must become righteous before God, and the righteousness which alone satisfies Him is that which he Himself supplies. We now learn what man's condition is which makes this a necessity. In other words this lesson, constituting the second general division of the epistle,

- (1) gives us a Divine declaration about sin (1:18-21);
- (2) shows it to be punitive and degenerative in its effects (vv. 22-23);
and
- (3) teaches the universality of its extent (2:1-3:20).

As to the Divine declaration about sin, we perceive that not only is there a righteousness from God revealed from heaven, but "a wrath of God" as well. The first gives the remedy, the second the penalty if the remedy is not applied. "Who hold the truth," might be rendered "who hold down the truth." That is, the truth of God, whose saving power might be known to men, is held down, does not get a chance to be known, because of man's unrighteousness (v. 18). This truth might be known by the facts of creation. Not that the Gospel of redemption is revealed in nature, but sufficient of God is thus revealed, i.e., His eternal power and Godhead, "to have kept men true to Him essentially," so that they are without excuse (v. 20). This is seen in what follows: Man once knew God, the story of Eden shows this; but he is now fallen from God, through his own ingratitude and conceited reasonings. The fall is moral, rather than intellectual, for his "foolish [senseless] heart" is "darkened" (vv. 18-21).

Sin at once becomes punitive and degenerative. Observe the downgrade: failure to glorify God; ingratitude; vain reasonings; darkened moral nature; turned into fools; worshipping natural objects, men, birds, beasts, reptiles; given over to uncleanness in the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves (vv. 22-25 ff.). The horrible details of this indictment against the Gentile world is established by the "classics" of Greek and Latin literature, showing that these things were true not merely of the low and ignorant, but the high and cultured of Paul's day.

This thought is now elaborated, which shows the philosophers and moralizers of Greece and Rome to be no better than the others (2:1-3). They were incapable of judging others; only God could do that, Who is no respecter of persons (vv. 6-11). His judgment would be just both as against the Gentiles and Jews. The former had not the revealed law as did the latter, i.e., they did not have the Old Testament scriptures, but would be judged by the law written in their hearts (vv. 12-16).

Special attention is now given the Jews because they had the Old Testament scriptures, and while equally sinful with the pagan Gentiles, were yet trusting in their knowledge of the letter of the law as making them better than they (vv. 17-20). The answer assumed in the case of each question in verses 21-23 is affirmative, proven by the concluding verses of the chapter.

Did this mean then, that the Jew had no advantage whatever over the pagan Gentile? No, for the reason in chap. 3:1-2. It was an advantage for the Jew to have the Scriptures even though some did not believe them (vv. 3-4). Verses 5-8 are parenthetical, with the main question taken up again at 9. The Jews are morally no better as a class than the pagans, proven by the facts of history just alluded to (vv. 21-24), and by their own Scriptures (vv. 10-18 with ~~940~~ Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1, 5:9, 10:7, 36:1). These were the things which their own "law" said, and said to them as Jews, because the Gentiles did not know the law. Therefore the "mouth," i.e., the boasting of the Jew was stopped as well as that of the Gentiles, and "all the world." Jew and Gentile, was "guilty before God" (v. 19). This proved that as the result of the works of the law no man could be accounted righteous before God, for the clearer one apprehended the law the more condemned as a sinner he became (v. 20).

QUESTIONS

1. What did the previous lesson teach us?
2. What are we to learn from this lesson?
3. Divide this lesson into three general parts.
4. What two great things are revealed from heaven?
5. Why are men without excuse for their ignorance of God?
6. Name some of the steps in the downgrade of sin.
7. What is the bearing of contemporaneous literature on Paul's indictment of the pagan world?
8. By what two lines of proof are the Jews proven as guilty as the Gentiles?
9. How would you interpret 3:20?

ROMANS 3:21-5:11 — THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

If a righteousness were not obtainable by the words of the law as we saw in our last lesson, then a Jew especially might well ask in surprise how it were obtainable. To which the apostle replies, that "now apart from the law a righteousness of God is manifested," (3:21 RV), i.e., a righteousness which may become man's without the keeping of the law. This righteousness he describes as:

"Witnessed by the law and the prophets," in other words, taught in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament; · obtained through faith in Jesus Christ (v. 22);

without respect of persons, Jew or Gentile (vv. 22-23);

the free gift of God's grace (v. 24);

based upon the death of Jesus Christ (v. 25);

and its bestowment declarative of God's righteous character (vv. 25-26).

"His righteousness" in these last two verses does not refer as in the earlier instances, to the righteousness he is. It means that He is perfectly

consistent with His own law and holiness in freely justifying a sinner who believes on Christ, because Christ has fully met every demand of the law on his behalf (10:4). In this connection "propitiation" should be understood clearly. It does not convey the idea of placating an angry God, but of doing right by His holy law and so making it possible for Him righteously to show mercy. Christ so honored the law by enduring its righteous sentence that God who ever foresaw the cross, is vindicated in having "passed over" sins from Adam to Moses (5:13), and the sins of Jewish believers under the old covenant, and in justifying sinners under the new covenant.

To appreciate chapter 4 go back to the phrase, "witnessed by the law and the prophets" (3:22). The Law of the Prophets was one of the names given by the Jews to the Old Testament. The Law meant the Pentateuch or the first five books of Moses and the Prophets the remainder of the Old Testament. Paul was showing that the salvation or justification by faith he preached was Old Testament truth, and in the present chapter he confirms the fact by the instances of David and Abraham. The illustration from Abraham is found in the Law and that from David in the Prophets. Abraham's case is first treated (vv. 1-4), and then David's (vv. 5-8). To Abraham he returns at verse 9, showing in what follows how justification is entirely distinct from ordinances. Verses 18-25 should be pondered because of their simple and picturesque presentation of the theme. Abraham believed God's testimony about Isaac in the face of nature to the contrary, and this faith "was counted to him for righteousness" (v. 22). We have only to believe God's testimony about Jesus Christ, Whom Isaac typified, to receive the same blessing in the same way. Verse 2 of this chapter must not be thought to contradict ^{<302>}James 2:24, because these two scriptures are but two aspects of the same truth. Paul here is laying down the principle which James is applying; or to put it better, Paul is speaking of that which justifies man before God, and James of that which justifies him before man. The former alludes to what God sees — faith, and the latter to that which man sees — works. The one has in mind ^{<015>}Genesis 15:6, the other, ^{<021>}Genesis 22:1-19.

There are three great results of justifying faith as indicated in verses 5:1-11: peace with God, access unto God, and rejoicing before God (vv. 1-2). The rejoicing is in hope of the glory of God, tribulations, and in God Himself (v. 11). The rejoicing in tribulations is a theme full of interest. We rejoice because the tribulations of a justified man work "patience," the patience "experience," and the experience "hope, that maketh not ashamed"

(vv. 3-5). The "experience" in this case is experience of the love of God who comforts us in our tribulation, sanctifies it to us and delivers us from it. This experience assures us of His love for us, the Holy Ghost thus 'sheds it abroad in our hearts,' and in consequence of that assurance our hope of beholding and partaking of His glory grows the brighter. We know that we shall not be ashamed of, or confounded in regard to the fulfillment of that hope. Verses 6-10, important as they are and full of the riches of Christ, are in a sense parenthetical to the main line of teaching in this section. Bishop Moule suggests a rendering of verse 10 of great beauty: "We shall be kept in His life."

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by righteousness "apart from the law"?
2. What is meant by "witnessed by the law and the prophets"?
3. How do you distinguish the "righteousness of God" (vv. 25-26), from the same phrase as used earlier?
4. How do you understand "propitiation"?
5. What part of chapter 3 is illustrated by chapter 4?
6. What is the meaning of The Law and the Prophets?
7. Why is the phrase used in this case?
8. What is the substance of chapter 4?
9. How does Abraham's justification illustrate ours?
10. Harmonize 4:2 with ~~5:12~~ James 2:24.
11. Name the three results of justifying faith.
12. Name the three causes of rejoicing.

ROMANS 5:12-7:6 — HUMANITY AND TWO ADAMS

"Wherefore" leads back to chapter 3, where the apostle is referring to the sinful condition of all men. It was by one man that sin entered the world bringing physical death as a penalty, and that all have sinned is proven by the fact that all have paid that penalty (v. 12). To be sure the law was not given to Moses till Sinai, but as "death reigned from Adam to Moses," it is evident that there was a transgression of another law than that written on

stone, for "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (v. 13). For the nature of this other law compare again 2:15.

But as sin came through the first Adam, so the gift of righteousness came through the second Adam. It was just one offense that brought the condemnation, but the gift of righteousness covers "many offences" (vv. 16, 19). It was the giving of the law at Sinai that revealed how many these offences were (v. 20) for "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (3:20). Nevertheless, though sin was thus seen to abound, yet "grace did much more abound" (v. 20). "Sin" as used here is different from "sins," the former referring to our fallen nature, and the latter to manifestations of that nature.

What Paul had said about grace abounding where sin abounded, might lead an uninstructed mind to infer that it put a premium on sin. Or in other words, if man were justified by faith only, what provision was made for a change of character? How did salvation by grace affect one's experience as well as his standing before God? Chapters 6 to 8 work out this thought as follows.

EXPERIENCING GRACE

The believer is identified with Christ in His death and resurrection (6:1-10). The baptism into Jesus Christ (v. 3), is the pentecostal experience which becomes the birthright of every believer the moment he believes. He is then baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of which Christ is the Head (~~4:13~~ 1 Corinthians 12:13); and being so baptized he is considered as one with Christ as any member of a human body is one with the head of that body. This means of course, that he is regarded in God's sight as having died when Christ died — he was "baptized into His death." The sequel however, must be equally true, and he is regarded as having risen from the dead when Christ rose. Hence he is now in a legal or judicial sense walking before God "in newness of life." Being dead he "is freed from sin" (v. 7), i.e., having legally died in Christ when Christ died just as every member of a body dies when its head dies, he has paid the penalty of his sin in Christ, and having now arisen in Christ after the payment of that penalty, "death hath no more dominion over him" (v. 9), he has not again to pay the penalty of sin.

It is now his duty to reckon this to be true, and no longer to allow sin to reign in his "mortal body" (v. 11). The way to accomplish this is not by

efforts and resolutions on his part, but by yielding his new life unto God. He yields his new life by yielding the members of his body unto God — his eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, brain, etc. (v. 13).

The result will be his deliverance from the dominion of sin — God will see to it (v. 14). The old relation of the man to the law of sin, and his new relation to Christ are illustrated by the effect of death upon servitude (vv. 16-23). The old servitude was rendered to sin the end of which was death. But death in another form, i.e., crucifixion with Christ, has now intervened to free the servant from sin, and enable him to become the servant of God, with "fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life" (v. 22). The relationship is next illustrated by marriage (7:1-6). Death dissolves the marriage relationship, and as natural death flees a wife from the law of her husband, so crucifixion with Christ sets the believer free from the law, or rather its penalty resting upon him on account of his sin.

"Newness of spirit" and "oldness of the letter" (v. 6) are expressions requiring a word of comment as we meet with them again in another epistle. By the "letter" is meant the Mosaic law, and by the "spirit" the power and relationships of the new life in Christ Jesus (see ~~4:16~~ 2 Corinthians 3:6).

QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of "wherefore" at the beginning of this lesson?
2. How is it proven that all men have sinned?
3. Did you cross-reference 2:17?
4. What is the distinction between "sin" and "sins"?
5. What thought is it that chapters 6-8 are working out?
6. What is the meaning of "baptized into Jesus Christ?"
7. How may the dethronement of sin be accomplished in a believer?
8. What two illustrations of this truth are employed in this lesson?
9. Describe "oldness of letter" and "newness of spirit."

ROMANS 7:7-8:35 — VICTORY AND SECURITY

That part of chapter 7 on which we now enter is biographical, giving Paul's experience at a period when, though, regenerated, he was still living under the law and in ignorance of the deliverance to be had in Christ. It is a revelation that the believer possesses two natures — that of the first Adam received at his physical birth, and that of the second Adam received in regeneration by the Holy Spirit through faith. The man here described has been baptized into Jesus Christ, is judicially free from the law, and is walking in newness of life, and yet sin reigns more or less in his mortal body. How is he to be delivered from it? In chapter 6 Paul taught that it was by yielding oneself to God, as the result of which sin would not have dominion over him. In chapter 7 he shows in his own person the need of doing this, while in chapter 8 he describes the Divine process by which the change from defeat to victory is thus produced.

He makes clear that the Christian believer is not made holy by the law (7:7-14). At one time, as a Jew, he thought he had kept the law (³¹⁸⁶Philippians 3:6), but now as a regenerated Christian he had come to see the law in a new light, i.e., as spiritual, and that which was not sin theretofore now became so. He had thought himself "alive" in a spiritual sense, but now he perceived that he was really dead.

He shows the conflict of the two natures under the law (vv. 15-25). He spoke of himself as "carnal" (v. 14), by which he meant that, as a believer, he was still more or less under the power of his fallen nature. He did things that were wrong and yet it was not the new Paul that was doing them but the old Paul, "sin that dwelleth in me" (vv. 17, 20). This "sin," this "old man" was like a dead body lashed to his back. Was there no deliverance from it? He thanked God that there was such deliverance through Jesus Christ.

This deliverance he now reveals (8:1-27):

- (1) It is through the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer who sets him "free from the law of sin and death" (vv. 2-4). In his fallen state he was subject to a bias or tendency towards sin, the outcome of which was death. But now as a regenerated man that bias or tendency is broken;

- (2) The Holy Spirit also gives him a spiritual mind to desire this new freedom (vv. 5-10);
- (3) And the spiritual power to exercise the desire (vv. 11-13);
- (4) And the spiritual motive to lay hold of the power (vv. 14-25); and
- (5) And the spiritual wisdom to appreciate the motive (vv. 26-27). The spiritual motive to lay hold of the power of the Holy Spirit for a life of victory, is that of our relationship to God as His children, which implies joint heirship with Christ. This heirship is so glorious in its full manifestation that the whole creation is groaning for it, because it means its deliverance from bondage.

The practical conclusion to be drawn from all this on the part of the believer is stated in verse 28, a conclusion which reaches into the glorified state (vv. 29-30). The man whom God has called in Christ to be his, is already considered "glorified," so certain is that event to follow in his experience. No wonder that the challenges of verses 31-35 should follow. Read them in the Revised Version.

QUESTIONS

1. How is the latter half of chapter 7 described?
2. Of what is it a revelation?
3. What does chapter 8 describe?
4. What does 7:7-14 make clear, and how?
5. What is shown in chapter 7:15-25, and how?
6. By whom is deliverance from the power of sin wrought in the believer? 7. Name the five-fold process by which this is done.
8. What is the spiritual motive for a life of victory?
9. Quote the practical conclusion of 8:28.
10. How far does this extend in its application?

ROMANS 9-11 — PARENTHESIS CONCERNING ISRAEL

These chapters carry us back to chapter 3, where Paul proved the lost condition of the Jew as well as the Gentiles. But if this were so it might be charged that the Old Testament promises to Israel had failed, which he now shows is not the case. This line of argument is threefold: first, some of Israel were already saved (chap. 9); secondly, all of Israel might be saved but for unbelief (chap. 10); thirdly, all of Israel would be saved ultimately (chap. 11).

Chapter 9 might be divided thus:

1. The apostle's solicitude for Israel (vv. 1-5), whose seven-fold privilege he names. There is a difficulty of interpretation in verse 3, which might be helped by a slight variation in the translation, which some have rendered: "I have great heaviness . . . for my brethren (for I myself were wishing to be accursed from Christ)." The thought may be that he is expressing sympathy with them in their spiritual darkness, because he was once in a like case.
2. The fact that some of Israel were saved (vv. 6-13). The Word of God had taken some effect for there were Israelites who had believed, and were now counted not only as Abraham's natural posterity but his spiritual children. This principle of selection was illustrated in the choice of Jacob over Esau. "Hated" (v. 13), must not be understood of arbitrary wrath, but only as expressing choice.
3. The sovereignty of God in such a choice is defended (vv. 14-24), for His mercy is under His sovereign will. The reference to Pharaoh must not be understood of arbitrary action on God's part, but as involving the free choice of the wicked monarch. God did not put forth effort to change that choice, so that the hardening of his heart was the penal consequence of his folly.
4. The Old Testament predicted the rejection of Israel and the calling of the Gentiles (compare vv. 25-33 with ^{<3110>}Hosea 1:10; 2:23; and ^{<3112>}Isaiah 10:22-23).

The whole of chapter 10 shows that the rejection of Judah is due to their unbelief, i.e., to their desire to work out under the law a character or

righteousness which would satisfy God, instead of accepting a righteousness from Him by faith (vv. 3-4 compare, with v. 10).

Chapter 11 shows that the setting aside of the nation has not been perpetual. In the first place, there was a remnant of the faithful even at the present time, of whom the apostle was one (vv. 1-6). Indeed, there always had been such a remnant. There was one in Elijah's day (compare vv. 2-7 with ~~<1198>~~1 Kings 19:18). There was one in Isaiah's day (~~<2009>~~Isaiah 1:9). During the captivity there was such a remnant, and at the end of the seventy years a remnant returned to the land. Look at ~~<4128>~~Luke 2:38 for one at the period of the first advent of Christ. There are believing Jews in our day who constitute such a class, and we have seen in our Old Testament studies that the prophecies focus on the deliverance of the remnant during the tribulation (~~<6078>~~Revelation 7:3-8). It is the hopes and fears of this last-named that the Millennial psalms treat.

In the second place this chapter indicates that the national blindness of the Jews had been foretold (vv. 7-10). But in the providence of God it gave an opportunity to the Gentiles (vv. 11-12), which the latter are warned to profit by (vv. 13-22). Throughout this warning there are several intimations of the restoration of Israel as a nation (vv. 12, 15-16). This is what is meant by "their fulness," "the receiving of them," etc. The "first fruit" and the "root" are Abraham, and the "lump" and the "branches" the offspring that came from him.

Finally, it is definitely stated that the nation shall be restored (vv. 23-36), by which is meant the faithful remnant at the end of the age. The "fulness of the Gentiles" (v. 25) means the completion of God's purpose in them at that time, i.e., the whole body of Christ, the church, will have been called out from among them, and caught up to meet Him in the air (~~<5013>~~1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Observe the reference to Christ's second coming in verse 26, and to the fulfillment of God's original promise to Abraham in verse 29. "Without repentance" means without a change of mind on His part.

QUESTIONS

1. To what part of the epistle does this lesson carry us back?
2. What possible charge is it intended to refute?
3. Give the refutation in outline.

4. Name the seven great privileges of Israel.
5. How is 9:3 sometimes rendered?
6. How is the hardening of Pharaoh's heart to be explained?
7. What explains the rejection of Israel as a nation?
8. Trace the history of the remnant of Israel in the Bible.
9. What is the meaning of the "fulness of the Gentiles"?

ROMANS 12-16 — PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In chapter 6 Paul revealed the secret of experimental sanctification as the yielding of one's self unto God, in which case sin would not have dominion over one. In chapter 8 he showed the divine process of sanctification as the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. Having finished the doctrinal part of his epistle, he returns to what he then said (chap. 6), and exhorts us to yield because of the "mercies of God" of which he had been speaking throughout (12:1-2). The presenting of our bodies is the same as the yielding of our members in chapter 6. This exhortation is followed by a promise that we shall not be "conformed to this world," but be "transformed by the renewing of your mind." In other words the Holy Spirit will do His work in us; as a result, we shall do the "good, acceptable and perfect will of God."

The verses, and indeed the chapters that follow to the end of the epistle, indicate the ways in which this will should be done:

- In the exercise of spiritual gifts as members of the body of Christ (vv. 3-8);
- In our social duties as Christian brethren (vv. 9-16);
- In our general conduct towards the world (vv. 17-21);
- In our subjection to human governments (13:1-14);
- In our church relations concerning doubtful things (14:1-15:13).

This last will repay further exposition. "Him that is weak in the faith," is the Christian brother with scruples on matters of practice, such as the eating of meats and the observance of fast days (14:1-9). He is not to be denied fellowship on that ground, since he is walking out of regard to God's

honor. On the other hand, he is not to judge the brother who does not see the particular matter just as he does. The whole question of judging or criticizing one another then comes under review (vv. 10-11), after which the apostle turns to the consideration of the "strong" brother who does not possess these scruples. He has a right to his Christian liberty, but he should not press it to the point of "stumbling" his weaker brother (vv. 13-18), but seek peace (vv. 19-21). If he has the faith to believe that he is at liberty as a Christian to do thus and so, let that be a matter between him and God, but let him be careful lest in openly exercising that faith or Christian privilege, he does not bring himself under self-judgment (v. 22). If he has a doubt about his liberty, he had better not "eat," as that will thus condemn him. To insist on his liberty when he is in doubt about it is sin. The better plan is to follow Christ's example (15:1-4), which is the apostle's prayer for them (vv. 5-7). The difficulty as to the strong and the weak had probably arisen between the Jews and Gentiles, which may explain the rest of this section (vv. 8-13).

The epistle concludes with:

A reference to the apostle's special ministry to the gentiles (15:14-21);

another expression of his desire and purpose to visit Rome (vv. 23-33);

individual remembrances, in which it is interesting to observe the references to Paul's personal acquaintances and relatives (16:1-16);

a warning and exhortation (vv. 17-20);

friendly greetings, a benediction and an ascription of praise to God (vv. 21-27).

In this last, Paul incidentally mentions "my Gospel," and also "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest" (vv. 25-26). Just what this "mystery" is as distinguished from the "Gospel," will appear more particularly in the epistles to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse, although chapter 6 of this epistle gave us an introduction to it in the believers identification with Christ. The full truth of the mystery is found in a right conception of the church of Christ as distinguished from the kingdom of Israel, and the union of Judah and Gentile believers in this age in that mystical body of which Christ is the head.

QUESTIONS

- 1.** To what chapter, and what thought in that chapter, are we carried back by the beginning of this lesson?
- 2.** What is the promise attached to the yielding of our bodies to God?
- 3.** What will be the result of the renewing of our minds?
- 4.** In what ways is our doing of the will of God to be shown?
- 5.** Who is meant by "him that is weak in the faith"?
- 6.** Why should he not be denied Christian fellowship?
- 7.** What is the Christian obligation of the weak brother?
- 8.** What is the caution given to the strong brother?
- 9.** Give an outline of the conclusion of this epistle.
- 10.** What is the explanation of the mystery here named?