

The Book of Romans

Romans 14:1-6

v 1 *“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, [but] not to doubtful disputations”.*

We notice Scripture here says *“the faith”*. What we hold as true, Christianity. The truth of it. Not all believers are sound in The Christian faith. Confusion abounds amongst believers as to many teachings related to Christian truth.

It is not a question here of personal faith a believer may have in Christ, that trusts Him for things in this life, that other (even more knowledgeable of the Bible, might think Christ should not, be trusted for, because they believe it to be something we are responsible for ourselves.

This weakness in doctrine must be considered, *“but not to doubtful disputations”*. That is, the weak brother’s lack of understanding of Truth is not to be something for him to *“dispute”* about and argue, forcing his weakness on his brethren, thinking himself to be the teacher of soundness.

Apollos might have been such a believer. *“But a certain Jew, Apollos by name...who was mighty in the scriptures, arrived at Ephesus”* (Acts 18:24).

Here was one, *“mighty in the Scriptures”* but being a Jew, was weak in *“the faith”* of Christianity. He knew only the baptism of John. But *“he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto [them], and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly”* (Acts 18:24-26). They received him, not to argue with him, but to help him, as to the Christian faith.

v 2 *“For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs”.*

Again, it is that which *“one believeth”* not how great his personal faith was in believing. Christianity does not occupy us with what we eat, (except denying blood as a food) but rather *how* we eat. There is much found in Scripture about that; i.e., *“meats, which God has created for receiving with thanksgiving for them who are faithful and know the truth”* (1 Tim.4:3). *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink...do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor. 10:31).

v 3 *“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him”.*

Christianity affects our whole being as men,

spirit, soul, and body. It changes or transforms us from the inside (heart, mind) out, (the body). Christ has a redeeming interest in the transforming of all parts of our being to be men suitable as vessels for God’s use. *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Thess.5:23).

v 4 *“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand”.*

It is important to remember the subject of judging one another here relates to weakness, not wickedness. In cases of wickedness we are told in 1 Cor. 5:13; *“Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person”*. Here it is God’s servants that are in a condition of weakness, perhaps due mainly to bad teaching.

v 5 *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day [alike]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”.*

We need to be careful in matters that we esteem more important than another might esteem it. Is *“one day above”*, or *“every day alike”*, something to divide over, or even argue about. (There are many things of this nature in our lives with one another.) It is sad when *“days”* become that which divides. (I speak of the principle of dividing over *“one man”* and *“another man’s”* differing views when God allows for every man to be persuaded in his own mind.)

I suppose it might be a wonderful thing if a man was converted to Christ in his youth, and in a long life afterwards, never needed to change his mind about anything. However we might, perhaps, end up as an old king, or as Ephraim. *“Better [is] a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished”* (Ecc.4:13). *“Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned”* (Hosea 7:8).

v 6 *“He that regardeth the day, regardeth [it] unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard [it]. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks”*

Assembly doctrine is not the subject of the book

of Romans. (The assembly is mentioned three times in the last chapter.) However we do learn (as in this verse) the very important principle of the individual believer's conscience before his God. It is of vital importance that we as believers stand in our own exercise of faith before God, and not before man. We must "regard" things unto the Lord.

Someone stronger in faith, or more intelligent than we might be in faith, still cannot impart the needed faith from God to follow them. If we seek to follow them, without faith to do so, we in principle, may end up as the young man in Mark 14; "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about [his] naked [body]; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked" (Mk.14:51,52).

"Group" activities without a personal exercise of faith, can lead to this also.

v 7 "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

Verse 7 teaches us to seek the welfare of others regarding personal faith in matters of this character. Paul gives a beautiful example as to this, in his writing to the Corinthian saints, (1 Cor. 8 through 11:1.) The stronger could eat meat offered to idols because they knew the idol was nothing. They knew there was only one God. The weaker brother had a conscience about eating meats offered to idols, so Paul says, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13).

Our individual life effects others. We need to be careful and aware of how it effects matters like this, "Hast thou faith? have [it] to thyself before God. Happy [is] he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." (see V.22).

v 8 "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

While none of us live to ourselves, we all are to live unto the Lord. He directs our behavior, and it will be for the welfare of His own. "Let no one seek his own [advantage], but that of the other." (1 Cor. 10:24 JND).

v 9 "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

Christ sought our advantage—our welfare—in His life, death, and resurrection. Are we now to live to ourselves? He is Lord of both dead and living. His care for His own, never ceases whether we die or live.

v 10 "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (God)."

When we forget the judgment seat of God, before which we all will stand, we seem to take up our brethren as though, we are their Judge. The result is always the esteeming ourselves greater, and the setting of our brethren as nought.

v 11 "For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

But Who is it that believers give account to? Most certainly we shall not give account to each other—rather, to the Lord alone! May we never think that it is to us as though we are superior to anyone.

v 12 "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Until a believer learns this in truth he will not be able to walk to please God. Somehow, forgetting God as the One to whom all men must give account, we will live for the approval of men—ourselves or others. "Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

v 13 "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in [his] brother's way."

Thank the Lord for those words "any more." We may have all failed badly but still there remains "That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pet.4:2).

v 14 "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that [there is] nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him [it is] unclean."

Remember the question confronting us is our conscience, whether weak or strong, before God. It is not here wickedness for Paul would also write:

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you” (2 Cor.6:17). Sin is most certainly and absolutely, totally unclean.

v 15 “But if thy brother be grieved with [thy] meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”

Meat as used here, would be some spiritual knowledge or understanding, belonging to a mature, or strong Christian. Milk would be what a weaker one would be sustained by. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual...as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat” (1 Cor.3:1,2).

What we have from God is to be used for the edification of our brethren, not for their destruction. “The power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction” (2 Cor.13:10).

vv 16,17 “Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Here is something that is called “your good”. Habitually the “good” acts of our Saviour were spoken of in unbelief by those who hated Him—they spoke of Him as being evil—even as being from Beelzebub. “They said, This [fellow] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils” (Mt. 12:24).

But in this passage, God is speaking of what can be called “your good,”—specifically when that good destroys our weaker brother. This especially happens when we are careless in the use of “our good.”—Particularly when taking the place of one who is superior to our brethren and thus setting them at nought (see v10).

v 18 “For he that in these things serveth Christ [is] acceptable to God, and approved of men.”

Serving Christ, having, and doing, according to His Mind, with His heart, is acceptable to God. In Samuel’s day it was said by God: “And I will raise me up a faithful priest, [that] shall do according to [that] which [is] in mine heart and in my mind” (1 Sam.2:35). This is ever God’s desire for His servants.

This we understand. However we also read here “approved of men”. In matters of “righteousness” (regarding relationships with others) even men rec-

ognize our manner of behavior. They see and “approve” of such a life...at least as seen in someone else. They quickly observe and see the reality of faith worked out in a believer’s life.

v 19 “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

Making for peace and edifying others, are not common traits in this world. The believer is to seek for both—it should mark believers. Does it?

The world has a saying which suggests this divine truth. “What you do speaks so loud, I can’t hear what you say!” The world will be very quick to recognize any inconsistencies in Christians.

v 20 “For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed [are] pure; but [it is] evil for that man who eateth with offence.”

The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink.(vs. 16-17) In Israel, there were definite restrictions on eating and drinking. The kingdom of God today is a moral one, not occupied with meats. In fact today; “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly... some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils...to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving...For every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving...For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim.4:(1-5).

Yet knowing this liberty we have in eating “meat” we need exercise of soul to guard against eating in such a manner that it would stumble someone in the spiritual realm, (The work of God.in a man) Paul would write: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all [men] in all [things], not seeking mine own profit, but the [profit] of many, that they may be saved.” 1 Cor.10:31-33)

The work of God is going on in all three categories listed here,the Jew, Gentile, and church of God. How and what we eat or drink can affect His work adversely if we become careless. May it never be said in truth, for instance, we are either a winebibber, or a glutton. Both charges against the Lord were false.

v 21 “[It is] good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [any thing] whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” *crease our faith.*” (Luke 17:5)

Years ago a Christian lady offered me a piece of cake she had made. Then she said (knowing me to be a Christian), “It is a beer cake.” I really didn’t know what that actually meant, but I knew she thought it might make a difference about it in my answer if it contained beer. (She had some sort of conscience about it.) I declined for her sake, not because of any affects it would, or might have on me. The Lord knows if I had His Mind and heart in doing that. I personally cannot say one way or another.

v 22 “*Hast thou faith? have [it] to thyself before God. Happy [is] he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*”

This does not mean we are to keep silence as to our faith in Christ. “*But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed*” (Gal.1:23)

“*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;*” (Col. 1:23)

But there are a multitude of things in a Christian’s life that may, or may not be up to another Christian’s faith. In these matters it may be well to keep our exercises of faith to ourselves unless asked.

A common example of this may be insurances of various types. Some believe they can trust God for their coverage, others think this to be irresponsible. “Circles” of fellowship can come about by such like things if we are not careful. We need to live “*before God*” while not judging such things.

v 23 “*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith: for whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin.*”

Faith is real. It comes from God, and goes to God. Where there is a pretense to having it, or, as we say, we follow another’s faith rather than our own, our hearts will fear and doubts will arise. An extreme example might be the Egyptians. Though they did not profess faith, they did try to follow those who were acting in obedience to God.

“*By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry [land]: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*” (Heb.11:29)

We can all say, in matters of faith “*Lord, In-*