

35 Or has any one laid an obligation on God, by first conferring a favor on him? Let him show the obligation, and he shall have full recompense.

36 For from him all things proceed, and by him all things are governed, and to his glory are all things both made and governed. To him alone be ascribed the glory of the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, for ever. Amen.

Summary

Great is the depth of God's resources, and wisdom, and knowledge in working out the redemption of the world. We cannot know beforehand what his decisions are, nor how he moves in effecting his ends. No one has ever been privy to his counsels, nor any appointed to aid him. All things originate in him, and all things are for his honor and glory.

Comment

d. Conclusion: 11:33-36

We can think of no better words to express the thought of this conclusion than the paraphrasing of these verses as given by W. Sanday on p. 333 in the International Critical Commentary. 11:33 "When we contemplate a scheme like this spread out before us in vast panorama, how forcibly does it bring home to us the inexhaustible profundity of that Divine mind by which it was planned! The decisions which issue from that mind and the methods by which it works are alike inscrutable to man. 34 Into the secrets of the Almighty none can penetrate. No counsellor stands at His ear to whisper words of suggestion. 35 Nothing in Him is derived from without so as to be claimed back again by its owner. 36 He is the source of all things. Through Him all things flow. He is the final cause to which all things tend. Praised forever be His name! Amen."

Text

12:1,2. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. 2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

PART THREE

The Practical, The Hortatory, and Conclusion. 12:1-16:27

Our Duties to God and Man. 12:1-15:13

REALIZING ROMANS, 12:1-2

507. "Beseech" is a strong word. Would we be disobedient if we fail to obey what is taught in these verses?
508. How have chapters one through eleven formed a background for the conclusion here stated?

Rethinking in Outline Form

5. This rejection neither total nor final. 11:1-36.
- a. Their rejection not total. 11:1-10.
- (1) Reasons for concluding it was not total. 1-5.
 - (a) Paul was an Israelite, but he was not rejected. 1, 2a.
 - (b) Conditions then were like those in the days of Elijah. 2b-5.
 - (2) Reasons for their rejection. 11:6-10.
 - (a) Acceptance is by grace. 6.
 - (b) The elect found it—not Israel. 7a.
 - (c) The rest were hardened. 7b-10.
- b. Their rejection not final. 11:11-24.
- (1) Their fall was an advantage to the Gentiles. 11.
 - (2) Their fall was a blessing to the Gentiles but it does not compare to the blessing their fullness will be to the Gentiles. 12.
 - (3) The Jews will one day turn to Christ. This will be like life from the dead. One day God will graft in the branches that are now broken off. The rejection of the Jews should be a warning to the Gentiles. 12-24.
- c. Mercy to all the ultimate purpose of God. 11:25-32.
- (1) The hardening of Israel will last only until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. 25, 26.
 - (2) God is able to show mercy to all. 27-32.
- d. Conclusion. 11:33-36.
- We can cry out in amazement at the great wisdom and love of God. 33-36.

REALIZING ROMANS, 12:1-2

509. Upon the basis of God's mercies, not his condemnation, we are called upon to make a living sacrifice. Explain this.
510. Our bodies are to be "a living sacrifice." Explain in your own words how this relates to your body.
511. If our bodies are not so presented to God, are they acceptable to him?

512. It would help you in your understanding of the inspired text if you would read it from several translations. In doing this you would find a new meaning for the word "spiritual" in vs. 1b. What is the meaning of the word?
513. Is the fashion of the world always wrong? How can we tell just what is fashionable with the Lord and with the world?
514. Isn't it wonderful to know we can be transformed? Not just changed or improved, but transformed!! Honestly now, do you believe this is possible? Transformed into what?
515. "The renewing of the mind": If we never had "new" minds to begin with, how could they be "renewed"? How often should this process be practiced? How often is it practiced with you?
516. Here is experimental religion in its purest form. We can come to prove to ourselves, to others, and most of all to God that which is good, acceptable, and perfect in life. We are here saying that we believe the practice of God's will in our lives will produce the greatest amount of real happiness for man. Do you agree? Tell why.

Paraphrase

12:1-2. Since the Jewish church, with its sacrifices, is removed, and the Christian church is erected in its place, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present to him your bodies, wherein sin formerly ruled, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, by consecrating its members to his service, which is your reasonable worship.

2 And be not fashioned like to the men of this world, by adopting their corrupt principles, their carnal temper, their rotten speech, and their vicious practices, but be changed from what ye were, by having your understanding enlightened, that ye may approve what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which is made known in the gospel.

Summary

We are continually to present our bodies a living, holy sacrifice to God. This is made our reasonable service by all the facts and teachings in the foregoing part of this letter. Our minds are to be changed by being renewed. This change is necessary in order to understand God's will correctly.

1. Full consecration to God. 12:1, 2

Comment

Whereas we cannot comprehend many aspects of the nature of

God, there is one quality of God which we can understand, and which calls for a response on our part. We can understand the mercies of God. A review of the history of his dealings with both Jew and Gentile will show "he hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." The goodness of God should indeed lead us to repentance, to "a change of mind." We are not abused at all, but marvelously blessed. In the heart of Paul so strong was this concept of God's goodness that he used a very strong word in calling for our response to God's mercies. He said, "I beseech you." It is as if he were saying, "Come here apart with me, and let me impress upon you face to face the inescapable responsibility each of us have as Christians in response to mercies to us." In the chapters to follow, Paul is to call upon believers to do many things, both for God and man, but now there is but one injunction which was inclusive of all others: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." When this is done, all other expressions of devotion and service will issue forth. Note, please, that the body does not present itself. "We" must offer it up to God. By God's grace and in response to his mercy, we *do* have control over this body of flesh; we *can* make it an offering to God, or Paul would never have called for it. Other Christians have done it; they are now doing it. Can we do less?

When we thus present our bodies to God, he will deem them holy and acceptable. Not that we by such a surrender become sinless or infallible, but he who looks on the heart so counts us holy and acceptable on the basis of his grace and our offering. Such action and devotion on our part is but the natural, sensible response of the heart and life to God. Anything short of this reflects upon our willingness to follow out the divine plan of God in dealing with man through Christ.

In verse two are the details of the living sacrifice. If our bodies are to be laid upon the altar of devotion to God, it will be because the volitional, responsible part of man has been renewed, not once but day by day, for that is how often this sacrifice is to be made. Perhaps a morning and an evening oblation would be in order. How shall we dress? How shall we talk? How shall we think? If we see and follow only those things and persons which are near, we shall be like them, corrupt, full of lust. But it is wondrously possible to

312. We can know one quality of God. What is it? How do we discover this quality?

313. Why should the goodness of God lead us to repentance?

314. Is it unreasonable to expect such a complete commitment of fallible man?

315. When we fail to present our bodies to God we fail our own selves also. How is this true?

set a "new fashion" by following Christ, who is the "fashion designer" of the Christian. To be in "fashion" with Christ calls for time, thought, energy on our part. All of this means we must set our minds on the things that are above, and not once, but continually, to have that divine power work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure. When our minds are renewed, so is our life. Our bodies then become "instruments of righteousness."

What are we trying to prove? Better yet, *to whom* are we trying to prove it? We are proving the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, or that God's will is good, acceptable and perfect. When once we have made this surrender, we will know it ourselves. It will be good, acceptable and perfect to us—life indeed! It will likewise appear so to other Christians, some who need such demonstration. Above all, it will prove to Satan that God's way is the best way, *good, well-pleasing, and perfect*. We feel the emphasis is upon proving it to ourselves, but the other aspects of the thought are also true.

Text

12:3-16. For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. 4 For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. 6 And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; 7 or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; 8 or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting; he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; 11 in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer; 13 communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but

316. What is the responsible part of man?

317. How can we be "in fashion" with Christ?

318. The Christian is trying to prove something. What is it?

condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits.

REALIZING ROMANS, 12:3-16

517. What is "the grace" of vs. 3?
518. We are not to think of ourselves "highly," but rather "soberly." Explain.
519. God has granted to each man "a measure of faith." I thought faith came by hearing, and hearing of the Word of God. (Cf. Rom. 10:17) In what sense are both of these ideas correct?
520. There are persons, some of them in the dark, who are prejudiced against God for making them the way they are. This is tragically wrong. Explain why.
521. We all have some God-given office to hold in his body. Is this the thought of verses 4 and 5?
522. We are not only members of the body of Christ, the church, but of one another. Explain this thought.
523. Prophecy is a gift. How could "the ministry" be a gift? Are these natural or supernatural gifts?
524. It would seem from vs. 8 that exhorting was a separate function or office in the Roman church. Should it be so today?
525. How could "giving" be a gift of God? Are we not all to give?
526. Is showing mercy a gift? Some of these gifts are present in the church today. Designate which ones.
527. What are some of the masks worn by those who are insincere in love?
528. What a wonderful quality is hate when directed toward evil. Explain the word "abhor" in vs. 9.
529. We are "to be glued" to that which is good. In a very practical way show how this is done.
530. If we fulfilled the injunction of vs. 10, would we be accused of emotionalism? Explain why.
531. In an everyday example, show how we could "in honor" prefer one another.
532. Isn't vs. 11a a contradiction? How could a person be "diligent" and "slothful" at the same time?
533. What "spirit" is meant in vs. 11?
534. The sense of service for the Lord escapes us many times; as a result, we begin to serve ourselves or one another. What is the outcome?
535. What "plus factor" must be present in our hearts if we practice the blessed trinity of vs. 12? Cf. Rom. 8:28.
536. Please remember as you read vs. 13 that you are not the recipient but the giver. Do the saints of today have needs we can

- meet? How would you define "hospitality"? How are we to consider these words: as suggestions, or ideals, or commands?
537. Just how can we practice blessing those that persecute us? Give an example.
538. Many times we are too busy to have a sincere interest in the happiness or sorrow of others. When we fail to do this, who do we fail? Can we be like Christ without this interest?
539. Is Paul suggesting a loss of individuality in vs. 16? What is he saying?

Paraphrase

12:3-16. Also, by the apostolical authority which is given to me, I command every one among you, without exception, not to have an higher opinion of himself, nor a lower opinion of others, than he ought to have, but to think of both justly, so as always to behave wisely in his own station, without aspiring after offices in the church which he is not fit for; and to employ himself in the duties of his station and office, according as to each God has distributed his measure of spiritual gifts.

4 These gifts are necessarily different, both in their nature and dignity, (ver. 6.) For, as in one body we have many members, but all these members have not the same office in the body;

5 So we, the many disciples of Christ, are but one body, or religious society, under the government of Christ; consequently we are all members of one another, receiving edification and comfort from each other.

6 Having then spiritual gifts, differing according to the offices assigned us in the church; if our gift be prophecy, let us prophesy only according to the extent of our inspiration, without adding to or taking from the revelations made to us, or meddling with subjects not revealed to us:

7 Or if our gifts fit us for the stated ministry of the word, let us be diligent in preaching, not disheartened by dangers: or if one's gifts fit him for teaching the ignorant, let him be diligent in teaching such:

8 Or if they fit him for exhorting, let him employ himself in exhortation. He whose gifts fit him for distributing the church's alms, let him do it with honesty, disinterestedness, and impartiality: he whose gifts fit him for presiding, let him do with assiduity and prudence: he whose gifts qualify him for taking care of the sick, the afflicted, the imprisoned, and of widows and orphans, let him perform these services with cheerfulness.

9 Let your professions of love be real: abhor every evil action: adhere closely to a virtuous course of life.

10 In love to one another as brethren in Christ, show that kindness

of affection which near relations bear to one another. In every honorable action, go before, and leading on one another.

11 In caring for each other, be not slothful. In spirit be fervent, when ye serve the Lord in the ordinary duties of religion, or in spreading the gospel.

12 Rejoice in hope of eternal life. Be patient in affliction. And as the best consolation in trouble, continue earnest in prayer, although your prayers be not immediately answered.

13 Communicate your riches, for relieving the necessities of the brethren. Practise hospitality to strangers, especially those driven from their homes by persecution.

14 Bless them who persecute you: bless them by praying God to bless them, but never curse them.

15 Rejoice with them who are in prosperity, and grieve with them who are in adversity: these things are acceptable both to God and man.

16 Be of the same hospitable, forgiving, sympathizing disposition towards one another, as towards strangers and persecutors. Do not aspire after the grandeur of this life; nor affect the company of those who are in high stations: rather associate with men who are weaned from the world. And be not puffed up with an opinion of your own wisdom, lest it make you despise instruction.

Summary

We should not be high-minded because we are gifted, but we must be right-minded, that we may place a proper estimate upon everything, especially upon gifts, our own as well as those of others. If we have a gift, we must exercise it, neither being proud of it, nor looking down upon others as inferiors because they have a less shining gift. Whatever we are best qualified to do, that we must do, and nothing else. This alone gives success.

Our love must be unfeigned, for otherwise it is hypocrisy. It is not enough that we simply oppose evil; we must abhor it. We must cling to what is good at every cost. Our love for the brotherhood must be very tender, while in the matter of showing esteem, we must be examples to one another. In serving the Lord, we must be full of zeal, and fervent in spirit. In affliction, we must be patient, constant in prayer, and full of hope. We are to share each other's wants, lovingly caring for strangers in our homes. We must bless even our persecutors, and never curse them. We are not to pattern after proud ways and high life, but evince a preference for lowly ways and meek life.

Comment

2. Duties to those within the church. 12:3-16

Paul was inspired, and his utterances came by divine inspiration, but he was not so blessed of God because he deserved it. He had such a ministry through the unmerited favor of God. We should heed his words as the words of God, and all the more so when we see reflected in the life of the inspired spokesman the very truths he seeks to impart. The church at Rome was graced with a number of spiritual gifts. There were men in the congregation who had the gift of prophecy (vs. 6); evidently some had the gift of supernatural wisdom or knowledge (vs. 7; cf. I Cor. 12:8.) Others were ministering (vs. 7a) and still others exhorting (vs. 7b). They were ministering and exhorting only by God's power and wisdom. There was a strong temptation to misuse these gifts, particularly in the area of pride. Let us put ourselves in their place. If we were blessed with the gift of prophecy, would we not consider such a power the greatest blessing of our lives? Would it not be a strong temptation to convince every other member of the church that what we had received from God was indeed high and holy? Find ten men and women with this same idea, and there will be confusion and collision!

What is here said of spiritual gifts is also applicable to the ordinary places of service in the church today.

A clear "renewed" mind will reveal reality. Sober judgment will be made and sound decisions formed. In the exercise of the supernatural gifts, faith on the part of the one gifted had to be exercised. For example: Peter and John could not heal the lame man at the beautiful gate without faith (Acts 3:1-10), but it was not the faith of the lame man but of Peter and John (cf. Acts 3:16). "The measure of faith" had reference to the power exercised by those possessing the gifts. The expression, "according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith," would seem to refer to the gift itself. It does so only in the sense that sometimes the result is put for the cause. The result was the exercise of the gift; the cause was the faith of the gifted. The faith, too, was a "gift" of God.

In verses 4 and 5, the human body as compared to the spiritual one is discussed. This passage is not the first time Paul uses such a comparison, nor the last one. (cf. I Cor. 12:12-27) There is perfect unity through diversity in the human body. The hidden, though inevitable, conclusion is that such is only true because there is a unified

319. Paul's words are all the more meaningful to us because of his life. Why?

320. Why was instruction concerning the proper use of spiritual gifts necessary?

321. Why are we admonished to think "soberly"?

response to the one head. In the spiritual body, the church, Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22, 23). There should be that perfect willingness on the part of each one to count the other better than himself and as necessary as himself—no one indispensable and yet all doing what none other can do. When we realize that our proper relationship to the head depends upon our proper relationship to every other member of the body, we will work together without highmindedness.

Note, please, the attitudes to be adopted by those who exercise their gifts, as in vs. 6-8. The gifts differ, but not the source. The expressions differ, but not the purpose. Each is to be used to its fullest extent, but with no attempt to control the use of another of God's gifted ones. There are seven areas of services here mentioned. In four of them we can see a need for special supernatural gifts: in prophecy, in ministry, in teaching and in exhorting, but not in the remaining three. We conclude, therefore, that the admonition is both specific and general. To those who are divinely blessed, as well as to those who serve without such needed aid, "do it with all that in you is" without thought of comparison with others. "He that giveth" evidently refers to those who have of this world's means and yet love the Lord. They are to give with liberality, perhaps realizing how rare such a person is and how needed is the gift. The rulers are doubtless the elders of the churches. Idleness or indifference will not produce an elder who rules well. A real word of emphasis needs to be sounded on "he that showeth mercy," or perhaps better translated, "he that showeth pity." It is easy enough to show pity or mercy to someone who is ill or shut-in the first time or the second or third visit, but how is our cheerfulness after the 100th call on the same unfortunate one? It should be the same as the attitude we expect from God when we ask him to attend to our needs (and many times the same ones) the 100th time.

In verses 9-13 are a list of attributes to be found in the life of a genuine Christian. Let us not love in word, but in deed and in truth. If we pretend in our love, it is only a pretense to man; God is not deceived. In our relationship to one another, our motives and purposes should be transparent.

It is not enough to pronounce a definition of evil; we must have an aggressive opposition to it. Within our inmost beings we must

322. What is the meaning of the expression "measure of faith"?

323. Why does Paul use the figure referring to the human body?

324. In what sense are we all essential yet not indispensable?

325. Both to those with supernatural aid and to those without what was the word of admonition?

hate sin. It is fully as necessary to speak out against evil as it is to speak up for righteousness. This marks a very vital aspect of our relationship to Christ and God. If our emotions are not involved in our religion, we worship in vain. Intellectual assent to right and wrong will never accomplish God's will in our lives. There must be within us an emotional response to God's will, or we simply do not love the Lord.

We are "to be glued to what is good." We are to adhere with all our hearts to the good. How many Christians are truly "lovers of good"? Too many are *grey* instead of *white* in their conception of good and evil. As a result, there is no conviction in either direction. We can be sure they are in the power of Satan.

In our love for each of God's family, we should have no mere polite acceptance of one another. Must we always find some attribute of loveliness in someone before we can love them? If our Lord had so waited, we would all be lost. Let us love one another with a true feeling of the family relationship for Jesus' sake.

"In honor preferring one another" could also be translated, "setting an example for one another." Let us challenge (provoke) one another to love and good works. "If he can do it for Christ, so can I," is the thought here.

In the care of the needs of one another do not be negligent. What a reproach this is to the average church! We do not even know the needs of one another, physically or spiritually; if we do, many times we do nothing about it. "It's the job of the preacher," or, "Let the elders take care of that," is often heard. Here it is enjoined upon all.

In zeal be "boiling over." Someone defined zeal as "communicated feeling." We love the Lord and one another, but our love is of no help to others or to our Lord until it is communicated.

"Serving the Lord": never for an instant should we lose the sense of serving him, as a slave to a worthy Master.

Here is a trinity of triumph for every Christian: (1) the hope of heaven; (2) the providence of God; (3) steadfast prayer. These qualities must become a veritable part of us. The factual knowledge that, on the basis of the death of Christ, we have the hope of glory is not at all enough. There must be the eagerness of a pilgrim going home, the joy of a true child at a family reunion. We can and will be patient with complete abandon in any and all tribulation. "All

326. Who are those who rule?

327. Why is it difficult to show mercy with cheerfulness?

328. How do our emotions become a vital part of our religion?

329. What is the meaning of "in honor preferring one another"?

things work together for good to them who love God and are called according to his purpose." All our hope and trust must be undergirded with constant, fervent prayer.

When one suffers, all suffer. We come to the aid of one another as a loving brother or sister. When a brother in the flesh is seriously ill, how concerned we become. What of the ills of the spirit and the flesh of our brothers in the Lord?

Moses E. Lard translates the next phrase, "keeping on in love for strangers." This was an Old Testament practice. It should indeed be the practice of each and every one as a Christian. Perhaps this could have reference to Christians who are strangers, but it should not stop there.

Continuing the list of those wonderful qualities of a true child of God: "Bless the persecutors, bless and curse not." This was the admonition and practice of our Lord. Oh, that we might practice it today with those who misunderstand us and spitefully use us! A genuine feeling of good will toward those who are unfriendly to us is the only Christian attitude.

Verse fifteen contains a real barometer of our spirituality, showing how we can sympathetically share the joys and the sorrows of others when we have the mind of Christ. He bore our sorrows and carried our griefs. How this is needed today!

"Let there be no distinction of persons" is the admonition of verse 16b. There are natural preferences that develop among brethren. The Christian, and especially any leader of God's flock, cannot allow such personality traits to cause him to show a distinction to the extent of slighting one and honoring another.

"Condescend" is a meaningful and strong word: "Be *carried away*" by (or "condescend to) the things that are lowly. Not only "things" but people are involved in this. It should be our desire to be hidden as much as possible by the work we do. No task or person should be too small or menial in the service of Christ.

"Be not wise in your own eyes." This is not an admonition concerning wisdom alone. Paul here says we should manifest our wisdom or sound judgment before God and men rather than before the mirror. The estimate we hold of our wisdom should be one of true humility, seen in the light of our mistakes and lack of knowledge.

330. Is Paul suggesting that all are responsible for the needs of others?

331. Define "zeal."

332. How can we bless our persecutors?

333. Give the "trinity of triumph" for the Christian.

Text

12:17-21. Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. 19 Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. 20 But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

REALIZING ROMANS, 12:17-21

540. How do the two thoughts of vs. 17 relate to each other?
 541. Is Paul suggesting in vs. 18 that after we have tried to maintain peace and found it impossible that we are at liberty to fight?
 542. Human vengeance is destructive in two ways. Name them.
 543. It is difficult to believe that finally justice will prevail, and yet the Scriptures plainly teach it. When will we see it?
 544. We know from vs. 20 that the "coals of fire" are good deeds. In what manner do they become "coals of fire"? Who is being burned?
 545. Is it always possible to overcome evil with good? If not, are we less obligated?

Paraphrase

12:17-21. Unto no one return evil for the evil he hath done you. Premeditate how to make your actions beautiful in the sight of all men; of your enemies as well as of others.

18 What relates to you is, live in peace with all men, whether friends or foes, if it can be done consistently with piety and truth.

19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves of your persecutors, but give place to the wrath of God, whose prerogative it is to punish. For it is written, Deut. xxxii. 35. Vengeance belongs to me, I will repay, saith the Lord. See also Lev. xix. 18.

20 Therefore, if thy persecutor hunger, instead of avenging thyself by suffering him to perish, give him meat; and if he thirst, give him drink: for by so doing thou wilt soften him, and make him lay down the enmity which he bears to thee.

21 Be not overcome of evil, so as to be made evil yourselves, but overcome the evil dispositions of your persecutors, by doing them all the good ye can.

334. How can we tell whether we have the mind of Christ?

335. The Christian should be "carried away" with something. What is it?

336. What is the meaning of being "wise in our own eyes"?

Summary

Injuries, we must not retaliate, and we are to be thoughtful to do what, in every one's estimation, is right. As Christians we must strive for peace.

We must never attempt to avenge ourselves, but leave that wholly to the Lord. On the contrary, if our enemy be hungry, we must feed him; if thirsty, we must give him drink. We must be God-like in dealing with him. We must not allow his evil to conquer us; rather we must conquer his evil by our good.

Comment

3. The Christian's duties toward those without the church. 12:11-21.

This is a fine sentiment, "Render to no man evil for evil," but who does it? The desire to get even with those who do evil to us is not the Christian attitude. Rather, let us make it a rule of life that we shall not retaliate. If such a conviction is developed ahead of time, we shall be able to so respond when someone does evil to us.

In contrast to the "eye for an eye" attitude is that in vs. 17b. We are to take thought beforehand so as to conduct ourselves in such a manner that all men, Christian and non-Christian, will come to appreciate our concern for them, and will see the consistency of our profession. A Christian will never go out of his way to offend anyone. On the other hand, he will make a conscious effort to bring happiness to all.

Verse eighteen seems to be an amendment of vs. 17. It will not always be possible to avoid conflict. Others will force evil upon the child of God. Never let it be said that any blame is due the Christian. We can be at peace with others, even though others are not with us.

What is the distinction between verse nineteen and verse seventeen? It would seem that verse nineteen is stronger, in the sense that some not only retaliate with an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but they actually become the judges, meting out what God alone has wisdom or power to do. If we believe God is concerned about our lives, we will allow him to act as judge in matters that hurt us. The Lord's anger is always pure—ours never. Besides these considerations is the bald fact that God has stated the case in plain words, "Punishment is mine, I will repay it."

337. How shall we ever be able to fulfill the admonition "render to no man evil for evil"?

338. We should plan ahead of time to so conduct ourselves that our actions will show something to all. What is it?

Someone is certainly going to say that the thought of verse twenty has gone too far. This is true from a human standpoint. We would never think of treating our enemies as here described. But we are partakers of the divine nature. God does daily feed and care for those who are his enemies. Can we refuse to do it?

The "coals of fire" of verse 20b probably refers to the burning of the conscience of the one so treated. When we return good for evil we are making an attempt to stir up his conscience to a recognition of his own guilt and our innocence. In this condition he is a candidate for the truth.

Who will win in this great contest of right and wrong? Either we give place to wrath and are overcome, or we overcome the wrath of others by returning good for evil. We must overcome the desire to give evil for evil within our own heart before we can hope to conquer evil in the heart of anyone else.

Looking back over the twenty-one verses of chapter twelve, we can now see in all its practical reality what it means to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Rethinking in Outline Form

Part Three

The Practical, The Hortatory, and Conclusion. 12:1—16:27.

A. Our duties to God and Man. 12:1—15:13.

1. Full consecration to God. 12:1-2.

2. Duties to Those Within the Church. 12:3-16.

a. Paul speaking as an apostle. v. 3a cf. Rom. 1:5; 15:15.

b. Addressed to all. v. 3b.

c. How to think. v. 3c. cf. I Cor. 8:2; 10:12; Gal. 6:3.

d. Many members yet all in one body. Each part has its function vs. 4-8.

e. Love to be true. v. 9a cf. II Cor. 6:6; I Tim. 1:5.

f. Abhor evil, cleave to good. v. 9b.

g. Tender love for the brethren. v. 10a. cf. I Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; Jn. 13:34-35.

h. In honor preferring one another. v. 10b cf. Phil. 2:3.

i. In diligence not slothful. v. 11a.

j. Fervent in spirit. v. 11b.

k. Serving the Lord. v. 11c cf. Matt. 6:24.

l. Rejoicing in hope. v. 12a cf. 5:2.

339. In what way does verse eighteen amend verse seventeen?

340. Explain the difference between verse seventeen and verse nineteen.

341. In what very practical way could we say we have fulfilled verse twenty?

342. What are "the coals of fire"? Why are they so called?

- m. Patient in tribulation. v. 12b cf. 5:3-5.
 - n. Continuing steadfastly in prayer. v. 12c cf. I Thess. 5:17.
 - o. Communicating to the necessities of the saints. v. 13a.
 - p. Given to hospitality. v. 13b.
 - q. Bless them that persecute you. v. 14 cf. Matt. 5:44; Lu. 6:28; I Cor. 4:12.
 - r. Share joys and sorrows. v. 15.
 - s. Be of the same mind one toward another. v. 16a cf. 15:5; II Cor. 13:1.
 - t. Keep the mind on lowly things. v. 16b.
 - u. Be not wise in your own conceits. v. 16c cf. 11:25; Prov. 3:7.
3. The Christian's Duties to Those Without The Church. vs. 17-21.
- a. Render to no man evil for evil. v. 17a.
 - b. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. v. 17b cf. II Cor. 8:21.
 - c. Be at peace with all men. v. 18 cf. Mk. 9:50; Rom. 14:19.
 - d. Leave vengeance to the Lord. v. 19 cf. Deut. 32:35.
 - e. How to treat your enemy. v. 20 cf. Prov. 25:21-22; II Kgs. 6:21-23.
 - f. How to overcome evil. v. 21.

Text

13:1-7. Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: 4 for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

REALIZING ROMANS, 13:1-7

546. Are we not a bit hasty in referring to "the higher powers" as the government? Why not think of the higher powers as the power of God instead of man?