

"<sup>1</sup> Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. <sup>2</sup> For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Ro 14:1-9)

There are two things that are highlighted in chapter 14, I think, that are stated simply in verse 19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Peace and edification. Peace and building up each other. This is the first message on this subject; next week will be another, the Lord willing. In the passage before us, Paul begins to set forth the principles that will provide both peace and edification in the church.

The word edification is a single-word figure of speech taken from the building of a building. A building is built up one piece at a time, and Christian character is built up one bit of knowledge at a time. However, the analogy is not strictly exact, for Christian character is organic rather than material: there is the idea of growth and development as a baby grows to maturity, each part grows up into Christ. But we will go with the analogy before us which is that of a building.

To help us see some important things in this passage, I will address three things: I. The saints that make up the church; II. The sins that hinder edification and peace; III The sanctification that overcomes the sins. **The Saints, the Sins, the Sanctification.**

- I. The **Saints** under consideration in the church. They are classified into two kinds: the strong and the weak.
  - A. The classification is not absolute. Depending on the subject, all of us are weak at some times and some things, and all of us are strong at some times and some things. The instruction for us is for the particular time and subject. Some may be strong about meats and weak about days. The reverse may be true. Nobody is strong about everything; and no saint is weak about everything.
  - B. What makes the strong the strong. From this passage and a parallel passage in 1 Corinthians 8, we will understand this.
    1. The strong are those who have knowledge.
      - a. Verse 14. With respect to meats Paul had knowledge that made him strong.
        - (1). The same thing is echoed in 1 Cor. 8: 6,7. <sup>6</sup> But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. <sup>7</sup> Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.
        - (2). This echoes what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 24:5 A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. This goes against much modern evangelicalism which thinks that ignorance is strong and blissful. Just the opposite is true. In order to use things rightly, we must know both God and the things.
      - b. But there is a caveat here, very important. Knowledge can be a snare if we do not know knowledge itself. What does it mean to know aright:
        - (1). 1Co 8:1 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

- (2). If knowledge is to edify, then it must be mixed with charity, or love and compassion. The focus is on the children of God in the church, where love must bathe all that we do.
- (3). So we have in the passage under consideration this: Romans 14:1. Receive the weak, but not to doubtful disputations. Don't fight with the babe in Christ over the things he doesn't understand yet. Receive him as a brother who has the Holy Spirit and the principle of life in him. God is able to teach him: Phil. 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [grown up], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."
  - c. So the strong are those who have knowledge about a particular thing, but also have compassion on the weak on the matter.
2. So now we have the definition of the weak before us. They are those who do not have knowledge on this particular thing and therefore cannot think as they should.
  - a. Problem: just as the strong do not know the nature of their strength at times; so the weak do not know the nature of their weakness.
  - b. Hence, we must be tender to one another, pray for one another, and listen to one another.
  - c. Because we know some thing, does not necessarily mean we know another thing. Because our ignorance is so widespread, especially in the Scriptures, we are greatly weakened in our Christian walk.

## II. The **Sins** that tempt the saints.

- A. Verse 3. The strong are tempted to "despise" the weak. Those who know "despise" those who do not know. ["despise" means to make no account. Wave off. Utterly ignore. Assign no value to, "Vain fellow" a fool. This is a very serious matter and wicked.] This is a great sin, and can be connected to knowledge. "Knowledge puffeth up."
  1. "2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. 3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him." (1Co 8:2-3) True knowledge is connected to the love of God, and the greatest gift that God can give you is the knowledge of Himself, which shows He loves you very much. He hates the proud and the boastful and the arrogant. If you don't know this about God, you haven't even begun kindergarten in the school of Christ.
  2. The result of this "despising" is that the weak are not edified by the knowledge of the strong, but are counted unworthy and the strong commit sin in not taking the time and patience to teach the weak.
  3. The strong are to have compassion on the weak, to teach with compassion and patience. We can edify one another if we have this compassion one to another; being humble when we are strong, and being teachable when we are weak.
- B. Vs. 3. The temptation of the weak is to judge the strong.
  1. Because they do not understand, they assign evil motives and wickedness to those who do not have their scruples about days, meats, and other things.
  2. They become standoffish and do not enter into the fullness of the life of the church and may sow division and strife over these things.

3. Their pride may be hurt this keeps them from "receiving with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save their souls. This hurt may be intensified by arrogance on the part of those who think they are strong. It is a vicious spiral in which both peace and edification are lost.
- C. Note: I think that Haldane's exposition of this passage is much better than Calvin's. Calvin tentatively assigns weakness to Jewish Christians that are not fully integrated into the church, but that seems to be contradicted by verse 2. Nothing in the law required vegetarianism.
- III. Having seen how the saints are classified on each particular thing, and the temptations that Satan uses to overthrow peace and edification, let us now look at the sanctification.
- A. We must see ourselves in every matter as servants of Christ and not lords over each other. Verse 4. We stand in the Lord.
  - B. But we are members of each other, and we do not live to ourselves nor die to ourselves. Jesus is Lord of the living and the dead—all the saints of all ages. None of us has an independent empire. We are warned about beating our fellow servants and about despising them. We are members one of another. Jesus is God and Lord over all, but especially the church that He purchased with His Own blood.
  - C. We must esteem each other as precious in the sight of the Lord, precious because His blood is precious.
  - D. There is an interesting passage in 1 Corinthians 10:
    1. The same reason is given for both sides of the discussion!
      - 24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.
      - 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:
      - 26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.
      - 27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.
      - 28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof:
    2. All of creation, all of time and space and everything in both time and space are the Lord's and you and I don't decide for ourselves what we are to do or not do. That belongs to the Lord, and we are to walk humbly before him. "Don't say, tomorrow we will go and buy and sell...." The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.
  - E. Peace and edification can both take place if: We listen to each other, confess the weakness of our errors and take from each other the knowledge and strength that everyone has. This will cement our love to each other, avoid arrogance and strife, and enable each of us to serve others and be served by them.

May God bless you. Amen and Amen.