

Life Lessons from the Epistle to the Romans

Topic for September S.

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The key verses of this epistle are found in Chap. 1, 16, 17. Its theme is a God-given righteousness, appropriated by faith. The chief steps in the development of this theme may be imperfectly indicated as follows:

All men are in need of righteousness, for it has been provided that both Jews and Greeks are alike under sin (1, 18; 2, 9).

Jesus Christ by His death has procured righteousness for us, which is to be appropriated by faith (3, 21-25).

Being justified by faith we have peace, and joy, and hope, and all the privileges of the Gospel (5, 1).

There is no condemnation to the man that is in Christ Jesus, for his life is brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit dwells in him, leads him, and controls his life (8, 1, 12-17).

In extending the privileges of the Gospel to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, it may be asked, What becomes of the special promises given to Israel of old? Paul answers this question in chapters 9, 10 and 11.

Paul has now concluded the argument of the epistle, which is a process of very close reasoning, showing the logical character of the writer's mind. He does not close his epistle, however, without making a practical application of his teaching. In most of Paul's epistles we notice that the first part is doctrinal, and the second part is practical. The doctrinal part of this epistle closes with chapter eleven, and the practical part commences with chapter twelve. In the first part he gives us the doctrinal basis of Christian life; in the second, he enforces the practical duties of Christian life.

Our lesson to-day is based on chapter 12, the teaching of which may be summarized under four heads.

1. *The Supreme Act of Worship.* We are told in the first verse what the supreme act of worship is. It is not saying prayers, nor singing hymns, nor attending church, nor leading meetings, nor studying the Bible, nor yet the giving of a portion of our time and means to the cause of God. All these are acts of worship. Even the small place that we place upon the collection plate, if done in the right spirit, will be received by God as an act of worship. But of no one of these can it be said that it is the supreme act of worship. The present supreme act of worship is the presenting of our bodies to God as a reasonable service. The word service means worship, used in the same sense as when we speak of the service that is held in the church. The preacher may say, "Let us commence the service by singing," or, "Let us worship God by singing." The word *reasonable* means thoughtful, intelligent. Hence, we are to present our bodies to God as a thoughtful, intelligent act of worship. All worship of God is to be thoughtful. The value of a meeting does not depend so much upon the extent to which our emo-

tions are aroused as it does upon the amount of thought we put into it. The man who is content to sit and sing himself away to realms of everlasting bliss is not so well pleasing to God as the man who quietly and conscientiously seeks to know what God's will is concerning himself.

The worship of God requires thought; but thought or meditation is not in itself sufficient. The true worshiper is expected to make a sacrifice. The highest act of worship requires the greatest sacrifice. It is not merely the sacrifice of a little time or a little energy, not merely the giving up of one day in seven or an extra evening in the week for God, nor merely the giving of a few dollars or even one-tenth of our income, but the sacrifice of ourselves, the surrendering of our whole body. Not Sunday alone, but the whole week is to be given to God. Not the tithe alone, but the whole of our possessions is to be given to God. Not the heart alone, but the whole body, our entire being, is to be given to God. This is a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. This is the supreme act of worship, and it is not only the privi-

lilege to be admired. All selfish purposes may have their proper place, but if they get into the chief place in our heart, they are weeds to be got rid of. There is but one supreme purpose of life, and that is, not to seek our own glory or aggrandizement, but to prove what is the will of God. This is the teaching of the second verse.

3. *The Supreme Preparation for Christian Service.* This consists in the gifts which the Spirit has given to each one of us. These are given to us that we may be useful in the service of God. The sacrifice of our bodies, which we are to present to God, is a living sacrifice; for we possess in our bodies living talents and powers and possibilities, all of which are the gifts of the Holy Spirit to us, and all of which are to be used in carrying out what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God. These gifts constitute our chief qualifications for service, and the consecration of these gifts, with the sacrifice of our bodies, constitute the chief proof that we are doing the will of God. (See verses 3-8.)

4. *The Supreme Motive of Christian Conduct.* This is love. See 9-21.

Love must be genuine. v. 9.
Love is tenderly affectioned one to another. v. 10.

Love by preference gives honor to another. v. 10.

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NO. 1.

Introductory
The "Bulletin" says
"Good Morning."

Needle Points

Work.
Pray, Study, Give!
All at it and always at it.
The Almighty have a quitter.

How does this strike YOU?
Have you attended many of our meetings since reorganization?

Watch the attendance grow as the Look-Out Committee gets down to business.

Our Fourth V.P. always wears a smile. Right man in the right place.

Are you dull? Get up against the grindstone (or attend one of our meetings).

Whew! how those League Members sweat! What if we only had a better Hymn Book?

Q's and A's

Q. Which is the most important committee? A. The one you are on.

Q. What is the relation of the Senior League to the Junior League? A. Sam, as the hind leg of a kangaroo and a kangaroo—they make him jump.

News

Someone told our pastor to "Go to Hamilton."

We welcome his successor from that place.
We extend sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Estes in their recent bereavement through death of the latter's brother.

N. B.

A home church and a church home—that's Dublin St.

Just register at the door before you take your seat in the meeting.

And be sure to help out the new financial plan by securing envelopes from Miss Roe or Miss Galbraith.

I desire a League offensive and defensive with every soldier of Christ Jesus.—Rev. J. Wesley.

The Constitution is rejoicing in the support it is getting. How's yours?

More prayers are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.—Tennison.

WANTED

Conversion in our meetings.
Leaguers to keep the Morning Watch.

Everybody interested in the League success.

Regard for the speakers, the place and the character of the meeting, sometimes called "good order."

Many new members and workers.

Every meeting better than the one preceding.

That you should find it here because you help us.

lege, but the duty of every member of the League.

2. *The Supreme Purpose of Life?* What is it? To get an education? To make a home for ourselves? To gain wealth? To gain power and influence? To secure happiness in this life? To make sure of happiness in the world to come? These are all good and praiseworthy. They have their rightful place in a man's life. But of no one of them can it be said that it should be the supreme object of life. Not even the preparation for the next world should be regarded as the supreme object of life. Some people's religion consists in an effort or desire to escape hell and gain heaven. But that is a selfish kind of religion, while the religion of Jesus is most unselfish. The supreme purpose of life should certainly not be a selfish purpose. How noble soever some of these may be in themselves, they should not be allowed to usurp the chief place in our lives. A daisy is good in its place. In the wheat-field it is a weed; in the garden it is a

Love administers to the necessities of the saints. v. 12.

Love is hospitable to all. v. 13.

Love blesses them that persecute her. v. 14.

Love always blesses and never curses. v. 14.

Love rejoices with those that are glad, and weeps with those that are sad. v. 15.

Love is sympathetic toward all, endeavoring to be of the same mind with them. v. 16.

Love is not high-minded, but humble. v. 16.

Love injures no one, not even those who have injured her. v. 17.

Love is honest and honorable. v. 17.

Love is peaceable. v. 18.

Love has her own way of seeking vengeance. v. 19, 20.

Love is the greatest motive power in heaven or earth. It was Love that sent the Son of God to be our Saviour. Love is the secret of the Christian's greatness. "God is Love."

Lynedoch, Ont.