

LIVING UNDER THE UNIQUE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST AND IN THE UNIQUE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

(Lord's Day—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

The Fellowship and Blending of the Body of Christ unto Glory to the Only Wise God

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 12:24; 10:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14;
Rom. 5:17; 14:3; 15:7-9, 25-33; 16:1-27

- 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely *members* have no need. But God has ¹blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked,
- 1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?
- 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is ^{1a}one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all ²partake of the one bread.
- 2 Cor 13:14 The ^{1a}grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the ^blove of God and the ^cfellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- Rom 5:17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the ¹abundance of grace and of the gift of ²righteousness will ³reign in ⁴life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- Rom 14:3 He who eats, let him ¹not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for ²God has received him.
- Rom 15:7 Therefore ^areceive one another, as ¹Christ also received you to the glory of God.
- Rom 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a ¹servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's ^{2a}truthfulness, to confirm the ^bpromises *given* to the fathers,
- Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles should glorify God for *His* ^amercy, as it is written, "^bTherefore I will ¹extol You among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name."
- Rom 15:25 But now I am ^agoing to Jerusalem, ^{1b}ministering to the saints.
- Rom 15:26 For ^aMacedonia and ^bAchaia have been pleased to make some ¹contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.
- Rom 15:27 For they were pleased *to* ¹do it, and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have shared in their ^aspiritual things, they ought also to do service to them in material things.
- Rom 15:28 When therefore I have finished this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by way of you to ^aSpain.
- Rom 15:29 And I know that when I ^acome to you, I will come in the ¹fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- Rom 15:30 Now I ^aexhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the ^blove of the Spirit, to ^cstrive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
- Rom 15:31 That I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my ^{1a}service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
- Rom 15:32 So that coming to you in joy through the ^awill of God, I may ^brefresh myself and rest with you.
- Rom 15:33 Now the ^aGod of peace be with you all. Amen.
- Rom 16:1 I ¹commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a ^adeaconess of the ²church which is in ^bCenchrea,
- Rom 16:2 That you ^areceive her in the Lord in a manner ¹worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been the ²patroness of many, of myself as well.
- Rom 16:3 Greet ^aPrisca and Aquila, my ^bfellow workers in Christ Jesus,
- Rom 16:4 Who ¹risked their own necks for my ²life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the ^{3a}churches of the Gentiles;
- Rom 16:5 And *greet* the ^{1a}church, which is in their ²house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.
- Rom 16:6 Greet Mary, one who has labored much for us.
- Rom 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my ^akinsmen and my ^bfellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
- Rom 16:8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
- Rom 16:9 Greet Urbanus, our ^afellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.
- Rom 16:10 Greet Apelles, ¹approved in Christ. Greet ²those of the *household* of Aristobulus.
- Rom 16:11 Greet Herodion, my ^akinsman. Greet ¹those of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
- Rom 16:12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved *sister*, one who has labored much in the Lord.

Rom 16:13 Greet ^aRufus, ^bchosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as ¹mine.
 Rom 16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them.
 Rom 16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.
 Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the ^{1a}churches of Christ greet you.
 Rom 16:17 Now I ^aexhort you, brothers, to ^bmark those who make ^cdivisions and causes of ¹stumbling contrary to the ^dteaching which you have learned, and ^{2c}turn away from them.
 Rom 16:18 For such men do not ^{1a}serve our Lord Christ, but their own ^{2b}stomach, and through ^csmooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the ³simple.
 Rom 16:19 For *the report of your ^aobedience* has reached to all; therefore I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil.
 Rom 16:20 Now the ^aGod of peace will ^{1b}crush Satan ^cunder your feet shortly. The ^{2d}grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
 Rom 16:21 ^aTimothy, my ^bfellow worker, greets you, as well as Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my ^ckinsmen.
 Rom 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this epistle, greet you in the Lord.
 Rom 16:23 ^aGaius, my host and *host* of the whole church, greets you. ^bErastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother.
 Rom 16:24 (Some ancient MSS add v. 24, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.)
 Rom 16:25 ^aNow to Him who is able to ^{1b}establish you according to ^{2c}my gospel, that is, the ^dproclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the ^{3c}mystery, which has been kept in silence in the ⁴times of the ages
 Rom 16:26 But has now been manifested, and through the ^aprophetic writings, according to the command of the ^{1b}eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the ^cobedience of faith;
 Rom 16:27 To the ^aonly ¹wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the ^bglory forever and ever. Amen.

I. The fellowship of the Body of Christ is the blending of the Body of Christ:

- A. God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the word *blended* also means adjusted, harmonized, tempered, and mingled.
 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely *members* have no need. But God has ¹blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked,
- B. Fellowship adjusts us, fellowship harmonizes us, fellowship tempers us, and fellowship mingles us (cf. 10:16-17).
 1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?
 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is ^{1a}one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all ²partake of the one bread.
- C. In order to be adjusted, harmonized, tempered, and mingled in the Body life, we have to go through the cross and be by the Spirit, dispensing Christ to others for the sake of the Body of Christ.
- D. We should not do anything without fellowshiping with the other saints who are coordinating with us; in our coordination in the church life, in the Lord's work, we all have to learn not to do anything without fellowship.
- E. Blending means that when we are about to do something, we always stop to fellowship with others.
- F. Such a blending is not social but the blending of the very Christ whom the individual members, the district churches, the co-workers, and the elders enjoy, experience, and partake of.
- G. The meal offering is a type of blending for the fulfillment of God's economy:
 1. This type of blending is strongly referred to by the apostle Paul when he says that the church as the one Body is "one bread"—v. 17.
 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is ^{1a}one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all ²partake of the one bread.
 2. The meal offering in Leviticus 2:4 consisted of cakes made of fine flour mingled with oil; every part of the fine flour was mixed, or mingled, with the oil; that is blending.
 Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.
 3. The purpose of the blending is to usher us all into the reality of the Body of Christ.

H. The blending is for the building up of the universal Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) as the final goal of God's economy according to His good pleasure (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10).

Eph 1:23 Which is His ^{1a}Body, the ^{2b}fullness of the One who ^{3c}fills all in all.

Rev 21:2 And I saw the ^aholy city, ^{1b}New Jerusalem, ²coming down out of heaven from God, ^cprepared as a ^{3d}bride adorned for her ^ehusband.

Eph 3:8 To me, ¹less than the ^aleast of all saints, was this ^bgrace given to announce to the ^cGentiles the ²unsearchable ^{3d}riches of Christ as the gospel

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all *that they may see* what the ^{1a}economy of the ^{2b}mystery is, which ³throughout the ages has been ^chidden in God, who created all things,

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the ^{1a}rulers and the authorities in the ^bheavens the multifarious ^{2c}wisdom of God might be made known through the ^{3d}church,

Eph 1:9 ¹Making known to us the ^{2a}mystery of His ^bwill ³according to His ^cgood pleasure, which He ^{4d}purposed in Himself,

Eph 1:10 Unto the ^{1a}economy of the ²fullness of the times, to ^{3b}head up all ^cthings in ⁴Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

II. There is the need today for the fellowship among the churches; this fellowship is to keep the universal oneness of the Body of Christ—4:3-6:

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to ¹keep the ^{2a}oneness of the Spirit in the uniting ^{3b}bond of ^cpeace:

Eph 4:4 ¹One ^aBody and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one ^{2b}hope of your ^ccalling;

Eph 4:5 One ^{1a}Lord, one ^{2b}faith, one ^cbaptism;

Eph 4:6 One ^{1a}God and ^bFather of ²all, who is ³over all and through all and in all.

A. Just as the health of our physical body depends on the circulation of our blood, so the health of the Body of Christ depends on the fellowship of the Spirit—2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1.

2 Cor 13:14 The ^{1a}grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the ^blove of God and the ^cfellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Phil 2:1 ¹If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any ^{2a}consolation of love, if any ^bfellowship of spirit, if any ^{3c}tenderheartedness and ^dcompassions,

B. The fellowship of the Body of Christ is simply the circulation, the current, of the Spirit; the Spirit today is the “blood” in Christ’s Body; if Christ’s Body did not have the Spirit, it would be like a corpse—Eph. 4:4a:

Eph 4:4a ¹One ^aBody and one Spirit, ...

1. When the all-inclusive Spirit is circulating within the Body of Christ, divinity, humanity, Christ’s person, Christ’s death, and Christ’s resurrection are all circulating—Phil. 1:19.

Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to ^{1a}salvation through ²your ^bpetition and *the* ³bountiful ^csupply of the ^{4d}Spirit of Jesus Christ,

2. Calling on the name of the Lord causes the Spirit to circulate within us so that we enjoy all Christ’s riches—Rom. 10:12; Neh. 8:10.

Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between ^aJew and Greek, for the same ^bLord *is Lord* of all *and* ^{1c}rich to all who ^dcall upon Him;

Neh 8:10 Then he said to them, Go your way; eat the fat, and drink the sweet wine, and send portions to him for whom nothing has been prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.

C. The trouble in the churches today is due to the shortage of fellowship, the circulation of blood; this lack of fellowship gives the enemy an opportunity to come in.

D. If any part of the Body is separate, that part will eventually die; the best way to stay healthy is to “receive more blood” and to “give more blood,” that is, to stay in the fellowship, the circulation of life:

1. The circulation of blood within our body carries nourishment to every part of our body and also causes our body to be cherished; in like manner, the fellowship in the Body nourishes us with the riches of Christ and cherishes us with the presence of Christ as the Spirit.

2. The circulation of blood within our body is like a river that always carries away the waste in our being so that it can be discharged; in like manner, the fellowship in the Body carries away all the negative things.

III. We need to reign in life in imitating the apostle to bring the local churches into the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Rom. 5:17; 14:3; 15:7-9, 25-33:

- Rom 5:17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the ¹abundance of grace and of the gift of ²righteousness will ³reign in ⁴life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- Rom 14:3 He who eats, let him ¹not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for ²God has received him.
- Rom 15:7 Therefore ^areceive one another, as ¹Christ also received you to the glory of God.
- Rom 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a ¹servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's ^{2a}truthfulness, to confirm the ^bpromises *given* to the fathers,
- Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles should glorify God for *His* ^amercy, as it is written, "^bTherefore I will ¹extol You among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name."
- Rom 15:25 But now I am ^agoing to Jerusalem, ^{1b}ministering to the saints.
- Rom 15:26 For ^aMacedonia and ^bAchaia have been pleased to make some ¹contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.
- Rom 15:27 For they were pleased *to* ¹do it, and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have shared in their ^aspiritual things, they ought also to do service to them in material things.
- Rom 15:28 When therefore I have finished this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by way of you to ^aSpain.
- Rom 15:29 And I know that when I ^acome to you, I will come in the ¹fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- Rom 15:30 Now I ^aexhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the ^blove of the Spirit, to ^cstrive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
- Rom 15:31 That I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my ^{1a}service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
- Rom 15:32 So that coming to you in joy through the ^awill of God, I may ^brefresh myself and rest with you.
- Rom 15:33 Now the ^aGod of peace be with you all. Amen.

- A. We must learn not to despise or judge others in their doctrines or practices according to doctrinal concepts, religious practices, and anything that is unrelated to our basic faith—cf. Jude 3; Titus 1:4.

Jude 3 Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our ¹common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you *and* exhort *you* to earnestly ^{2a}contend for the ³faith once for all delivered to the ^bsaints.

Titus 1:4 To ^aTitus, genuine ^bchild ^caccording to the ¹common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

- B. We should receive people according to God's receiving, not being more narrow than God, thereby demonstrating and maintaining the oneness of the Body of Christ:

1. We should receive people according to the Son of God, according to God, not according to doctrine or practice, thus maintaining a condition of absolute peace, smoothness, and order, without any deviation and discord, in the fellowship of the Body of Christ to the glory of God—Rom. 14:3; 15:7.

Rom 14:3 He who eats, let him ¹not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for ²God has received him.

Rom 15:7 Therefore ^areceive one another, as ¹Christ also received you to the glory of God.

2. To receive others according to the Son of God is to receive them in His being unbiased and balanced in taking care of both the Jews and the Gentiles; Christ is a servant of the circumcision to fulfill and confirm all the promises God gave to their fathers, and He is a servant of the Gentiles so that they may glorify God for His mercy—vv. 8-9.

Rom 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a ¹servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's ^{2a}truthfulness, to confirm the ^bpromises *given* to the fathers,

Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles should glorify God for *His* ^amercy, as it is written, "^bTherefore I will ¹extol You among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name."

IV. We need to reign in life in following the apostle's footsteps to bring all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ—Rom. 16:

Rom 1 be omitted.

- A. This is to follow in the apostle's footsteps to bring us into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ by recommendations and greetings so that the God of peace may crush Satan under our feet and so that we may enjoy the rich grace of Christ—vv. 1-16, 21-24, 20.

Rom 16:1 I ¹commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a ^adeaconess of the ²church which is in ^bCenchrea,

Rom 16:2 That you ^areceive her in the Lord in a manner ¹worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been the ²patroness of many, of myself as well.

Rom 16:3 Greet ^aPrisca and Aquila, my ^bfellow workers in Christ Jesus,

Rom 16:4 Who ¹risked their own necks for my ²life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the ^{3a}churches of the Gentiles;

Rom 16:5 And *greet* the ^{1a}church, which is in their ²house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.

Rom 16:6 Greet Mary, one who has labored much for us.

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Rom 16:13 Greet ^aRufus, ^bchosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as ¹mine.

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Rom 16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.

Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the ^{1a}churches of Christ greet you.

Rom 16:21 ^aTimothy, my ^bfellow worker, greets you, as well as Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my ^ckinsmen.

Rom 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

Rom 16:23 ^aGaius, my host and *host* of the whole church, greets you. ^bErastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother.

Rom 16:24 (Some ancient MSS add v. 24, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.)

Rom 16:20 Now the ^aGod of peace will ^{1b}crush Satan ^cunder your feet shortly. The ^{2d}grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

- B. Through the fellowship in the Body, the crushing of Satan, and the enjoyment of grace, we can carry out the mystery kept in silence in the times of the ages concerning the complete salvation of God in the fulfillment of the eternal economy of God for the Gentiles to have the obedience of faith unto glory to the only wise God through Jesus Christ—vv. 25-27.

Rom 16:25 ^aNow to Him who is able to ^{1b}establish you according to ^{2c}my gospel, that is, the ^dproclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the ^{3e}mystery, which has been kept in silence in the ⁴times of the ages

Rom 16:26 But has now been manifested, and through the ^aprophetic writings, according to the command of the ^{1b}eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the ^cobedience of faith;

Rom 16:27 To the ^aonly ¹wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the ^bglory forever and ever. Amen.

- C. This glory is the New Jerusalem, the universal incorporation of the union and mingling of divinity with humanity, in which God will be completely glorified and His economy will be fully accomplished.

V. In its conclusion, Romans, which gives a general discussion of the Christian life and the church life, gives glory to the wise God—v. 27:

Rom 16:27 To the ^aonly ¹wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the ^bglory forever and ever. Amen.

- A. This unveils that all the matters discussed in Romans (such as how God selects us, how He saves us from sin and death, how He redeems us and justifies us, how He makes us, sinners who were dead through and through, His divine sons, how He transfers us out of Adam into Christ, how He sanctifies and transforms us in Christ, how He makes us the members of Christ for the constituting of the Body of Christ, and how He causes us to be the local churches appearing in different localities as the expressions of the Body of Christ on the earth in this age) are planned, managed, and accomplished by God's wisdom, in order that He, the immeasurably rich Triune God, may be glorified, that is, that His incomparable glory may be completely and fully expressed through us who have been perfected eternally by Him and who have become His Body and have been joined to Him as one.
- B. The focus of God's wisdom is the working of His Divine Trinity into the three parts—spirit, soul, and body—of our redeemed being that in His redemption, sanctification, and transformation we may have a full union in the divine life with Him, that His desire for the mingling of divinity and humanity, the joining of humanity to divinity, may be fulfilled in eternity.
- C. This truly is worthy of our appreciation and worship! How blessed and how glorious it is that we can participate in this! This is worthy of our unceasing singing and praise for eternity!
- D. Both our Christian life and our church life should have this as our center and goal; may God bless in this way everyone who has been chosen and perfected by Him.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

IN IMITATING THE APOSTLE TO BRING THE LOCAL CHURCHES INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

The last three chapters of Romans show us that we need to reign in life particularly in two crucial matters. The first thing is in imitating the apostle to bring the local churches into the fellowship of the Body of Christ (Rom. 14:3; 15:7-9, 25-33); the second thing is in following in the apostle's footsteps to bring all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ (ch. 16).

I hope that we all can see that reigning in life is not a matter of position; rather, it is a practical living. All the things mentioned in Romans 14 through 16 are related to reigning in life in our practical living. To experience reigning in life, first, we must imitate the apostle in bringing the local churches into the fellowship of the Body of Christ. It is only by practically entering into the fellowship of the Body of Christ that we can have the genuine experience of reigning in life.

Not Despising or Judging Others according to Doctrinal Concepts, Religious Practices, and Anything That Is Unrelated to Our Basic Faith

In imitating the apostle to bring the local churches into the fellowship of the Body of Christ, we must learn not to despise or judge others in their doctrines or practices according to doctrinal concepts, religious practices, and anything that is unrelated to our basic faith. Concerning this matter, our co-workers and serving ones in all the places must be willing to learn, and all the brothers and sisters must have clear insight.

"Our basic faith" refers to the most important and fundamental truths. These are the truths concerning Christ's person and work and those related to our salvation. All other matters, such as eating and the keeping of days mentioned in Romans 14, are secondary truths, not the basic faith. The Bible definitely gives us some clear principles concerning foods. First Timothy 4:1 and 3 tell us that forbidding marriage and commanding to abstain from certain foods are teachings of demons. God permits us to eat meat, but if someone who is weak in faith eats only vegetables, he is still saved as long as he has believed in the Lord and has received Him as his Savior. His eating of vegetables does not make him an unsaved person. Therefore, eating is not a matter of our basic faith. The same is true concerning the keeping of days. We should not argue with people concerning whether we should meet on Saturday or on the Lord's Day; that is a secondary truth. We should not despise or judge others according to doctrinal concepts and religious practices, including the doctrinal concepts and practices we have in the Lord's recovery. Nor should we despise or judge others according to anything that is not related to our basic faith. As long as one is a genuine Christian, we should not exclude him, even though he may differ from us with respect to doctrine; rather, we should receive him in the same one Lord.

But Receiving People according to God and His Son

We should receive people according to God's receiving, not being more narrow than God, thereby demonstrating and maintaining the oneness of the Body of Christ. Furthermore, we should receive people according to the Son of God, according to God, not according to doctrine or practice, thus maintaining a condition of absolute peace, smoothness, and order, without any deviation and discord, in the fellowship of the Body of Christ to the glory of God (Rom. 14:3; 15:7); Christ is a servant of the circumcision to fulfill and confirm all the promises God gave to their fathers and a servant of the Gentiles so that they may glorify God for His mercy (15:8-9).

We have much to learn concerning receiving people according to God and according to His Son. Because of our negligence in this matter in the past, we have offended the Body of Christ and many brothers and sisters in the Lord. For this reason, I had a deep repentance before the Lord. Brothers and sisters, I hope that we can see our past mistakes by getting into this message through pray-reading, studying, reciting, and prophesying. Of course, sectarianism in the denominations is

wrong; it is something very much condemned by God. Nevertheless, those who are genuinely saved in the denominations are children of God and have been received by God. Hence, we also should receive them, but we would never participate in the division in which they are.

Romans 14:3 tells us that we should receive people according to God; this is to receive all those whom God has received. Romans 15:7 says that we should receive one another, as Christ also received us. Those whom God has received and those whom Christ has received are actually the same group of people. It is not that God receives one group of people and Christ receives another group of people. God is very liberal and not narrow. When we receive people according to God and according to His Son, Christ, we demonstrate, show forth, and maintain the oneness of the Body of Christ. If we receive people according to doctrine and practice, there is no way for the oneness of the Body of Christ to be maintained and demonstrated.

We must receive people according to the Son of God. This is to receive others according to the Son of God in His being unbiased and balanced in taking care of both the Jews and the Gentiles. Our Lord is a Lord who is balanced, without any bias. On the one hand, He is a servant of the circumcision (the Jews); on the other hand, He is a servant of the God-chosen nations (the Gentiles). What the Lord does is always balanced and even. His balanced ministry, on the one hand, enables the fellowship of the Body of Christ to be kept in absolute peace and smoothness to the glory of God, and on the other hand, causes the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy. To glorify God is to participate in the New Jerusalem. If we do not participate in the New Jerusalem, whatever we do is not a glorifying of God but of ourselves, an expression of ourselves. It is only when we express God in the New Jerusalem that He is truly glorified in the universe.

IN FOLLOWING IN THE APOSTLE'S FOOTSTEPS TO BRING ALL THE SAINTS INTO THE BLENDING LIFE OF THE ENTIRE BODY OF CHRIST

The last three chapters of Romans show us the blending and fellowship of the Body life brought forth through the apostle's receiving according to God and Christ; such an explanation was not seen by the Bible expositors throughout the generations. Romans 16 gives us an excellent pattern of the apostle in bringing all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ. It is in such a life that we can truly reign in life.

The Apostle Bringing Us into the Blending Life of the Entire Body of Christ by Recommendations and Greetings

We must follow in the footsteps of the apostle. He brought us into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ by recommendations and greetings that the God of peace may crush Satan under our feet and that we may enjoy the rich grace of Christ (vv. 1-16, 21-24, 20). In Romans 16 the apostle Paul greeted the saints, one by one, mentioning at least twenty-seven names, including Phoebe, a deaconess of the church in Cenchrea, and Prisca and Aquila. Moreover, he greeted the saints generally. This shows us that he had a considerable amount of knowledge, understanding, and care with regard to every one of them. Such recommendations and greetings show both the mutual concern among the saints and the mutual fellowship among the churches. It is by the churches' fellowship in the Body that the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet and we will be able to enjoy the rich grace of Christ. This grace is the manifestation of the Triune God in His embodiment in three aspects—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Carrying Out the Mystery Kept in Silence in the Times of the Ages concerning God's Complete Salvation in the Fulfillment of God's Eternal Economy

Through the fellowship in the Body, the crushing of Satan, and the enjoyment of grace, we can carry out the mystery kept in silence in the times of the ages concerning the complete salvation of

God in the fulfillment of the eternal economy of God for the Gentiles to have the obedience of faith unto glory to the only wise God through Jesus Christ (vv. 25-27).

We must have the reality of the fellowship and blending of the Body of Christ. Otherwise, regardless of how much we pursue and how simple and humble we are, sooner or later there will be problems, even divisions, among us. Hence, we must be governed by the vision of the Body and follow in the footsteps of the apostle by bringing all the saints in all the churches into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ. This is to reign in life, and by such reigning we give glory to God. This glory is the New Jerusalem, the universal incorporation of the union and mingling of divinity with humanity, in which God will be completely glorified and His economy will be fully accomplished.

In its conclusion Romans, which gives a general discussion of the Christian life, gives **glory** to the **wise** God. This unveils that all the matters discussed in this book are planned, managed, and accomplished by God's wisdom in order that He, the immeasurably rich Triune God, may be glorified, that is, that His incomparable glory may be completely and fully expressed through us who have been perfected eternally by Him and who have become His Body and have been joined to Him as one. The focus of God's wisdom is the working of His Divine Trinity into the three parts—spirit, soul, and body—of our redeemed being that in His redemption, sanctification, and transformation we may have a full union in the divine life with Him that His desire for the mingling of divinity and humanity, the joining of humanity to divinity, may be fulfilled in eternity. This truly is worthy of our appreciation and worship! This is worthy of our unceasing singing and praise for eternity! We should have this as the center and purpose of both our Christian life and our church life. May all of us who have been chosen and perfected by Him experience His organic salvation in full and reign in His life to be His consummate expression in eternity. (*The Experience of God's Organic Salvation Equaling Reigning in Christ's Life*, pp. 67-72)