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Instructions to the Weak and the Strong According to Romans 14

By C. A. GAERTNER

ETERNAL vigilance is the price of Christian liberty which was restored to Christendom through the Lutheran Reformation. Legalism and license always have been and still are the implacable foes of Christian liberty and ultimately of the Gospel itself. Since the Apostolic days church history is replete with instances where entire church bodies fell victim to one or the other. And the pity is that only too frequently matters of indifference, so-called adiaphora, served as the starting point from which either legalism or license sabotaged the priceless boon of Christian liberty. The Lutheran Church must therefore guard with especial care its great heritage of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel if it would retain its liberty.

Eternal vigilance must be the watchword also of the local congregation. It is on the congregational level where either legalism or license frequently manifests itself in determining the Christian's attitude toward purely indifferent matters. There may be honest differences of opinion in fixing the borderline between right and wrong in many of the problems which confront the Christian in his family, his social and business contacts, and even in his congregation and synod. Some of the Christians at Rome became exercised over the matter of whether or not it was permissible to eat certain types of meat. In our society Christians may clash in their views concerning such adiaphora as the proper observance of Sunday and "closed seasons," church rites, tithing, the frequency of attendance at the Lord's Supper, clerical vestments, forms of amusement which are *per se* not sinful. Lest the agitation over such and many similar adiaphora lead to the loss of Christian liberty and of the Gospel, pastor and people must carefully heed the instructions which St. Paul lays down in Romans 14. These instructions are based on inviolable principles and are as true today as when Paul penned them.

It must be noted at the outset that in this chapter St. Paul is dealing with real adiaphora. It is of course understood that under certain conditions the principle: *Nihil est adiaphoron in casu confessionis et scandali* (Formula of Concord, Art. X) must be applied. For example, the form of applying water in Baptism, whether by immersion, sprinkling, or pouring is in itself an adiaphoron. We can therefore find no fault with a Christian if he, like Luther, prefers immersion. It is therefore certainly not unscriptural if under certain circumstances a Lutheran pastor would depart from the customary form of Baptism and baptize an adult convert by immersion. However, if he insists on immersion because of erroneous views concerning the essence and purpose of Baptism, then the form of Baptism ceases to be an adiaphoron and becomes a matter of confession. Immersion may also become a matter of offense, inasmuch as our Lutherans who rightly view the form of pouring as a confessional matter would be confused. Or take the case of liturgical forms, clerical vestments, and similar adiaphora. If the introduction of new forms causes our people to suspect that some un-Lutheran doctrine lurks behind the new ceremony, then ceremonies cease to be adiaphora because they cause confusion and may even become a scandal, an occasion for some Christian to lose his faith. In Romans 14, however, Paul is not speaking of such matters, but restricts his discussion to the Christian's attitude toward genuine and real adiaphora.

I. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WEAK BRETHREN

A proper application of the principles laid down by St. Paul requires that we know whom Paul has in mind when he speaks of "him that is weak in the faith." We frequently call those members "weak Christians" who are easily misled into sin, whose faith is weak, who are negligent in the use of the means of grace. However in Romans 14 the word *πίστις* does not denote the Spirit-wrought conviction that Christ is the Savior from sin. Here it is used to express ethical conviction, or moral persuasion. In other words, Paul is describing the weakness in knowing what a Christian may or may not do; or very simply, his failure to understand the essence of Christian liberty. They are fearful Christians lest they do wrong in something of which they are not sure. They are weak

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brethren because they lack the Scriptural knowledge and understanding concerning indifferent matters, the *adiaphora*.

This interpretation of "weak in the faith" is the only one possible when we take into consideration the rest of this chapter. The weak brother is described as one who does not eat meat, but only herbs. He is afraid he may defile himself by eating meat. Possibly some of them had scruples concerning meat eating, because some meats were forbidden as unclean in the Ceremonial Law. Or perhaps some were afraid that the meat offered for food had been offered originally to some of the idols by the heathen and that therefore it might not be right to partake of it. Whatever the reason may have been, they were afraid they would sin by eating meat, or they thought that they could be spiritually stronger by refraining from meat eating.

Some of these "weak in the faith" are also described as people who selected special days of the week for prayers and meditations. They esteemed one day above another. These weak brethren considered it necessary to observe special days unto the Lord. They apparently were afraid that if they would not do this, the Lord would be displeased with them and they would endanger their faith. They considered this as essential for their own spiritual health and well-being.

Some of these "weak in the faith" also did not consider it right to drink wine, as is evident from the 21st verse of this chapter. Our chapter does not give us the reason why some felt it wrong to drink wine, but possibly, since many people abuse wine by overindulgence, they felt that the use itself was wrong. At any rate, it seemed wrong to them, and they were afraid that it was wrong. There were still other *adiaphora* not mentioned in this text which were a matter of concern to the weak brethren.

Thus those "weak in the faith" in our chapter are those who do not have a clear and full understanding of Christian liberty in things neither commanded nor forbidden in the Scriptures.

We should be careful not to confuse these weak brethren with the Judaizers who plagued so many early Christians with their insistence on the Ceremonial Law and taught that it was necessary for salvation. The entire Epistle to the Galatians is directed against

such as attempted to place the early Christians under the yoke of the Old Testament Ceremonial Law. These Paul considered false teachers. The brethren "weak in the faith" at Rome were in an altogether different class. They did not consider the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament binding in the New Testament Church. They only were confused on some of the things which were neither commanded nor forbidden. They did not want to make a mistake. To be on the safe side and to be at peace with their own conscience, they refrained from the full use of their Christian liberty.

The "weak in the faith" were true Christians. They were brethren with the others in the congregation, united in the saving faith in Christ. Their weakness was not such as to exclude them from the Christian fellowship of the congregation or to expose them to ridicule and denunciation and judgment. The very fact that these "weak in the faith" had such sensitive consciences in indifferent matters and were easily offended made it necessary that they should be given special consideration and be edified and built up and instructed.

We no doubt have members in our congregations who are "weak in the faith" in regard to adiaphora. The Apostle asks us to remember that while they lack a full understanding of Christian liberty, they are true Christians whose souls are precious in the sight of God. Such members today are frequently regarded as "problem members." They try our patience with their many questions and misgivings. Let us not ignore them nor neglect them. They are in need of patient instruction.

But Paul not only pleads for special consideration of the weak, but also addresses instruction and admonition to the "weak in the faith." If they do not wish to eat meat themselves, that is their business. If they feel that for their own spiritual life they need special days, no one will deny them that privilege. If they get along better without drinking wine, well and good. But in taking such positions, those "weak in the faith" must be careful not to let their weakness and lack of understanding lead them into doing wrong and sin. They do so, if they consider themselves better Christians than those who make full use of their Christian liberty. It is sinful if in an holier-than-thou attitude they refrain from eating meat or observe special days while they sit in judgment on

those who eat meat with thanksgiving to God and who esteem all days alike unto the Lord. They glory in their conscientious scruples instead of giving all glory to God. And that is sinful, in fact, that is teaching error — if not by word, then by example — for they set up their own scruples in indifferent matters as standards of holiness. A Christian congregation must rebuke them and endeavor to correct their sinful notions.

Paul expresses another principle in our text for the special benefit of the "weak in the faith." It is wrong and sinful for them to do something when they are not fully persuaded that it is permitted. He urges upon them that everyone should be fully persuaded in his own mind before he does something. Paul states that all things are clean in themselves and therefore are permitted for Christians. But Paul emphasizes for the benefit of those "weak in the faith" that if they consider something to be unclean, it actually is unclean to them and that therefore it would be a sin for them to make use of it. If a Christian believes that it is wrong for him to eat meat, or if he thinks it might be wrong for him to eat meat, or if he believes that it would hurt his faith to eat meat, then it surely would be sinful for him to eat it. St. Paul states: "All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense"; and again: "He that doubts, if he eats, is condemned, for it is not of faith. And everything that is not of faith is sin." The word *πίστις* here means that one must be fully persuaded and sure something is right and permissible before one does it. This is a general principle which is here addressed especially to the weak brethren lest they act contrary to their own convictions. The "weak in the faith" need such instruction. When leading members of the congregation do things that the weak consider sinful, or at least not wholesome, they may be tempted to follow the strong brethren's example and do things that seem wrong to them or omit to do things which seem necessary to them. Such action is sinful.

If the "weak in the faith" will follow these instructions, they will serve the Lord with joy and live at peace with their fellow Christians who make full use of their Christian liberty. As they grow in grace and in knowledge, they will become strong Christians also in respect to adiaphora. When they are fully persuaded that they have a right to change their minds in these matters, they will

also use their liberty to change their mode of living. No one should view them with suspicion for such a change, but rather thank God that they can now enjoy with a good conscience the many gifts of God.

II. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STRONG BRETHREN

Throughout the chapter St. Paul contrasts the "weak brethren" with another class, whom we are accustomed to describe as "strong brethren" (cp. 15:1). As the weakness of the weak brethren consisted in their failure to understand the Christian's liberty regarding adiaphora, so the strong brethren were strong inasmuch as they had the correct understanding of Christian liberty and made full use of it.

The strong brethren did not hesitate to eat meat, for they knew that it was not wrong in itself, and they were persuaded that meat eating in itself was not harmful to their spiritual well-being. These strong brethren realized that the Lord did not command them to set aside special days for private worship and meditation and therefore they simply regarded all the days unto the Lord and arranged their days as they saw fit and as it suited them best, leaving time, no doubt, on each day for prayer and meditation in God's Word. If they had a taste for it and enjoyed its use, they also made moderate use of wine without any scruples of conscience.

These strong brethren understood the Biblical principle expressed by Paul: "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself" (v. 14); and: "All things indeed are pure" (v. 20), or: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. 4:4; cp. Acts 10:15). These strong brethren in the Roman congregation fully understood that when something is not commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God, it is left to the free choice of Christians to make use of it, or not to use it.

Thus the strong brethren usually made use of their liberty without all kinds of unnecessary restrictions and prohibitions. Such Christians were happy in the use of their Christian liberty and had a right to be (v. 22) because their conscience was at rest and did not condemn them in that which they allowed. They were not careless and indifferent Christians, but rather as well-informed

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Christians they enjoyed the liberties of the New Testament children of God.

From the many exhortations of our text it is evident that the majority in the congregation at Rome had a correct understanding of Christian liberty. Most of the members of that congregation undoubtedly had no scruples about eating meat and drinking wine and ignoring the special days which some of the "weak in the faith" observed. Such a ratio of strong and weak members in this respect will be found in the average modern congregation. The "weak in the faith" in respect to the adiaphora are usually in the minority. And because of this fact the strong in the faith need to be cautioned to be careful of these weaker brethren. For that reason special instruction is also given in our chapter to the strong in the faith.

The first instruction to the strong is that they are to receive those "weak in the faith." When the strong constitute a majority in a congregation, they are apt to ignore those "weak in the faith" with their ascetic notions. St. Paul urges the strong Christians at Rome to receive into fellowship such "weak in the faith" and make them feel that they are a definite and welcome part of the congregation.

In the same sentence, Paul warns against the danger of speaking to the weak brother in a wrong spirit. The strong should not receive the weak for the purpose of condemning them in their weakness and passing sentence on their ideas of what is proper for their own good. Their weakness should not be a topic for constant discussion, nor should they be confused and bewildered and even driven to despair by a highhanded denunciation of their weakness.

The strong brethren are next admonished not to despise the weak brethren. It is so easy for one who feels secure in the exercise of his Christian liberty to look with contempt upon the timid and weak brother who seems to be afraid of doing wrong. The strong brother can so easily become the proud and disdainful brother, overbearing in his relationship with the "weak in the faith." The strong need to be warned against such a sinful attitude and be reminded that the Christian "weak in the faith" is just as much a precious child of God for whom Christ died and just as privileged a member of God's kingdom as he himself.

This warning against despising the weaker brethren is always

necessary in the Christian congregation. The strong are so easily inclined to ridicule the conscientious fears and scruples of the weak, forgetting that their derisive remarks and contemptuous jokes offend and hurt those weak in the faith. Instead of despising and condemning the weak brethren, the strong should be eager to show them consideration and make them aware of the bond of Christian love that exists between them as believers in Christ. The strong should be careful to edify the weak and build them up in their faith and in their understanding of the Word of God in all things.

Christian liberty gives to the strong not only the right to use those things which the weak may consider sinful, but it also imposes on him the duty to abstain from such use under certain conditions. St. Paul has this in mind when he writes: "But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." In the use of his Christian liberty the strong brother must be careful to remember that his weaker brethren in this respect may not fully understand his actions and be offended by them. For that reason he should judge his own actions with that in mind. Though he realizes that the enjoyment of his Christian liberties is right in itself, yet he should ask himself: Will my action offend my weaker brother? Will it cause him to be confused? Will it perhaps lead him into doing something against his own conscience? Will it lead him into sin? In that manner every strong brother is required to watch himself in the use of his Christian liberty when some weak brother is involved. Such a principle necessitates a constant evaluation of every exercise of Christian liberty in the presence of weak brethren.

Such consideration for the weak on the part of the strong certainly calls for love and Christian charity. It means that many times I would like to do something which is not wrong in itself, but I must refrain lest I offend a weak brother who has scruples about such action. If I enjoy meat for dinner, but find that a weak brother is occupying a seat next to mine in a public eating place and I know that he does not approve of meat eating for himself, then I should give him that much consideration that I enjoy with him his herbs and deny myself the pleasure of eating meat. If I invite to my home for a meal one "weak in the faith" who is afraid to eat meat and drink wine, it would be wrong for me to serve

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good, juicy steaks with wine as an appetizer. I do not consider him right in his fearful attitude in regard to the enjoyment of these fine gifts of God, but my Christian love demands that I have consideration for his sensitive conscience in these matters.

"But if thy brother be grieved [injured spiritually] with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably" (v. 15). A willful lack of consideration for the "weak in the faith" in the exercise of Christian liberty is sinful, because it does violence to the law of Christian love. Regardless of what the result of that action is in the spiritual life of the weak brother, it would still be sin to act without Christian charity. Yes, such action may even prove fatal to the faith of the weak brother. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." These words make it clear that the proper and careful use of our Christian liberty in relation to those who are weak in the faith is a vital and important matter. Without the proper consideration in these matters, a strong brother can be responsible for the loss of a weak brother's soul. If a strong brother by such careless use of his Christian liberty can lead a weak brother to do something which the weak brother considers sinful, that is destructive of faith in Christ. Or it could happen that the stronger brother's action so confuses and bewilders the weak brother that he casts his Christian faith overboard entirely and forsakes his Savior. This may sound like an exaggeration, but Paul warns: "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." Again, in verse 20, we read: "For meat destroy not the work of God."

What should impress us all the more seriously in this discussion is that Paul reminds us that Christ died also for the weak brother. If the weak brother is lost, because a strong brother carelessly uses his Christian liberty, then Christ died in vain for that weak brother. Salvation is there for him, but he loses it, because a strong brother did not exercise brotherly concern and Christian wisdom in his use of Christian liberty. What is more important—to see his weak brother eternally saved in Christ or to enjoy his meat and wine and otherwise exercise his Christian liberty? In placing such charitable consideration on the conscience of the strong, Paul again repeats the principle: "All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eats with offense." This applies to the weak, but with

equal force to the strong. It is wrong for them to make use of their Christian liberty if thereby they give offense to the weak brethren.

This brings us to the important principle that things which in themselves are not wrong become wrong when their use causes offense or injury to those "weak in the faith." For that reason St. Paul states: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (v.21). The strong will gladly refrain from the exercise of his Christian liberty, in order to safeguard the weak from spiritual injury. Such consideration, however, also implies that the strong instruct the "weak" in matters of Christian liberty. By precept and example the strong will edify the weak. If after proper instruction the weak is still unable to make use of his Christian liberty, the strong brethren should bear the infirmities of such a weak brother and cheerfully continue to deny themselves the exercise of their Christian liberty (15:1).

But does that mean that the strong brother can make no use of his Christian liberties as long as there are "weak in the faith" in the congregation? By no means; but he should follow such convictions before God (v.22). He should enjoy these privileges before God and give God thanks for them. He should not parade his liberty before the weak. In reality, in not making use of the things indifferent in consideration of the weak, he is properly enjoying his Christian liberty, knowing that God approves his action.

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR BOTH THE WEAK AND THE STRONG

In the foregoing we have considered passages in our chapter which deal in a special way either with the weak or with the strong brethren. Now we come to that portion of our chapter directed to both the strong and the weak. This is a most interesting section of our text and fundamental for the successful practice of the instruction given to both the weak and the strong.

Paul was anxious that there should be peace in the congregation in Rome and that everything in the congregation should work for the welfare of the Kingdom of God. He knew that trouble could easily arise between the weak and the strong in indifferent matters. Therefore he emphasized in this chapter that both the weak and the strong belong to the Lord and both were to serve the Lord

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wholeheartedly. This exhortation and statement is the high point of our chapter.

"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. For to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Vv. 8-9.) St. Paul directs both the weak and the strong to Christ and His love for us. He explains that all Christians really belong to the Lord. The Lord Jesus died for all. He rose and revived for all. He is the Lord of all Christians, not only in so far as the one is weak or the other strong, but so completely that He is Lord of both the dead and the living. While a believer lives, whether he be weak or strong, he belongs to the Lord. The Lord watches over him and provides for him and guides him and keeps him. And when the believer dies, he still belongs to the Lord, for the Lord is his Savior even unto death. He takes him to Himself in heaven, and on the Last Day He resurrects his body gloriously. And thus the believer, living or dying, is ever the Lord's.

And since it is true that the believers, both weak and strong, belong unto the Lord always, therefore the believers do not live or die unto themselves, but unto the Lord (v. 7). The one aim and object in the Christian's life and death is to glorify God, even as Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). This basic principle solves all possible tensions which may arise between the strong and the weak brethren in matters of indifference. The one eats meat and drinks wine and gives God thanks for these gifts and thus lives unto the Lord. He observes all days alike and glorifies God by such action. On the other hand, the weak brother does not eat meat and refuses wine. He also strictly adheres to self-appointed special days. His action also is unto the Lord, and thereby he glorifies the Lord (vv. 6, 18).

Since both the weak and the strong live and die unto the Lord and are received and upheld by the Lord, they will therefore not judge one another any more (v. 13). It is entirely out of place for either to judge, condemn, and despise the other concerning the adiaphora, yes, it is beyond their province, for they are passing judgment on another man's servant, on Christ's servant. If Christ

is pleased with the weak brother, why should the strong brother despise him? If Christ receives the strong brother, why should the weak brother condemn him? After all, this is God's business, not the business of the weak or the strong (vv. 4, 10).

And in the final analysis, is there really any ground for judging and despising when both the weak and the strong really live and die unto the Lord? How can you criticize a Christian when he does everything unto the Lord? Instead of judging, let every Christian be concerned with his own conduct and live unto the Lord. He, after all, is the Judge of all, to whom we must give account. If both the strong and the weak Christians keep this in mind, they will avoid causing trouble and strife or giving offense.

But Paul has further instructions for both the weak and the strong. He warns both against making too much ado about eating or not eating. He tells them: "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (v. 17). The most important consideration in the Kingdom of God is not whether or not you ought to eat meat and drink wine. Such matters in themselves have no spiritual significance. It is foolish and wrong to place so much emphasis on these external matters that the real issues of Christianity are neglected and ignored.

All Christians, whether they are weak or strong, must remember that righteousness is of primary importance in Christ's kingdom. Paul is not speaking of the good works of Christians and their godly life, but he refers to the righteousness that the Christian has before God by faith in Christ Jesus. He refers here to justification. The most important question for the individual members of the Kingdom of God is "Shall I stand before the throne of God justified? Shall I be clothed in the accepted righteousness which Christ won for me on the Cross?" That consideration should occupy the Christian much more than eating and drinking and the other indifferent matters.

Paul also mentions "peace" as important in the Kingdom of God. Here he is not speaking of peace among nations of the earth, nor of peace among Christians in a congregation, important as both of those considerations are. He refers to the peace between God and

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man by Christ, the Savior. This peace, which the world cannot give and which the believer has by faith in Christ, certainly should merit much more consideration in the Kingdom of God than meat and drink.

The same is to be said of "the joy in the Holy Ghost." The real joy in the heart of the Christian is not to be found in external matters as the liberty to eat and drink. It is rather that blessed work of the Holy Spirit which brings to the Christian the blessed assurance of forgiveness of sins and peace with God, fills him with comfort and hope in the Lord, and assures him of the mystical union. And this "joy" must receive more attention from the Christians than the matter of eating and drinking.

When Christians in a congregation forget these essentials of the Kingdom of God and wrangle over, and even cause divisions because of, indifferent matters, they not only do untold damage among themselves, but give offense to those outside the Christian congregation. Unnecessary quarrels and schisms among Christians concerning adiaphora give unbelievers occasion to speak evil of the Christian religion (v. 16). In his own ministry, Paul was extremely careful in these matters. When he was among weak brethren, he adjusted himself to their weakness. He did not permit these matters to weaken the bond of Christian fellowship and cause scandals among those without the Church.

Lest there be unrest in the congregation in these matters of Christian liberty and the essentials of the Kingdom of God be neglected and forgotten, Paul again reminds both the weak and the strong that the man who serves the Lord in these things is acceptable to God and approved of men. And then he continues: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Disagreement in the adiaphora should not be permitted to disrupt the peace of the Christian congregation. Both the weak and the strong should be careful in these matters to exercise such consideration for those of opposite opinion that both follow after the things that make for peace. Let each member's prime concern be that every other member possess the righteousness of God by faith in Christ and peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost. Let each strive to edify the other.

IV. CONCLUSION

By applying the principles laid down by St. Paul, pastor and people of the modern congregation will avoid all forms of legalism or of license in dealing with adiaphoristic matters. There is always the temptation to employ legalistic measures in solving the problems which arise in connection with matters which are not specifically commanded nor forbidden in Scripture. As an example we refer to the question as to how frequently a Christian is to receive the Lord's Supper. We have those in our Church who commune every Sunday. The majority of our members do not commune so frequently. There is a danger that members of the one group will condemn, at least speak disparagingly of, members in the other group. Since the Scriptures do not clearly indicate how often a communicant should commune, the frequency is an adiaphoron, and no rule can be established by congregational legislation. The principles of our text must be applied.

Nor will a pastor and his congregation turn their Christian liberty into license. Many practical applications of this principle could be adduced. No pastor will, for example, abuse his liberty to wear clericals. In some sections of our Synod the wearing of clericals seems the proper thing to do. In others people may have an aversion to this custom. Expediency and the welfare of the church must determine the pastor's conduct in such purely indifferent matters. Under no condition will the pastor use his Christian liberty as a license to do what in itself is purely indifferent. This principle applies especially in our mission work. When a Lutheran congregation is established in a community which is predominantly Reformed, where the majority of the Christian people hold to the puritanical views of historic Calvinism, e. g., concerning the observance of the Sunday, cardplaying, etc., then the Lutheran Christians must have regard for these "weak brethren" until they can be instructed. We certainly have an obligation also toward these. This principle holds true in a larger and more direct manner in dealing with the unchurched whom we endeavor to gain for Christ. Many of them come from families with sectarian background and may have peculiar notions as to what a Christian, especially the minister, should do and not do. To such people the exercise of certain Christian liberties may be offensive. If a minister drinks

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beer or smokes in their presence, he may lose their confidence and respect. We must therefore exercise caution, lest by a heedless use of Christian liberty we cause a soul, for which Christ died, to be lost.

Many more examples of modern adiaphora could be cited to show that the principles of Romans 14 have lost none of their relevance and need to be applied today in the same way as in the congregation at Rome. Let us so teach the Word of God that all our members will be "strong Christians," understanding their Christian liberty in things neither commanded nor forbidden. If a brother is "weak in the faith," let us bear with him and deal with him according to Christian charity and receive him into our Christian fellowship as a fellow servant of Christ. Adiaphora will then cease to be a problem, and all members of the congregation, the weak and the strong, will work together in a God-pleasing manner. Everyone will then live unto the Lord and die unto the Lord, holding precious as the essentials of his faith righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

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