

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning.*

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CLASS DISTINCTION

Surely this will be remembered as the decade of protest — of banner waving; of car stickers and placard brigades. The age of “Banning the Bomb,” “Nuclear Power — No Thanks”; Hunger strikers and so on. If there is anything not quite to our liking we take to the streets with slogans, and go on the march, or even the rampage. From the window of the office in which I work I have witnessed several such placard assemblies this week alone — the most recent of which was a protest by our Roman Catholic friends who (although pursuing “Christian Unity”) were, on this occasion, complaining about their children facing the possibility of sharing school facilities with “Protestant” children. They insist, of course, on having their separate schools. The theme of today is, therefore, “Discrimination” and it seems to affect nearly everybody — we have all kinds of minority groups, “Women’s Lib,” Asians, all creeds and colours. Doubtless some of shouting may be justified.

It is refreshing therefore to come indoors from all the clamour and strong language to read in the scriptures that with God there is no discrimination, unless, of course, someone wants to accuse God of legislating against sinners. Far from it however; in fact God’s word is framed to deal kindly and graciously with all winners, and that includes everybody, for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. On witnessing the baptism of the gentiles the apostle Peter exclaimed, “Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” (Acts 10:34). God is impartial in recognising no nation better than another. Paul asserts, “For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 4:27). God is impartial in concluding *all accountable persons* under sin. “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10). God is impartial in providing one and the same *Redeemer* for the whole human race. God is impartial in providing one and the same *scheme of redemption*. *The gospel* is God’s only power to save whether we be as good moral people as Cornelius was, or as religious as the Ethiopian eunuch was, or whether we be as the bloodthirsty Jews who screamed “Crucify Him”. God will be impartial on Judgement Day as *all nations* are gathered before His Judgement Seat and *all will give* an account to Him as to why they rejected His offer of pardon or spurned the invitation of the Saviour who died for them. God is also impartial in providing His word in just one volume, a book

not confined to the possession of the rich but available to all. We ought to praise God that He is no respecter of persons but regards you as important as anyone else. We ought to praise God that His salvation is for 'Whosoever will', that it is free of any monetary charge and so can be as available to the abjectly poor as to the disgustingly rich.

With men things are not so. So many commodities are available only to the rich and the influential. This was seen to such good effect by those of us who can remember the war years and the food rationing, the shortages of clothing and petrol. The "Black Market" flourished only because of those who could pay. The rich and influential could always obtain petrol and virtually anything else that money could buy. Thanks be to God that no such rules exist in the Kingdom of God and that men cannot buy or bribe their way into heaven. There are also those who by reason of accident of birth are born with a silver spoon (or sometimes a silver shovel) in their mouths and form a wealthy elite in this country. The Greeks gave us the word "Aristocracy" (rule by the best) to describe this form of class distinction, and so we have (or had) in this country a populace divided into such class conscious groups as "middle class" and "working class". Fortunately, or unfortunately, "Death Duties" are slowly eroding the demarcation lines but the concept persists. The man who drives up in the gleaming Rolls-Royce is still inclined to get the "red carpet" treatment. We still live in a world of the "Haves" and "Have nots."

While there is no doubt that such a situation exists in the world can it be that such attitudes are to be found in the church? Have we ever witnessed, or been guilty of, occasions where any form of class distinction, or impartiality was evident. If God is absolutely fair and completely impartial should not His servants be likewise? Do we fawn over the rich brethren and tolerate the poor ones? Do we pursue the company of the "intellectual" members and bestow a passing nod upon the less knowledgeable ones? Are we part of a little select clique in our congregation. I remember hearing of an eminent preacher who was said to favour very large congregations so that each member could have company at his/her own social and intellectual level. Some would also seem to see the church in terms of "Youth" and "the elderly" and have all kinds of "Programmes" for the young. Some recognise others as "Big Wheels" in the church and others seem to see the church in terms of ethnic considerations — I remember seeing a religious magazine which had a column entitled, "News from the Coloured Brethren."

Certainly there are instances in the New Testament wherein a tendency to impartiality was manifested but it was always condemned when recognised. Doubtless there are occasions when we display a partiality without realising it. In the early days of the church we read that there appeared to be discrimination in the church's attitude to the gentile widows. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." (Acts 6:1). In the later verses we read of the means taken to put the matter right. Then again we have the instance when even an apostle seemed to show an impartiality and was publicly rebuked by Paul. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For, before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabus also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews." (Gal. 2:11). If the apostle Peter could get it wrong so can we. Indeed Paul charged Timothy before God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect

angels, to observe God's word without "preferring one before another and doing nothing by impartiality." (1 Tim. 5:21).

Probably James, in his epistle, makes the most direct attack on the tendency of men, even in the church, of fawning over the rich and the V.I.P.'s. He says: "My brethren, have not the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment: and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become the judges of evil thoughts." (James 2:1). He goes on, in the ensuing verses, to say that whereas *men* may prefer the rich, God embraces the poor of this world (albeit rich in faith — the rich, by contrast, are disposed to oppress the poor and blaspheme the worthy name of Christ, and James concludes, "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors." (V. 9). And so James impartiality, class distinction, discrimination and respect of persons as sin; certainly within the context of the church. James also informs us that heavenly wisdom (in contrast with man's wisdom) is firstly pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (3:17). May we seek such wisdom. God is no respecter of persons, and is completely impartial to all — we should try to be the same.

EDITOR.

LOVE. The Greatest Thing in the World

No. 5. A Many Splendid Thing (continued)

1 Cor. 13 5:

(vi) **LOVE, doth not behave itself unseemly**

In the present time so many things are designed to offend or contend with public decency. The greater the shock caused to ordinary, decent people, the greater the pleasure appears to be derived. Almost all that can be described as 'Modern,' (music and dress spring readily to mind) are in essence designed to offend. Likewise the actions between fellows and girls so often deliberately draw unfavourable notice. The News media, cashing in on the dissolute desires of the many, publish in gordy fact and fiction those things which are offensive to Christian people. In all these things the lack of LOVE is the most prominent feature, for Love doth not behave itself unseemly.

As far as love is concerned anything which is offensive is just NOT ON. Obscene language, jokes with rude meanings, lewd pictures, all these are OUT. Love gives due reverence to all relationships. Another persons modesty will never be offended by LOVE. The Cynics in Apostolic times were well known for habitually defying all the usual ideas of decency. How like our own times, from the professional vandals who have removed so much of the beauty of bygone craftsmen and replaced it with concrete monstrosities to the poor little mindless punk with dyed hair and ridiculous clothes, all find pleasure in offending decency.

LOVE — TRUE LOVE — is the only correcting force. The implanting of LOVE, and that alone, can restore the balance and bring back general clean, decent living.

For, LOVE doth not behave itself unseemly.

(vii) LOVE, seeketh not her own

This is, with the greatest certainty, the pure and priceless gem of unselfishness. It is by far the hardest to attain and it quite rightly lies at the centre of all the other gems in this wonderful collection. Someone has said, "There is not a more striking nor important expression in the whole of the New Testament than this, nor one which more beautifully sets forth the whole nature and power of love."

This gem seems so bright and large, but, oh, so far away. Could we but attain to this one ideal so many of the others would automatically fall into place. LOVE doth not seek her own. Gone is all thought of avarice, all suggestion of covetousness, all **eager grasping**, after that which is another's. Even beyond the thought of stealing, Love does not seek her own.

Her Own What?

Her own way. You may have heard about the elderly lady who was going on a coach outing. Her daughter was helping her to get ready and in the course of her assistance she urged her mother, "Just watch that you don't spoil things by falling out with people."

"Oh, I won't be falling out with anybody, just so long as they let me have my own way." You may smile, but that is typical of many of us, for we do like our own way. LOVE seeketh not her own.

Her own rights. How important are your 'rights' to you. One of the facets cut on this stone is meekness. True meekness is, not to be without rights, but to be prepared to waive those rights in preference for other people. Did not Jesus teach, To him that would take away thy cloak, give him thy coat also.

Her own happiness. We all put great store by our happiness and prosperity. LOVE seeketh not her own, neither exclusively, nor primarily, nor at the cost, detriment nor delay of the same to any other person. The great beauty of salvation is we work out our own salvation by seeking the salvation of everybody else — FIRST.

Her own ideas. Have you ever had a good idea. Some thing which you found you could do and which was a benefit to others. Then, just as you have the job ticking over nice and steady someone comes along and wants to help. But it's *your* idea! The resultant praise is something which you enjoy and after all you thought about it first, or you saw the need first. Why should someone else come and steal your thunder? LOVE seeketh not her own. In such a case true LOVE will assist the usurper to make a success and only step back in when the other retires. LOVE does what is needed when no one else will, and does not make a song about it. Many willing workers are kept out of service because someone says, "that's my idea; keep out."

With this stone on the Christian finger there would be no lack, no shortage. (read Phil. 2 4. in the English Revised Version). "Not looking each of you to his own things but each of you to the things of others." This verse instructs us to be concerned primarily with the wellbeing of others. If your horse and your neighbour's both fall into a pit, you get your neighbour's horse out first. The children are taught to sing, J.O.Y. J.O.Y.

Happy as can be.

Jesus first, Yourself last,

Others in between.

If this is the axiom of joy it is the very fullest expression of LOVE.
LOVE seeketh not her own.

Paul Jones.

GLEANINGS

"Let her glean even among the sheaves." Ruth 2:15

Jesus said

"Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."

Luke II:35.

Light hidden is Darkness

"Is it possible for a lighted lamp to be darkness? It is. That lighted lamp is darkness when it is put out of sight, in the cellar or under a bushel. That lighted lamp is light when it is placed on a stand, so that they which enter in may see the light. Light, then, is only of value when it is kept shining, and the steps are guided by it. Light hidden is darkness. Truth disobeyed is valueless. Knowledge unyielded to is ignorance."

Campbell Morgan.

Remember Christopher Columbus

"When things perplex you, remember Christopher Columbus! You see, when Columbus set out on his famous voyage of discovery, he didn't know where he was going. When he arrived on the strange shores of America, he didn't even know where he was. When he got back, he didn't even know where he'd been. And yet he knew beyond a shadow of doubt that he had found a great, new world."

Measured by His preciousness

"As all the rivers run into the sea, so all delights centre in our Beloved. The glances of His eyes outshine the sun: the beauties of His face are fairer than the choicest flowers: no fragrance is like the breath of His mouth. Gems of the mine, and pearls from the sea, are worthless things when measured by His preciousness."

C. H. Spurgeon.

We quote - F. W. Robertson

"The central doctrine of Christianity is the atonement. Take that away, and you obliterate Christianity. If Christianity were merely the imitation of Christ, why, then the imitation of any other good man — the apostle Paul or John — might become a kind of Christianity. If Christianity were merely martyrdom for truth, then, with the exception of a certain amount of degree, I see no difference between the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus Christ. But Christianity is more than this. It is the at-one-ment of the soul. It is a reconciliation which the life and death of Christ have wrought out for this world — the reconciliation of man to God, the reconciliation of man to man, the reconciliation of man to self, and the reconciliation of man to duty."

God is a Designer

"Like man, God is a designer, and this is everywhere evident from the minutest animalculae in the smallest drop of water to the stately planets, which wing their perennial flight around the sun. I would illustrate what I mean by "design" in this way. Here is a man wheeling a barrow along a public thoroughfare. You contemplate the barrow and observe that it is composed in parts, and evidently put together for a purpose. It possesses a skilfully combined wheel for locomotion, legs to keep it in position when at rest, sides, ends, and a bottom so arranged that it may carry its freight, handles that the workman may propel it, and other things needful for its work. These marks of intelligent contrivance prompt you to affirm that it has been the work of an intelligent barrow-maker. Now turn from contemplating the barrow and in the same way examine the man who is wheeling it, and you will find his body has the same story to tell. He is also composed in parts and evidently put together for

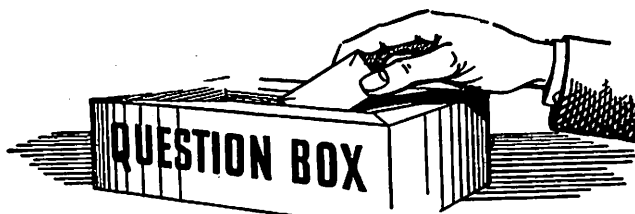
some Divine purpose. This apparent from the brain, with its intricate convolutions, to the palpitating heart that sends forth the blood on its mission of life through the crimsoned arteries of the body. Each organ has its duty. The liver secretes bile. The lungs inhale and exhale the gases necessary for life; the stomach receives and digests food. All is beautifully and wonderfully made: legs for locomotion, hands that help him to subdue and replenish the earth, eyes by which he revels in the sublime and the beautiful, ears that catch the sweet harmony of Nature's choristers. In him

"Nothing useless is or low,
Each thing in its place is best,
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and sustains the rest."

Now, if the character of an inanimate barrow is a satisfactory proof of a barrow maker, then in all fairness the marvellous design manifest in man must suggest an intelligent man maker."

Isaac Selby.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Would you please comment on the difficult passage (so far as I am concerned) contained in 1 Tim. 2:15, 'Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.'"

As our questioner says, this is indeed a difficult passage, and I have seen various explanations of it, but we will return to those later. It is my view that we should not consider this verse in isolation, but that we should try to understand it in the context of the teaching given concerning women in the verses nine to fifteen, and this we shall do.

In Decency and Propriety

I am well aware that I have mentioned this before, but it seems to me that Paul is genuinely concerned that the hierarchical structure of the Church should be maintained. He himself had taught, and he was very conscious of this, that in God's sight, regarding salvation, that there was no distinction between male and female; all had become free in Christ Jesus. He knew also that his freedom was likely to become misinterpreted, and that *in all things* women would tend to see themselves as the equals of men; this he seeks to correct.

Furthermore, it is obviously true to say that due attention in every age must be paid to the environmental scene. God has deliberately created the polarity of sex and down through the ages women have chosen to adorn themselves in many ways with the express intention of drawing attention to themselves. Paul knew that Roman women, particularly, were very fond of parading in public wearing expensive clothes, elaborate hairstyles, and much jewellery. As we studied a short while ago, Paul had made it plain at Cornith that he did not wish the head covering to be dispensed with, and here also he seems most concerned that the outward adorning of the Christian women should reflect their inner Christian character. Peter seems to

sum it up when he says, "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful." (1 Pet. 3:1-6 N.I.V.).

We must appreciate, of course, that as regards dress 'modest' and 'decent' might vary in degree in succeeding generations, but so long as Christian women accept the principle that the outward apparel should reflect the dignity of the inner spirit then they should not go wrong.

In Quietness and Submission

'Silence' in the A.V. has the meaning of 'quietness,' and quietness has the meaning of tranquillity arising from within. In 1 Tim. 2:11-14 Paul is speaking about the aspirations of women to have authority over men in the teaching role in the assembly. He puts it this way, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (vv 11, 12). It seems quite clear to me that Paul is here speaking about instructing or edifying the Church, and this, he says, he will not permit a woman to do. It is also clear that Paul does not forbid women to teach in *all circumstances*, for he instructs Titus to teach the older women how they ought to conduct themselves so that "they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children" (Titus 2:3-5). In this context, I hold the view that women's meetings held in our churches should have limited application in the subject matter taught, and that doctrinal matters which may affect *the assembly as a whole* should be avoided by them and left to the teaching of the men in corporate assembly.

The phrase to 'usurp authority' as used in the A.V. needs a little explanation. According to W. E. Vine, the verb AUTHENTEŌ signifies to exercise authority on one's own account, to domineer over, and it is so used in 1 Tim. 2:12. Teaching or preaching implies authority, and the woman is not to 'dominate' man in this respect (or in any other, if it comes to that) but to learn quietly and submissively. Paul goes on to explain why, in God's scheme of things, this should be so, and it takes us back to the fundamental point in scripture that man should not violate the headship of Christ, and that the woman should not violate the headship of man. Paul is merely re-affirming what he knows God's view to be, and the penalty that He had pronounced on Eve when she had dominated Adam. Genesis states that Adam sinned of course, but it was Eve who was *deceived* and this deception had led to the downfall of the human race; consequently God said to her, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16).

We are aware, of course, that there are many talented women operating in many spheres of life, but because this is so in society as a whole, some women have concluded that their role in the Church should change as well; this Paul does not accept and neither should we. The many talents of woman ought to be used in the God-ordained function for her, and she can surely express her God-given glory in these.

In Childbearing

This is the difficult part of Paul's teaching, but I feel sure that what he has taught just prior to this has some bearing on it.

The word 'childbearing' comes from two Greek words, TEKNON, a child, and the root GENO, to beget, and consequent upon this some have concluded that what is meant here is that woman brought salvation to herself and to the world by making the means of the Incarnation possible; thus woman made salvation possible.

Others teach that what is meant here is the general promise that women will be brought safety through the natural process of child-birth. The general argument adduced here is that some women were trying to lay aside their natural function of

bearing children and concentrating on becoming teachers. Perhaps here there is an echo of our present day society.

A third view, and one that I would subscribe to, is that Paul here has in mind that child-bearing, not public teaching, is the peculiar function of the woman and that this will invest her with a dignity and glory of its own. Child-bearing has the all-embracing scriptural warrant of the woman's place as wife, mother and manager of the home. I think it is undeniably true that woman will gain her blessings by keeping her own place in God's scheme of things. However, woman's salvation from sin is like other peoples salvation and consequently the latter part of verse 15 should not be ignored, "if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety." The plain inference is that if she has 'to continue' in the things mentioned then she must have previously started in them. This, I believe, is the crux of the whole matter; what Paul seems to be saying is, "christman woman, continue in those things you have learned, and even in the extremes of pain and travail associated with childbirth your salvation will still burn bright."

(All questions please, to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan).

THE CLEANSING FOUNTAIN

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened . . .
for sin and uncleanness." (Zechariah 13:1).

"Of all the products man has made
To take away the dirt and grime,
There's not a substance can be bought,
To cleanse this sinful soul of mine."

As I walked through the local supermarket, I saw the vast display of cleaning materials, soaps, powders, detergents and such like, and I pondered, "How clever is man to devise all these means of helping the harassed housewife to clean her possessions, and yet so incapable of removing the stains of sin from the heart of man by any means that he has devised."

That sin is in the world is obvious. God has already informed us in His word that this is so. "Since by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death has passed upon all men, For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." What is this standard of Goodness that God has set? What is this Glory of God of which all people fall short? It is the revelation of God himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the exact image of the Invisible God, for John tells us that "We beheld his Glory, the Glory of the Only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth." Jesus has revealed the intense Love of God "Who is not willing that any should perish but come to a full knowledge of the Truth." Man may be able to mend his ways, to change his life and character, but still is unable to erase from his soul the devastating effects of the sin committed. It was for this purpose that Jesus came, that he might open up a "fountain for sin and uncleanness."

"The cleanest and the whitest wash
For all mankind beneath the sun.
The vilest sinner here may bathe;
Come and be cleansed every one."

Every cleaning agent that man has made has been superseded by others that have come along claiming to be even better. The t.v. and the press are used to impress upon us the great strides that have been and still are being made in this direction. We see before our very eyes demonstrations of one biological cleaner being much

better than some other unnamed product. That is as far as it goes. Man's greatest need is the cleansing of the soul from sin. This can only be obtained by receiving pardon from an offended God. He has provided the means of receiving this pardon by sending His Son Jesus into the world to take man's place, to die for man, "He who knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Thus the cleanest and the whitest wash has been provided for all mankind beneath the sun, and even the vilest and the sinfullest here may find absolute forgiveness. Under the Old Testament scriptures, many sacrifices had to be made for sins transgressions, and they needed to be repeated over and over again, because "it was not possible for them to take away sin." Yet this was God's method of teaching His people that there was one to come, who would provide a perfect offering and thus take away sin for ever. In the New Testament we see this fulfilled in Jesus "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." His precious blood has made an atonement for the soul and He has become the "Saviour of the world."

A recognition of His righteousness becomes a recognition of our own sin and an acknowledgment that He alone can save us. A readiness of mind to change our ways results in our acceptance of Him as the divine Son of God and our Saviour and Lord, and a willingness to submit to His authority and to obey Him in all things.

"Though red like crimson be your sin,
Though deep-dyed scarlet by your stain;
There's cleansing in the precious blood,
There is forgiveness in His Name."

The fountain for sin and uncleanness which began at Calvary, fulfilled the message of God given by Isaiah, "Come now, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be whiter than snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool," required the death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God. The preaching of the gospel is the telling forth of the good news of free and full salvation, of the fountain which is opened for sinners, and the command is given to "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins." The act of baptism, therefore, has become the place where sins are washed away, where the sinner identifies himself with the death, burial and resurrection of the Saviour and rises to walk in newness of life." For we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the Glory of the Father, So also we should rise to walk in newness of life.

Praise the Lord! there is a fountain
Where all sins are washed away,
It began at Calvary's mountain,
And it is open still today.

Tom Kemp.

I RECKON him a Christian indeed that is neither ashamed of the gospel nor a shame to it.

— Matthew Henry.

A young girl was asked, "Whose preaching brought you to Christ?" "It wasn't preaching; it was Aunt Mary's practising," she replied.

IT is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can help another without helping himself.

Anonymous.

What the wise man must remember is, that while he is a descendant of the past he is a parent of the future.

H. Spencer.

CAN CHURCHES FINANCE A HOSPITAL AND ITS STAFF?

The above subject matter, to me, appears to be the question Brother Willis wants answered. I may be wrong in my title but in his query in "The Scripture Standard" page 80 of May 1981, which states "I noticed in December 1980 issue of the Scripture Standard an appeal written by a Brother Allan Ashurst to financially support a Carole Ashurst as she went to India to work as a nurse. Would someone give us book, chapter and verse for the church to be involved in financing a hospital or supporting its staff."

I must admit outright that I have no Bible quotation or quotations giving churches authority to use their finances to support or build hospitals and I may add, many other good works the churches should do, if given specific commands or approved apostolic examples, namely: provision of good drinking water to the community, electricity, roads, postal services and so on. Fortunately, for all concerned, there is another institution — government — which has responsibility to provide these amenities.

The intention of this article is not to give our dear brother book, chapter and verse which authorises congregations to foresake their divine assignment — preaching the word — to financing other institutions, but to share in his concern which has prompted him to pose his query.

There are many good works an individual (in this particular case a Christian) can do which the church cannot do collectively. I suppose that if the appeal to support a hospital or hospitals could be made possible by christians (NOT church as a body). As an individual, if my village proposes to construct a road and a voluntary or compulsory contributions are to be made, I am free to contribute, bearing in mind Romans 13. The church would not and is not right to use its fund to support such a good work no matter its good intention since the Bible has not imposed such a work on it: neither by direct command, approved example nor necessary inference. In short, there are many things also the church can do which the individual cannot do as a single person. An individual cannot worship alone on the first day of the week and complete the items of worship, for example "the apostles came together to break bread" and the church is supposed to follow the apostles' examples. (Acts 20:7).

The mission of the church is far more than physical ailment, it takes more care about our spiritual ailments.

One of the divine works of the church is as commanded in the book of Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and in order to impart spiritual enlightenment. "And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his path: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3).

This 'body' called the church can only survive from spiritual death and/or be firmly built up by constant instruction or edification. For this reason many offices were created within the church. "And he gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints (Christians), for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

(Ephesians 4:11-13). "Stature" here does not mean physical stature. Consider the following by one who after reading through his account in the Bible was forced to voice out these words: "no other man who profoundly influenced the human race as did the great teacher of Nazareth, Jesus Christ. Even his lofty teachings, nor his amazing miracles, nor his manner of life, has ever been equalled by any other man. He pre-eminently was the man, even as the Bible is the book."

In conclusion, it must be admitted that if there were a question in an examination paper, I will have scored zero. Why? Because, instead of opposing brother Willis as posed by his question, I was trying to nail down the fact that it is wrong for churches to use their funds to finance a hospital or support its staff. It is therefore hoped that readers would pardon this departure from the point at issue and read the article for its own sake.

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London NW5, England.

Dear Brother Gardiner,

I can understand our brother's apprehension at the thought of the churches setting-up and maintaining hospitals and their staff, but I don't think it comes into the same category as infant baptism.

Infant baptism makes the command of God of non-effect. There is no command of God which is nullified in its effect by the organised support and carrying out the daily running of giving medical aid to those who would not get it otherwise, many of whom happen to be our brethren. This I think comes under the category of Gal. 6.10 "Do good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith." Carole Ashurst has become aware of the desperate need of leper children in Andhra Pradesh, devoid of medical aid. She is a nurse and wants to help them. She is not skilled in tropical medicine but a brother and sister in Christ. Doctors Mr. and Mrs. Alexander, two Indians who run a hospital in Madras are prepared to train her and would be grateful of her help at the same time. They cannot afford to employ her, but there were concerned brethren here who wished to help and suggested that others would be also. So the informative letter was written to the 'Scripture Standard,' so that brethren who cannot go themselves, and would not be much use if they did go because of lack of medical training, could have fellowship with Carole in extending the compassion of our Saviour to these children.

Not knowing Brother Willis's specific reasons for denouncing what we are doing, I started to draft a reply which grew into an epistle and became an article entitled "Compassion." I hope you will publish it.

I am not suggesting that brother Willis is not compassionate, far from it. A Christian couple who lived in the Wigan area and held equally rigid views, though living in comparative poverty, abounded beyond their means in giving and sharing their home with destitute and needy. For all I know brother Willis might be the same kind of compassionate person.

It may be that in the article I have built up a few straw men to knock down, however, after reading it Brother Willis might be prompted by whatever in it he considers relevant, to make more detailed presentation of his understanding of the

scriptures with regard to churches giving financial and practical help to widows, orphans, the destitute, sick etc., and the manner in which it ought to be done. I hope to send my article very soon.

Yours in Jesus' Name
Allan Ashurst.

BROTHER WILLIS' ENQUIRY

Brother Willis asks for the book, chapter and verse which permits Christians and Churches to support hospitals. First, may I point out that love must accompany doctrine (1 Cor. 13) and that the Spirit must work in Christians' lives together with scripture (2 Cor. 3:3). Our love, therefore, is not bounded by detailed instructions but rather by God's will, as apprehended by the disciple from the two greatest commandants.

However, if I must be more specific, then I quote the parable of "The Good Samaritan" (Luke 10). What was the Inn used as if not a hospital? Again, who paid for the man's treatment, if not the Samaritan? Again, what was the purpose of the parable if it was not as a model for the subjects of the coming Kingdom.

It may be that our good brother does not support any Christian activity without an express command in scripture. If so perhaps he will tell us the book, chapter and verse which permits him to publish a magazine.

PAUL DOVER,

1 Wheatley Drive,
Carlton,
Nottingham.

(I perhaps should remind correspondents on this subject that Brother Willis wanted scriptural authority for *churches* to be involved in hospital work, not individuals. Mind you if everybody in the world became church members, as God intends, it might be difficult to deny that churches were running all the necessary services. — Ed.).

SCRIPTURE READINGS

SEPTEMBER
1981

6 Nehemiah 5	I Thess. 2, 10-20
13 Nehemiah 9, 1-3, 22-37	I Thess. 3
20 Psalm 1	I Thess. 4
27 Proverbs 6, 1-15	I Thess. 5

THESSALONIKA

This was an important town in Roman Macedonia, inhabited it is said by Thracian people of a rather superior culture in comparison with other heathen districts. We do note a

relationship with Paul happier than is apparent in most of his other letters. The two letters to them, and that to Philippi, which is quite near, indicate this. His first visits in both cases were with affliction which was shared by those who accepted the gospel. "A fellow feeling makes up wondrous kind" says the proverb, and common experience of suffering undoubtedly bring us nearer to one another in heart. Jason suffered for Paul at the earliest riot, but was obviously found innocent. For how long the travellers stayed in the town we cannot tell from Luke's account but it is obvious the machinations of the Jews made it necessary for Paul to leave to avoid further disturbance. The gospel spread in the town itself and its influen-

tial position on a main road where there were communications to all parts of the district and the Roman World, opened up the church to very wide publicity. This is made plain in the letter, and Paul's wish to revisit was stimulated by the prospect of a strong and spreading cause. The situation and political importance of the town made it a good place in which to trade and this is why a synagogue was there, and Jews had power of which they took advantage to make things very difficult for the Christians. Their following up with Paul at Beroea shows their determination to fight the new faith.

The entry of the Gospel

Three messengers of God's love, two of whom had borne considerable physical damage came to the town and were found in the synagogue offering worship to the one true God with their Jewish brethren. We assume they received invitation to speak as happened at Antioch in Pisidia. Paul took full advantage of this to set forth the scriptural proof that Jesus of Nazareth was in fact the Christ, the Messiah, the son of David, the expected king. That he would do this with wisdom and ability we can have no doubt, but he had a difficult task because of the same mistaken ideas which caused rejection of Jesus. We think it most probable that the most prominent, perhaps the rulers or elders of the congregation, had heard of the work and "fate" of Jesus as had Cornelius at Caesarea so many years before and so much nearer to Jerusalem, but they would also know of the spread of the new faith (Acts 10, 36-38). Paul would pursue his subject as he did at Antioch (Acts 13, 16-39). It is evident that he was given a hearing and that some were indeed persuaded. While he was labouring at tent-making he would undoubtedly be working to influence those most interested though a minority. After the third sabbath however enmity developed and opposition became dangerous. Violence failed to attach any

guilt but whatever time the messengers stayed they had to leave, and stay away. Spiritual power was with the believers and the work established solidly among chiefly devout Gentiles, so that after a few weeks Paul could write "from you sounded out the word of the Lord" far and wide (1, 8). This shows that some of the churches begun by his work in Asia were in touch with him. The original spread of the gospel through the preaching and teaching in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and as far as Antioch in Syria, probably reached even to Rome, a centre of communication in that ancient world. This was slow indeed in comparison with any modern system.

Behaviour of preacher and hearer

The motives of the preachers are examined in 2, 1-6, and their practices in 2, 7-12. There was not any base thought at bottom, and honesty was assured by making their own living without any dependance upon their converts. Some modern preachers are gravely subject to suspicion about this and the churches, perhaps in particular the Roman Catholic, and larger denominations, sustain numerous "ministers" who are making a good living, sometimes deservedly and sometimes otherwise. That the tent-maker evangelist did not do so is made quite a point in these early writings. The failure of some converts to do "a day's hard work" led the apostle to write "If a man would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thess. 3, 10).

"Getting support" can become a hindrance to spread of truth by making excuse for not doing daily work, hence an obvious anxiety in Paul's mind to encourage Christians to be earning their keep. It remains true that as messengers of Christ, working for spread of truth, we have a claim upon, shall we say, the church's purse. the hearer needed to know that the afflictions he bore for identifying himself with Christ assured him of a future reward. He was given the

promise that could not fail, of glory upon the return of the Saviour from heaven. God IS a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. God could not be just and righteous unless this were so. It is the Christian's joy and privilege to give without expecting to get more back, but ultimately to hear from the Lord "Enter into the joy of thy Lord!" — the joy of having shared in the grace. From a condition of darkness, ignorance and hopelessness into an expectation of glory must have been to those benighted heathen a most thrilling experience. It is therefore not surprising that some immediately slacked off and waited for the Lord from heaven to come and consummate the experience. They needed to know that faith ONLY was not true.

Death-bed repentance like that of the robber on the cross must be VERY exceptional.

The gospel is a call to life, life more abundant, fuller, in some senses harder. They had turned from idols to serve the living God, but had misunderstood the waiting for His Son. Do not some today assume that surrender in baptism is enough? How shall we escape if we neglect to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance? (Heb. 2, 3; Luke 3, 8; Rev. 2, 5; James 5, 8). The preacher had shown an example of purity of life, fervency of love and earnestness of Labour, and his message had been how to walk and to please God (4, 1) more and more. Behaviour is the practical outcome of faith, hope and love (1, 3).

The coming of the Lord

This is an essential part of the gospel, and Paul had taught it to his converts. There had arisen doubts about the safety of some who had recently died. What would happen seeing they are in the grave and cannot therefore be here to see the Lord descend from heaven? We are assured death makes no difference to them or to us. The resurrection of our Saviour guarantees resurrection to all who believe in Him.

Paul's instruction on this subject with I Cor. 15 also provides what we know on this subject. We assume with almost all commentators that this letter is the first in order of writing preserved to us in the New Testament. It was written from Corinth probably within months of Paul's leaving Thessalonica and passing through Berea and Athens as recorded in Acts 17, 10 to 18, 18. Timothy had been sent to the young church from Athens, and the letter written when he got back to Paul at Corinth (Acts 18, 5). The resurrection of Jesus must have been a most important part of his preaching (Acts 17, 3), as it is of ours today, and our own resurrection equally so. The question of how it would happen may not have been so plainly spoken of, and it is clear that there was expectation of a very early return — a point which only maturity of revelation, and facts of history could clarify. It was needful in those early days that expectation should be immediate, and would be better now if we had not allowed our watching and praying to grow less expectant! "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!" (Mark 13, 37), said our Saviour.

R. B. SCOTT.

When you criticise, be sure you want to help.

One of the most valuable lessons any of us can ever learn is that of making it easy for others to work with us.

Our greatest temptations come to us when we are off duty. How and where we spend our spare time will react upon our Christian character.

Keep your Bible open and you will not find the door of heaven shut.

It is a sad religion that is strong only when its owner is sick.

Study the language of gentleness: refuse to use words that bite or tones that crush.

PERFECT LOVE

Slow to suspect — quick to trust;
 Slow to condemn — quick to justify;
 Slow to offend — quick to defend;
 Slow to expose — quick to shield;
 Slow to reprimand — quick to forbear;
 Slow to belittle — quick to appreciate;
 Slow to demand — quick to give;
 Slow to provoke — quick to conciliate;
 Slow to hinder — quick to help;
 Slow to resent — quick to forgive.

Christian Messenger

What have you done today that
 nobody but a Christian would do?

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The church as the one Body existed from the days of the apostles to our time, whether we can find traces in every century or not.

If no trace of conformity to the New Testament could be found in any church since the first century, a church established today upon the N.T. life and order would be as truly a historical church from Christ as the church planted by Paul at Ephesus.

(Extracts from E.M. Borden's *History of the Church of Christ*).

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Buckie, Scotland: On Saturday, 6th June, the church enjoyed its annual social. The chairman was John Geddes and the speaker was Tom Nisbet, Tranent. About 120 attended and enjoyed items from brethren from Aberdeen, Buckie and Kirkcaldy. Of special interest was the simultaneous translations for the deaf by some of the Aberdeen brethren. A rich time of fellowship was enjoyed by all.

J. Geddes.,

Newtongrange: On Saturday, 20th June, 1981 members and friends of the church derived much pleasure from the annual pilgrimage to the beautiful village of West Linton. A number of 60 travelled. Throughout the day the sun shone upon us. After the main meal the company enjoyed participating in the events of the local village fair, run in conjunction with "The Year of the Disabled." After tea, many of the assembly enjoined in the sports as arranged. All went well. At the hour of 6 p.m., the happy but tired company boarded the bus for home.

A. P. Sharp.

OBITUARY

Motherwell, Scotland: We report the passing of our beloved Sister Barbara Hunter on July 2nd, aged 79 years, the widow of our late Brother William Hunter.

Our Sister's health had been failing for some time and in the end it was a happy release for her.

She was a faithful member of the church for many years; a fine person, a friend to many, a loving mother who has left behind her faithful children who are a credit to the church.

Her passing means that the church here has lost one more faithful member but we will always remember her for her fine example of faith and for her labours among us.

We thank God for knowing her, for her happy Christian home and the many happy times spent there.

Having remained faithful to the end we rejoice in the knowledge that her reward is sure, the crown of everlasting life.

We commend her family and all who mourn her passing to the consolation and comfort that is found in Our Lord.

William J. Purcell,
 Secretary.

WANTED

Any surplus copies of the "S.S." bound or unbound, for any year. Willing to pay for same depending on cost, quantity, etc. Also copy of "The Church in Great Britain" by John Allen Hudson. All information to K. J. Kerr, 100, The Riggs, Fort Augustus, Inver-shesshire, Scotland.

Notice on Bible Class door: Knowledge given away free. Bring your own containers.

The only man to get all his work done by Friday was Robinson Crusoe.

Politicians make strange bedfellows, but they soon get used to the same bunk.

THINK! A car sticker, seen in South Africa — "When all else fails consult the makers handbook — The Bible."

TRACT. "THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CHURCH"

We have required to make another printing of this little four-page leaflet, which the printer has charged at the larger quantity rate; so the tract can now be got for £15.50 per thousand, post paid; smaller quantities pro-rata. c.w.o. s.a.e. for sample to: Tom Nisbet, 61 Meetinghouse Drive, Tranent, East Lothian EH33 2HU.

Be sure to put your feet in the right place, then stand firm.

Abraham Lincoln.

Judas was awake and active while the other disciples slept.

H. S. Ficklin.

Like all true love the love of God cannot be encompassed by a definition.

H. A. Kelly.

What is the use of running when you are on the wrong road?

John Ray.

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