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1 Cor. 16:1-2—Authority for Collection On the First Day of the Week

CHURCH TREASURY?

A few months ago, I received from some man in California, (I do not have the materials now) some material on the fact that it was unscriptural to have a "church treasury". He stated that each member was to lay away his own money at home until a "need arose" then bring it forth. He compared it to olden days when, if the church needed some wood for the stove some one cut it and brought it to the church. This revival of this teaching has led to the church reexamining the position of collection on the first day of the week, to determine just what God would have us do. THIS IS GOOD! IF GOD REQUIRES IT, LET US DO IT, IF HE DOES NOT, LET US DROP THE MATTER!

CONTRIBUTING OF OUR MONEY

Space will not allow for a full discussion of man giving to God part of what God gave him, but we know that sacrifices began in the days of Cain and Abel. Tithing began with Abraham, Gen. 14:20, and was later incorporated in the law of Moses, Lev. 27:30-34. When the Israelite refused to tithe, God said they had robbed him, and promised a greater blessing if they brought the tithe to his store house, Mal. 3:7-12. Of course under the law of Moses it was tithe, under the law of Christ there is a change.

GIVING TODAY

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver", 2 Cor. 9:7. In chapter 8, of 2 Cor., Paul had commended the churches of Macedonia for giving beyond their expected ability, because they, "first gave themselves to the Lord", verses 4 & 5. The church was commanded to give and we have records where they did give.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTION?

There are only TWO reasons given for the church contribution, 1---To preach the Gospel, 2---Help the needy saints. There are three sources of authority

under which the church can do the Lord's will. 1---Direct command, "Go preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15-16). 2--Apostolic example, Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). 3--Necessary inference, "Go" infers transportation, or method; assemble, infers a place, church building; sing, infers song books, baptize, infers a place to baptize, etc. From 1 Cor. 16:1-2, we learn that the collection was for the "poor saints" Rom. 15:26, and money was sent to them in Jerusalem, Acts 11:29-30. Paul taught that the Lord ordained that those who preach should "live by the Gospel" (be supported) and churches did support Paul, Phil. 4:15. Therefore we have command and example of the churches collecting money and supporting the preaching of the Gospel and taking care of the members of the church who were in Need!

HOW MAY WE DETERMINE WHEN TO TAKE THE COLLECTION?

All of God's will on any given subject is not found in one verse of Scripture. Man divided the Scriptures into verses, the Holy Spirit did not do this. Therefore we must have ALL teaching on a subject before we can be sure we are doing the Lord's will.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

We are COMMANDED to observe the Lord's supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-30, but can not find in this passage WHEN to do it. Should we just stick to 1 Cor. 11 and observe it when we please? The answer is no! From apostolic example we learn to observe the Lord's supper, "on the first day of the week", Acts 20:7. On this matter we all agree!

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

In James 1:27, the command is given to take care of widows and orphans. In Acts 6:1-6, we learn what James did not say, that the church can and did care for widows and HOW it was done. From 1 Tim. 5:9-10, the church is authorized to take care of certain widows, and in verse 4, the individual is charged. So we learn

(Continued on Page 4)

Snake Handling To Show Thyself Approved??

While in Tennessee lately, I viewed a film taken at an east Tennessee snake handling service. The service began with some singing and an occasional shout. After a while the preacher and three other men "got the Spirit". They stood in the middle of the group and began babbling in an "unknown tongue" and shaking as if something had overtaken their bodies. After some time, I supposed time to let the Spirit sink in, the rattlesnakes were brought out. The men then began passing the snakes around as they babbled and shook. At this point I was skeptical of their sincerity because they were careful to handle the snakes in a way that they could not coil into a striking position. When the preacher reached for one of the snakes it was able to maneuver into a position to bite him on the hand. I expected him to run for a snake bite kit but he just kept on shaking and babbling as if nothing had happened. The man evidently trusted that the Spirit would protect him. A few moments later he staggered and fell to the ground. The snake handling stopped and the man was carried to the hospital barely alive.

Most anyone would say these men were pitifully ignorant. Legislators of the state of Tennessee were so disturbed they introduced a bill to make this practice illegal. Actually they are no more pitiful than the Boone family and others who were once our brethern. All the same ingredients were there except for the snakes.

The twelve disciples were told in Mark 16:17-20 that some would be able to drink deadly liquids and handle deadly snakes and not be hurt. We find this occurring with Paul in Acts 28 where he shook a deadly viper from his hand with no ill effect, unlike the Tennessee preacher. It is clear from Mark 16:20 that this was promised to them that they

(Continued on Page 2)

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen
and James E. Henley.

Appreciation Dinner At Crowley's Ridge

by Don R. House

An appreciation dinner honoring preachers of the Gospel from Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri, who are seventy years of age and above will be held at Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, Arkansas, September 21. The program is to begin at 7:00 p.m.

Taylor Davis, George Benson, L.N. Moody, L.C. Sears, Riley Henry, L.O. Sanderson, Harbaert D. Hooker, St. Clair Slatton and others are among those to be honored. Keynote speakers will be Frank W. Gould and C.W. Brannam.

A capacity crowd is anticipated for honoring of these men who have blazed the trail for truth for a half century and more. Items of interest from the early restoration movement in Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri will be on display.

Tickets are \$3.00 each or \$5.00 for two and include cost for a delicious meal. Contact Boyd E. Morgan, Crowley's Ridge College, Paragould, Arkansas 72450. Phone (501) 236-6901.

Nothing is more dangerous than discontinued labor; it is a habit lost, a habit easy to abandon, difficult to resume.

The reason worry kills more people than work does is that more people worry than work.

Snake Handling (Con't.)

might "confirm the word". There is no reason to expect signs and miracles to happen today since the word has been confirmed. There is no evidence that the Spirit works today any other way than on the hearts of those who submit themselves to God's word.

Let's ask ourselves some questions about the snake handling incident.

1. Was it the Spirit that inhabited their bodies and caused them to shake and babble? I say no! If it was the Spirit why would he let the man be hurt discouraging his faith and that of the spectators?

2. Did the man collapse because he lacked trust in God? I say no! He trusted in God to protect him or he would have searched for a snake bite kit soon after being bitten.

3. What then caused these men to shake, babble and display the courage they did? I say it was the same thing that causes a person to lift a car off their child when they could not do this any other time. It is the same thing that causes a man in battle to run headlong into a sure death. It is simply a self-induced emotional state with which the Spirit had nothing to do.

God's word is complete and completely furnishes us. (II Tim. 3:16-17). There is no need for miracles and sign to confirm the word today. There is no need for further revelation. Those who claim these necessarily give the Bible a back seat and put these experiences in its place. Their cry is to have an "experience" rather than to study God's word to show one an approved workman.

I challenge any "spiritualist" to confirm his words as being truth the same way Jesus and the apostles did. Since they profess signs and miracles let them drink deadly poisons or allow deadly snakes bite them with no ill effect. When I say miracles, I don't mean these obscure so called miracles that could be miracles or staged fakes. I want to see the tongues of fire of Acts 2 on their heads. I want to see a man buried for days and stinking from decay raised from the dead like Lazarus was. I want to see someone speak and immediately calm a raging sea as our Lord did. If the "spiritualist" can't

Purpose of Singing

Singing of gospel songs should not be looked upon as a command only. It is a most exalted privilege. God has allowed weak, erring men to please Him by praise through song! His people are wonderfully blessed and grateful that He will listen to and accept their feeble praises through singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

What is the purpose of uniting our voices in songs to God?

NOT FOR ENTERTAINMENT

Even though singing is gratifying and uplifting to Christians, it is not for the purpose of entertaining. Our worship to God involves feelings and actions far more noble than entertainment. It seems that some denominations almost compete with other sects in seeing which can afford more entertainment for their pleasure-crazed audiences. Fleshly entertainment has no place in worship to the One who seeks men who will worship Him in spirit and truth. If you desire entertainment for the flesh, look to some place other than the church of the Lord—it does not seek to please in such mortal ways.

NOT TO EXHIBIT ABILITIES

We now point out the fact that our singing is surely not for the purpose of showing to others our abilities in music. The church of the Lord has never employed the use of solos, duets, trios, quartets, choirs, etc., because such tends to encourage individuals to sing for the purpose of exhibiting their singing abilities or of entertaining others, while in congregational singing every saint is on an equal basis, humbly uniting with others in whole-hearted praise to our God. What a great privilege for God's children! Our

(Continued on Page 4)

confirm his words this way I suggest that they quit causing division by closing their mouths opening their Bibles and teaching Christ, baptizing them that believe, teaching them to observe all things taught by Christ and his apostles. If they can confirm their words to me I'll be their loudest follower telling what I saw everywhere.

Larry Price
Allen, Texas.

GEMS OR A LEATHER POUCH?

"Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."
(Col. 3:2)

A soldier prowled the deserted palace of the conquered Darius, searching for his share of the spoils. He discovered a leather pouch filled with opals, rubies, pearls, diamonds, sapphires and pieces of jade; an immense treasure. It would be folly to even attempt to estimate how much blood, sweat, tears, hunger and torture were represented in those crown jewels of Persia. Here was something of rare worth....doubtless the most precious possession in the palace. The glitter of the

gems was matched only by the glitter of greed in the soldier's eyes.

For fear of being robbed of his bulky treasure, the soldier emptied the sparkling jewels into the dirt of the palace floor and hid the leather pouch under his tunic. Oblivious to the worth of the stones, that man knew only one thing--he had found a wonderful leather bag in which to carry his lunch.

Have you ever made such a mistake? You have if you have thrown away the "precious stones" of real life in eagerness to find some material bauble to satisfy only your immediate desires.

An ancient philosopher accurately suggested that, "...life is a search for values, and the heart of the search for treasure is endless, because our sense of values constantly changes. What was of utmost importance to us yesterday is the object of indifference today. We are like a child who cannot live another hour without a certain toy. But within a matter of hours the "new has worn off" and the appeal is gone.

Our text urges us to look for lasting values. It does not advise us to resign from life in the monkish meditation of the monastery. But it does suggest seeing life against the background of eternity, no longer living as if only the world mattered. It does suggest a new set of values, a new way of judging things, a new sense of proportion.

Keep a substantial stock of "lasting values" in life's inventory. Don't settle for a leather bag when you can have real riches.

(Joe R. Barnett)

"WEEKENDING"

Since the last decade three things in our living standards have combined to create one of the greatest threats to the church since its inception. Innocent and unassuming individually, these traits, combined with the catalyst of self-indulgence, can eat away the strength of the body of Christ! A problem exists. It is time to meet it head-on.

The three factors are: (1) Mobility--This is the jet age. It is only 6 to 7 hours to Europe now, and plans for future passenger jets call for 2 hour capability. Also, an automobile can cruise at 70 mph all day long. We have the ability to go; (2) Financial Affluence--We Americans are rich! The poorest family on relief has a better income than 9 out of 10 families in the world. We have money to go on; (3) Time to Spare--The 40 hour work week is standard. Unions now talk of the 35 hour week. Vacations and weekends are getting longer. Next year national holidays will henceforth fall on Mondays. We have time to go. "Weekending" is becoming a way of life. Brethren, the implication of this mushrooming problem in the local church is tremendous!

Regular "weekending" mars the value of systematic Bible Study. Educators tell us that learning takes place in regular study sessions. We are to systematically study God's Word. That's obvious (II Tim. 2:15). But, many "skip" Bible study altogether while away on weekends. The regular learning process of those who do attend away from home is slowed down somewhat. (Could an algebra student learn effectively if he visited a different school each week and each school was studying at a different place in the text book!) Studying God's Word is more important than any secular subject.

Frequent absence can harm our influence with others in the local family of God. The Bible is replete with commands to Christians to strengthen one another (II Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:25). Though each individual absence may be, "legitimate," the adverse influence on a weak member or new convert due to wholesale "weekending" by members will have its effect.

The loss of financial support from local programs by a large scale exodus at

regular intervals is an established fact. A sampling of church bulletins will show us that the problem is universal. Giving as prospered to a local work of which we are a member should be apparent (I Cor. 16:1, 2; II Cor. 8). God expects all to give "as prospered," not "as often as in town."

Soul-winning is deferred with regular out of town visits. Seldom are effective cottage meeting teachers among habitual weekend travellers. It takes regular orderly sessions of Bible study plus an example of dedication to lead a soul to Jesus.

"Weekending" and frequent trips in the summer months can pass borders of wholesome recreation and move into the state of self-indulgence (II Tim. 3:4). In the process, the supply of manpower in the church can be washed down the drain of pleasure. No one denies that periods of recreation have a place. Everyone needs to "get away from it all;" occasionally weekends may legitimately be involved. The sincere Christian, however, will remember to use moderation in this area as in all other areas of life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33).

--BOB BARNHILL

The Boy Who Never Returned

Once upon a time a bright-eyed boy attended Bible School on the Lord's Day. He heard the teacher read and stress, "SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD." He was favorably impressed by the lesson. He was so thrilled that he went back to church that evening and asked for his teacher. He wanted to sit by her and be near her for she had won his little heart. To his dismay he was told that she was not present and seldom came for the night's services. His spirit fell, and he was heard to say, "And she told us--"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

(Selected)

And don't you want to do anything for me? Don't you want to do a little good to the souls of your friends who

Purpose of Singing (Con't.)

heartfelt thanks should be expressed to our Father for allowing us to sing gospel songs as an item of Christian worship!

NOT FOR A WAITING PERIOD

Do some Christians regard the singing part of public worship as a time taken for a non-essential, a time provided by the church for merely waiting on the people who are late to services? It seems so, doesn't it? Incidentally, I think tardiness to church services becomes a habit. Can't you, my brother, be at the services on time? Promptness shows more interest. Anyway, a very important part of the worship has been missed, and blessings not received, when we do not participate in the singing. Do you place importance in the singing by Christians? If not, you should cultivate an interest in that part of

the worship--in that act you are not worshipping in spirit and truth.

BUT TO PRAISE GOD

David said, "...thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with goodness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and may not be silent" (Ps. 30:12). Again, "...sing unto the Lord, all the earth, Sing unto the Lord, bless his name:...For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised..." From a reading of the Psalms it is evident that David placed a great importance in and received many blessings and comforts from singing unto God. The writer to the Hebrews wrote, "I

will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12).

There is far more importance attached to singing than many of us have thought. The purpose of singing is more important than entertaining ourselves or others, showing our abilities, or in other trivialities; but by songs we praise the Creator of heaven and earth. Lord, help us to sing with the spirit and the understanding. --BOBBY POYNOR

Let each one strive to know God's will - not man's.

True education is a gradual process, like the sunrise--not a sudden one, like lightning.

I Cor., 16:1-2 Authority (Con't.)

that the individual and the church can and must care for needy widows. But no where is there an example of the individual, or church, caring for orphans. So we conclude that who ever and how ever the case of the widow was handled, the same is true of the orphan. If not, why not?

I COR. 16:2

It is said that I Cor. 16:1-2 is not a command and if it were it does not apply to us today, for it was for a specific collection for the needy saints and we are left to choose our own day for collections. So the only reason we "lay by in store on the first day of the week" is because it is a convenient time. Now this is the belief of many and we need to examine the Bible and try to "rightly divide" it on the matter. First, this is a "command" for Paul gave the same "order" (disatasso, to arrange throughout) to the churches of Galatia. They were to "arrange throughout" the matter just as Paul told them which is the same as commanding them to do it a certain way. This includes the day as well as the way!

There is no place, nor instructions, on collecting money for the preacher, or preaching the Gospel. Yet Paul said the preacher was to be paid, and the churches sent money to him. So some way they gathered the money and got it to the source! We know that when the church carried out the command to care for widows, under the directions of the apostles, that God's law was respected. We are equally sure that when the church cares for orphans today the same as it does for widows, that God's law is respected.

Some like it better to say that I Cor. 16: 1-2 is "an example" of how the church took collections under instructions from Paul. This is fine, as apostolic example is just as binding (Lord's supper on first day of week) as the command to do it, I Cor. 11. So due to the fact that there are only TWO things for which the church collects money, PREACHING and HELPING NEEDY SAINTS, we know that Paul would not violate God's laws when giving instructins on the collections for ONE of these. Therefore if it is God's will that his people "lay by in store on the first day of

the week" for part of His work, then it has to be safe and Scriptural to do it the same way for money devoted to preaching the Gospel. We can do it on the "first day of the week" by faith, for God has spoken. But to take up collection ANY OTHER DAY, we are without ANY AUTHORITY and it can not be of faith, therefore it would not please God, Heb. 11:6; Romans 14:23. As has been stated, a place to worship, to baptize, support preacher, etc., are all inferred in "preaching the Gospel".

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

We even have to go to the Old Testament to learn that the church was established on the first day of the week (pentecost). Yet it was on the first day, Christ arose on the first day, the saints assembled on the first day, the Lord's supper was on the first day, then what better day could the Lord have chosen to collect money to tell about him to a lost world and to help his people in need. The first day of the week is the ONLY day we have authority to "lay by in store" during

the assembly of the saints, therefore we can do it "by faith".

Glynn Purdy

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