

as a means to support a family and comes under the same fire in the household of faith.

6. GIVE CAREFULLY.

"whomsoever ye shall approve."

Paul had no intention of taking charge of the collection. There were to be delegates and these must be approved by letters and the faithful choice of the Corinthians. The Greek makes this very clear that the delegates were to be those whom "you yourself will count worthy" of this mission. Paul undoubtedly would introduce the delegates to the church at Jerusalem, but they were chosen by the local group. Incidentally, here is sound reason for a local church and responsible leadership.

7. GIVE SPIRITUALLY.

"to bring your liberality."

The word translated "liberality" is in fact the word "grace." All is related to God's grace and the idea of thanksgiving (2 Cor. 8:4-7). No sense of duty can be registered here. This must be a work of the Spirit in the life.

8. GIVE GENEROUSLY

"if it be meet."

Paul leaves no room for assurance here because he employs a third class condition. It is an awkward expression in the Greek, but the sense is clear: he will go with the money also if it is an appropriate amount. He did not want to associate himself with a mean gift to Jerusalem! He was not sure of the generosity of the Corinthians and therefore withheld a word about his travels. It is interesting to note, however, that he never relinquished his authority as an apostle sent by God. He notes that "they shall go with me" and not "I shall go with them."

Conclusion The churches at Galatia were told to give also. They did! Corinth was dilatory in giving. With the emphatic pronoun, he says "you" also do. The aorist imperative means that it is to be done once and for all. Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"Church Collections"

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Introduction

1. The work of the Lord is supported through the children of God. It is they who are responsible to maintain the witness He has brought into being. They do this with the stewardship of the funds He makes available to them (2 Cor. 9:7).

2. In addition to the regular support of the local assembly, special needs arise. This was the case which provoked Paul's words in this text. There was a special need amongst the saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8, 9; Rom. 15:16-31; Gal. 2:10; Acts 24:17). For this Paul urges a generous giving. But in so doing, he also provides some helpful principles by which any true believer may be guided in his giving.

3. To call giving a "collection" is not wrong. This is the original Greek term employed here and only here (vv. 1, 2). Other terms are used elsewhere (cf. v. 3; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:5, 12; Acts 24:17). Whatever word is used, it is not a shame for the saints of God to talk about the supposed mundane item of finances and do this in a manner which will benefit the work of God! What are some of the ways advocated here by the apostle to give? Study them for your spiritual growth:

1. GIVE SYSTEMATICALLY.

"Upon the first day of the week."

The preposition which is rendered "upon" is used in its distributive force, hence every first day. "Week" is actually the word for sabbath in view of the fact that it is a Hebrew idiom and weeks were measured by sabbaths. The "Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10) was not yet common usage, but it is interesting to note that the Spirit avoided the use of heathen chronology. However, the use of the term "first day" suggests that the sabbath had been replaced as the day on which the church met to

worship the Lord. This is confirmed by other passages (cf. Acts 20:7). Indeed an early document called "The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles" calls the first day the "Lord's" without the use of the term "day" showing that it was a technical term even as we employ it today. The Sabbatarians have nothing upon which to stand if one correctly understands the dispensational character of the Word of God!

2. GIVE PERSONALLY.

"everyone of you."

This shows that all were to be treated alike. The rich were not to bear the burden of the poor. All were expected to give, no matter how little it might be. The preposition used here means that it was to be done "alongside of himself." This suggests the privacy of it all. It was to be done at home and not at church! Here is a strong word that giving must be a work of the Spirit of God in an individual heart and not the result of high pressures brought upon one's purse by some forceful raiser of funds! None, however, are given an exemption. All believers were expected to give.

3. GIVE HABITUALLY.

"lay by him in store."

The present active imperative shows the habitual character of the matter to "lay" it in store. The haphazard, guess, and hope so sort of giving is judiciously spoken against. The verb is followed by a present tense participle which again emphasized the continuance of an activity and should be rendered "making a treasure." The idea is that as one gradually adds to the amount set aside he accumulates a healthy treasure for the Lord's work. Here is an encouraging word for most of us: little as our gift might be, it gradually becomes a sum which may be termed a "treasure." Hallelujah. It is then what the funds are to be turned over to be used. Other Scriptures make it clear that this is never to become a burden to the one who gives (2 Cor. 9:7). Those who have learned to deal with God rightfully will find the discipline helpful in their own personal needs.

It is the folk who don't know how to give to God who find themselves in personal financial problems. It is the old story again: be right vertically and God in His mercy will come to your aid horizontally!

4. GIVE PROPORTIONATELY.

"as God hath prospered him."

Literally this means: "whatsoever he may prosper in." Hence, as God in grace prospers a man in whatever he does, let him take action with the funds God provides! This verb is an interesting one and found elsewhere in the N.T. (Rom. 1:10; 3 John 2; Acts 11:29). It means to "guide one happily on a journey." Hence the thought is this: as one is guided by the Lord on his journey, he will find that God providentially makes available to him a portion which he is supposed to put into the sacred "treasure." Many were slaves in the early church and therefore without means or stated incomes, but the rule of God still obtained! It is patent that only those who really meant business with a living God would exercise their hearts toward this giving principle! It would be God Who would provide and out of His provision the saint was to give. What a stewardship of His providence! If only the matter of giving were seen in this spiritual light!

5. GIVE REGULARLY.

"that there be no gatherings when I come."

Here is a purpose clause in the Greek. The object behind all the instructions just given is a clear one. There were to be no unseemly difficulties about raising money suddenly when Paul arrived. There was uncertainty as to when he would come and the use of the emphatic "then" hammers the truth that a collection would be totally out of place "then." Too often giving to the work of the Lord is a sort of sudden impulse and not a settled persuasion and principle. This is unworthy