

NOTE: The following is from *Comments on First and Second Corinthians*, Leslie M. Grant, chapter 6, pp 33-37.

In this chapter there is another matter raised in which the Corinthians had not been using proper judgment. No individual is singled out here, but the strong reproof of the apostle is for any who had laid charges in the law courts against their own brethren. Did they realize they were relying on the judgment of the unjust in this case? Was it becoming that they should accept the judgment of the ungodly at a time when they might have the fair and properly considered judgment of the saints of God?

Had they not been taught that the saints will judge the world? They will be fully identified with Christ in that discerning judgment that distinguishes between one matter and another that must be faced when the world is brought under judgment. How thoroughly wrong then it is that the world should sit in judgment as regards the saints. If saints are to judge the world, are they not able now to judge as regards the trivial personal matters between believers?

Verse 3 goes still beyond this to assert that we shall judge angels. It is as Man that the Lord Jesus is given authority to execute judgment, and this includes the judgment of angels (Jn. 5:22,27). And redeemed mankind will be fully identified with Him in this judgment. Then if so, how much more should a believer be able to judge as to things in this life. Let it be remembered that "he that is spiritual judgeth (or discerneth) all things" (ch. 2:16).

But a striking principle is laid down in verse 4. It is evident that for spiritual matters the discernment of a spiritual person is necessary; but if merely matters of this life, those "who are least esteemed in the assembly" should be expected to be competent for this. Not spirituality, but simple honesty is required for this. These matters are not of sufficient importance to take the time of those who engage themselves in the spiritual welfare of saints of God. Let us guard always against such things assuming an importance that overshadows the infinitely more important spiritual prosperity of the saints.

The matter was so serious that Paul presses them severely: "I speak to your shame." Among the entire assembly was there not one man able to exercise any discerning judgment in such cases of dissension among brethren over mere material possessions? Going to law before unbelievers was utterly disgraceful, and he allows no excuse for it whatever. In fact, much rather than this, one should allow himself to be defrauded. And if one did

take his brother to law, he was himself guilty of defrauding his brother - defrauding him of the right at least to have the matter settled by his brethren.

Verse 9 is no doubt intended to cut two ways. First, the unrighteous to whose judgment they had been appealing would not even themselves inherit the kingdom of God, where authority is maintained in true righteousness. But secondly, let the Corinthians judge in themselves as to the way in which they by their actions were guilty of resembling the unrighteous. For as to the list of evil characters that follows, it is positively declared they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Some of the Corinthians had themselves been so classified before conversion, but were now washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. The washing here is not evidently the cleansing by blood, though of course this was true of them too. But it is the washing by the Spirit, as in Titus 3:5, no doubt through the application of the water of the Word, and therefore having a moral effect in the soul. The sanctification too, being that of the Spirit, would speak of their being set apart not only positionally, but in practical, moral character, from a world of evil, and to the Lord. Justification too, though it is positional in its elementary character, putting the individual into a place of perfect righteousness before God, is yet here shown to have a practical character also attached to it by the fact of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. "In the name of the Lord Jesus" therefore is the positional side of the truth, but "by the Spirit of our God" is the side of the vital work done in the soul to give expression to this. There was no right reason therefore, that fullest expression should not be given to this.*

These things are manifestly not accomplished by the law, but by the grace of God; and the apostle will not allow the thought of mere legality entering into this matter. If one insists now that grace has made "all things lawful," yet grace has a powerful voice to persuade the individual that "all things are not expedient." Grace teaches us the opposite of self-indulgence (Ti. 2:11,12). And it teaches with living power to the renewed heart. If "all things are lawful," yet personal faith will not be brought under the power of mere "things." The believer has a Master who is supreme, and it is only right therefore, that he should allow nothing else to dominate him.

"Meats" are used here as an apt example** of the mere temporal things that may too easily get control of a

man. One may allow his appetite to make him a virtual slave to food; but God will destroy both the belly and the meats. Should mere temporary things govern us? Should temporal pleasures hold such power over a believer that it should pervert the proper use for which God has given us created things? Our own body is for the Lord, not for fornication, not for the mere gratification of fleshly lusts. And how precious too, the words, "and the Lord for the body." He has vital concern for the proper well-being of our bodies, not merely of our spirit and soul; and we may entrust our bodily needs into His own hand with utter confidence, rather than concentrating on taking thought for our life or our body (Mt. 6:25).

Indeed, as God raised up the body of the Lord Jesus from among the dead, so will He raise up our bodies. The care of our bodies then is in the power of His own hand, and it is for us now to use them rightly, not to abuse them. In fact, the striking statement is made that "our bodies are the members of Christ." What a dignity is this given to the body! In its present state, of course, it is subject to decay and death, but this is only temporary, and it is to be honorably and properly treated for the Lord's sake. How grossly wrong to take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot! It is a practical denial of what is actually true. In practice the joining of two bodies together makes them one, as God declared when He created the woman for the man. "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." It is a higher, more precious, and eternal unity, and though spiritual, yet the believer's body is to share in this blessing for eternity.

"Flee fornication." In this one is not told to fight, but to keep far from it, as Joseph fled from the wife of Potiphar. Other sins may not involve the body in this way, but this is sin against one's own body. And as well as our bodies being the members of Christ, now we are told,

"Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." The Spirit of God dwells within our body in order to display in us the precious reality of His character in our practical lives. Notice that it is not said that our spirits or souls are His temple, but our bodies. So that when we are told, "Ye are not your own," we cannot regard this as being merely in regard to our spiritual interests, but fully applicable to our bodies. Being bought with a price - a price so infinitely great - certainly we are totally the property of the Living God; and it is only right and becoming that we should glorify God in our body.

End of extract from L. M. Grant

Notes by R. M. Canner

* The preceding paragraph makes the point that our character and daily life should clearly show out the positions we each have in Christ:

- > WASHED: morally and doctrinally pure.
- > SANCTIFIED: set apart, separated from evil and the world.
- > JUSTIFIED: upright and righteous conduct.

** Other examples, besides eating, might include recreational activities (spectator or participating), games, music, sports, hobbies, shopping, a job or career, family, marriage, and many other good things. We clearly can enjoy such temporal things in moderation but should not let ourselves become controlled by them, much less by evil things.

(Temporal: things of the world, temporary not heavenly and eternal)

Compiled by Ron Canner, March 5, 2003