

Man

As we observe that woman is God's gift to man we should realize just how precious she is in the sight of God and should therefore be in the sight of man. As a gift she sets before us something of God's grace. If man is the image of God in a special way depicting God's sovereignty, surely woman is the image of God in a singular way showing God's grace and mercy. Here was a man in need (Genesis 2:18). God, unasked and without consultation, supplied that need in the form of a woman. Yes woman is God's gracious gift to man. When we are reminded of the apostle's words "but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31-32) do we not stand in amazement at the glorious underlying teaching of this short passage in Genesis?

Conclusion

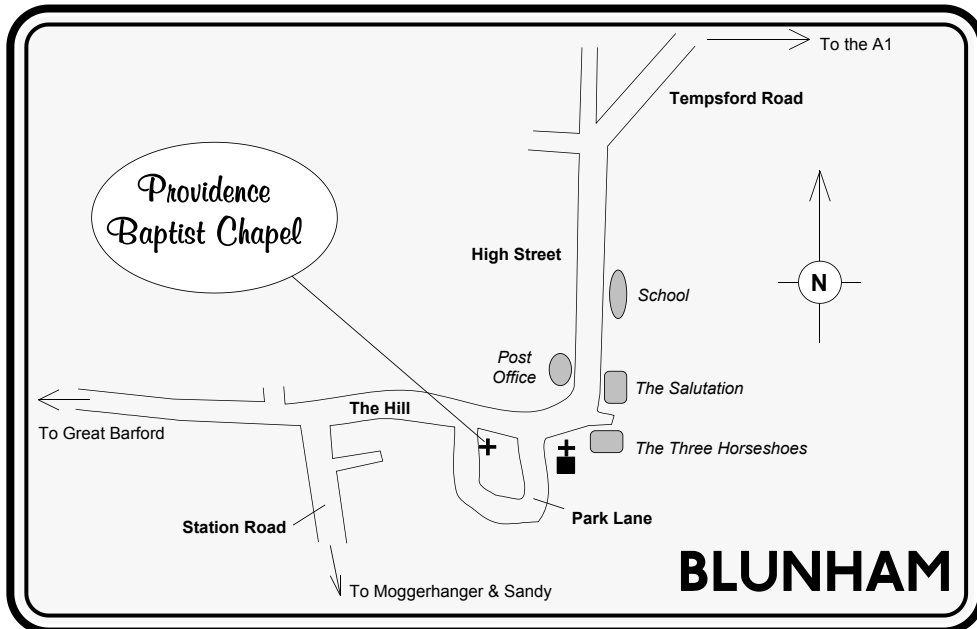
In conclusion the feminist and homosexual lobby of our generation cannot justly charge Scripture and Christianity with bigotry or intolerance of relationships between men and women, or between members of the same sex. When we carefully examine Scripture teaching in these matters all is very clear. Man cannot find his fulfilment with man any more than woman with woman. Woman was made to complement man, a task which she does perfectly, physically, emotionally and spiritually. To deviate from God's own order is to court disaster and reap the appropriate consequences. Thank God that men are men, women are women and that each glorifies God in carrying out their own biblical role.

Times of Services:

Sunday Morning 10:30 am

Sunday Evening 6:00 pm

Week evening (Friday) 7:00 pm



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First Steps

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No.4

Dear Reader,

After all the hype and all the stories about what might happen, it finally arrived - the year 2000. The most significant thing should have been that it was 2000 years since Jesus was born, but we didn't hear much about that. Perhaps we think nothing has changed. Well one thing has changed, we are all nearer to eternity than we were - do we ever think about it? Jesus, when here on earth, in his ministry said "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Perhaps you think "I don't need Jesus", why not? The Bible tells us we must all stand before him. The apostle Paul tells us in the Book of Acts, "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." We all enjoy the wonderful things in this world that he created, but that won't be enough to save our souls. We need to be able to say as Thomas said, "My Lord and my God"

Why don't you come along here to the chapel in Park Lane. A warm welcome awaits you. Hear the wonderful message about Jesus - it's as relevant today as it was 2000 years ago. The chapel is for public worship and anyone can come, you don't have to have connections with anyone else who comes or be this or that. Everyone is welcome to hear the Word of God and we look forward to seeing you.

David Green, Deacon at Providence Chapel

CONTENTS:

•YOUR HEALTH MAY BE WORSE THAN YOU THINK! (CONTINUED)

PAGE 1

•WOMEN, GOD'S GIFT TO MEN

PAGE 2

YOUR HEALTH MAY BE WORSE THAN YOU THINK!

Last issue we were thinking about the health of our souls, like we would our physical health - something that people are often concerned about. We considered the soul to be a very unhealthy 'organ', riddled with 'disease':—

Checking vital organs

What about the virtue of the soul which we call humility? Is this diseased too? Of course it is, because everyone seems to suffer from the cancer of pride. For most people the great motive for living is pride. What will people think of them? How can they create a good impression?

People boast, swagger and show off endlessly. They fight tooth and nail for

promotion, power and superiority. Sickening pride has buried itself deeply into the soul so that humility has shrivelled out of all recognition.

If we examine the three main parts of the personality, what condition shall we find them in? The mind or intellect is full of selfish and impure thoughts. It is swollen and discoloured by a wide range of sinful schemes and thoughts. Prominent among them are selfishness, self-love, hatred and hostility.

The emotions are seriously deformed. These too are covered with the cancer of self-love as well as other tumours which we call lusts.

The will is so badly deformed that it works in terrible and unreasonable convulsions. It either responds with alacrity to every passing temptation, or it utterly refuses to move, becoming obstinate and stubborn.

Truly this is a stunning and depressing report on various aspects of the soul. If we ever heard such a devastating assessment of our physical health we would realise that survival was impossible.

Years ago we used to see mass X-ray caravans in the cities. The idea was to detect T.B. early enough to gain the best chance of treating it. The trouble was that the public had to be persuaded to enter the X-ray caravans on the off-chance of hearing bad news. Many people would rather not know the worst. This is exactly the case with message of the Bible. If we cannot get people to realise that the soul is in a desperately diseased condition then they will never seek the healing power of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Physician of Souls. Let me describe some of the worst features of sin as it gets free course in our lives. It is the most infectious disease imaginable. If for example, we bring children into the world, our weaknesses and corruptions will be transmitted to them through our example and the atmosphere of home life. They will inevitably absorb some of our worst traits.

Another thing about sin is that it is a very weakening and highly progressive disease. Somehow we always imagine that in ten or fifteen years time we will be much the same people as we are today in basic personality, outlook and character. But this is never the case. There is bound to be a great and inescapable deterioration in us because the disease of sin will take its toll.

Anyone who is past thirty can prove this easily. Just try to recall what you (and your old friends) were like in teenage or in early twenties. Note how much everyone has changed. Note particularly how all have hardened and come to accept more compromise in life. Even the most idealistic members of that once youthful circle have lost their rare, unselfish trait.

Observe how each one has become so much more materialistic, cynical, and sadly, more selfish also. You will be compelled to agree that any attractive aspects which once drew you together are fast slipping away. Sin is always progressive.

Living with pain

A further feature of sin is the fact that it is a very painful disease. Sinful thoughts, words or

deeds may not necessarily hurt at the time, but the consequences are always painful. A life lived at the mercy of every temptation, whim and passion costs youth and years, not to mention money.

It leads to heartbreak, disappointment, remorse, bitterness and even neurosis. Half the pills swallowed daily in this sin-sick world are really palliatives for the deeper disease of the soul.

In addition to all this, sin is a terribly isolating disease. It separates us from each other, but most of all it separates us from God. It is solely because of the selfishness, rottenness and pride in the human heart that we fall out with each other and become enemies.

What can be done about this disease? Is a doctor any use, or a psychologist? Is there any drug or therapy? No, says the Bible, as far as man is concerned it is utterly untreatable.

There is nothing we can do to halt or to heal this disease. We have no remedies at all.

All man can do is administer painkillers. He can only dull the effects of the disease by seeking pleasure and entertainment, or by turning to drink to deaden the discomfort. Alternatively he can bury his heart in his business, or in possessions or anything else which may help to subdue the aching void within.

This only hope for curing the soul's disease is to realise that we cannot cure it and to turn to God to be forgiven and healed. He alone can wash away the rebellion and the proud

independence which brought this disease into the world in the first place. He alone can wash away the guilt and the deep perversion of years of sin.

Because God is perfect and holy, if He is to forgive and heal any member of the human race, He must first purge away the guilt which renders us unfit for fellowship or contact with Him.

In order to forgive us God had to come into this world Himself to suffer the punishment of our sin in our place. That is what Christ was doing when He suffered and died on the Cross of Calvary 2000 years ago. There He made a personal atonement for the sin of all who turn to Him for help.

Before anyone can be saved from the disease of sin, there must be an urgent approach to the



Great Physician. We must be deeply anxious about the disease in the soul, and we must really want to be healed. Then Christ must be approached along these lines: you must pray to Him telling Him about your condition, and you must acknowledge that you deserve to be condemned and discarded for ever.

You must sincerely repent of your sin. Christ can perform radical divine surgery in your life, accomplishing results which you could not even begin to achieve yourself.

The only cure

The Lord can destroy the potency of the disease and give a completely new life; a transformed personality.

The side effects of the disease of sin will also be removed, such as the numbness of soul which made it impossible for you to pray or to feel God. You will come to love Him and know Him. All these things He will do for you and you will know that you have been changed. You will know that He has blessed you and healed your disease.

How many people will spend the rest of their lives with sin capturing more and more of the soul, until it finally overwhelms them in death and all hope is gone?

There is no physician on earth like Christ. There is no doctor in human medicine who cures his patients by taking the force and consequences of the disease himself. That is the exclusive glory of Christ Himself - the Physician of Souls.

WOMEN, GOD'S GIFT TO MEN

We are living in a generation that has turned its back on God, ignored His divine will and plan and abandoned His Word and precepts. Perhaps this is most clearly seen in the relationships that are not only tolerated but encouraged between men and women. Christian values are scorned and ridiculed on every hand, often quite viciously. Where the principle of men's headship and the women's supporting role is taught and practised, the church is accused of a patronizing attitude and of being against women. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just ponder for a moment the value that God and the Bible place upon women.

God made Woman

When the Scripture refers to a woman being made (Genesis 2:22) it uses a word emphasizing the sense that she was constructed. Eve was not a product, any more

than Adam, of some evolutionary process. She has been put together according to plan and design for a specific purpose. Her maker is the LORD God (Genesis 2:22) Yes, the same One who formed man out of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7) constructed woman out of the side of the man. The builder of woman is the same God whose sovereign power and order are displayed in creation's work. He is the same God who declares Himself satisfied with all His works which He has done for the specific purpose of bringing glory, honour and praise to His own name. He made woman with a purpose in mind. The purpose being that she should honour Him by fulfilling the role and function for which He designed and made her. Moreover God has given woman the ability to do what He designed her to do. It is important to notice that He constructed her, without recourse to man or discussion with him. It was in His own sovereign plan, that God designed her and by His own hands He made her.

The making of Woman

When God made woman He did two things. First God made Adam fall into a deep sleep (Genesis 2:21). Adam was put into a state that looked like death, but which was most definitely not death. Though perfect, Adam is rendered perfectly helpless. God is going to provide a supporter, a helper, suitable for man, yet without man's assistance or understanding. Thus God preserves His own integrity.

While asleep, God takes one of Adam's ribs, more correctly rendered part of his side and from it constructed the woman (Genesis 2:22).

As we recognize this we can immediately see that woman is actually part of man. As such she is God's own completion of man and must therefore be equal with man. As Matthew Henry quaintly says "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam. Not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."

Woman, since Scripture declares it, is equal with man therefore in construction and nature and thus in her standing before God. Are we not taught that there is neither male nor female in the spiritual economy? (Galatians 3:28)

God gave Woman to

