The Christian Courier



Send all correspondence to 17103 Bixby Avenue, Bellflower, CA 90706

JANUARY 1991

****

"O SEND OUT THY LIGHT AND THY TRUTH: LET THEM LEAD ME; LET THEM BRING ME UNTO THY HOLY HILL, AND TO THY TABERNACLES."

Psalm 43:3

****

CONSCIENCE

What about the weak brother's conscience? What about the strong brother's conscience? Are there scriptural rules governing the right or wrong use of our conscience, in the allowing ourselves what we call "christian liberty"? I believe there is.

Let's leave out all imaginations, opinions, and personal conclusions; and study scriptures only. Jer. 23:35 "Thus shall ye say everyone to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, What hath the Lord answered."

Taking this as our rule, we are safely following the Lord. Rom. 14:1, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." What would be doubtful disputations? It must be disputing about opinions: things not found in the Bible. II Tim. 3:16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." These doubtful things could only be these liberties we might claim, if they are called in question. Because, 1 Peter 3:15 commands, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope which is in you, with meekness and fear." This subject is dealt with in Rom. 14:1-13(14) "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (15) But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." 1 Cor. 13 states that if we have not charity, "I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (13) "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Rom. 14:19 "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and the things wherewith we may edify one another." (21) "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is make weak."

What about the so-called liberty approved by our conscience? (22), "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God, Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 15:1-2 "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let everyone please his neighbor for his good to edification."

I Cor. 8:9, "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. (10) If any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (12) But when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. (13) Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

We know that where the Lord has commanded, or given an example for us to follow, we have no liberty to disobey the command; also where the Lord has forbidden a thing, we have no liberty. It is the things neither commanded nor forbidden in any way scripturally, where we are pleased to exercise liberties. But they are still not legal liberties unless they comply with all these scriptural rules. Choosing to exercise "liberty" that is not scriptural, involves a heavy responsibility to be judged, in the judgement day.

I Cor. 10:23-33, another instance for us not follow conscience mandated (not scriptural) liberties, is, if someone present calls it in question. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient, all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice to idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof: conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?" Paul's answer: (31) "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (32) "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. (1 Cor. 11:1) "Be ye therefore followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

The words of Christ: Luke 17:1-2 "Then said he unto the disciples, it is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

I know the Bible says if a woman will learn anything, let her ask her husband at home. I am a widow. I find this subject

puzzling. Here are the results of my study. Hope some of my brethren who read "The Courier" will comment and correct.

Your sister in Christ,
Lurana McCluskey
18038 Penn Valley Dr.
Penn Valley, CA 95946

****

LIBERTY - WHAT ARE WE SET FREE FROM?

This is a subject that is easy to misunderstand. We may be tempted to think in our own minds that anything that is not specifically condemned we have liberty to do or refrain from doing. But this is just not what the Bible teaches at all. We find that what we are set free from is very specific, and that it is dangerous to go beyond that.

First of all, we find many scriptures talking of liberty as opposite of being in prison or a slave. For example, I Cor. 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, where we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

In I Cor. 9:1 Paul writes of another freedom. "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" Then he explains what this freedom is. Let's notice verses 11-14. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (Notice that Paul did not go to Corinth full-time and be their preacher. He lived to spread the Gospel, establish new congregations, and help strengthen existing ones. This is the man we have freedom to pay, not a full-time preacher for one congregation).

We find in the scriptures that we have been set free from sin. John 8:31-32 "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Free from what? Verse 34 tells us free from sin. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." We don't want to be servants of sin; we want to be free from it. In Rom. 6:16-18, Paul taught the same lesson that Jesus did. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." In verse 22 we read "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Rom. 8:21 "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Liberty from what? In verses 5-13 you find that it is liberty from the carnal mind, from living after the flesh.

When you research the scriptures carefully, there is only one more thing we are give liberty from. That is the law of Moses. All the scriptures that we are tempted to apply to what we want to do, look at closely. You find that they all refer to the fact that we aren't bound to the law anymore. We can eat meats, we don't have to keep the Sabbath day, we don't have to be circumcised, etc. It is very dangerous to expand liberty (or any other subject) beyond what is actually taught in the scriptures. Let's study some of the scriptures on the word and the subject, to see that it is the law of Moses that this subject deals with. We will examine some, and list the rest os that you may study all the applicable scriptures yourself.

Let's look first at the fourteenth chapter of Romans. The word "liberty" does not appear here, but the principles taught are the same as the scriptures where the word appears. The whole chapter deals with the subject, and I encourage you to read it and apply it. You will find the underlying theme is that there are certain things we are allowed to do, but we must not allow this liberty to cause a weak brother to stumble. Verse 6 tells us specifically what we have liberty to do. "He

that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." We are allowed to eat meats or refrain from it, and we are allowed to keep or not keep the sabbath day. Notice also verses 14 and 15. First, verse 14. "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unlean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Does this mean that if we don't esteem fornication, adultery, thus we are free to commit them? Or does it mean anything not specifically condemned is up to us to determine unclean or not? To take either of those positions is to add our own opinion to what the Bible actually says here. But we are not left in the position of having to go by our own opinion. Because verse 15 tells us exactly what is not unclean of itself. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."

Let's look next to I Cor. 6:12 "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." All what things are lawful? Anything we want to do? Anything we want to do not specifically condemned? Again, the Bible says neither of these things. Verse 13 tells us exactly what things. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." Again what we are allowed to do is eat meats that the law of Moses forbade Jews to eat.

The 8th chapter of I Corinthians again speaks of our liberty to eat meat. And it reinforces the teaching of Romans 14 to not let that liberty cause a weak brother to stumble. Let's read verses 8-13 "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak." Do you see the relationship? The liberty is to eat meat.

Let's read another passage of scripture. Look to the 5th chapter of Galatians. Verse one encourages us to "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,a nd be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." What was that bondage? What are we at liberty from? Verse 2 - "Behold, I

Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Again, we are free from the law. Paul continues this thought. In verse 6 we read, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." In verse 13 he dispells completely any thought that we can determine our liberties for ourselves, and verse 14 tells us again plainly what we have liberty from. Verse 13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Verse 14, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Please study these additional scriptures carefully. You will find that they, too, tell us we are set free from the law of Moses. None of them tell us we can determine our own liberties. I Cor. 10:22-33 tells us all meats are lawful for us to eat. II Cor. 3:13-17 tells us there is liberty because the law was abolished. Gal. 2:3-5 grants us liberty from circumcisioin. Col. 2:14-22 tells us the law is blotted out. James 1:25 tells us we now have a perfect law of liberty. James 2:10-12 tells us we will be judged by the law of liberty, not the law of Moses. As you study these scriptures carefully you will find other good principles, such as being merciful, not using liberty as a stumblingblock for others, being doers of the work, etc. We didn't go into these principles because of space. The focus of this particular study is: What do we have liberty from? These scriptures show we have liberty from the law of Moses, and from sin, nothing more.

Peter gives two warnings about liberty, one in each of his epistles. I Peter 2:16 "As free, and not using your liberty for the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

Brothers and Sisters, let's be careful. Satan really is out there, and he wants our souls. He wants us to die that second death eternally with him. Don't let him bring you back into the bondage of sin.

In love of peace, and your soul,
Brother Terry Warford

P.S. Brothers and sisters, please don't think I am trying to point any fingers or cause any trouble with this article. My

hope is that this will be a blessing to you in understanding what the Bible does say on this deep subject. Satan is happy to deceive us and cause division on this subject. The only way to save our souls, and bring peace is through understanding the Bible. This only was my aim. Not to hurt feelings, or judge, but to speak the truth in love.

Please note that we have moved from Oklahoma to Seattle, Washington. We are currently living in an apartment provided by Bro. Ellis and Sis. Lynell Forsman, so our address is the same as theirs - 1034 So. 140th, Seattle, WA 98168. We send our love to all of you.

****

THROW IT OUT

For a number of years we had yard sales at least once a year. A number of us would get together and gather up things to sell. In going through our garages, storage areas, or closets, we would sometimes have a hard time deciding what to keep and what to get rid of. Finally, our son, Jerry, came up with the correct solution - "When in doubt, Throw it out!" In reflecting on our christian life, should not this be our attitude? Paul tell us to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Heb. 12:1. He also tells us that he "gave up everything for Christ." Is this our attitude or are we just giving up what is convenient? Have we put on all new garments which are the "Righteousness of Saints", or are our closets still full of the old clothes of covetousness - I Thess. 2:5; cloak of maliciousness - I Pet. 2:16; the cloak of Envy and all worldliness - II Cor. 5:17? "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a <u>new</u> creature; old things are past away. Behold <u>all things</u> are become new." Rom. 14:22-23 "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemeth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." (because he has a character conscience). "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of Faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is <u>sin</u>." We realize that Paul was talking about eating and drinking, but this also applies to every facet of our lives.

Brethren, let us not think that <u>maybe</u> something is all right, let us be <u>sure</u> and if there is the <u>least</u> doubt, let's throw it out and have a clean closet, free from sin and worldly fashions.

Let us be sure of Heaven and not just wish for it. Let us be christians, and not just church members with our closets full of old garments. We don't need to fear that we will be found naked in the Day of Judgment if we throw out our old clothes, for God our Heavenly Father will provide us with new. Brethren, when in doubt, throw it out!

Written in love,
Howard McCay
3904 Knobel Ave. #8
Yakima, WA 98902

****

"AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY."

Prov. 25:25

****

LA HABRA, CALIFORNIA

Greetings to all:

Randolph and I drove up to Medford, Oregon in October as Randolph's brother, Fay I. Kellems passed away on October 16th. He was 86 years old last April. The funeral was October 18th at Grants Pass, Oregon. Brother Harry Wegley officiated at the graveside service. Singing was by the grandchildren of Fay and Myrtle. It was beautiful. By the way, Myrtle is my sister, and we sisters married brothers.

We at the La Habra church miss Marion and Mary Serrano very much. It was nice to have Brother Mark and Sister Tammy Perigen and their children, Stephen and Chelsea, at church. Brother Mark gave us a good lesson. We were also happy to have Al and Okja Way with us last Sunday to visit and help out.

We are thankful to God that J.B. Nunnally is out of the hospital as of November 27th, after his open heart surgery on November 9th. We hope he continues to do well and will be with us at church soon.

We are enclosing a check to help out with the Courier.

With Christian love,
Randolph and Olive Kellems

****

YUMA, ARIZONA

Greetings and best wishes to all:

The church here in Yuma is doing well. There is still some illness, but most are improving. Brother Sonny Boling has some problems with kidney stones and had tests run in Pheonix for a heart condition. His good news was that his heart checked out okay.

We have had good attendance on Sundays for the past couple of weeks. We are pleased to have some new people coming regularly and have great hopes that they will become members.

The work on our kitchen is completed. It is a great improvement and looks good. Verda Nelson's daughter, Vicki, and friends built a patio on the kitchen; it is an asset and looks very good. They did a great job.

Our meeting begins the 23rd of this month. Everyone has worked hard an planned to make this a very good meeting. We are looking forward to having a lot of Christian fellowship and visiting together. Hope to see you all here.

In Christian love,
The Church in Yuma
by Harry Davis

****

BELLFLOWER, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We hope this finds everyone doing well this holiday season. All of us here are in good health for which we give thanks to God for. It's hard to believe that another year is now over. A lot has happened among us this past year that I'm sure has brought us closer together and hopefully, closer to God.

We are happy to report that two more people have dedicated their life to Christ. Bill and Darla La Faye from the La Habra congregation were worshipping with us and came forward confessing Jesus Christ and asking to be baptized. We rejoice in knowing that these two have given themselves to Christ. Our prayers are with them so they will remain strong and faithful to the Lord.

This past month we have been blessed with several visitors meeting with us. Brother Michael Geho from Seattle, WA came and met with us one Sunday. We invite him back anytime, as this was the first time most of us met him and we would like to get to know him better. It was nice having him. Brother and Sister Gary and Jane Ferguson and their daughter, Amanda; Sister Joan Shea and daughter and son-in-law, Bill and Darla La Faye, and their daughter, Danielle, from the La Habra congregation came and worshipped with us at various times. We certainly appreciate those from La Habra coming over and helping us out. One of my co-workers, Joan McDonough came and brought her family one Sunday. All in all, we have had a good month. We thank all those who came and welcome you back whenever you can.

We have also asked Brother Jim Brown to hold our meeting for us this summer and he has consented. Our meeting dates will be from June 30 to July 7. We are looking forward to hearing his lessons and invite any who can to come and be with us for a week of fellowship and learning God's word. We had such a wonderful meeting last year with lots of young people and congregations being represented. We hope you can come this year.

In Christian love,
Brother Gerald Brockman

****

EDITOR'S NOTE

We hope all is well in the body of Christ. As we have previously mentioned, we have been having trouble with the typewriter and have been using a borrowed typewriter. The price to repair it exceeded the worth of the machine, so we purchased a new typewriter which suits the needs of the Courier much better.

Also, we seem to be having problems with getting The Courier to some congregations. The post office returns a new congregation every month, so please contact us if you have changed your address as each returned package costs the Courier in postage. We will do our best to find out what the problem might be. Please don't think you have been taken off the mailing list, just drop us a line with your correct address on it and we will check it against our list. As you all know, the price of postage will soon be going up, so please let us know if you receive unused copies as this could save us a substantial amount.

You questions and comments about the paper are welcome. We are no more than servants and are just as apt to make mistakes as anyone else. We would appreciate your input.

Thank you and God bless,
The Editors

****

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Cedaredge, Colorado	June 29 - July 7	Camp
Bellflower, California	June 30 - July 7	Jim Brown
Selah, Washington	July 28 - August 4	To Be Announced

****

BAPTISMS

Bill and Darla La Faye were baptized on December 9th of the La Habra, California congregation.

****

"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."

Psalm 15:1-2