

## PROVIDING FOR ONE'S NATURAL HOUSEHOLD

**"If any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house [margin, kindred], he hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." – 1 Tim. 5:8.**

THIS PASSAGE may be properly paraphrased thus: He who provides not for those dependent upon him, especially those of his own household, hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This relates primarily to a Christian *husband* and his duty *toward his wife and his children*. If the husband should cease to provide for the wife, cease to cherish her and, on the contrary, should desert her, either in heart, in affection, or actually, it would imply that he had seriously departed from the Lord, from the guidance of the Spirit, and from "The wisdom that cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits."

Under these circumstances we could not consider such an one approved of the Lord as an "*overcomer*," until after reformation. Then, too, every parent owes it to his child to give him more of a start in life than merely the imperfect, dying little body born into the world. Having brought children into the world, it becomes the duty of parents to see to their *reasonable establishment in it*. This includes not only the dispensing of *food* and *rayment* during childhood and youth, but also the provision of *intellectual* and *moral* instructions, to which we have more than once referred; and all this means laying up, aside from personal consumption, in the interest of the children.

Seeing the uncertainties of life, it would not be an unreasonable application of the Scriptural injunction for the parent to have something laid up for the necessities of his family in the event of his death before they had reached maturity. It is not our thought that the Apostle meant that parents should seek to lay up fortunes for their children to quarrel

over and be injured by. The child fairly well born and who receives a reasonable education and guidance to maturity *is well off* and has a rich legacy in himself; and the parent who has made such provision for his children has every reason to feel that he has been ruled in the matter by a sound mind, the Holy Spirit, the disposition approved by the Lord, even though he leave no property to his family, or not more than a shelter or home. Such a man has discharged his stewardship; and such children will be sure in the end to appreciate his faithfulness.

We should manifest an interest in those related to us by *ties of blood* more than in mankind in general. If the Spirit of the Lord leads us to be kind and gracious toward humanity in general, it would imply that our sentiments toward our *relatives* should be *specially considered* by us and be, to the extent of our opportunities, helpful. Nevertheless, it would not be wise, according to our judgment, nor in harmony with the instructions of the Scriptures, nor in accord with the examples which they set before us of our Lord's conduct and the conduct of the Apostles, for us to extend a very special fellowship to our earthly relatives; or to receive them and treat them better than, or even as well as, we would treat the household of faith. [R4854 : page 219]

We here make an exception of such close relationships as would have a demand upon us in accord with the Apostle's words, "He that provideth not for *his own*, ...hath *denied the faith*." In general – outside of the exceptions above – we are to apply the Apostle's words, "As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10.) Next to the household of faith should come our more distant relatives.

Of course, from the standpoint of the New Creation, the new relationship, the members of the Body of Christ would be members of our own household, and their temporalities would be *in some measure* our responsibility. We are, however, living in a time not the same as that in which our Lord lived; now, there are public charities;

for this reason this passage would not apply with the same force as when the Apostle spoke these words. One would be making proper provisions, sometimes, when he paid his share of the taxes toward the general weal; and it might, perhaps, be necessary to avail *himself* of a share in those benefits, either on his own account later, or on account of some of his own friends – members of his family.

## **BUILDING ONE ANOTHER UP IN THE HOLY FAITH**

*Christ is the Head of His own household.* He does not intend that His people shall be unnecessarily burdensome to each other, but each should feel a responsibility in respect to others and gladly lend a helping hand to strengthen, encourage and bless, "building each other up in the most holy faith." It evidently was the intention of our Lord to draw together His followers as a *new family*, a *new household*, the "*household of faith.*" Hence, we find the repeated injunction and encouragement for mutual fellowship, mutual helpfulness and regular association, with the promise that where two or three meet in the Lord's name He will be specially present with them to grant a blessing; and that His people should not forget the assembling of themselves together.

Returning to our text we note that the Apostle says that one neglecting his obligations to *his own family* would be *denying the faith*. The faith that we profess is not merely a faith in certain things that we are getting, but it affects also *matters of propriety*, our *character*, all of life's affairs in general. We profess to love God more than others love Him. We profess to love our neighbor as ourselves. We profess to take this as our standard. If a man's responsibility to his neighbor is that he love him as himself, then this would bear in with *double force* as to his *own family*. If one is derelict *there*, he is *misrepresenting the doctrines of Christ which he professes*. To live contrary to the doctrines one professes would be to *deny his faith*. And so one who would live in violation of these

recognized standards of life would be living below the world instead of above the world.

As for denying *the faith*, the thought is that there would be a lack of love, of sympathy, regarding the interests of the ones neglected and, therefore, a denying of the faith to that extent. What a perfect example of unselfishness we have in our Master, who, when in the greatest of trouble and anguish, was thinking sympathetically of others! We notice His provision for the welfare of His mother, whom He consigned to the care of the loving John, thus showing our Lord's approval of the noble characteristics displayed by John in pressing near to his Master in this trying hour!

