

Our Christian Obligation to Care

Whether or not the Christian should separate themselves from the world is not open to debate. The question has been settled for him by the Sacred Scriptures, an authority from which there can be no appeal.

Christ's Prayer for His disciples, Christians, was very plain.

John 17:16 [NIV] *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."*

James was just as plain in his general letter to all Christians.

James 4:4 [NIV] *"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."*

The apostle John was just as strong in his letter to the Church,

1 John 2:15 [NIV] *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*

Such teaching as this would appear to be plain enough, and there should be no doubt about what is intended.

But we must never underestimate the ability of the human mind to get itself lost on a paved highway in broad daylight.

Some well-intentioned souls have managed to get themselves confused about their relation to the world and have sought to escape it by hiding from it.

They read into the biblical command to separate from the world the idea of complete withdrawal from all human activities and seek peace of heart by cutting themselves off, as far as possible, from the great stream of human life and thought.

And that is not good.

We human beings were made for each other, and what any of us is doing at any time cannot be a matter of indifference to the rest of us.

On the human plane all men are brothers.

The Son of Man, Jesus Christ, never denied this loving tie with humankind.

Luke 13:34 [NIV] *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"*

Jesus realising what was about to happen in Jerusalem as a result of their sinful stubborn nature, expressed His love and compassion for them.

Luke 23:33-34 [NIV] *"When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*

Jesus even in his hour of painful death, prayed for the men who were so blind as to nail their longed-for Messiah [Saviour] to the cross.

Romans 9:1-3 [NIV] *“I speak the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit, I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race.”*

Paul who burned with desire to be like Jesus Christ his Lord, wept over unbelieving Jews, to the point of giving up his eternal life.

To seek tranquillity of mind by stopping our ears to the cries of human pain is NOT the mind of a Christian.

We Christians should never try to escape from the burdens and woes of life among men. The hermit and the anchorite sound good in poetry, but stripped of their artificial romance, they are **not** good examples of what the followers of Christ should be.

True peace comes not by a retreat from the world but by the overpowering presence of Christ in the heart. *“Christ in you”* is the answer to our cry for peace.

The Salvation Army lassie distributing gospel literature in a saloon is a better example of the separated life than a prim and cold-faced saint who has long ago fled the world to take refuge in the barren caverns of their mind.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Here in Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome we see the true example of a Christian’s mindset, allowing the Holy Spirit [Christ in us] to re-mould our minds until they become the loving, compassionate mind of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:1-8 [NIV] *“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!”*

This renewed mind we are to seek becomes a living sacrifice as we give up our lives, our time and wealth in the serving of others.

We hate this evil society but we love the people, and long for them to know this love that Christ their Saviour has for them.