

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

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Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,
but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in
the house.

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

From The Editor's Desk

Jesus said I am the way, the truth, and the life: John 14:6

Over the past few weeks we have been delving into the Book of Job and Oswald Chambers' excellent and revealing comments on it. Much food for thought has been placed before us through the words preserved for posterity and has helped us to see more of our character than sometimes we might be comfortable with.

An expression Chambers used a number of times was the "ban of finality" which is described as the limitation or "curse" of having one's mind made-up and unwilling to consider new information.

Thinking on that and making application to our own lives we quickly realised that most of us have and perhaps still operate in that frame of mind at times and it is a condition that will stifle conversations about God and His plan for our lives and may in fact even stifle that still small voice and even quench the Holy Spirit because we are not open to new or different information that opposes our mindset.

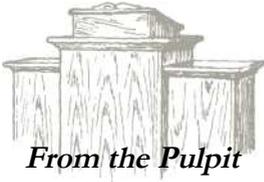
Chambers also wrote these few lines: Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne; yet that scaffold sways the future and behind the dim unknown stands God within the shadow keeping watch above His own.

We know that Jesus is the Truth and His scaffold, a place of execution, was the cross and by allowing wrong, those things we know are not pleasing to God, to be what rules our hearts, to sit on the throne, we are I believe falling in danger of being of those who are mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-6 and that friends is a very sobering thought indeed!

And yet, as Chambers continues, the death of Christ did not abolish or exile Truth it has swayed the past and continues to do so irrespective of those whose lifestyle is one that denies that eternal Truth which continues to be Jesus. God does indeed keep watch over His people and has made a promise that He will hear them when they call, 2 Chronicles 7:14 says: If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

O what a wonderful God we serve who calls us to take up His free offer of redemption so that we can put wrong on the scaffold and Truth on the throne.

J.V.L



From the Pulpit

THE ANABAPTIST VISION
 by Brother Richard Mininger

The name Anabaptist carries the meaning of "rebaptizers" or "baptism minded." The name was attached to the true Christians because they rejected infant baptism and only accepted as biblical baptism upon repentance and forgiveness of sins and faith in the atoning blood of Christ, administered by God's ministers of the true visible church. They did not choose the name, but it was given to them out of spite and scorn by the false religion of that time.

Where and when did these people live? History gives a fair amount of information regarding Anabaptists. For the most part the location would have been various countries on the continent of Europe. The title to the first part of the *Martyrs Mirror* (p. 63) gives an indication of the time: "The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Anabaptist or Defenseless Christians who suffered and were slain for the testimony of Jesus Christ, their Saviour, from the time of Christ until the year A.D. 1660."

It is probable that some were called Anabaptists who were not of the true faith. We leave them; our focus is with the true lineage of faith and people of God. These people were the true church, our brethren, our forefathers. They carried the torch and kept it burning through the Dark Ages, the Inquisition, the time when they suffered unfathomable persecution and finally death for Jesus Christ and their salvation.

When we talk about the Anabaptist vision, we are not thinking of some trance-like experience that came over them in a miraculous way. However, God did reveal Himself at times in a marvelous, convincing manner. The term "Anabaptist Vision" refers to their firm faith in God and what they possessed in heart, mind, and spirit. Their belief and vision was that the Word of God was the unerring guide and must be obeyed and practiced in all aspects of life. In conjunction with this faith, they had a clear vision of the future. They believed that worldly pleasure, ease of life, and material advantage was nothing compared to the reward of the heavenly home for the saved. Their vision included a real faith and practice of following the strait and narrow way, the way of the cross and self-denial. The heavenly

joy, a deep-settled peace, the knowledge that God was with them in the darkest times and severest tortures are a strong testimony of the vision that the Anabaptists embraced.

An excerpt from Menno Simons will probably say it best relating to a description of these people:

"These regenerated people have a spiritual king over them who rules them by the unbroken scepter of His mouth, namely with His Holy Spirit and Word. He clothes them with the garment of righteousness, of pure white silk. He refreshes them with the living water of His Holy Spirit and feeds them with the Bread of Life. His name is Christ Jesus.

"They are the children of peace who have beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and know war no more. They give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

"Their sword is the sword of the Spirit, which they wield in a good conscience through the Holy Ghost.

"Their marriage is that of one man and one woman, according to God's own ordinance.

"Their kingdom is the kingdom of grace, here in hope and after this in eternal life.

"Their citizenship is in heaven, and they use the lower creations such as eating, drinking, clothing, and shelter, with thanksgiving and to the necessary support of their own lives, and to the free service of their neighbor, according to the Word of the Lord.

"Their doctrine is the unadulterated Word of God, testified through Moses and the prophets, through Christ and the apostles, upon which they build their faith, which saves our souls. Everything that is contrary thereto, they consider accursed.

"Their baptism they administer to the believing according to the commandment of the Lord, in the doctrines and usages of the apostles.

"Their Lord's Supper they celebrate as a memorial of the favors and death of their Lord, and an incitement to brotherly love.

"Their ban or excommunication descends on all the proud scorners—great and small, rich and poor, without any respect of persons, who once passed under the Word but have now fallen back, those living or teaching offensively in the house of the Lord—until they repent.

"They daily sigh and lament over their poor, unsatisfactory evil flesh, over the manifest errors and faults of their weak lives. Their inward and outward war is without ceasing. Their sighing and calling is to the most High. Their fight and struggle is against the devil, world, and flesh all their days, pressing on toward the prize of the high calling that they may obtain it. So they prove by their actions that they believe the Word of the Lord, that they know and possess Christ in power, that they are born of God and have Him as their Father" (The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, pp. 94,95).

What a testimony! What a cloud of witnesses we have. Oh, to have that same vision and purpose in life that our martyr brethren, the Anabaptists, had!

Today we are confronted with many questions, perplexities, evils, allurements and pleasures of the world. Sin is so appealing to some. Would it not serve us well to have a heart-warming revival of the Anabaptist vision, the faith of our fathers? To lose this one is to lose the whole package. It is true that the Bible and the Holy Spirit are the supreme and unerring guide for Christians today. But is it not also true that we (the Church) believe and have accepted the Anabaptist vision, our forefathers' faith, as a true, authentic and valid interpretation of the Word and will of God? We must keep the faith.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" 1 Timothy 6:12



THE FAST FOOD APPROACH TO BIBLE READING

Often when we are traveling, we do not want to take the time to stop for a big meal. I recall a family trip some years ago when we made quick stops at fast food restaurants along the way. By supper of the second day, we all agreed we couldn't face another fast food meal. So we stopped at a full service restaurant and had a real meal. It took more time but was so much more satisfying.

How many of us are trying to satisfy our spiritual hunger with fast food meals?

God told Abraham: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever ... Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (Genesis 13:15-17).

The Bible is our spiritual heritage. How many of us have walked through the length and breadth of it? How many of us have read through the Bible from beginning to end? Reading a chapter a day, which is the most one should read to be able to begin to understand what is there, it will take about three years. It is well worth the effort.

Brothers and sisters come to Sunday school and talk about the Daily Reading that they read for devotions in the morning. Then in Sunday school class they express some bewilderment as to the events surrounding the text of the lesson. This does not need to happen. At the top of each lesson there is a list of background scriptures, which provide the context for the text we will be studying. How often do you read these background scriptures?

The introduction to one Sunday School quarterly explained that these background scriptures are an integral part of the lesson. It stated: "The daily Bible readings are not necessarily intended to be used for family devotional readings but rather as a supplement to the lesson text. Reading the background scriptures will help us understand the setting and context of a lesson."

If a family would use only the daily readings for family devotions, that would be much like eating all their meals at a fast food restaurant with its very limited menu. Why not rather pick a book of the Bible and take a month or more to read it through and get a feel for the history and the teaching it contains? That will do so much more to satisfy the hunger of our souls.

Many brethren use reference Bibles that provide ready access to a list of verses on many topics. It is a concern to me that such topic lists can come between the reader and the Bible. Are we getting enough of the context of the verses to really understand them? How much confidence do we have in the compiler of these references? Is there perhaps some "secret blend of herbs and spices" added that we don't see? In other words, is there some doctrinal bias in the way the references are selected? Is there something being left out?

One thing that is left out is the translator's alternate readings, which are found in the margin of Cambridge Bibles, and perhaps others, when a word might have more than one meaning in the context, the translators had the humility to refrain from arbitrarily choosing one over another, but set one in the text and the other in the margin. They said: "It cannot be dissembled,

that partly to exercise and whet our wits ... partly also to stir up our devotion to crave the assistance of God's Spirit by prayer, and lastly, that we might be forward to seek aid of our brethren by conference ... it hath pleased God in His divine providence here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation (for in such it hath been vouched that the Scriptures are plain), but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better become us than confidence."

A striking example of this is found in the account of Jephthah in Judges. Jephthah vowed in Judges 11:31, "Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burn offering." In the margin we read that the conjunction translated as and could also mean or. Then at the end of the chapter we read, "the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year." In the margin we read that the word translated lament could also mean visit. Does your Bible contain that information? Changing those two words can make a huge difference in our opinion of Jephthah. And those alternate readings come from the translators, not some recent compiler of references. Do the references under Jephthah in your reference Bible include Hebrews 11:32, where he is listed among the heroes of the faith (I have chosen to focus on the story of Jephthah, but there are many passages where our understanding would be helped by considering the alternate readings in the margin)?

Has our knowledge of the Word of God increased in the past several generations since these reference Bibles became available? Or has it decreased? Is it possible that the tools we think will help us better understand the Bible actually hinder us from searching the Scriptures for ourselves? Children's Bible story books are not altogether innocent either. Many do not limit themselves to simply telling a story from the Bible but add the writer's editorial comments. The writer of one well-known Bible story book felt compelled to mention several times how foolish Jephthah was. Another Bible story book explains that the star seen at the birth of Jesus was actually the light from the distant angelic host.

Modern translations claim to make the Bible easier to understand. Is this what we want from a Bible? The Authorized, or King James Version, was written in language that was intended to capture our attention and linger in

our memories. We will never in our lifetime penetrate to the full depth of the meaning, but many times these remembered passages come back to us with a clarity and meaning that we could not grasp at first.

Is it the goal of our devotions to do a quick read and then get on with our day? Or is it to pick up something that we can feed on throughout the day?

Brother Robert



[Following is the seventh and final article in a series on the evolutionist teaching by Bro. Sumner Loomis. —EDITOR]

7. WHAT IS TRUE SCIENCE?

The American Heritage Dictionary (1978) defines science as: "The observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and the theoretical explanation of natural phenomena."

When I was a boy of ten to fourteen years of age a treasured adult friend of mine used to tell me that science was "the study of God's handiwork." He would often remind me that my favorite study was due to God and was not the work of man. Over the years, this definition and my friend's admonitions have become exceedingly precious to me. Note that this definition makes God the final authority of the entire field, as He is the Creator of it all. As humanity exited from the Dark Ages and began to study and understand his environment, the scientist was often a self-educated, humble, and dedicated individual. He struggled to discover the laws that govern the operation of the world and its contents, and extended his studies to the universe beyond. As knowledge expanded the art of writing and the printing of books efficiently provided a means of making this knowledge broadly available. The great breadth of this knowledge and the availability of printed matter have also made it possible for men to specialize in certain areas of study. This was beneficial because the complexity of the whole expanded to exceed the capacity of any one person.

It seems that all of these developments were allowed and even blessed by God. In recent times, however, man has developed a pride of station and often denies the Creator the credit for all these things.

Supposedly, it is important that a scientist has extreme flexibility of mind and disregard for his own feelings, so as to not colour the direction and re-

sults of his work. More simply stated, it is important that he formulate only the truth in what he does and that he readily states those conditions that are based on less than proven knowledge. Despite his reputation or personal beliefs, he should be quick to admit the truth and the error when it is discovered.

Personal pride can easily complicate this situation. His position should be that of a humble student; a know-it-all attitude quickly upsets the entire endeavor. The relationship between these qualifications and Biblical admonitions is very apparent.

Many scientists refuse to recognize that a total flood once engulfed this earth. Yet the flood explains many geological (study of the structure, origin, and history of the earth) mysteries that are found throughout the world. The flood, for instance, explains the various rock layers (strata that occur world-wide, and why they are sometimes found in a differing order. When Mount St. Helens erupted as a volcano, rock layers were quickly deposited and solidified in the same manner and structure as found elsewhere. The mystery of vertically standing trees imbedded in multiple rock layers was also dramatically illustrated by the severe flooding that accompanied the eruption. Before that eruption, the only proposed answer seemed to be long periods of time in the order of millions of years. Belief in the Bible account of the flood proved to excel the logic and imagination of (carnal) man.

By these simple examples, we must conclude that much of today's learning that is labeled as science is not true science. It is rather study polluted by man's unwillingness to acknowledge the true God as Creator of everything. God has blessed this country and many others in the world with wonderful advances in medicine and life improvement when He was given proper respect and acknowledgment. These blessings may be reduced as more and more credit is given to the accomplishments of man. Likewise, the past record shows that suffering and trouble have often caused more of the population to turn to God than has prosperity and excess.

Let us remember the words of Christ in Luke 18:8, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

Sumner S. Loomis



SANCTIFICATION

Be it known unto us that sanctification addresses the born-again children of God. It should not be confused with sinners coming to the Lord or the prodigals coming back to God. If we as children of God would give this subject the due attention it deserves, we would realize what we are and what we ought to be for the Lord.

Forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ our Saviour is a foundational experience in one's relationship with God. It is the beginning and not the whole, or end, of one's relationship with the Lord.

Through the new birth, one is born of God and brought into a personal relationship with Him. This brings us into an entirely new realm of spiritual life. It is this newfound spiritual realm that calls for sanctification in order to grow and mature. Thereby one understands more and more what is all entailed in being born again and in sustaining spiritual life. It is in sanctification that one realizes the responsibilities and commitments of being a faithful child of God. This spiritual responsibility is subject to our willingness.

Sanctification is a continual working of grace, bringing cleansing and renewals in our spiritual lives. We cannot argue the fact that a spiritual Christian still has need to be renewed, refreshed, and strengthened in the inner man. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" Ephesians 3:16. It is updating oneself spiritually in order to remain spiritually current and walk in newness of life. This should be a sincere desire of every true child of God. If one has no desire for sanctification, it is doubtful that he is living in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and usefulness to God.

Sanctification can be compared to the human body's processes of cleansing and changing for growth and sustenance of life. This is an unconscious process that the body undergoes in order to remain vital and functional. Once one is born, carefulness in maintaining and sustaining existence becomes paramount. This is also true of the spiritual birth.

The essence of sanctification is to remain and maintain what we ought to be for the Lord. In 2 Chronicles 29:5, it is written, "Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place." In this account, the house of the Lord was already on ground, but the people had abused it.

Hence it had to be updated and freed from the abuses caused by their fathers.

Similarly, sanctification is a spiritual cleansing which safeguards and keeps us from the fleshly and carnal abuses that confront our Christian lives. This is where cross bearing comes into focus in order to check such excesses and abuses.

Also, sanctification is a washing (not a birth) for those already born in the Spirit. As children of God, we have reasons to be yielded unto the cleansing effect of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God dwelling in us. The more we desire to live a Spirit-filled life, the more we will be yielded to spiritual cleansing.

Jesus indicated such cleansing when He taught about the vine and the husbandman. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" John 15:2. So that the vine would be more productive, the husbandman had to purge it. Is it not also true that all those who are spiritually productive or desire to be more productive undergo purging from time to time as they come across the challenges of Christian living? One has reason to ask how useful to the Lord such people are who resist this experience in their Christian life?

In sanctification one must be ready to deal with him or herself in their relationship with the Lord. One does not have to rely only on what the church permits or doesn't permit to measure the state of his or her relationship with God. It is true that we were not approved for baptism and membership in the church of God until we were in conformance to its standard. But thereafter, one's heart-conviction becomes the measure of spirituality that determines his level of sanctification. Do you desire more, or even less?

As one faces the reality of sanctification, he must be willing to deal with where he gives himself a passing mark. This enables us to deal with excusing our failures because of what we see others doing or not doing. There are laxities one allows in his or her life because of what he sees others doing. Some may excuse themselves because of their circumstances.

There is no excuse that will be tenable before God. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" 2 Corinthians 10:12.

Let us cite the rich young ruler's account to buttress this thought. According to him, he had the keeping of the commandments to his credit. He may have wondered if that was everything he needed, or he may have desired the confirmation and approval of Jesus Christ for his obedience to the generally accepted rules of life. To his greatest surprise and disappointment, Jesus pointed out the personal challenge of following Him, which was more than the dictates of the commandments. It meant self-denied living. This story we all know. The rich young ruler could not continue with Jesus beyond this point. The Lord came too close to, or infringed on, his personal interests in life, which he was not willing to give up. Hence he departed from Christ sorrowfully. Therefore, the level of sanctification, so to speak, which he could have obtained was forestalled.

This is where many Christians hit the "rock" today when it comes to making a personal commitment and self-denial to serve the Lord. Then the Holy Spirit and the church become too demanding, and they begin to turn sorrowfully the other way in complaint against the church and the leaders, only to count on their personally-set standards and grade marks for consolation. And then sanctification is not obtained. What happens then is that they begin to mix carnal and spiritual living, with carnality becoming the easier alternative form of Christian living. The result is a breakdown of relationship with God and breakdown of confidence in the church and the leaders.

Sanctification has its agents and means of accomplishment. The Bible gives us the following explanations on the agents and means of sanctification (read John 17:17; Ephesians 5:25-26; Hebrews 10:10; 13:12). The Word, the blood of Jesus Christ, and Christ Himself are the agents of sanctification. Sanctification is accomplished through the dwelling of the life of Jesus in our soul. A state of sanctification is a natural consequence of our faithful loyalty to Christ in our daily Christian walk.

Sanctification has a painful effect on self, which we still carry along with us despite our conversion. As all forms of ungodliness and filthiness of the flesh are dealt with in our lives, the old man is bound to feel and suffer the consequences. This is unavoidable (Malachi 3:1-4).

Where one has made an unconditional surrender to God, there will be grace to live in a state of sanctification. The dictionary explains sanctification as "a state of growing in divine grace as a result of Christian commitment after baptism or conversion; to sanctify and set apart to a sacred pur-

pose or religious use." Such is the end result of a sanctified state of Christian living.

The apostle Paul prayed for the sanctification of our whole being. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Thessalonians 5:23. All these aspects of our lives must be brought under the authority of the Spirit of God. By this there will be conscious and unconscious dealing with all that is unbecoming of a child of God, both outwardly and inwardly. This would be dealing with the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" 2 Corinthians 7:1. When all the excesses of self are constantly brought under check by the Spirit, we would have an unhindered relationship with God. And then we are useful to Him. Living in a state of sanctification, we realize our spiritual status as children of God, which we cannot afford to abuse. When we lack sanctification, we lack a sense of spiritual worth and usefulness to God and others.

In a state of sanctification, we display a sense of consecration and being set apart for God's purpose in our lives. Our priorities are spiritual things and the will of God for our lives. To this end the apostle Paul wrote and said, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" 2 Corinthians 6:17. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" Romans 8:1.

According to our sanctification, we are committed to God and His service without complaint. We are willing to cooperate with the church in the spiritual standard and spirituality the members are to attain. Then we are no longer a problem member and burden on the church.

Brother Patrick



THE POWER OF A YIELDED WILL

As in every facet of life, the Lord Jesus is the perfect example of the power and blessing of a yielded will. The yielding of His will comes into poignant focus in the garden of Gethsemane. In exceeding heaviness because of what He knew was ahead, He withdrew from the disciples "about

a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed" Luke 22:41. "Father," He pled, "if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (v. 42). Immediately upon His complete deference to His Father's plan, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (v. 43).

What an example! One wonders what the spiritual prosperity of individual Christians would be if they honestly expressed themselves as the Lord did? Lest this be only a hypothetical question, it is well to remember that the Christian's overriding purpose is the highest honor and glory of God. This purpose can only be served as Christians humbly and sincerely defer to God's will. Thus, the above question is a vital one. Furthermore, what measure of spiritual power and graces would reside in any one congregation of believers and in the entire church if everyone together could say sincerely, "Nevertheless, not [our] will, but thine, be done"?

It is true that the Lord agonized in the Garden. But He was not resisting the Father's will. It is a misconception to think that doing the will of God must be preceded by struggling to put down resistance. Listening closely to Jesus' words tells us differently.

When an electrical current meets resistance because of poor connections, heat is created. In that case, there is a loss of power, and a dangerous condition results. The will of God is like that electrical current, carrying with it power and grace for the believer. But if the connection or relationship between God and man is not genuine, resistance in one form or another develops. With the required effort to clean and repair the connection, full power becomes available, and there is no resistance. The Lord's connection with His Father was never in question, and neither was the plan of redemption ever in jeopardy.

Jesus agonizing in the Garden does give us a glimpse of His human part. Although He was the Son of God and had come for the express purpose of making the atonement, there was a natural aversion to what lay ahead. He wrestled with the prospect of carrying the sins of the world unto death on the cross. And so He actually prayed, "If Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me!" But that human feeling in Him did not infringe in any way on His sonship with the Father. There was no loose connection there. There was no heat of spirit from resistance. In that same breath, we hear His immortal words, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." The full power and blessing of the plan of salvation flowed freely in His being. And

"there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."

In this scene, one gains insight into one's own struggles; maybe there is a personal "Gethsemane." A Christian's human desires and natural thinking are often confronted by that cross of which Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" Matthew 16:24. This calls for a decision by one's will. At such times, one's sonship is not in jeopardy just because the Christian may pray, "If it be possible, remove this cup from me." There is not necessarily a corroded connection here. The true Christian, like the Lord, prays those words in the context of honoring the sovereignty of God. The beauty is in what follows. Partaking of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), the Christian says, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

The faculty of will endowed upon man by the Creator is a wonderful thing. Surely it is part of what God had in mind when He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" Genesis 1:26. The faculty of will, or that power that enables man to make decisions and pursue a reasoned course, is not to be confused with the stubborn self-will that is inherent in the sin nature. True, there is an area of overlap between the two when the heart is in Satan's domain. But the faculty of will remains free standing. God will not infringe on it, and Satan cannot completely corral it. Thus a man is never "high-centered." Man can choose to serve God even when the old flesh cries against it. The fact that the will was left freestanding makes man responsible and accountable for his life.

Propositions and circumstances of life influence the will. It is true that, for all practical purposes, a person never does anything against one's will. A person might say, "I didn't want to do it ...," but the reality is that the will did finally assent to doing the undesirable. Circumstances likely influenced one's will. On the other hand, martyrs of all ages became martyrs because their wills were set irrevocably by their love for God and the truth.

Of all the things that exert influence on the will, the affection of the heart is the most powerful, and perhaps the most subtle. The faculty of the will, with time, will make those decisions that bring to a person that which his or her heart desires. The heart is commonly thought of as the seat of affection, and one's affection will eventually sway the will into its scheme. To a point, the will is subservient to the affection. Here is the essence of the proverb, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" Proverbs 4:23.

The person who is secretly lusting after the things of the world is in great peril because, sooner or later, the will makes decisions accordingly. On the positive side, when the heart's affection is set on the Lord, one can readily see the blessed picture that results. It is on this eternal and foundational truth that the Holy Spirit is earnestly calling,

When the Lord has the heart, He has the will, and then He has everything. Loving the Father, as Jesus did, our wills will be yielded to Him. And "E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me," we shall know "the comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:31).

"When the spirit of the compassionate Christ indwells a person, he will bear the fruit of the Spirit."



ARE YOU SATISFIED

It is likely that every individual is looking for some form of satisfaction or comfort. That holds true for those of every walk of life. There are those who are destitute of many of the essential things that would make them comfortable in life. Then there are those who have it all at their fingertips, and yet the yearning for satisfaction or more meaning to life is the same.

We have the account in John 4 where Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. The conversation first deals with the water from the well. Then in verse 10, Jesus says, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." In verse 14, Jesus tells her, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

We all know that natural water will satisfy thirst temporarily. But the same thirst soon returns and must be satisfied again. Jesus offered this woman, and everyone, water that would satisfy sufficiently so that thirst would not return. How wonderful this sounded to the woman, but it is obvious that she did not understand what Jesus was telling her.

We can compare the water out of the well with those things that so many people try with hopes that they will satisfy the inner thirst. With that yearning for inner satisfaction, man turns to many things and devices to find true meaning. Changing their appearances by various means, being immersed in the sports world, shopping and buying beyond their means, and much edu-

cation would be some examples. Some become overly zealous in spiritual matters, yet not in truth. Many more things could be mentioned, but are these not all because there is a longing for inner satisfaction? Some get so desperate in their inner frustrations because of not finding what they are longing for that finally death seems to be the only way out.

Is it possible that some of us are not fully experiencing true satisfaction? The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 3:19, "That ye might be filled with the fulness of God." This scripture teaches us that there is a filling to be had that will satisfy, and we will not desire that unfulfilling well water anymore. We talk of restlessness among us and are grappling with things that want to pull us closer to the world. Is that an indication that we are not truly satisfied within? Is this not because we are not freely drinking from the water of life? To be filled with the fullness of God would surely result in an inner rest and satisfaction. When we are well acquainted with Jesus' living water, it will remove that restlessness from us.

There are many things that are a temptation to our youth and all of us: fashions, sports, unchristian use of technology, much travel, attending places of carnal entertainment, and many get-togethers. All these things will somewhat satisfy the inner longings for the time being, but is it not like a drink from the well water only? And after the "fun" is over, the ache inside is only intensified. Others in their thirst and longing for true meaning in life turn to seeking more material gain than God would be pleased with. Wealth will bring a sense of security and satisfaction, but it will not quench the thirst for that inner satisfaction.

In Luke 1:53, Mary, the mother of Jesus, speaks: "He hath filled the hungry with good things; but the rich he hath sent empty away." In her reference to the hungry, she means those who honestly seek for truth. The rich are those who satisfy themselves with the beggarly things of the world. This is not only material riches. She is referring to those who make themselves appear rich spiritually by doing good deeds or having learned to orate convincingly and thus appear rich spiritually.

The good things that the hungry are filled with can only be attained by humbly coming to Jesus and reaching for the water He so graciously offers. That is also what Paul means by "being filled with the fulness of God." It has been said that it is easier to become saved than to remain saved. When our young children feel the call, they are so troubled and become willing for whatever it takes to have the burden of sin removed. It is

heartwarming to listen to them as they tell us, with tears in their eyes, how the Lord spoke peace to their hearts. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" Colossians 2:6. The apostle makes it dear that walking in Him requires the same as receiving Him. The need to seek out Jesus for a drink of His water is continual.

We are surely living in the end times. For that reason a scripture like Ephesians 5:16, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil," should be a serious matter to us. We have more scriptures that teach us that in the end time there will be more evil. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 presents a clear example of the times we are living in today. As we consider the call to a deeper revival, we will need to be willing to surrender our vessel (self) that we have been using to draw water from the well. We must reach out to Jesus and let Him give us that living water and drink until we are satisfied. The initial drink will cleanse us from all sin, and having experienced His love in our hearts will cause us to ever thirst for more of God and holiness.

In conclusion, let us look at one more scripture: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" John 7:37-38.

By God's grace let us ask ourselves the question, "Am I truly satisfied within?" May God's blessings rest on each one.

Brother Edwin



TAKING IT FOR GRANTED

There is hardly a more common inclination of mankind than to take things for granted. Man assumes and presumes many things about life and eternity, often to his hurt. A clear example of this trait is found in a prophecy of the apostle Peter. He says that in the last days men shall ask, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" 2 Peter 3:4. They took it for granted that time would go on and on.

Speaking of our natural lives, who hasn't, at one time or another, taken life for granted? Only knowledge of what the Word of God says about life and attention-arresting experiences awaken one from this complacency. The reality is that life is in God's hands, and due to the curse of sin, it is

uncertain. Acknowledging this by word and conduct indicates one of the clearest insights that wisdom gives. James says it, we know it with the intellect, but we often ignore the truth: "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" James 4:13-15.

A certain amount of planning, preparation, and anticipation are good and necessary in the natural affairs of life. But the propositions of life should be as a prayer of petition presented to God, properly ending with, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." This lacking, someone has said, is like burning the candle of life in the service of self and then in the end blowing the smoke in God's face.

The apostle Paul told the philosophers on Mars Hill about the "God that made the world and all things therein" (Acts 17:24). Then he brought God even closer, saying, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (v. 28). True Christians are mindful of and rejoice in this fact. The Apostle's teaching being true, though, the person who takes his or her life for granted is also taking God for granted. "To take God for granted" means to unthinkingly expect that He owes us good, pleasantness, and the fulfillment of dreams. Often there is little or no consideration of God's plan and purpose. This mind-set makes God a servant to the interests of man. It's as though man puts God on a shelf and tells Him to stay put until He might be needed. This is an ingredient of the sin of presumptuousness.

Presumptuous. "Rude or arrogant: inconsiderate, disrespectful, or overconfident, especially in doing something when not entitled or qualified to do it." The Scriptures are not silent on how God looks at presumptuousness or taking life into man's own hands. "But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord" Numbers 15:30-31. The reproach is against the sovereignty of God, that whatever He does or wills is righteous and good and therefore worthy of man's respect and obedience. Many are guilty of this sin in regards to salvation and serving the Lord. A multitude know they do not want to die the way they are living, but they put repentance off until another day. Under the convicting power of Paul's

reasoning, "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" Acts 24:25. He took it for granted that a more convenient season would come. Where did that place God? As far as is known, this mightily troubled man died in his presumptuousness, and many today will die in that same condition.

Taking it for granted is a near kin, if not the forerunner, of procrastination. Its implications reach into almost every area of life, and only the Judgment Day will yield the full tally. As it applies to the kingdom of God, the following may be considered.

The new and young Christians among us should not be taken for granted. They likely grew up in Christian homes, but they will need to be nurtured in the faith. This may be easily overlooked. As they add a year or two to their Christian walk, it is often taken for granted that they know the faith. Experience is showing that this is not necessarily true. Many may know the outward rote of religion but not that vital, personal relationship with the Lord. They may not have the vision of bearing the cross in obedience to His doctrine.

Neither should we take one another as older brothers and sisters for granted. Because we know quite well the prescribed manner of living, when this is more or less in order, we assume that our brother or sister is of good courage. This assumption proves to be mistaken at times, and sometimes tragically. It could be said that if a congregation is spiritually vibrant, the devil will not be able to spring such surprises. The apostle Peter says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" 1 Peter 5:8. We must be one another's keepers.

One wonders how many youth and young married couples in the church today are taking it for granted that there will be time and conviction to consecrate their lives later. The loss that the church of God is incurring through spiritual gifts and service not being made available because of this presumption is not small. It may be that some are deliberately putting off consecration because they are not willing for the burden of the cross of service. They presume that they can walk a fine line of staying out of trouble and evade the call to service today. "Tomorrow" they will yield themselves, presuming that God will bear with them until they get ready. Some may take it for granted that if they thus get by the call of the church, they are free. But "What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he vis-

iteth, what shall I answer him?" Job 31:14.

By all evidence many are taking the church of God itself for granted. The religious and social life of the church is all they have known from childhood. There is decreased knowledge and feeling for the cost that has been paid by believers of former times to preserve this faith. Little thought may be given that sacrifice and effort are required today to ensure the blessing of the true faith for tomorrow. It may be assumed by individuals or an age group or a congregation that their neglect in Biblical principles is of no consequence to the church. This is not so. Indeed, one sure indicator of taking it for granted is the lack of a sense of responsibility and accountability for blessings received.

The king of Nineveh gives us a good example of not taking things for granted, or of presuming on the grace and mercy of God. He heard Jonah's message and believed it wholeheartedly. He told his people to fast and pray. He didn't presume that God would spare them but said, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Jonah 3:9. That attitude of not taking it for granted touched God's heart. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil,

Brother Gladwin



THANKFUL LIVING

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" Colossians 3:15.

Giving thanks to God such as the Scriptures everywhere teach, is the fruit of living in a thankful state. Man has only one life to live (Hebrews 9:27), wherein he is to bring thanks to his Maker (1 Thessalonians 5:18), "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Psalm 6:5).

To be thankful is to experience a heartfelt gratitude for benefits received and favor bestowed. When one begins to entertain the thought that he or she merits such benefits and favors, he makes someone else a debtor to him and thereby loses the blessing of thankfulness. At the center of a thankful heart is the knowledge and feeling of being undeserving.

There are more reasons than one why, throughout the entire Scripture,

thankfulness is commanded, taught, and exemplified. First and foremost, it is the heart and lips' offering of gratitude justly due the Creator and Savior of mankind. Secondly, it benefits man himself. Thankfulness is an essential part of a good emotional disposition. Notice a person who feels no thankfulness, and you will see a man or woman with a warped view of life in general. If one has no sense of being unworthy, no feeling of gratitude for blessings and favors bestowed upon him, he will likely serve no purposes but selfish ones.

There are those who feel mistreated by life, which really is a mild way of expressing deeper feelings that God has dealt unfairly with them. This, though, brings to mind the question of why some can experience greater adversity and heartache than others and yet be thankful for God's goodness. In some cases, perhaps the deceitfulness of the heart has somehow dimmed the truth of the matter.

Humility is the source from which issues forth the overflowing of thankfulness. Much of the world's constant striving for greater economic security (and the Christian is not exempt) can be traced back to a heart that has set its affection on material things. And if one were to search his heart in all honesty for the root of an unthankful attitude, would he not find a proud heart? The apostle Paul states dearly that being unthankful is a sin that will be particularly manifest in the last days. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" 2 Timothy 3:1-2. Notice the context of serious and grave sins in which he places being unthankful. Pride and thankfulness will not co-habit the same heart.

The thoughtful Christian will observe that the greater one's sense of dependency on God, the greater will be his thankfulness. This also says something about one's faith in an all-knowing Heavenly Father (Matthew 6:32). The most heart-touching expressions of thankfulness have been heard from the lips of Christians of other lands who are less fortunate than we in more prosperous lands. Many of these people would be destitute in comparison to our thinking as to what basic "needs" are; yet they can be truly thankful. These people have no problem with Jesus' counsel in Matthew 6:24-34. Upon casting themselves on the Lord in their great need, they have found Him to be faithful. Each experience of God's provision is cause for added thankfulness. Contributing to the general state of being un-

thankful is man's striking out on his own course and not recognizing his utter need of God.

Thankfulness is not necessarily dependent on comparing one's situation with that of another. While noticing others who are less fortunate may cause one to count his blessings, one will get a truer picture and come to a greater grace by comparing his wretched and undeserving self with the goodness and mercy of God. It is this comparison alone that brings true thanksgiving, which will not be squelched when adversity comes. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" 2 Corinthians 10:12.

Thankfulness has a natural offspring: the spirit of sharing what one has with others. Just as faith without works is dead, so the claim of being thankful without sharing quickly becomes vain and hollow. Jesus stated the principle of the matter when He said, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). In this, the blessing is not contingent on the "size" or quantity of sharing but on the heart, as was shown by the widow who gave her two mites (Mark 12:41-44). The benevolence of charitable acts confirms the testimony of thankfulness and pleases God and warms the hearts of men.

Thankfulness is not a lesson that will be learned by study; neither is it obtained by happenstance. In its true essence, it comes only by a vital, personal relationship with God. When the Christian becomes unthankful, he needs a freshening of his walk with the Lord. The Lord alone can give him those eternal values that will take the mind and heart off the beggarly elements of the world. Not only does the Lord give us such heavenly values, He Himself is the Christian's treasure.

We will have a true day of giving thanks when we see our sins in the light of God's judgments, and the forgiveness thereof for what it really is—the mercy of God through Christ's sacrifice; when Jesus is not just spoken of on Sunday as the Saviour but becomes the abiding Lord of our lives every day of the week; when the riches in Christ become more real and precious than material and earthly matters; and when heaven is more than a dream.

Why not make every day a day of giving thanks the beginning of a life of thankful living before God and man?

I CANNOT AFFORD.

I cannot afford to go back on the Lord,
Returning to pathways of sin.
I dare not begin to let doubtings creep in,
If heaven at last I would win.

My soul must be fed with His own living bread,
If I would be faithful and strong.
My mind and my heart be kept wholly apart,
From the things that to Satan belong.

I cannot delay all God's will to obey,
When He has revealed it to me.
With diligent care, I must always beware,
The lust that His children should flee.

No, I can't afford to stop serving the Lord,
The price is entirely too high.
I have counted the cost, if my soul should be lost.
I want to be His till I die.
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