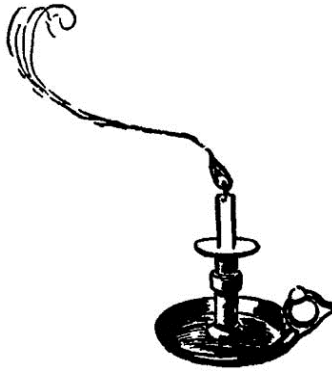


THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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

To those of us who by God's grace have come to the place and time mentioned in Psalm 90:10 are likely aware of the changes in society away from God and His precepts, no doubt there are many others who are not in the Psalm 90:10 category who perceive the same thing and unless our faith is like that of Job who said of God though He slay me yet will I trust in Him, we can become very fearful but take heart because God is always there just when we need Him most, the psalmist said this: God is our refuge and our strength; a very present help in trouble, Psalm 46:1.

J C Ryle penned these thoughts on God being our refuge and strength:

If you had your choice, which would you pick: 1) to have God's presence with you or 2) to have God's presence really, really with you? If you're smart, you'll choose number two. But, you must realize that by making that choice, you are accepting the fact that there's going to be trouble. God is with us always, but He is really, really with us in trouble.

Trouble? What exactly are we talking about here? The Hebrew word means tightness. The kind that is caused by adversity, anguish, distress, or tribulation. It refers to a situation or a time of extreme discomfort, any affliction which comes for many different reasons.

God delivers His people from this condition.

Jacob built an altar at Bethel to "the God Who answered me in the day of my distress and was with me wherever I went." (Gen. 35:3). Job's friend, Eliphaz, assured him that "from one disaster after another He delivers you; no matter what the calamity, the evil can't touch you" (Job 5:19). David tells us that God is "a sanctuary during bad times" (Psalm 9:9).

The beloved Hymn writer, William Poole (1907) said it this way –

Just when I need Him, Jesus is near, just when I falter, just when I
fear to help me, ready to cheer, just when I need Him most when I
need Him, Jesus is true, never forsaking, all the way through for

Just when I need Him, Jesus is strong, bearing my burdens all the
day long all my sorrow giving a song, just when I need Him most
when I need Him, He is my all, answering when upon Him I call
watching lest I should fall, just when I need Him most.

Jesus is there for you — just when you need Him most.



From the Pulpit

The Subtle Sin of Cynicism

*From a message by David G. Weaver
Richland Mennonite Church 2006*

The Word “cynicism” is not a Bible word. It is not found in the Bible and it is not a commonly used word even among us in our vocabulary. My observation is that we meet and visit with one another time after time without ever using this word once. Perhaps then, cynicism is not a problem among us? I suppose the answer to that is that it is not a problem in the sense that we are addressing it over and over again and need to be talking about it all the while as we might about some other things. It is not a problem in the sense that we are dealing with people for being cynical. We have not done that with these kinds of things, whether it is cynicism, covetousness, or some others what we might think of as problems with attitude or sins of the spirit.

However, once we know the definition and what cynicism means then we are able to see and identify the spirit and the attitude in ourselves perhaps and, no doubt, in someone else with whom we are going to church, or someone else with whom we are dealing and relating to.

Therefore, since this is a strange word as it is and we may not know rightly what it means I think our first main point then needs to be:

1) *What is cynicism?*

I will first give a dictionary definition of it and then go on to describe it further and look at some Bible examples of this. I said it is not a Bible word but we surely can see cynicism in various instances in Scripture. What is cynicism? It is derived from the word *cynic*. Cynics were, first of all, a group of Greek philosophers known by that name. They were called cynics. However, we are not talking about that this afternoon.

A dictionary definition that fits us where we are is that the cynic is “a fault finding, captious critic.” It is one who believes that human conduct is motivated wholly by self-interests. A cynic is “one who is contentiously distrustful of human nature and motives.” Now, the word *captious* as it was used in our first definition means “marked by an ill-natured inclination to stress faults and raise objections.” That is cynicism.

I leave the dictionary definitions now except to say that I have found pessimism a word that is quite considerably more common among us. The word *pessimism* is a synonym to cynicism. It is a word that, as I said, we use considerably more, and we are more familiar with it. It was interesting for me to notice that pessimism and cynicism can be used interchangeably.

Cynicism is an attitude that questions whether anyone is really sincere. The cynical attitude habitually questions the motives of others. We know that God takes motives very seriously. We know that what motivates us to do what we do is important to God. However, the Bible does suggest that it is not for us to always decide on what the motive might have been behind what another has done, many times we really cannot see that and are best to try to study it. James says, “Who art thou that judgest another” James 4:12? “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth” Romans 14:4. He is saying that there are things that we do not have any business with in this regard.

Thus we see the cynical attitude is that which questions the motives of others. It tends to think that whatever is done, no matter how good it is, whatever is done is done out of ulterior or selfish motives. Cynicism is the attitude that loves to frown upon the ambitions and enthusiasm of eager youth. One example is saying disdainfully “Oh, I thought all that too when I was your age. You will find out it is not that way.” You see, as someone has said, a cynical person not only puts out their own fire, but they have a bucket of water always ready to put out the fire of another.

The psalmist recognized this cynical attitude when in Psalm 4:6 he says, “There be many that say, Who will show us any good?” “There is no good around. Show me some good.” There will be those who say that. Or, at a later time in Psalm 116:11 the psalmist said, “I said in my haste, All men are liars. There is not one that is genuine. They are all liars. There is not one that is really sincere every time.”

Now, in more modern language it might be said this way as people sometimes say, “The church is full of hypocrites.” Well, the church is full of sinners because the church is looking for sinners saved by grace and the true Church does not take people in unless they have acknowledged the fact of sin in their lives. However, the church is not full of hypocrites. An

attitude that some people have and say is “If this is what Christianity is — if this is what people are — then I do not want anything to do with it.” That is a cynical attitude. Or, it may be expressed in this, “There is more behind the scenes than meets the eyes.” Cynicism is a negative, suspicious, and sometimes bitter outlook on life and other people.

2) Some Bible examples of this trait or sin as it is called in the title.

Nabal, in 1 Samuel 25 was such a fellow. He was quite cynical. Nabal’s servant conversing with Nabal’s wife said of Nabal that “he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him” 1 Samuel 25:17. His wife very evidently knew that very clearly herself. She agreed with that. She did not argue with him. She went to work to try to save the situation which needed saving as we know the story. He was such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him.

I believe the servant had become aware that his master was so wise in his own conceits and had such a poor attitude toward his contemporaries that he could not be reasoned with. I am sure we have met people like that. If we have lived long enough and have seen enough we have known such individuals. When David’s men came seeking reward for their service to Nabal in that they were a protection to Nabal’s servants and flocks, Nabal flatly refused them and he said in effect, “There are lots of runaways nowadays and David is like all the rest of them. I do not intend to give any help whatsoever to him.” He was wrong, but he could not be reasoned with. David determined evil upon his household which Abigail averted.

Satan was cynical when he told God (putting it in my own words) “I know why Job serves you. You pay him. You pay him so well. You remove his pay and he will curse you to your face.” Now, he was very wrong. God gave him two opportunities to test this and he was proved to be very wrong in his notions. By what God allowed Satan to do to Job, it was clearly demonstrated that Job was not self-serving at all. He was genuine in his motives for serving God, and after experiencing the deepest of trials that we think anyone could have experienced (other than our Lord Jesus Christ) Job says, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil” Job 2:10? “the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” Job 1:21.

Job's friends were cynical in their outlook (at least one of them) when he said to Job putting it in my own words, "Now let us get this thing straight . . . 'who ever perished, being innocent' Job 4:7? "Job you need to repent because you know well enough that you are guilty of something or God would not have done this to you." Now they were wrong in that evaluation. It is true that Job did come to the point where he said, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6), and God received that well. He did not tell him though, "You should not be saying that about yourself." It was a good attitude for Job to have. Job's friends talked this way so much to Job that Job eventually said, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" Job 12:2. We can see that they were quite cynical in their counsel to Job.

The ten spies, in returning from Canaan were quite cynical. There were twelve that went. Two of them were not cynical. However ten spies returning from Canaan were quite cynical. They said, "[Here] is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" Numbers 13:32. That is an interesting thing. That might have been true if they had not said what else they had said. They said, "There are people that have grown so big in that land that when we saw ourselves alongside of them we thought that . . . we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" Numbers 13:33. They did not know that, I do not suppose. They probably ran for their lives, maybe they did, but the point is that this land that is supposed to have eaten up the inhabitants did have some very large people in it.

They questioned God's motive for ever bringing them to this land. They got the people of Israel upset and questioning that with them. Caleb and Joshua said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" Numbers 13:30. "If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land" Number 14:8. This attitude of the ten spies was not very optimistic; rather it was a pessimistic outlook.

One more in the Old Testament — Elijah, a great man of faith seems to have had a cynical moment, at least one of those in 1 Kings 18. To God's question, "What doest thou here, Elijah" 1 Kings 19:9? Elijah's answer was, "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant. . . and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). The cynicism ap-

peared in that he was saying that by this time in Israel there were no other genuine people. He was the only one and once he was gone, he was the last champion of truth. When he is gone, it is all over. That is what he implied. This was instead of saying “I am afraid of Jezebel. That is what I am doing here,” which would have been the truth.

God showed to him, by the time God was finished with him, that there were still “seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal” 1 Kings 19:18. Thus he was not quite all alone like he thought. Sometimes we too hear some expressions as though there are only a few people who are championing the cause of truth and when they do not do that anymore, the cause will be lost. Well, we are glad for those who champion the truth, but likely the number is not quite as few as what we sometimes put on or think in our more cynical moments.

In the New Testament — I am thinking now of Diotrefes whom the Bible says loved “to have the pre-eminence” 3 John 9. One of the ways that he showed that is that he did not believe in other people. He did not believe in John and he did not believe in other brethren within his church. Therefore he refused those that wanted to enter and refused those who were coming to visit a while. That is what I would gather John is saying there. He was quite a cynical individual. In those examples we can see a glimpse of cynicism by definition and by illustration.

3) *Why cynicism is subtle — the subtle sin of cynicism.*

Why is cynicism so subtle? It is subtle because it comes so gradually on us. Young people are generally not troubled with cynicism. Young people are more trusting. They believe in other people quite readily. They believe that issues would not need to be nearly as complicated as what older ones make them sometimes. This outlook, in the opinion of older ones, we think needs some sobering down, and no doubt it does. Sometimes we refer to the outlook of those who are younger as idealistic or unrealistic or even naïve.

The word naïve is described in Proverbs when he says, “And I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding” Proverbs 7:7. Someone who has not seen as much of life as what they have will need to see to make good deductions. As we

grow older, we are disappointed with other persons and with ourselves more than once. Having learned that some people are not as trustworthy as we once thought they were, we are in danger of becoming cynical about life and about other people. We are inclined to imbibe the faulty notion that first the ones who betrayed our trust can no longer be trusted, and secondly that no one should be trusted entirely. When we have come to that we have become cynical.

We think that no matter how kind the deed or how genuine the motive appears, there is a self-serving, unspoken motive behind it. Therefore, we say things like, "Oh he or she made that change only to get in good with the ministry." Perhaps if you will listen to somebody express their motive and heart desire maybe you will find that was true. On the other hand, that may be a false accusation. Or, someone might say, "There is a hidden agenda here. There is something else going on." Again, that is a possibility. Another one that we use quite often is, "This is just the tip of the iceberg," suggesting that there is a whole lot more about this individual or this situation that is beneath the surface that has to be dug out sometime.

Again, these things could be true in specific instances, but they are the expressions of cynicism. Sometimes we hear someone say, "Well, if you knew what I know about that person, you would not think so kindly about them as you do." Or, "I would never live in the heart of the Mennonite community in Pennsylvania because that is a bad place to live. The Mennonites are so thick there and so conceited and so . . ." whatever you know, whatever you might say there that I would not want to live there. Of course, those of us who live in the heart are inclined to think about the same thing of those out and about. These could be cynical, and are often cynical attitudes because what we will find all around the world is that human nature works the same way no matter which state, province, or country you are in. The same kind of things and carnalities that are in one place will be at another. These statements, as I said, could sometimes be true in specific cases, but they are not always true at least in a general way. Nor can we make them justifiably and lump one instance that we know of, with the whole and say, "This is what you have. This is it the whole way around." I think that is when we are becoming cynical.

How shall I close on this point? I think of it like this. The awareness that people may not be and do not always come through transparently honest or trustworthy is a proper awareness to have. However, this awareness that people are not always as honest as what we expected them to be or thought they were, becomes cynicism when it turns into an attitude of suspicion and mistrust that refuses to let another redeem himself in our eyes. See, when someone says, “I so distrust that individual,” they are so suspicious of what another is doing, in their heart they are refusing to give the benefit of the doubt and give him the opportunity to redeem himself where he might have gone wrong. That is the cynical, contentious attitude that we saw in the dictionary definition.

4) *How is cynicism sin?*

Is cynicism or pessimism a harmless, rather innocent, natural disposition or outlook that about half of us have and the other half does not struggle with? We sometimes talk about this — the difference between the optimist and the pessimist. We often do it quite light-heartedly supposing that the pessimist gets along quite well in life seeing the dark side and is justified in doing so. The optimist, no doubt, is not realistic either. That may be how it is in one regard. On the other, when you look at cynicism and pessimism as synonyms then you begin to understand that a pessimistic outlook, though it means looking at the dark side, really tends toward suspicion and mistrust of anything that is happening and also toward what we may call paranoia. That is where we think that in everything, there is something, where we are being “set up” and that we are about to be trapped in one way or another. I say that is what we are inclined to do.

No, I do not think that pessimism and cynicism are harmless dispositions. Perhaps in the sense of hereditary traits some are more inclined in that direction than others, but the way it is with all the traits that we could call hereditary where they are plain carnalities, we are supposed to gain victory over those. This is true whether it is anger, cynicism, or any other form of carnality that the Bible speaks about. We must find victory over those.

5) *Cynicism is a sin in that it assigns bad motives to others without good evidence.*

When cynicism does that and says that here is someone now that I am sure

has a selfish reason behind what he is saying or doing. If we do not know that for sure, and we are assigning those motives without good evidence, we are becoming slanderous really, or we are being slanderous or bearing false witness. Slander is sin.

6) It is sin also in that it amounts to a critical fault-finding attitude.

The New Testament is full of admonition against such a spirit. An outstanding reference against such a spirit is the one that Jesus gives in Matthew 7:3, when He raises the question, “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” The mote and the beam — it is a splinter and a log. It is a comparison there. It is an exaggeration. We cannot carry a beam or a log in our eye, but it is so instructive for us when Jesus puts it this way because we are so inclined to think that I am looking at the other brother’s log through my beam, through my splinter, through my mote. Jesus says, “It is not that way. You have got a log in your eye and you are looking at another’s splinter.” Does that not mean we should be discerning one? Well, not at all. We should be discerning what He is referring to there — the critical, fault finding spirit. As I said, the Bible has much to say about that.

7) Cynicism is sin in that it is a violation of true Christian love.

You ask, “How is that?” First of all the Bible commands, “Let each esteem other better than themselves” Philippians 2:3. That is a hard assignment, but it is one that we are called to. Also, the other thing about Christian love is that Christian love remains vulnerable though it is hurt sometimes. When we become cynical because we have been hurt, we are no longer vulnerable. We withdraw. We say, “I was hurt once and I will make sure that I do not get hurt that way again.” It is true that if we got hurt because we have failed then we ought to learn how to avoid that. On the other hand, often that is said with a touch of bitterness that someone else has done us wrong and we are not about to trust them anymore. That is not Christian love.

Christian love is vulnerable.

It is vulnerable in that it is open to forgive and be hurt again. It is open to that. That is our Lord. If you do not believe that, look at our Lord’s example as one of those. As we come to conclusion, stay alert for cynicism

in your own lives. You might see it in others, but you might see it also in your own life. That is the only place, probably where you can really work at eliminating it. If you do not eliminate it, it will do you spiritual harm.



BOXES AND OTHER THINGS by Brother Mark

"And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin" Luke 19:20.

It is a characteristic of our mentality that our concept of what is normal, middle of the road, acceptable or unacceptable, held in high esteem or disdain, is established by the background we have been exposed to. The blind man, while feeling the tail of the elephant, could not be faulted in thinking an elephant is like a rope. And our thought pattern, whether we like it or not, is swayed by what we think others are thinking. In this writing, we want to explore things that govern and influence our lives.

There is a quote I once read, "There is no hindrance to success like past success." The truth of this is revealed in this thought: I may begin to bask in my accomplishment, oblivious to the changing environment affecting my enterprise. The fact that I have been successful may have made me immune to input or suggestions from others. My way of doing seems right to me; so why should I change or listen to others? However, circumstances change, the demand for a certain product changes, or the resources to produce it are no longer available. Because I have always done it this way, and it has worked in the past, I cannot see the handwriting on the wall.

Boxes. They are useful things. I have a storage loft in my shed, and it was getting rather chaotic. One winter I took it in hand, disposed of unneeded items, and gathered boxes to organize the remaining inventory, and when it was done, I stood back and admired the orderly scene. But a truth soon dawned on me—not one of those items was useful if it never got out of the box. So, boxes are necessary to create structure and order in our lives, but if I never get out of one, how useful am I?

Living in a box is comfortable and feels safe. I am insulated from exposure to the unknown. Maybe the tract committee is looking for someone to go with them on a trip, but it may mean speaking at a rescue mission. My reaction is, "I can't do that; I've never done that before," and I draw back. In labeling the boxes in our lives, the word fear likely is prominent on

many of them, such as fear of the unknown. Fear grips me when I think of the rejection that may come if I offer a tract to a local businessman. Fear of failure is crippling, and I am stifled by what I fear my peers will think if my venture is not a success. Fear of hard work could be another one.

In the verse following the one quoted at the beginning of this writing, we will notice that the servant said, "For I feared thee" (Luke 19:21). As he carefully wrapped up the gift the master had given him and stored it in a safe place, what went through his mind? While his fellow servants were out and about, knocking on doors, seeing and making opportunities, he was sitting at home, immobilized by an irrational fear. Likely, his thoughts were negative, which can be the most constrictive box of all. How many times have you heard, "It won't work," or, "It can't be done," even before any effort has been expended toward the goal?

Another box we need to mention is "I must be self-employed." This box sometimes has a very secure lid and takes considerable mental effort to escape. Maybe I have been influenced that to "just have a job" is inferior. This box locks out many, many opportunities. To grow and manage one's own business takes a tremendous commitment, requiring several abilities, and often cripples other areas of productivity that could develop in someone's life. While there are those who thrive under this environment, others would be happier and more productive working under someone. To accept and recognize the abilities God has given and work within them let us be at home with ourselves and with others.

We hear the saying, "Think outside of the box." Sometimes this is as basic as considering another's viewpoint. Our minds follow a familiar pattern of thinking. Sometimes it has worn such a groove that people will say, "No point in asking him—we already know what he is thinking." We can have a "farmer mentality," an "I'm useless mentality," an "entitlement mentality," or a host of other mentalities, and our perception of life is governed by that viewpoint. In a social setting, we may not be much of a contributor unless the conversation is focused on what is in my box.

Have you ever noticed, when faced with a perplexing challenge, that your thoughts can circle around the same unproductive attempts toward a solution, and it is only after you clear your mind of the stagnant thoughts (sometimes in the dead of night or sitting in a meeting) that a brilliant but simple answer flashes through your mind. Or maybe some neighbour drops by and, in casually observing the problem, suggests a plan that somehow

eluded you. Sometimes it pays to look around, and see what is lacking, and consider how to fill the need. It may be something you have never thought of or done before. Do you suppose Thomas Edison ever thought outside of the box?

Another box that affords a semblance of security is our cultural viewpoints. The equipment we own, the vehicles we drive, the type of print on the sisters' dresses, even what we fix for Sunday dinner is the way it must be done. A sister may marry into a congregation in a different locality and find that which she thought was commonly accepted is now offensive. Someone from another background may spend a lifetime trying to understand what it takes to "fit in." While having our own schools has been a tremendous blessing, one downside is that it has narrowed the perception of "normal" in our children to an uncomfortable degree, and it will take a decided effort by parents to broaden it. What can be done to condition our minds to be accepting of another concept, a different standard of living, or maybe even another way of relating to God, and then to not immediately label it as inferior, not normal, or even wrong? To walk a mile in another's moccasins is noble, and may be the bridge that will connect us. Would it help us to understand that upwards of 95 percent of people do and live differently from you and me, and likely it is not always a question of right and wrong but simply a matter of doing things in another way?

We have talked of many undesirable boxes, but we cannot close without giving this a rounded-out view. There are boxes that are needful in our lives. Someone may read this and justify something in his life that is somewhere out in left field. To be different just to be different hardly ever is blessed of God. That which separates us from our brethren is not of God. To be involved in some passion or cause promoted by activists is not in the Christian realm. It is wise, brothers and sisters, before one sinks everything into an untried venture, to test the waters in a small way. See if there is a demand for it. Talk to some informed business people who will be honest and forthright with you, and then benefit from their opinion.

Another box we need to stay in is that what we do should be of benefit to mankind and within the scope of Christian living. As an example, a Christian could never work in a liquor store. A Christian is not an entertainer. It is questionable if one would find fulfillment in developing a Christmas tree farm.

Let us remember to choose the boxes in our lives. Some are necessary,

just like the ones on my storage shelf, but some just clutter our lives. And one last thought, "Success is often unrecognizable, because it is disguised as hard work."

May God bless us in our endeavors.



[Following is the sixth article in a series on the evolutionist teaching by Bro. Sumner Loomis. —*Editor*]

6. THE DETERIORATION OF THE HUMAN RACE

In the study of physical systems, there is a law that has never been disproved and is the basis of most engineering work. This is known as the second law of thermodynamics.

This law states that no machine can ever use energy with 100 percent efficiency, and the use of energy always contributes to disorder in any system. This is a complicated statement that has far-reaching effects. In simple terms, this means that all machines and systems of this world are in a state of decay and will, after a time, become completely useless or deteriorated. I feel that this is closely related to the curse that God placed upon the earth because of sin. It places a severe limitation on what can be accomplished by man's creations and on the reliability and longevity of his efforts.

Most of us are aware of this situation to some degree, even if we haven't been trained in physics. We expect our material possessions to wear out. As we age, we see that our bodies are becoming less capable. And we also recognize that even this world is deteriorating. Despite the evidence that is on every hand, often there is resistance to admitting this inevitable decay. In one person, we see the hope that a certain diet will cure all ills. Another person becomes infatuated with the idea that a machine of certain design can generate its own energy (the free lunch). Another follows a unique scheme that will generate monetary funds with little or no effort. And so man pursues perfection and ease in a world that denies most such opportunities.

Even the genetic pool that determines the amazing construction of the human body is deteriorating. Research and medical efforts are directed toward gaining control of the downward slide that imposes a limit to the human body's endurance.

The theory of evolution is one of man's schemes that deny this built-in degradation. It teaches that life started as a small speck which, over much time, climbed the ladder of continuous improvement. Thus, the result is the present-day, "highly improved" model of the human being. This type of self-improvement has never been observed in reality. There are definite improvements obtained by the cross-breeding of plants and animals, but improvement in one area always induces weakness in another area.

This principle is even manifested in the tiny microbes (bacteria, fungus, and viruses) that can achieve resistance to certain drugs: as they become resistant to one method of control, they lose ability in another area. It is likely, however, that God has a hand in this matter, because sickness and disease are not only a result of sin but they also result in many souls recognizing their need of a providential God.

It has been said that all mankind has a major deficiency: a built-in need for God. This concept often brings about rebellion in mankind, but is our need really so hard to bear? What more could we ask than a loving, ever-righteous, and all-powerful

God who oversees our being and supplies our need? He is eternal and never changes. Is this not the ultimate answer to all of man's seeking? Indeed, this is all the perfection and utopia that man can imagine!

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, evolutionists are claiming that mankind is improving by leaps and bounds. Supposedly, by the strength of his science-based achievements, he will overcome all sickness, all ethnic limitations, all warfare and strife, and all barriers to the perfect life. He even proclaims that in the past man needed a god or gods to keep him in line and provide psychological support. But now, with his great knowledge, there is no need for the God of creation or the God of love and righteousness. Obviously, this proclamation shows that a new god has been created by mankind, a god of science and human wisdom. This is nothing new; it is only a slightly new slant on an old story. It clearly illustrates man's need of God.

Rather than subscribing to the latest fad in goods let God's children rejoice that they are heirs of the most wonderful offer ever made to mankind: to be reconciled with the unlimited Creator of all through Christ Jesus His Son.

~ Sumner S. Loomis ~



THE FEAR OF THE LORD

The dictionary describes fear as uneasiness or anxiety, or to feel reverence or awe. It is this latter fear that I would like to lift out in this essay: reverence of God and for God.

Looking up these three words, awe, reverence, and fear, we find some deep thoughts contained in the Scripture.

The Psalms is the only book of the Bible that uses the word awe, and all those verses refer to God. Psalm 4:3-4 says, "The Lord will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." Lastly, Psalm 119:161 tells us, my heart standeth in awe of thy word."

Reverence has a special meaning, and one that we do well to note. It denotes a feeling or attitude of respect, love, and awe. The word reverence occurs thirteen times in the Bible. It is used in many ways: from us to God, from a lesser to a greater, from a wife to her husband, and from children to their fathers.

These two words, awe and reverence, combine to make what we call "the fear of God." There are extensive references on the word fear in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. I would like to group the applicable scriptures under four main headings:

- (1) What the fear of the Lord is.
- (2) How we are to use it.
- (3) What it produces.
- (4) How God reacts to it.

(1) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and understanding (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7). It is clean, enduring forever (Psalm 19:9). It is God's treasure (Isaiah 33:6). It is also the whole duty of man, Ecclesiastes 12:13.

(2) We are to use the fear of God in several ways:

–To serve Him – Psalm 5:7

–To perfect holiness – 2 Corinthians 7:1

–To do His work (Psalm 2:11)

–To bless Him (Psalm 135:20)

–To keep us from envying sinners (Proverbs 23:17) –To trust (Psalm 115:11)

–To apply our hearts to wisdom (Psalm 90:11-12). Our awe and respect for God has many beautiful results. They produce:

- Freedom from sin (Exodus 20:20)
 - Respect for the infirm and aged (Leviticus 19:14, 32)
 - Reverence from our youth up (1 Kings 18:12)
 - Provision from God (2 Kings 4:1)
 - A heart that is united with the brethren and set in God's ways (Jeremiah 32:39; Psalm 119:79)
 - Causes us to sanctify His name (Isaiah 29:23).
- (3) The fear of God also produces:**
- Instruction (Zephaniah 3:7)
 - Joy (Matthew 28:8)
 - Freedom from terror (Luke 1:74)
 - Godly sorrow for sin (2 Corinthians 7:11)
 - Submission to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
 - A proper work ethic (Ephesians 6:5)
 - Obedience (2 Corinthians 7:15)
 - Kindness (Leviticus 25:17)
 - A search for wisdom (Proverbs 2:1-5)
 - Perseverance in our Christian life (Philippians 2:12)
 - Chaste conversation (1 Peter 3:2)
 - Praise (Revelation 19:5; Psalm. 22:23)
 - Joyous declaration of what He has done for us (Psalm 66:16)
 - It helps us give a prompt answer to those who ask about salvation (1 Peter 3:15)
 - Makes us leave evil (Proverbs 3:7; 16:6; 19:23; 8:13)
 - And gives a whole and united heart (Psalm 86:11)
 - Gives joy in our brethren (Psalm 119:79)
 - And contentment (Proverbs 15:16)
 - It is a fountain of life (Proverbs 15:16)
 - Gives us a hatred of pride and arrogance (Proverbs 8:13)
 - As well as strong confidence and a place of refuge (Proverbs 14:26).
- (4) The Bible also tells us how God reacts to our reverence and respect:**
- He gives the heritage of the brotherhood (Psalm 61:5)
 - Promising to prolong our days and that all shall be well with us (Ecclesiastes 8:12)
 - He gives life and peace (Malachi 2:5)
 - Healing (Malachi 4:2)
 - Much mercy (Luke 1:50; Psalm 5:7; 188:4; 103:11, 17)

-Comfort (Acts 9:31)

-He sends His angels to guard us (Psalm 34:7)

-He causes us to be satisfied (Psalm 22:25)

-And will give us a kingdom which cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:28).

God further promises:

-That He will honour us (Psalm 15:4) and lay up goodness for us (Psalm 31:19)

-That He will hear our cry, will save us, and fulfill our desires (Psalm 145:19)

-And that He will watch over us carefully (Psalm 33:18; 111:5), helping and shielding us (Psalm 115:11)

-He takes pleasure in us (Psalm 147:11).

Finally, I believe Psalm 60:4 has a beautiful thought. "Thou halt given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." From my own personal experience, this banner is the love and purity of God displayed through His people. It is an unmistakable and glorious one that shall never be removed.

In conclusion, I would like to quote from Psalm 25:14 and Hebrews 12:28:

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

Sister Renee



JUSTIFYING FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

The "burden of the Lord" does not go away until the concern is rectified. With the passing of time, it may even increase. So it is relating to the above title. Over the past several years the subject of true faith versus an intellectual profession has become more and more weighty. Observing the course of Christendom in its compromising with the flesh and the world while yet maintaining a claim of salvation by faith raises the question of how it could happen. Surely there have been subtle, but mighty, forces of deception at work. Could it happen to us?

The cornerstone of Christianity is the doctrine of justification by faith. The Apostle Paul states it so clearly, "Therefore being justified by faith, we

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" Romans 5:1. We should note the result of justification: "peace with God," or reconciliation with an aggrieved Father.

Spirituality is not justification per se, but it is the resulting condition of the heart and mind when one lives in the justified state. One is not justified by being spiritual, but one is spiritual because he is justified and sanctified. No person is justified on any other ground than faith in Christ Jesus.

While we are endeavouring to stay on this true gospel ground, the human element is subject to being influenced by religious voices all around. Some of what is being said is very subtle and, on the surface, seems so right. Reference is here made to the use of the term spiritual. The world's usage of the word indicates one who is conscious of and relates to the spirit part of man. Or one who is concerned with religious values. Spirituality, accordingly, is "sensitivity or attachment to religious values" (Webster). This connotation has even taken on political significance today. One can appreciate a part of this; yet as it relates to the way of salvation, it is shallow and misleading.

In need of "a nail in his holy place" (Ezra 9:8) to arrest the slippage from the faith, we come again and again to a common conclusion: we need more spirituality. Spirituality is the answer to our needs today—if it is that spirituality that proceeds from being justified by faith (Romans 8:6-14). It must bear the hallmark of true faith. The faith that justifies is God-loving, truth-loving, and willingly obedient to the doctrine of the Lord and His apostles (Ephesians 2:20). Such qualities are the unalterable constitution of faith. If what one professes to be faith doesn't work in him what the Scriptures teach, he doesn't have faith. Then he is not justified. Consequently, a so-called spirituality that does not bear the marks of Abraham's faith is false and deceptive.

If we do not recognize this and labour accordingly, in time we will speak the simplistic religious rhetoric of nominal Christendom. And we will fail to be a called out, separated-unto-God people.

A lack of depth in repentance has been noted again and again. Has "our" gospel become anaemic because the truth that repentance begins with one being convicted he has aggrieved the holiness of the Almighty is not emphasized? That element must be present first. Afterward, and timely, comes the presentation of Christ Jesus as the Saviour. The scriptural order is "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" Acts 20:21

Let us bear in mind that faith—true justifying faith—is fostered by sound, balanced preaching (Romans 10:17).

Faith believes God's pronouncements against sin as well as His assurances of pardon upon brokenness. Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God ... And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" Romans 4:20-21. "And therefore [because he staggered not and was fully persuaded] it was imputed to him for righteousness" (v. 22). Paul then reinforces the truth that God is the first focus of justifying faith. He says, "But for us also ... it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (v. 24).

It is too easily forgotten or ignored that the end in view of justification through Jesus Christ crucified is reconciliation with the Father, or peace with God.

God longed for reconciliation with estranged humanity, and the only way to effect that was for Him to take the initiative. In eternity He begat His only Son and, in the fullness of time, offered Him as the sacrificial Lamb of God (John 1:29). Thus, by Christ's death, the Father satisfied His holy law concerning sin and reached out to invite sinful men unto Him. "That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" 2 Corinthians 5:19.

By the initial work of faith through the Holy Spirit, the heart becomes broken and contrite. Then faith lays hold on the veracity of the Father's promise that "whosoever believeth in him [Christ Jesus] should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). By faith Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, becomes his only and all-sufficient hope. That faith obtains pardon and justification. Such faith establishes Christ Jesus as Lord and Master of one's life. It does not leave one empty-handed and disappointed; neither is that one's following manner of life disappointing to the saints. That believer is spiritual, meaning he is led by, conscious of and responsive to the Holy Ghost.

True justifying faith has a "socket" for every tenet of the faith to plug into. Never will faith in Jesus' precious blood reject parts of the truth or doctrine as foreign or useless ideas. Neither are parts of the doctrine like a transplanted organ, always foreign and needing submission as an anti-rejection drug. No, faith in God and His dear Son has a natural affinity with the truth. Therefore, the whole scope of Biblical doctrine and practice is many times referred to as "the faith" (Jude 3).

Many have noticed with concern the rise of a younger generation with deficient conviction regarding separation from the world unto holiness, yet claiming to be spiritual. Sometimes an assurance of being spiritual is taken from the daily reading of the Bible and having a prayer. This may also be true of some among older generations. We dare not "justify" such on this basis or some "improvement" and good promises at revival time. To do so fosters the false doctrine of justification by deeds. The way of salvation is not mechanical. The gospel ground on which we must labour is justification by faith, which brings the clear witness of the Spirit. But if the works of true faith are not in evidence, then that which one claims as faith is a "dead faith" (James 2:20-24).

The principles of salvation are fundamental and yet simple. However, they are not simplistic (unduly simplified and trite). There is an apparent working in Christendom that presents an overly simplified gospel and makes it a matter of profession only. That "gospel" does not contain the leaven of truth regarding what true justifying faith is and does (Matthew 13:33). In the face of this, suggesting that faith embraces all the doctrine of God and obeys it may bring charges of corrupting the simplicity of the gospel. Nevertheless, declaring "all the counsel of God" carries its own comfort, and there the saints of all ages have found rest.



The Word Conquers

*Submit yourselves therefore to God.
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
James 4:7

The account of Jesus' temptation offers grave warning and great comfort to believers today. In it we see the deceptiveness and tenacity of Satan. However, we also see that there is a way to victory in every test. There is the comfort of knowing that as Jesus has "suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" Hebrews 2:18.

After Jesus' baptism, He probably felt a need to commune with His Father in preparation for the ministry that lay before Him. Jesus sought no personal comfort or gratification. In prayer and fasting, He gave Himself wholly to consider the Father's will for His life.

In Luke 4:1-13 we are told of our Lord being tempted and using the words of Scripture to conquer Satan's suggestions and so can we.

Luke 4:1-13 “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. ³ And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. ⁴ And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. ⁵ And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. ⁷ If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. ⁸ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. ⁹ And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: ¹⁰ For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: ¹¹ And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ¹² And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. ¹³ And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. ¹⁴ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee:.....”

After forty days of fasting, Jesus must have felt physically tired and weak, and in that condition Satan found Him. Satan's first suggestion carried both a subtle challenge and an enticement. "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." The word "if" insinuates that if Jesus could not turn a stone into food, He was not God's Son. Secondly, Satan was enticing Him to use His power for personal gratification rather than trusting God to supply His need.

Though Jesus was weak and hungry, He was not weak in spirit. His well-chosen words of Scripture showed Satan that He would not accept his challenge.

Satan tried another tactic. He took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and suggested that Jesus cast Himself into the chasm below. Satan even used scripture to suggest to Jesus that He had the right to invoke God's special protection in this act. He seems to be saying, "You have just said that you trust your Father to take care of you in every situation. Therefore, prove to

me your trust and His care."

Again Jesus used a clear Scriptural principle to repel Satan's thrust. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" means that one must not make a test of God's promises and goodness for the sake of personal vindication. To do so would be presumptuous and would make merchandise of God's grace.

Satan's cunning produced another temptation. Showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, he said, in effect, "You want to establish a kingdom. I can give you this immense earthly kingdom and all its power and glory, and you won't have to die for it. Just acknowledge my power over it and my right to it, and I will give it to you."

This offer promised earthly power and glory and was designed to appeal to the natural inclination of the flesh to avoid pain and suffering, but it required the act of idolatry. This temptation was filled with devilish audacity. Jesus recognized this, and again using the Word of God, ordered Satan to depart.

Matthew's gospel records that "angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matthew 4:11). The God whom Jesus sought to honour and the Father in whom He trusted did not fail Him. It must have been a time of inexpressible blessing as the angels ministered to Jesus' needs and He and His Father communed together.

No man, however good, is exempt from temptation. To be tempted is not sin, for Jesus was subjected to temptation. Because Jesus endured these temptations we are better prepared to recognize Satan's approaches and know how to resist them.

Satan still uses against us the same basic appeals to fleshly desires, honour and vanity that he used against Jesus. How often do we not desire to use a God-given ability to some personal advantage or to accept a little honour for something we have done? How often do we mistrust God's promise to provide for our needs? Then we feel we must use our own thinking for our time to somehow wring a livelihood from this unproductive earth or deal with some troublesome situation.

This mistrust opens the door for Satan's next cunning suggestion. Almost subconsciously the question arises in us, "Is God really able to take care of all my needs?" and then, "Is God really good?"

The tendency to presume upon God's promises arises from the persistent temptation to feel that we are more important than we really are. As we take care of our affairs, our personal needs tend to seem of paramount im-

portance to us. We ask God for many favours because we "need" them. If we could see what God sees, would some of our prayers appear embarrassingly self-serving and unnecessary?

Do we have the vision to know which promises to reach for? Should we ask for strength to endure rather than for an easier road? Would God be more honoured to teach us to be content with fewer earthly goods than to supply our request for more? Would God be more pleased if we humbly used the small abilities He has given us rather than to ask for a more open door?

Worldly ambition still reaches out its arms today. It calls to our inherent pride and to our insecurities to make a name for ourselves and to establish our own sphere of influence. If we heed Satan's suggestions, we become manipulative and domineering as we try to direct our own little kingdoms. To defend our position, we may find it convenient to undermine that of others.

Satan's ultimate goal in all this is to place the man of sin (self) in the temple of our heart, removing God from His rightful place (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). The lifting up of self allows us to put things, family, friends, and our own lives ahead of God. It leads us to justify our actions, possessions, ambitions, and attitudes because we have become our own judge. The temptation to idolatry comes in small, innocent opportunities, but it is always near at hand.

Jesus' gracious and purposeful use of God's Word in thwarting Satan's thrusts shows us that we need to have the Scripture engraved on our hearts. It is the sword of the Spirit, the weapon with which we may most confidently defend ourselves against the enemy. The psalmist says with meaning, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" Psalm 119:11. James writes of receiving "with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" James 1:21.

After His temptation, Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. Overcoming temptation brings us also joy, grace, and power.

May the example of Jesus inspire in us the determination to resist Satan and to find in every temptation God's way of escape.

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