

# 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****The Hazardous Christian**

“Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” *Act 15:26*

Marketers have called it the World's Most Successful Ad. It was posted in The London Times in 1905 — “Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages. Bitter cold. Long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in event of success.” Signed: *E. Shackleton*.

He was looking for a crew to help him discover the South Pole. The next morning, over five thousand men were waiting outside the Time's office ready to go. Something in the ad touched something deep inside each man. But there is an even more successful ad posted in the Acts of the Apostles, and over the centuries millions have responded to its higher call in an even deeper way.

Paul and Silas were commended as men who hazarded their lives. Contrary to what one may initially think, this does not mean to be reckless or irresponsible. The Greek word means “to give over to another.” In other words, they were men who had handed their lives over to Jesus Christ, so as to bring great honour to His name. And while the underlying thought might seem to be one of self-abandonment, the truth of the matter is that this is the ultimate act of personal responsibility.

Paul said, “My friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.” *Romans 12:1*, Good News Bible. The Amplified Bible says it is the “reasonable, rational, and intelligent” thing to do.

You and I were put on this earth to make Jesus famous. It is reasonable, rational, and intelligent for us to use our gifts and abilities to honour Him. But that's not going to happen if we hold on to our own reputations as something to be cherished and mollycoddled, as they said in the old days. We must hazard our lives. There is something deep inside every person that is stirred by the daring challenge to live a life of greatness for something other than oneself.

Still, not all choose to do so; not everyone hands their lives over. Some settle for the pampered, risk-free environment of a lifeless faith and live out their days making no difference at all. But not you; surely not you?

Start now and from this day onward, hazard your life for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*From Daily Devotions by J.C.Ryle*



*From the Pulpit*

*No Reserve, No Retreat, No Regrets*  
*From a message by David S Burkholder*  
*Decker Lake Mennonite Church 2010*

Greetings in Jesus name this morning.

We have a God that does not waiver, we have a tendency to waiver to not be steady but God promises answers to those who are sincere and that is a real encouragement to us.

I read a short summary of a man's life and I would like to use the motto that he had for his life for the outline for the message this morning, this man's name was William Whiting Borden, he was born in 1887 well over 100 years ago, he was born into privilege, wealth, education and opportunity. His father was immensely wealthy and prominent and he lived with his parents in Chicago where he dedicated his life to Christ and never turned back.

After high school he travelled with another missionary to many other places and while on that trip the things that he saw depressed him and he wished to become a foreign missionary.

At that point in his life he wrote in his Bible "No Reserve" he was not going to let anything stand in his way in serving the Lord with no reserve.

To reserve is something that we set aside or to have set aside for special person.

Have you ever pulled into a parking lot and thought there is just the right place for me to park and you get there and it says Reserved Parking, it is not for you, it is set aside for someone else.

Or it means to keep back or retaining for oneself, we will reserve things, we may be generous with some things, some things we will give away, some things are for sale but some things are not.

Or there is forest reserves, there is land that is set aside for special purposes, sometimes we hear about that or maybe go to an un-reserved auction

that means that things are going to get sold there is nothing to hold it back it is going to go, no reserve.

We turn to Luke chapter 9 I would like to explore this idea of no reserve and let's look within ourselves, we know that this is the right thing to say but are we doing this without wavering without question?

[Luke 9:57-58](#)

<sup>57</sup> And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

<sup>58</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

No reserve, this man said I will follow thee.

And Jesus goes on to explain to him what this means or at least part of it; He says I don't even have a place to lay my head.

This man had come to the most important conclusion in his life: I will follow thee.

This is the most important step for us as a Christian, it is more important than following certain rules of the church, those are important, but we must have this first: I will follow Thee.

Sometimes it is easy to get this thing turned around we will try to follow guidelines that others expect of us first.

Don't get me wrong that is all right but this comes first: I will follow Thee.

What are those requirements?

Look over in Mark chapter 8 Jesus said: If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Then He goes on and says what we lose if we don't He says even the whole world is of no value if we lose our own soul, if any man will come (*read Mark 8:34-36*)

We need to deny, take up the cross daily and follow.

What could this mean, what will this mean for us in this life, where might it take me? Are we willing to surrender ourselves to these commitments? Jesus said we need to do that to take up our cross.

First of all maybe we should look at this in the order He has it in, deny self, don't try to take up the cross without denying self, first you deny self then you take up the cross and then you follow Me. Let's get that in the right order.

Can we trust God with the future? There are many things that pass and we do not understand why God permitted things and why God allows evil, why all this, but then here God is asking us to give it up to follow Him.

Well God does not expect us to know and answer all those things, we need to follow, Jesus says if any man will come he must follow me.

No matter what our questions are, no matter what lies before us we need to come to this place, deny, take up the cross and follow daily.

Paul said I die daily.

This living a life of no reserve needs to be a choice daily.

Peter said but we have forsaken all and followed thee ([Matthew 19:27](#)) and I believe Peter felt that way but then right following that he says: And what shall we have therefore?

What are we going to get out of this, what's in it for me?

Don't we notice that is a natural response when God asks something big of us we say: Well what's in it for me?

Let's look at verse 61 of Luke chapter 9 for the next point:

[Luke 9:61](#) And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee;

And he should have stopped there, I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

Was his response right or did he have some reserve? He did have some reserve, it was more important to him to go and talk to his family than to follow Jesus, he said I'm going to say goodbye to them. And that would seem okay but he was putting that ahead when he said I will but.....

So there is one word that we cannot use when we talk to God when we come ourselves to Him, I cannot think of a time when we are talking to God or respond to God that we can say but... Certainly not in this context of I will but.... We have to lay it down.

Another one in verse 59 and this is one that Jesus initiated He said to him follow me come and he said, Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father

(Luke 9:59) it was not likely that his father was dead otherwise I doubt he would have been out there following Jesus he would have been at home taking care of those things it also seemed like he chose a very logical response in his mind he said but....

We notice in verse 23 Jesus said if.

Do you ever find it in your life we say well fair is fair if Jesus says we can too. But we can't do that. We tend to want to say the same thing yes I will come if.....

If God asks us to give our lives to Him without reserve we say yes but if.....

We have to lay that down we have to have no reserve.

Jesus said strive to enter in.

Someone has said there is no such thing as winning this kingdom by half-hearted endeavours.

We have to come to Him like the first man did, I will follow thee. No reserve, no subject clauses, no buts, no ifs, that will hinder us in striving and pressing forward but it takes eager sincere pursuit, eagerness to please the Father no matter what.

I think it is native to all of us to want to know what is required of us.

In a business deal it would be looked on as foolish for you to sign a contract to do certain things without knowing what that is but we cannot do that with God, we have to come to Him with no reserve, nothing set aside for ourselves.

Remember those reserved parking zones are set aside for special persons and this William Borden said that he is not going to set anything aside that he is going to keep for himself, no reserve.

No reserve is to hold nothing back to have no secrets from God. Right away we know we cannot do that we know that we cannot have secrets with God but do we, we try other things in our life that we do not want to think about because we don't want to share them with God, maybe our ambitions, our motives, our aspirations things we would like to do, do we go ahead and do them because we do not want to check with God because He might say no?

I have done that already and it is something that we would like to do, that's making a reserve, that's saying I'm not quite sure I want God's approval because I'm not sure what He might say.

There is a song that somewhat describes this as our heart having rooms, I don't remember all that is in that song but I think it gives us a picture of how our hearts are, we have this condition in our heart, we have these rooms in our heart, maybe one place is for our ambitions, another for our motives, another for our aspirations but we do not want God in there because He might interfere with us and our plans.

That's a reserve.

Maybe we have a room that has secret pride in it, yes we have dealt with the main thing of pride in our life we try to keep that under control in the way we act, the way we relate to others but we know that there is a pocket a room in our heart for pride.

It could be bitterness, grudges, hurts of the past, lustful thoughts, pleasures of sin, things that we have in a sense dealt with but yet leave there because we potentially may want them again.

I think sometimes we need to probe deep into our hearts, is there something that we are uncomfortable for God to know about our life? We know that God knows everything but if it brings turmoil to think of the way God is viewing that then the tendency is to just try and block that out but if we are blocking things out of our realisation or when God is trying to speak to us we have a reserve there.

Could it be somewhat like an onion you peel it layer by layer and it may bring pain to the eyes and tears they sting the eyes and we don't like to think about things in our life that are painful things that hurt us whether it is by others or by our own disappointment but if we don't come to rest with that with God it will haunt us so let's open our hearts whatever it is open it wide up to God no reserve.

Is there something in your life that you don't want God to think about because we don't want to think about it?

I'm not suggesting that we always keep rehashing these things that have happened to us or failures of our life but if we are trying to deaden the feeling by blocking it out and ignoring it I think we are reserving and we need

to give that to God. Allow God to come into our lives without any questions, without any No I won't go there.

I think this illustration is in Scripture where King Agrippa when Paul came to him and said believest thou the prophets, I know you believe. Then Agrippa said to Paul almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said I would to God that not only thou but also all that hear me this day were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds ([Acts 26:28-29](#))

King Agrippa had a reserve, I don't know what it was, I'm not sure what it was but he said almost, almost but it was not enough. On the other hand here was Paul he was not wishing, sure he wished that he could be released, but that was not bothering him, that was not dragging him down he said I would to God all are like me except for these bonds.

Well all Christians know what it is to experience both of these; we know what it is like to have a reserve in our hearts to say yes I want to, yes I'm almost persuaded but no.

But we also know what it is to give it all up, no reserve.

I think as time goes on we all, and maybe some more than others, will deal with this situation where there is a little bit more holding back, something comes up, something maybe we have done, the same thing that we want, that early desire that we had when we came to God in full surrender absolutely no reserve.

It is a natural tendency to let our selfish nature to start drawing us in trying to get us to reserve a spot, maybe just a small spot in our heart for selfish things for just me.

Well there are no rooms in our heart that we can have "reserved" on, there is nothing in our life that we say we will not do for God. Can we trust God for that?

I know it is difficult when we don't know and maybe we feel we have been hurt by God because He does not understand that, yet lets come to that place let's trust God because He is Almighty.

William Bordon attended a university for about four years and he was appalled at the lack of spiritual interest there and so he began to meet with a classmate for prayer in his room. By the end of that year there were 150

meeting regularly for Bible study and prayer and by the end of his time there were about 1000 students of the 1300 at University meeting in such groups but he was still determined to heed God's call as a missionary to China.

He was offered many lucrative jobs because of his position, his heritage and also his abilities but he turned them down and then once again he opened his Bible and on the fly leave and wrote "No Retreat"

Sometimes we think, do you maybe sometimes notice the surges in your life you get to the place you say yes Lord: No reserve. And at that point you find such peace and rest why does it not stay that way? Because we let it retreat, no reserve, no retreat.

To retreat is to draw back.

**Luke 9:62** And Jesus said unto him, [this to the man who said to him all he wanted to do was to go home and say farewell] Jesus said, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Do we take it that serious, this retreating thing?

Well we say at least he had so much he was really dedicated he wanted to follow Him but Jesus said no you are not fit.

Well we would have to look at this in their own lives seriously if we are looking back we are not fit. That's part of retreating and that is why William Bordon said there is no reserve I'm holding nothing back I'm going to hold it there and keep it there.

That's why Jesus said, look back at **Luke 9:51** And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

It's that stedfastness, that dedication and unwavering confidence and trust in God.

Well what about when we fail in this and we do retreat?

We have to come back to that place again no reserve, we have to lay it all down again and dedicate ourselves again to no retreat.

**Hebrews 10:38** Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

The next verse says: But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. [Hebrews 10:39](#)

Do we take this as seriously as God does? He says if he is looking back he is not fit he cannot go straight if he is looking back, if he is trying to plough a straight furrow he has to be looking ahead he cannot be thinking of looking at what is behind him where he came from.

In Hebrews it says if we draw back My soul shall have no pleasure in him and then he says those that do draw back draw back unto perdition. That means if we are drawing back we are of those that are unto perdition but he says we are not like that.

So let's remain confident and stedfast in that.

A quote: "He that comes still loving the world, still looking with regret on its pleasures, its wealth and its honours that has not wholly forsaken them as his portion cannot be a Christian and is not fit for the kingdom of God."

If we are coming to God still loving those things of the world still looking with desire and regret because of the pleasures that people are finding in this world and we regret that we don't have it he says those are the kind of things that are drawing us back.

Let's unite ourselves with those people of [Hebrews 10:39](#) but we are not of them who draw back.

Paul says brethren I count not myself to have apprehended that this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 3:13-14](#)

We all know that this no reserve commitment takes maintenance could we say, it takes daily maintenance, Paul says I die daily, Jesus says take up your cross and follow daily, Paul says I have not apprehended but I'm working toward that and forgetting what is behind me I'm not looking back with regret to what I've given up but I press toward the mark.

Jesus said to the Jews which believed on Him if you continue in my word then ye are my disciples and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. [John 8:31-32](#).

No retreat.

Remember in our commitments He says if you do this then you are my disciples, if you continue then are you my disciples but not if you retreat.

So this leaves us with keeping on and keeping on, there is no other choice, we need to keep on putting one foot in front of the other even when we don't know what that means, even when it is difficult, even when it seems like all is against us. Let's remember it is not always what it seems it is never all against us God is for us He knows our situation just like the children of Israel things looked at dark for them things had gotten worse for them but it was part of God's plan, no reserve, no retreat.

In 1912 William Borden decided to go to Egypt to perfect his Arabic language he thought that would help him in his missionary work in China.

Shortly after he went to Egypt in 1913 he died of spinal meningitis in April 1913 and his Bible was given to his friend that he had started the Bible prayer time with in university. When his friend received William's Bible he opened it to the fly leaf and read the words, No Reserve, No Retreat, and then he found two more words that were penned just days before Williams death, what do you think they might have been?

He says: No regrets.

And is not that so true?

I don't know if any of us have a premonition that we have only a few days left of our life but if at any point in our life we are living this way no reserve, no retreat there are no regrets.

Let's go to second Timothy chapter 4.

Brother Paul is such a blessing in living this out in his life the way he gave himself up and the way he was willing to just put all into life and to not retreat.

Regrets are to feel troubled or remorseful over something that has happened or the way that we have acted, we are all familiar with regrets, we all know what that is like and you would not be human if you do not know what a regret is but it does not have to be that way.

We do not have to live in that as being an all pervading thought just caving in on us that we are living a life that is totally full of regrets, even though people have regrets over what has happened and about our choices and the

way we've acted we can come to God open ourselves wide up and be in a right relationship with Him again through no reserve and no retreat.

This is a man who was living without regret,

**2 Timothy 4:6-8** For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. <sup>7</sup> I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

I'm now ready, he was in such a state of life that he was ready to go, yes he had regrets, he wished he had not done some of those things that he did, he was involved in Stephen's stoning, he regretted that, but here he came to a place because he had dealt with that in his life, he did not block it out, it is taken care of, he did not reserve feelings of bitterness and anger, holding others accountable to him otherwise he could not have felt this way about his coming to the end of his life and saying: I'm now ready to be offered up.

Notice how he says it is a crown of righteousness and it is going to be given by the Righteous Judge not to me only but to all who love His appearing, all those that have no reserve and no retreat can have this promise of a crown of righteousness.

In another place he says but none of these things move me neither do I count my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry that I received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the Grace of God, **Acts 20:24**

His life, his physical life is secondary, he did not put any reserve in on that, whatever God allowed, whatever God wanted to do that is what he wanted, why? So that he might finish his course with joy.

Turn yet to first Peter one.

No regrets, **1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

<sup>4</sup> To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Do we see any regrets, do we see any remorse, any wishing for something better?

We have a lively hope because Jesus died for us and He rose again, an inheritance that is incorruptible and that won't be defiled, it won't fade away.

At the end of verse four there is a promise: reserved in heaven for you.

A promise for whom? It is for those: **Verse 5**: Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

How is all this possible to live a life of no reserve, no retreat, no regrets?

It is through the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

If we have if we are living with no reserve, no retreat we will have in heaven a place reserved for us and could it be that God has a place in heaven reserved for everyone, there is a place therefore everyone on this world every one that has lived, every one that will live, there is plenty of room he says that there is a place reserved in heaven for you.

Do you believe that? Are you going to take that place, are you going to be there?

Let's do that, let's fulfil God's wish to take that place that is reserved for us and that is the only reserve that we can have, we can have no reserves on our life but look forward to the place that is reserved for us.

So follow God wherever He calls it is the only way home for us,  
No Reserve, No Retreat, No Regrets.

Let's kneel for prayer.



*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

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

## 5. WAS GOD SURPRISED AT THE FALL OF MAN?

Our Creator is a great God. We will never have need for a greater one, nor is it possible that there could be a greater god than the "I AM" (Exodus 3:14) of all time and eternity. God's greatness is beyond our comprehension. This fact and its affirmation to man is testified to in Genesis 1:14: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

There are three words used that are not directly defined in the Bible in partially explaining the attributes of God but they are referred to therein and widely accepted by Christian writers and commentators. They are:

*Omnipotent*. Having unlimited or universal power, authority, or force: all powerful.

*Omniscient*: Having total knowledge; knowing everything—past, present, and future.

*Multiplex-able*: Capable of simultaneous communication or perception of two or more messages at the same time. Thus, God is available to everyone, continuously.

Sometimes the Genesis account is told in a way that implies that after Adam and Eve sinned, God had to change His plans for this earth. And sometimes it is intimated that God was surprised when the world became so sinful that He had to destroy a major part of His creation. But this is not the case. God knew before He began the creation that these events would take place, and He knew what the cost would be. This knowledge is due to His omniscience.

What most people fail to realize is that the triune God knows and feels for us in the pain, sorrow, and unrighteousness that is in this world (Psalm 103:14; Hebrews 4:15). He knows the content and intent of our hearts. He knows our attitudes, our outlook, our objectives, and our needs. His main concern is our salvation.

Sometimes we have a view of this life that is clouded by our shortsightedness. As an example, I have a friend who is disabled to the point of being almost completely paralyzed by a degenerative nerve disease. He is able to

live a useful life from his highly automated wheelchair, which he controls wonderfully by a single muscle still active in his chest. The everyday challenges that he faces strain his faculties to the limit. I'm sure many of us looking on wonder why this situation exists. For just a moment, though, consider this possibility: If he had been born to a normal body, maybe he would not have been saved. If this would be true, then is the present situation justified? Would you be willing to subject yourself to these conditions if your eternal destination were in the balance?

Many unbelievers, then, consider the creation record trite (too simple, lacking in detail). And sometimes this confusion causes them to reject the creation account completely. This comes about because of a lack of respect and reverence for an Almighty God, whom they have not known. Two scriptures deliver important information on this point: "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8), and, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). This is the equivalent of someone offering a certain proposition and saying, "Come on, just believe in me and try me; you will soon see the good results."

From these facts, we may conclude that a purpose in God's creation was to allow men to make a free choice between righteousness and evil. We can also be assured that God has always had His creation under His control, and thus it will be until the passage of this earth and the final judgment.

~ Sumner S. Loomis ~



*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

## THE MATCHLESS CHRIST

There is coming a day when God "shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" 1 Timothy 6:15. This, of course, refers to Christ Jesus the Lord. Indeed, He justly claims that title even now, although the world does not acknowledge Him as such. But of that Day "it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" Romans 14:11. What a Day that will be!

There is a cause of Christ occupying the highest station. It is in the covenant God made in eternity with His Son and is the centre of the Christian dispensation.

It is amazing how Christ is in the Old Testament, although veiled by human figures and happenings (Luke 24:27; Acts 7; Acts 17:2-3; 1 Corinthians 10:4). Indeed, "the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8).

The heart of the covenant that God made with His Son is typified in Abraham's relationship with his son Isaac. When Abraham's eldest servant, who ruled over all that his master had, was sent to seek a wife for Isaac, he said to Bethuel and Laban, "And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath" Genesis 24:36. So did God give all that He has to His Son, and the Holy Ghost never fails to make this point in bidding the Bride to come with Him to the great consummation.

God had earlier made a covenant with Abram concerning the land of Canaan. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" Genesis 17:7-8.

Coming into the New Testament, one sees the actual, spiritual fulfilment of this promise. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" Galatians 3:16. In other words, all the promises made to Abraham and the patriarchs concerning Canaan culminated in Christ Jesus and the gospel dispensation. This was really what God had in mind. The mighty stream of God's grace and goodness, exemplified and signified by literal things and promises, flowed into Christ. Thus, the eternal Son received all His Father's goods. So now all the Father's blessings flow outward through Christ to believing people. The apostle Paul said, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God..." 2 Corinthians 1:20.

Considering the above, how true the words of Peter, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" Acts 4:12. No doubt Peter re-

membered Jesus' words, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father" Matthew 11:27. Again, just before ascending into heaven Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" Matthew 28:18. Truly, the former dispensation culminated in Him, and now all the spiritual power and might of God proceed through Him alone.

Salvation is "in" Christ. "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. Many, many other scriptures attest to this position. Here only are we "heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him" Romans 8:17. Here only we inherit the true land of Canaan, the blessed gospel rest for the soul.

Nowhere do the Scriptures hint at a blessing being obtained by merely being "close" to Christ. Some may be just outside the door, but the blessings are found only "in" Him. Neither does being of any particular nation, tribe, or people have any merit. The Father has given everything to Him—there is no other place of blessing. Isaac denied Esau the blessing, even though Esau sought his father's change of mind "carefully with tears" Hebrews 12:17. Had Esau sought his own repentance, history would be different today. In like manner the Father's mind about the pre-eminence of His Son and the blessing being only in Him will never be changed.

What does it mean to be "in" Christ Jesus? The answer is simple, but one must realize that it entails crucifying the "Esau" man in us to obtain that blessing.

It means valuing above everything else the salvation that Christ wrought. Think of the practical application of Jesus' words to the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:21-22).

It means being convinced by the Holy Ghost of one's depravity and sins, and of the only, all-sufficient merit of Christ crucified for one's pardon.

It means suffering with Christ because one bears the cross, which is the suffering of the flesh that results as one obeys the Word. To be in Him means there is no sidestepping around the cross, or shallow, lukewarm, and lip-confession only of being a Christian.

It means counting the inheritance of the spiritual land of Canaan, which includes the church of God and the faith, a great treasure. How can one be in Christ and not feel deeply about the church, for which Christ shed His blood (Acts 20:28)? The injunctions in the Bible about being strangers and pilgrims are understood to have practical applications. The same is true

about not loving the world and the things thereof (1 John 2:15-17).

It means being fervent in the Spirit, with spiritual interests and concerns. It means loving the souls of men. In Christ one has a spiritual mind and proves and perceives things from a spiritual perspective. It means being watchful, knowing the time is short.

The description of being "in" Christ could be detailed much more. But let it be said again that the only true blessing in life is alone "in" Christ. Vain indeed it is for one to seek a blessing of the Father outside of that which belongeth to His Son.

The pre-eminence of Christ and the New Testament's interpretation of the promises made to Abraham say something about the status of the nation of Israel today. The recent conflict in the Middle East has caused heightened excitement in some segments of Christendom. Almost immediately there is speculation regarding Armageddon and pronouncements that God is on Israel's side. The scenarios vary, but a common thought is that God's special favour is still upon Israel, and He will yet restore her to great prominence. However, God would be denying Himself if this were granted outside of Christ Jesus the Lord (note and understand spiritually Romans 11). He would be going back on His covenant with His Son if He did so, because He gave everything to Him.

Brothers and sisters in the faith should be grounded in the Scriptures lest they be swayed from the simple truths of the gospel. Remembering that the promises made to Abraham culminated in Christ Jesus, not in the literal nation of Israel, will shed light on many things.

That God is still getting Him honour through the Jews is true. The very fact of their existence testifies of the truth of the Scriptures, because it is undeniable that these are the beloved people of which the Bible speaks. The world will give an account for this witness of the God of heaven on the Day of Judgment. Furthermore, given the religious passion and extreme hate that is galvanizing nations today, great and terrible bloodshed is entirely possible at some point.

It remains, then, that God's people walk prayerfully and carefully. We must not be led astray by winds of doctrine. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye never fall" 2 Peter 1:10. On that final Day, where would one rather be than in Christ Jesus, and in Him receive all that the Father has (Luke 15:31)?

## THE WISE USE OF INFLUENCE

"Ye are the light of the world.... Let your light so shine before men,  
that they may see your good works,  
and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

*Matthew 5:14 & 16*

INFLUENCE MAY be defined as the flowing in of our soul to enthuse and help, or to debase others, which is **not** helpful. The law of action and reaction, of attraction and repulsion is always at work, in virtue of which it may be truly said that no one liveth or dieth to himself. The position of each atom of sand upon the seashore affects the position of all others, and the quality of our personal character is more pervasive than a good or ill odour. What we are affects others much more deeply than what we say. Probably waves of spiritual influence are continually going forth from our inmost nature, and it is the impact of these upon those around us which makes it easier or harder for them to realize their highest ideals.

The first circle which we can touch and influence is that of our friends. Our counsel may be sweetness or bitterness, but whatever we do or say, we must see that we are absolutely true and faithful ([Proverbs 27:6-9](#)). Sincerity means to be without the wax which the cabinet-maker may put into the cracks of the wood to make it appear sound. It is the true and pure soul that most readily and forcibly helps another. Do not be selfish in your friendship, but always give out as much and more than you expect to receive. Love is a tender plant, and needs culture. We must not suppose that it is able to thrive without light and truth.

The second circle of influence is that of our associates. The great world of men may not appreciate our reproduction of the Beatitudes of the Kingdom, but still reproach, persecute, and say all manner of evil falsely; nevertheless, we must continue to bless the world by the silent and gracious influence of holy living. Reviled, we must bless; persecuted, we must endure; defamed, we must entreat. We must be as salt to our persecutors and as light to our defamers. It is wonderful how love with patient, prayerful and consistent influence finally prevail.

We are to be as salt; i.e. our consistent holy living will act as antiseptic to arrest evil. We are to be the light of the world. Inconsistency and cowardice are like bushels which are put over the lamp. Let us put all these

hindrances away, that the light which is within us may shine out on the dark world.

Ephesians 5:15 -

See then that ye walk circumspectly - carefully, anxiously, solicitous lest you fall into sin. The Greek word rendered “circumspectly” - akribōs - means “diligently,” and the idea here is that they were to take special pains to guard against the temptations around them, and to live as they ought to.

Not as fools, but as wise - Not as the people of this world live, indulging in foolish pleasures and desires, but as those who have been taught to understand heavenly wisdom, and who have been made truly wise.

Ephesians 5:16 -

Redeeming the time - The word rendered here as “redeeming,” means “to purchase; to buy up” from the possession or power of anyone; and then to redeem, to set free - as from service or bondage; note [Galatians 3:13](#). Here it means to rescue or recover our time from waste; to improve it for great and important purposes.

Because the days are evil - Because the times in which you live are evil. There are many allurements and temptations that would lead you away from the proper improvement of time and that would draw you into sin. Such were those that would tempt them to go to places of sinful indulgence and revelry where their time would be wasted, and worse than wasted. As these temptations abounded, they ought therefore to be more especially on their guard against a sinful and unprofitable waste of time. This exhortation may be addressed to all, and is applicable to all periods. The sentiment is that we ought to be solicitous to improve our time to some useful purpose, because “there are, in an evil world, so many temptations to waste it.” Time is given us for most valuable purposes. There are things enough to be done to occupy it all, and no one need have it hang heavy on his hands. He that has a soul to be saved from eternal death need not have one idle moment. He that has a heaven to win has enough to do to occupy all his time. Man has just enough given him to accomplish all the purposes which God designs and God has not given him more than enough. They redeem their time who employ it:

- (1) In gaining useful knowledge;
- (2) In doing good to others;

- (3) In employing it for the purpose of an honest livelihood for themselves and families;
- (4) In prayer and self-examination to make the heart better;
- (5) In seeking salvation, and in endeavouring to do the will of God.

They are to redeem time from all that would waste and destroy it - like recovering marshes and fens to make them rich meadows and vineyards. There is time enough wasted by each sinner to secure the salvation of the soul; time enough wasted to do all that is needful to be done to spread the Gospel message around the world, and to save the race. We should still endeavour to redeem our time for the same reasons which are suggested by the apostle - because the days are evil. There are evil influences abroad; allurements and vices that would waste time, and from which we should endeavour to rescue it. There are evil influences tending to waste time:

- (1) In the allurements to pleasure and amusement in every place, and especially in cities;
- (2) In the temptations to novel-reading, consuming the precious hours of probation to no valuable purpose;
- (3) In the temptations of ambition, most of the time spent for which is wholly thrown away, for few gain the prize, and when gained, it is all a bauble, not worth the effort;
- (4) In dissipation - for who can estimate the amount of valuable time that is worse than thrown away in the places of revelry and dissipation;
- (5) In wild and visionary plans - temptations to which abound in all lands, and pre-eminently in our own;
- (6) And in luxurious indulgence - in dressing, and eating, and drinking.

### PRAYER

Grant, we beseech Thee, O God, that our behaviour may be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. May the savour of Christ be in our influence, His light in our face, His love in our hearts. AMEN.



*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

**THOUGHTS ON MATTHEW 25:1-13** *by Brother Laurel*

The Parable of the ten virgins – Five were wise – Five were foolish

**vv.1** "And then shall the kingdom of heaven." This applies to the church of our day, but could it not also come right close—to my congregation or my home?

"Be likened unto ten virgins." All declared themselves free from all other engagements whatsoever. The church is the only place we would consider being. Her mandates encompass everything—religious life, home life, social activities, and material involvement.

"Which took their lamps," unashamed to be the light of the world. We enjoy religious and economic freedom above everyone in the world. While our church houses are free of elaborate display, yet they include almost every detail that relates to comfort. Yes, as we view the good attendance, proper dress, and the rows of clean vehicles parked outside we would conclude that worship services are very important to us.

"Went forth to meet the bridegroom." They are waiting, yes, anticipating, the time when the Lord shall come to claim His own. Jesus said, "Occupy till I come," and most of us would admit that too much emphasis is placed on occupy and not enough on the "I come part".

**vv.2** "And five of them were wise." "He that regardeth reproof is prudent." "And five were foolish." "A fool despiseth his father's instruction" (Proverbs 15:5).

**vv.3** "The foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them," because surely God's grace would be sufficient, and, after all, salvation is free. We do well to consider that a foolish mind-set is the cause of indifference. It is easy to associate foolishness with frivolity, but just having a grave demeanour does not make one wise. Since fools despise instruction, we would do well to review our attitude when our inner man rises up. The Bible gives simple instructions on how to become one of the wise. "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise..." Proverbs 19:20. This also corresponds with Jesus' promise that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled" Matthew 5:6.

**vv.4** "The wise took oil in their vessels," because they knew the night was dark and the wait could be long. Paul says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). The treasure would, no doubt, relate to the oil in Jesus' parable of the ten virgins. Oil was used in Bible times

for anointing priests and kings, signifying the filling of the Holy Ghost. Also, oil, having healing properties, was used in the treatment of various injuries and wounds. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities" Romans 8:26, comforting and healing us in time of need. Olive oil, with its nutritional value, was used in preparation of food. Even so the Spirit prepares for us a table, supplying us with strength for each day. Just as oil, when poured into a lamp, was used for light, the Spirit illuminates our path, showing us things to come.

Each of the virgins took their lamps, which would hold the oil and give light. Our bodies are like the earthen vessel part of the lamp. The Word tells us that "[our] body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" 1 Corinthians 6:19). We do well to be on guard lest our vessel is lent to evil use, making us unusable for the master. The oil travels up the wick to the surface where it is exposed to the atmosphere. When the wick is lighted, the flame burns, drawing the oil out of the vessel and giving light.

**vv.5** "The bridegroom tarried, and they all slumbered and slept." Could this refer to our day when affluence wants to rock us to sleep? It would appear that a time of spiritual unresponsiveness is upon the world of our day. Bible values are being disregarded as trite. This has an effect on each one of us, tending to dull our senses, be it ever so slightly. We may well be of those who have been chosen to man the last watch; so may we have oil in our vessels.

**vv.6** "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh." The world has yet to hear that final call when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Lord of glory. Yet even today we are faced with calls of various kinds. We all have loved ones who have been called into eternity. Some of them used time wisely to trim their lamps; others may have spurned opportunity and maybe were taken suddenly. The call of the Master to consecration is being heard among God's people from time to time. Will we go out to meet Him, or will we wait and see how our brethren will respond?

**vv.7** "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." In spite of it being night, there was an instant response to the voice of the one who cried, "Behold, he cometh." As we hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare," will we sense the urgency of our time? Or will we be settled on our lees, content that the Lord will not do good or evil (Zeph. 1:12). Our lamps all need trimming from time to time. The wick that draws

the oil could be likened to our human spirit. As the Lord lights our candle to shine for Him, there is a cost to our natures. Slowly the fire consumes the wick. The more we shine for Jesus, the more our old self must die.

The Holy Spirit is able to reveal the Father's will to those around us through this offering of our bodies as a living sacrifice. Typically, we must be purged at times that we may bring forth more fruit. Or could we say, our wick must be trimmed to allow the light to shine more brightly.

**vv.8** "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." We notice that the foolish are not really seeking direction. Rather, they seem to have good control of the situation, instructing others to help cover their own shortcomings. Their need is obvious. Yet the foolish tend to think that others somehow could do more to keep them from their predicament. Those who defensively claim to be dealing only with God will tend to be very man-conscious or demanding of man when their needs are brought to light.

**vv.9** "But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you." It may seem hardhearted of the wise to turn their fellows away in this time of dire need. Yet there is a realization in the hearts of the wise that only the grace of God can bring salvation. They are helpless to give salvation to others; they can only point the way. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear" 1 Peter 4:18?

"But go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." The need to have a relationship with God is emphasized again. While still in the day of grace, we can "buy for ourselves" of the riches of God. Like the man who found a treasure hidden in the field, we must sell all in order to buy.

**vv.10** "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

This is the saddest part of the whole parable. Trying to find oil, searching for God's will, but a little too late! In this day of grace we can fail to realize the severity of God. May our desire to please Him who called us inspire us to keep oil in our vessels and our lamps trimmed and burning.

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