

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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

Vol. 8 No. 4 – APRIL 2011



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

From The Editor's Desk.

Easter: An annual church festival commemorating Christ's resurrection, and occurring on Sunday, the second day after Good Friday. It corresponds to the “pasha” or Passover of the Jews, and most nations still give it this name under the various forms. (Webster's Unrevised Dictionary)

This month the world is again reminded of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through His victory over sin and death at Calvary.

The greatest example of obedience leading to victory is that of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who, through His obedience to the Father, won a victory that resounds through the ages, it will endure for eternity, it will never have to be repeated and it was a victory that offered life back to all of mankind which since the Adam and Eve's Fall in the Garden of Eden have been subject to death physically and also spiritually through sin. (Romans 5:12) No one of us can escape physical death, (Hebrews 9:27) but we can escape the penalty of sin by coming to Christ in repentance and thus finding forgiveness for our sin and as we continue in obedience to His direction we become partakers of Christ and all that He has to offer, (Hebrews 3:14).

Partial obedience will not do, only a complete surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ will suffice and that means being a true disciple of Jesus.

Our love for Christ is shown by our obedience to His commandments and then He promises to manifest (show) Himself to us and make His home with us, (John 14:21 and 23.) And again in *1 John 5:3*: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

As we ponder upon the obedience of Christ in light of our profession that we are His disciples can we truly claim that which it says in *Philippians 2:8* of Christ and apply it to ourselves? “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Yes, our cross is not His cross but He does ask us to take up our cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23) and we can be like those mentioned in *Galatians 5:24*: “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

J.v.L.



OBEDIENCE AND VICTORY – JOHN 5:24

*Part 1 of 2 from a message by Glenn M. Sensenig
Given at Roxbury Nationwide Fellowship Meeting*

We bring greetings in the name of Jesus.

The greatest and most forceful commandments of God in the Scriptures are commands to obedience. God told Adam after he disobeyed: “Because thou hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee saying thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake;” and He went on with the curse. Genesis 3:17-18.

God's dealings with His people, with us today and continuing until the end of time, are conditioned upon obedience.

God told Israel: “If you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people upon the face of the earth.” Exodus 19:5.

God requires obedience to Himself before He accepts anything else, God expects a response of obedience.

He said it again in Samuel, first Samuel 15:22, Samuel told Saul that to obey is better than sacrifice.

God requires obedience as a necessity for eternal life. They that do His commandments will have right to the tree of life. Revelation 22:14.

Obedience is more than attitude, obedience is a practice, it is a way of life, and it is a practical outworking.

Our title is: Obedience and Victory. Victory implies battle.

Revelation 12 gives us a picture of battle and the tenor of Brother Melvin's message implied a battle that we are facing today. There are no victories without battles. If we are going to be victorious there must be a battle, of necessity there will be a battle. The Christian life is often described as a warfare.

Particularly outstanding is the second book of Timothy where there are a number of comparisons to the life of a soldier. Paul said I have fought a good fight, (2 Tim.4:7) there was a battle there for victory.

Obedience and victory are related because we can be victorious in the battle only if we are obedient to the authority that is over us.

The outcome of many great battles depended upon the express obedience of officers under authority that made possible a working together, apart from that many outcomes would I suppose have been different.

I invite your attention to John chapter 5 where we have our text verse 24 of John five. First I want to read as a background John 5:17-29 just to give a brief description of the circumstances that brought about the teaching that is involved here in verse 24 and of verses around it.

Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath day, a crippled man, and in his healing Jesus told the man to take up his bed and walk.

The Jews challenged the man they saw walking and wondered why he was doing what they considered to be un-lawful on the Sabbath day, namely, carrying his bed.

He said that he didn't know, they asked him and he said: He that healed me told me to do this. He didn't know who it was. But later on Jesus met the man and had a few more words with him, He said: "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more unless a worse thing come unto thee." (v.14}.

The man upon discovering who healed him went and told the Jews, their response to that was, or their reaction was, (v.16) they sought to persecute Jesus because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.

Jesus' response is in verse 17: "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Again their reaction in verse 18 was an increase of feeling against Him because His reply indicated that He considered Himself equal with God, they caught it correctly because from verse 19 to the end of the chapter Jesus reinforces the claim that He is in fact equal with God and a very part of God, He is the Son of God. (John 5:1-18)

And now this verse 24 is part of a discussion where He is reinforcing His claim that He is equal with God and is part of the godhead. I'm going to read these verses here in John 5:17-29.

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. ¹⁸Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. ¹⁹Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the

Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. ²⁰For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. ²¹For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. ²²For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: ²³That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. ²⁴Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. ²⁵Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. ²⁶For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; ²⁷And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. ²⁸Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Verse 24 while it is in the context of His teachings it is somewhat a complete thought in itself but I want to take four points from this verse.

1] The first one that we want to look at is: "He that heareth my Word" - a pre-requisite for obedience.

2] Secondly: "And believeth on him that sent me" - the practice of obedience.

3] Thirdly: "And shall not come into condemnation" - and that's protection, the protection of obedience.

4] Fourthly: "But is passed from death unto life" - the product or result of obedience.

Parts one and two apply directly to obedience, parts three and four to the victory that comes as a result of our obedience.

We want to look now at the first phrase there: He that heareth my word - the pre-requisite for obedience.

First; Pre-requisite means a requirement beforehand, a necessary condition for something following. One of the first requirements, one of the most important requirements for obedience is the recognition of authority.

Obedience requires the recognition of authority. He that heareth my word - why is that significant? Because Jesus is saying that because it is the final authority of the universe, it is absolute authority. Absolutely authority resides in God. God possesses an inherent authority that no one else has. Hebrews 1:3 states: He upholds all by the word of His power (or authority).

The operation of the world is based on an authoritarian structure that we cannot ignore.

Satan's uprising that we have pictured there in Revelation 12 was a test to see whether or not that authority was absolute or not, and it was and it is tonight, and will be forever, it is absolute authority. God possesses an inherent authority that is a part of Himself, it is a part of God and nothing else and no-one else possesses an inherent authority like God does.

Now Jesus subjected Himself in the flesh to that authority while at the same time He was a part of it. Verse 27, the Father has given Him, the Son, authority to execute judgement. It rests in God as possessing inherent authority, He is able to delegate and give that authority where it belongs. God could give it to Jesus because God possessed that and of course Jesus is a part of the godhead, He was a part of that but in the flesh subjected Himself to that.

Now by recognising absolute authority and responding to it we will also recognise delegated authority. We are speaking here about something that is necessary for obedience and that is recognising authority. All authority under God is authority set under authority. There is only one absolute authority and all authority under that is authority under God's authority. And all authority is delegated by absolute authority or it is not authority. Either it was delegated, it moved down from the godhead, or it possesses no authority.

God delegates authority to the Church, God delegates authority to the home, God delegates authority to the State. They have no inherent authority, none of these areas, but are only in authority as they have been commissioned and given authority by absolute authority.

But the fact that they have been placed in authority by absolute authority makes violation of delegated authority a violation of that absolute authority. When we fail to respond to a delegated authority we come up against absolute authority, authority flows from God, it moves down and finally goes back to God.

In Luke chapter 7 we have the centurion that encountered Jesus. He told Jesus that He didn't have to come to his house, he said I'm a man set under authority, having under me soldiers and I say to one go and he goes, and to another do this and he doeth it. The centurion was recognising that his authority over the 100 soldiers under him depended upon his obedience to the authority that was over him, that was ultimately the authority of the Roman Empire and finally resided in the Roman Emperor himself. (Luke 7:7-8)

That soldier, that centurion had no authority to say do this or do that and demand obedience were he not under the authority that was over him which was the authority of Rome.

Disobedience is a response to the devil who is no authority.

The devil possesses no inherent authority, the devil is no authority. He is a usurper who rejected the authority of God, the devil was rebellious, is rebellious, rejecting the authority of God and is making an effort to rally men around him in his rebellion against God. Rebellion against absolute authority is responding to the devil because he is the head of that, that is his work.

Rebellion against authority delegated by God is also rebellion against absolute authority.

A look at refusal to recognise church authority.

I want to just expand a little bit more on some of the thoughts that I've given here relating to this thought. A refusal to recognise church authority is ultimately a refusal to recognise or to subject oneself to the authority of God when that church is responding to the authority of God.

The same is true of the home. It is also true of agencies or rather areas of church life where individuals have been placed in authority such as the school program. Our school boards represent an authority that has been delegated by the church that has been delegated by God for this work.

If we refuse to be obedient to the church we are despising her authority which she has not taken to herself but that authority which has been placed upon her by God.

There are times when individuals who are being dealt with will accuse church leaders of setting themselves up like Moses was accused of. They said there are a lot of people that could do Moses' work, that Moses is set-

ting himself up. But they heard from the authority that placed Moses in authority - God.

I say when we challenge the authority of leaders in the church we are trampling on ground where we had better be careful because we are coming up against the authority of God Himself, absolute authority. That person is rebelling against God and cannot have a fruitful Christian experience because the entire Christian life is based upon submitting ourselves to the authority of God.

There is a thought that I want to give now yet in relation to the thought of obeying church authority.

There are people sometimes that say that church authority does not have to be obeyed if it can't be found in Scripture, that church authority only goes as far as what is a "Thus saith the Lord" in the Word and that is all that can be asked, that applications in details are inconsistent or an abuse of the authority that the Lord had laid upon the church.

I want to say that is also false, that is wrong. God has given authority and if you find yourself in a church Fellowship and are chafing under the agreements and disciplines and restrictions of that group and refuse to acknowledge them because you say they are not in the Word you finally are facing up to the absolute authority of God, you will confront that.

We have example after example and one of them is that Jesus said they (the Pharisees) sit in Moses' seat, (Matthew 23:2) He said that about a people and one would certainly think after Jesus was finished with them that they were not worthy of respect but there was an authority that was laid upon them and they were to obey because of that authority not because of who they were.

If your church is of such a condition that you can no longer be obedient to it you had better be with a fellowship where you can be obedient to it, you had better get there because we are not safe for long, I'll put that qualification to it, we are not safe for long in a church where we must set ourselves up against that church because they are the leading contrary to the Word.

We had better find ourselves in a place where we can submit for our own spiritual welfare or we are going to eventually find ourselves not submitting to the authority of God.

Again I say it is a myth that we can be disobedient to delegated authority and still be obedient to the authority of God, we can't do it. If you are disobedient and unsubmitive to one you are finally unsubmitive to the one that heads up the authoritative structure that the whole universe operates on and that is God Himself.

It is a myth that we can be in right standing with the Lord and be rebellious to the authority that is over us, whether that authority is parental authority or whether that authority is church authority or whether that authority is the authority of the State or any other area under these.

If we think that we can knowingly and consciously violate and not submit to that authority we are doing something to our relationship with God because our relationship to God is based upon a subjection to His authority. We are under authority - all of us.

I think this area does give some problems sometimes among us because we are not conditioned to living lives under discipline like we should. We are not, we just aren't. The world isn't, people aren't.

Discipline is something to be chafed under rather than something to be submitted to. It is a developing and coming to fruit of the devil's entire program, part of the end times are people that are disobedient to parents.

In Jude it speaks about presumptuous rebellious apostates that have a contempt for authority, they speak evil of dignities, it is a part of our world, it affects us, it touches us, and therefore causes restlessness at times. We must, we must work as leaders, as people we must learn to enjoy a life under discipline. If we haven't learned it as children we had better learn it because living a life in subjection to God involves a life under discipline. There is too much freedom to set our own thinking up against constituted authority.

Jesus told the people in His day that the Pharisees were sitting in Moses seat. What did He mean by that? Why, they have authority, they possess an authority that warrants the attention of and respect of the people.

Now another pre-requisite for obedience or requirement for obedience is that obedience requires the crucifixion of self.

Before we can be obedient we need to have self dealt with. He that heareth my word - it is His Word against our word - the call of the flesh versus the call of the Lord.

He that heareth my word. To hear His Word and to respond to His Word means to reject our own way. Before we can respond to that word we must first of all say “no” to self before we can say “yes” to God. There are a lot of people who try to say yes to both.

Paul tried that, a lot of people tried that. You know where you end? You end up in the midst of and bogged down in the full round of frustration that we have described for us in Romans seven.

Frustration to where we are in bondage to a law in our members, we want to respond and we want to do what is right but we find ourselves doing wrong and so we feel bad because we have done wrong but we keep on doing wrong and there is a conflict, we know what we ought to do and we are living under condemnation and trying to remove that by doing things, it doesn't work.

We must say “no” to self so we can say “yes” to God.

Now in our baptismal vows we affirm that we are willing to renounce Satan and all the works of darkness and all our own carnal will and sinful desires and live for the Lord.

We have agreed to do that, we have committed ourselves to do that. That means saying “No” to the works of darkness and our will for the sake of the Lord, it involves the cross experience.

Obedience also requires hearing. He that heareth.

God is speaking, God has spoken. Are we hearing this evening, are we responding to God? “He that has ears to hear let him hear.” or who is willing to hear let him hear this evening. Matthew 11:15.

Are we responding to the authority of God?

Editor's note: The foregoing briefly outlines the Scriptural need of obedience and the concluding part of the message in next month's issue looks at the Practice of Obedience.



AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER? *Genesis 4:9.*

Cain asked this question at the beginning of time, and we still ask this very same question at times today. What is expected of the church of God as it relates to our brothers' spiritual need? Is my salvation and spiritual progress affected by my willingness or unwillingness to be a mouthpiece for the Lord? I will try to portray the thoughts that have come to me.

The first area I would like to explore is the spirits that hinder this work among us. Someone said thus: "When confidence lacks, spiritual work one with another is difficult."

A spirit that leads quickly to a loss of confidence is a spirit that emphasizes the law. The law in the old dispensation demanded death in certain circumstances. Today, this spirit still causes one to "slay" his spiritual brother for a real or imagined transgression. It wants to see hurt punished. It is also narrow-minded. A brother living to the dictates of this spirit holds as important only the portion of law that comes quite easily to his flesh. All the while he is failing in the New Testament law of love: "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" Matthew 22:39.

Another spirit at war with God's people is the "It's all right" syndrome. This spirit gains some strength by thinking, "At least I'm not self-righteous." It claims that questionable thoughts and actions can fit under the canopy of God's grace. Thus, little spiritual concern emanates from this source. This train of thought is attractive to those who want to justify questionable practices in their own lives.

A spirit of gossip may be busy among the brotherhood from time to time. This spirit is self-righteous. "Did you hear what brother John did?" is said. "I would never do that" is the unspoken message. This is so destructive. True love and concern "covers" sin, keeping it quiet rather than broadcasting it. James 3:17 is a verse worth memorizing and using as a gauge to judge motives. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

My understanding of these spirits is incomplete, and I'm sure there are others that also cause divisions and a lack of effective working among brethren. How do we circumvent these evils of our day?

I believe the answer is in our first love. Is our affection set on the Lord and His ways? "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the

earth" Colossians 3:2. First love set on God benefits the subject of caring for our brethren.

Possibly the most immediate benefit to a properly placed first love is that the Lord helps us to see ourselves as we really are. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" Job 42:5-6. We see that our flesh is weak, selfish, needy, carnal, and unloving. This God-inspired knowledge takes the steam out of self-righteousness. I now see that my self-rightness was a greater sin than those sins I had condemned my brother for. This vision helps me to allow the workings of God and His church to be patient but sure, as opposed to "he must be dealt with now!"

By first love to God, I see my need for sanctification, so I give my brother room for this grace also. I do not overlook sin; I just do not live with the deception that comes with living for self. I covet my brother's help in my life. I am careful; I soak my concern in prayer and let God's light bring to fruit a proper course of action. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.

This brings to light another point to be made. First love to God is a prerequisite to using our knowledge effectively. The angel of the church of Ephesus had much knowledge, but he had left his first love, Rev. 2:1-7. As with this angel, we have knowledge of right and wrong as taught by the church and God's Holy Word. But this knowledge, without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, is so often misused. When a brother is seen in error, some may go in the heat of the moment and accuse. Others may not be burdened at all. Still others may noise abroad the details. Truth without charity is murder.

He whose first love is on God and lives by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost will seek the Lord's face in prayer. He will search his own life and motives. Then, in a spirit of meekness, sensing his own frailty, he will go and prove the matter with a heart full of love. He knows that someday he will need the help of his brethren in his own life.

May God bless us with grace to live together in peace, drawing courage and direction from our spiritual family.

Brother Michael.

Heaven, that homeland of the soul, I long to be there while ages roll.

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined" Psalm 50:2.

As I was reading my Bible this morning, this verse stood out to me. Heaven will be the perfection of beauty.

We may travel through this world and see many beautiful places. But have we thought what heaven will be like? When I'm thinking of heaven, the picture that comes to my mind is that of a far off, shining city. I can see it across the Jordan River. It's hard for me to visualize the jewels, pearls, and the golden streets. What comes to my mind is the joy of being in the presence of Jesus. How beautiful to attend the wedding banquet and sit at the table, with Jesus at the head, or just to sit at His feet!

Can we sometimes catch a strain from that heavenly choir singing? Can we feel the joy that awaits when we will fall prostrate at Jesus' feet and crown

In the Sunday worship service, the pastor quite often remarks that we are in the presence of God, but very few people really realize what it means.

God is omnipresent; nevertheless, He has a special abode in heaven and also in the hearts of the contrite and humble. (Isaiah 57:15). Jesus also said that if a man would love Him and keep His words, the Father and He would make their abode with him (John 14:23). He also said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

God, the Almighty, the All-wise, the Everlasting One, has no equal. There is none beside Him. He has the keys to heaven and to hell. He says, "Come," and, "Go," and it must be so. He is able to spew consuming fire out of His mouth and upon the whole creation, and He is able to save to the uttermost all whom will come to Him repenting, confessing, and pleading for mercy. God the Almighty is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

The Psalmist says, in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever-more" (Psalm 16:11). To Moses, God said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Exod. 33:14).

Moses had been in the presence of God more intimately than anyone else. The presence of God on Mount Sinai was so terrifying that the children of Israel panicked when they saw the mountain smoke and heard the thunder.

They refused to go, and they sent Moses to meet God. Moses, dealing with God mouth to mouth, desired to see Him in order to assure himself. However, God, in His holiness, majesty, and glory, told Moses that no one could see Him and live. Nevertheless, Moses was favored above all men; God allowed him to see His back after He had passed by while Moses was in the cleft of the rock. What a favor!

Was Moses favored above the Christian? Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8). Jesus answered him, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..." (John 14:9). In saying this, Jesus was not speaking of bodily form, but of character.

Thinking back to the God of Sinai, should not the sinner tremble at His presence? Of course, there are those in the world who have only a slight knowledge of God and who are much less accountable, but masses of people have considerable knowledge about God's terror and His displeasure for the works of man. They are in His presence, but they act very indifferent to the matter. Many who are aware of the Spirit's convicting defy the Spirit, the Word, or the message of God. A few even disown the fact of God. To those who disregard or disown the existence of God, Mount Sinai will smoke, thunder, and shake again, moving them to call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them to cover them from Him who sitteth upon the throne (Rev. 6:16).

As Jesus expired on the cross, the veil in the temple that divided the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was rent in two, giving access directly to God. Since Christ, a new dimension is added to God for the believer that of a Father. In a father-son relationship, barriers are removed, fears subside, and confidence is built. This can develop a common oversight, forgetting that God is still God.

How does one account for the common happenings of people when they are in His presence?

Where Israel trembled and removed themselves at Sinai, today's people are lighthearted and indifferent enough to sleep when God speaks through the preached Word. Some are even bold enough to do the extraordinary when Christians are together to meet God. Holy fear and deep reverence for God is hard to find.

"In thy presence is fulness of joy." There are some things in life that make for joy, physically and materially, but at no place can "fulness of joy" be found except in Christ. People come from all walks of life, weary,

sad, heartbroken, and weeping, into the presence of God, and there they find relief, strength, and joy! This fullness of joy is not expressed in light-mindedness and laughter. It is joy that can be expressed through tears; it is a joy wrapped in humility and lowliness of mind; it is a joy that penetrates earthly sorrow and grief.

As all men seek happiness and joy, why do they hesitate to come into the presence of the Lord? Why do they hesitate to attend a religious service where the Lord is present?

A startling fact is that Christian people are so prone to hurry away from His presence, where fullness of joy is, to their many other, secular engagements and interests. That prayer in the "secret closet" is cut short or neglected; Bible reading in the morning devotions is left off, Bible study classes are unattended in order to prosper other matters of interest. There is great need for the spirit and attitude of Peter and the other two disciples on the holy mount. "Lord, it is good for us to be here ... let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17:4). It is very seldom, if ever, that a man pursuing material interests comes to the end of day with fullness of joy; rather, he comes tired and hungry and often weary. It seems that few people insist, like Moses, that they want to see God. How thrilling is the testimony of having met the Lord! "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). His presence illuminates, strengthens, and instructs.

"At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). Pleasure-seeking is at a new high. There seems to be no end in planning to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The one thing wrong in this pleasure effort is that the priorities need rearranging. Man's concept of pleasure differs vastly from the Lord's concept. Earthly pleasures are only for a moment and are mostly hurtful at that. With God, the pleasures are genuine and forevermore.

Few men would hold back from coming into the presence of a sovereign of the world. Multitudes crowded Jesus in their desire to be with Him. Throngs of Mennonites would delight to come into the presence of Menno Simons and other revered churchmen. But to come into God's presence is something else.

May we come into His presence with joy.

Contributed by a sister in the Lord

TRAIN UP A CHILD

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" Proverbs 22:6.

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" Proverbs 19:18.

Being a father with many failings, I feel very hesitant and unworthy to speak on this matter. The ideals lifted out here we also strive for in our own home and, in weakness, would desire to be more successful. We have experienced some of what is written here in our home, but some we have not. I feel a burden on my heart in this area and would like to share some inspirations but leave ample room for correction.

To have a happy, secure Christian home necessitates a great dedication and acceptance of responsibility. Referring to financial things, we sometimes say, "We can't afford it." Then there are things that we can't afford to be without. Our home is one of those things. We must have a happy, Christian home regardless of the cost or sacrifice.

Children are usually born to us when we are young and inexperienced, and also in the busiest time of life. To those who feel overwhelmed with the cares of parenthood, take courage. God has promised to help us with this responsibility. Isaiah 40:11 says, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

That little newborn child in our arms seems so sweet and innocent. But we must remember that within their little hearts lies much potential for evil (Jeremiah 17:9). It is difficult to realize the weight of the responsibility to deal with this until the fruit of the corrupt nature begins to show itself in reality.

Someone has said that we should prepare the child for the way, not the way for the child. Too many parents today are trying to prepare the way for the child. This is a real problem when material means are abundant. This approach will not prepare the child for the realities of life.

To prepare the child for the way will require more than just talking. It will require the actual application of firm and loving discipline. The responsible parent will not be able to sit back and do nothing when the child is in need of discipline. To see our child become angry, scream, and throw a temper tantrum and we do nothing is a sign of irresponsibility. Sometimes when this happens, parents will try to distract the child or compro-

mise with him by offering something else to entertain him. This method will do nothing to subdue the child's will. It only prepares the way for the child.

We will need to confront the child's will as it is and not avoid the real problem if we are going to prepare the child for the way. Our duty is not over with until the child submits. However, at times in our training, we become frustrated when we don't see good results at the present time or as we think we should. We try over and over again to deal with our child's problems and habits, but any noticeable result is so long coming that we become discouraged. We pray often and wonder why the Lord doesn't answer our prayers. Let's keep it up! Perhaps not every application of discipline will produce all the desired results, but consistency and faithfulness will finally begin to make the difference.

What a blessing it is when we begin to see some positive results in our children. Sometimes it seems like we have not done anything, but God has answered our prayers. Here the verse in Ecclesiastes 11: 1 comes to mind. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

New parents with a very young child are sometimes very zealous and ready to begin the training program. This is good, but we must be careful, for there is much we don't understand. Sometimes we are weary with their crying and may feel that they need to be punished. Yet the reason for their crying is somewhat unclear. It may be better to wait for an opportunity with more clear evidence. If we are prayerful and concerned, we will notice these opportunities. The great challenge is to not neglect that opportunity, for it will likely come at a time when it is not convenient. If we are going to "train up a child," we may as well forget about a convenient time.

Sometimes we place undue burdens on our children. Why do we ask our small children to make choices, like a parent at Burger King trying to get the toddler to decide exactly what he wants to order? Many times we do this because we are afraid of the outcome if the child doesn't get just what he wants, and we do not wish to confront their will. Even though we are loath to admit it, as parents we often have a certain carnal fear of our children. It may be a secret fear that we are not in control as we need to be. If we do not have the grace to humbly face this reality, this weakness will most certainly carry on to youth years as well.

It seems that today's parents do not have enough control of or influence

on their teenage children, and they become so independent. An example might be when families are together visiting, but their youth children are off somewhere else. Do we have a spiritual love for them ruling over the carnal love, which never wants to hurt their feelings? Do our youth today plan their own activities without input from the parents?

Someone has said that parents are responsible to make decisions for their children until they are able to make proper choices for themselves. Should an eighteen-year-old ask permission before he or she leaves with the vehicle? Should father feel free to ask where he or she has been and what they have done? Should mother check on her teenage daughter as she sews a dress and instruct her how she should sew it? If it is inconsistent, should she be instructed to change it? As the ministry would express church concerns and direction to the congregation, should not parents endeavor to make the practical application in their own home? I believe that the answer to these and similar questions should be yes. It is the duty of parents to encourage conviction in the hearts of their children.

We should strive to give our young children kind and yet positive direction. Sometimes we answer them with, "I don't know, I really wish you would not." If we don't know, it would be better for them to wait while we consider the matter. Proverbs 31:26 refers to the "law of kindness." We should consistently give our commands in a kind way and yet one that does not leave a question. An example would be when we say, "Johnny, please don't tease your little sister, okay?" That sounds as if the parent's command depends on Johnny's consent.

It is not proper for children to argue with the parents. Parents need to feel a proper sense of authority that is a result of a God-given sense of responsibility. This is not selfish authority but rather a heartfelt acceptance of divinely given responsibility and concern for the eternal welfare of our children. We should try to understand our small children but not necessarily try to "reason" together with them. We are responsible to do the reasoning.

We must learn to discipline our own natural feelings and emotions. When we become angry with our children, we lose a certain sense of authority. And when we lose our authority, we cannot gain the respect of the child. It is so easy to feel angry and frustrated, but perhaps we become angry because we fail to sense a spiritual concern and burden of responsibility. Yes, God has made us responsible for the behaviour of our children. We must not lash out in anger, but neither should we spare for the

child's crying.

Emotional feelings, however necessary, must give place to principle. We must not sacrifice principle for the sake of our emotions. It is noteworthy that the world, "sparing for the child's crying," experiences more feelings of anger and frustration with their children. Much emphasis is placed on showing love to the children. "Don't be too hard on them; be reasonable, build confidence." Despite all such talk, you will see that it is the parents who are willing to deal with that carnal love, standing firm on the Word of God and sound principles, who gain the greater love and respect from their children.

Parents should endeavor to build a close relationship with the children. They should be a confidential friend, and not only an instructor. Fathers, take time sometimes to tuck the young children into bed at night and stay at their bedside awhile. Visit with them about their day in an understanding way. You might be surprised at what all they have to say. If we cannot develop their confidence in us when they are young, will they have confidence when they are older?

Let's not flatter our children in public, but privately encourage them. When we are alone with them, sincerely tell them the things we appreciate in them. The first method will go to the head; the second will go to the heart. Deuteronomy 6:7 reads, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." What a responsibility! As we sincerely try to fill this place, we will often find ourselves in that secret place of prayer. Also, need we mention the importance of the sacred family altar? This is where children learn the sacredness of God's Word. This is where fathers are given opportunity for much teaching and instruction. Yes, this is where we may share our hearts together and confess to one another. The tears shed here are of a healing nature.

May we be willing for all the tears that are necessary to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The cost is not too great.

Young fathers and mothers, does the question ever come to you when your family is together, of whether everyone of them will be saved? Let us do all that we can to ensure that our family circle will not be broken in heaven. After we have done our best, we must leave the rest in the Lord's hands. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and

weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" Psalm126:5-6. *Brother Robert.*



The Wisdom of the Gospel

The gospel is the sum of wisdom; a collection of knowledge; a treasure-house of truth; and a disclosure of mysterious secrets.

In it we see how justice and mercy may be associated; here we see unalterable law entirely satisfied, and sovereign love carrying away the sinner in triumph.

Our meditation on it broadens the mind; and as it opens to our soul in successive flashes of glory, we stand astonished at the profound wisdom manifest in it.

Yes, dear friends! if you seek wisdom, you will see it displayed in all its greatness; not in the firmness of the earth's foundations—not in the measured march of the clouds of the sky, nor in the perpetual motions of the waves of the sea; not in the vegetation with all its intricate forms of beauty, nor in the animal with its marvellous tissue of nerve, and vein, and sinew; nor even in man, that last and loftiest work of the Creator.

But turn aside and see this great sight!—an incarnate God on the cross; a substitute atoning for mortal's guilt; a sacrifice satisfying the vengeance of Heaven, and delivering the rebellious sinner.

Here is essential wisdom; enthroned, crowned, and glorified. Admire, you men and women of the earth, if you are not blind; and you who glory in your learning, bow your heads in reverence, and admit that all your skill could not have devised a gospel that is one so just to God, and so safe to man.



TWELVE ATTRIBUTES OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

The following list is by no means claimed to be all-inclusive, nor are these attributes listed in order of importance. May the Lord help each of us find our place under Him.

1. A constant awareness that, really, everything belongs to God. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" Psalm 24:1.

2. Being more concerned about faithfully following God's ways than pursuing personal ambitions of greatness or position. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36-37.

3. The search and pursuit of the kingdom of heaven is stronger than earthly peer pressure or competition. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" Matthew 6:33.

4. Wanting to please the Lord becomes more important than self-pleasure. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" 1 John 3:22.

5. Proper willingness to work and to earn one's way in life. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" 1 Tim. 5:8.

6. A willingness and desire to give and share of the blessings God has given us. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" 2 Cor. 9:6-8.

7. Possessing an ongoing concern about the wise use of time. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" Ephesians 5:16-17.

8. An ideal or goal to avoid waste in general practice and lifestyle, taking into consideration the attitude of Jesus. "When they were filled, he said

unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" John 6:12.

9. Compassion for the poor and unfortunate. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John 3:17.

10. Willingness to pay taxes due. "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes" Matthew 17:24-25.

11. Striving for total honesty and integrity in all business dealings and interaction with others. "Let us walk honestly, as in the day" Rom. 13:13. "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing" 1 Thessalonians 4:12.

12. Endeavoring to always be alert and prayerful. "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto YOU I say unto all, Watch" Mark 13:35-36.

Who then qualifies? "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" Luke 12:42-43.

Anyone can, by the grace of God. "And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves; Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith; With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" Mark 10:26-27.

Brother Luke.



IT IS FINISHED!

There's a line that is drawn through the ages
On that line stands an old rugged cross
On that cross, a battle is raging
To gain a man's soul or it's loss

It is finished, the battle is over
It is finished, there'll be no more war
It is finished, the end of the conflict
It is finished and Jesus is Lord

On one side, march the forces of evil
All the demons, all the devils of hell
On the other, the angels of glory
And they meet on Golgotha's hill

It is finished, the battle is over
It is finished, there'll be no more war
It is finished, the end of the conflict
It is finished and Jesus is Lord

The earth shakes with the force of the conflict
And the sun refuses to shine
For there hangs God's Son, in the balance
And then through the darkness He cries;

It is finished, the battle is over
It is finished, there'll be no more war
It is finished, the end of the conflict
It is finished and Jesus is Lord

Yet in my heart, the battle was still raging
Not all prisoners of war had come home
These were battlefields of my own making
I didn't know that the war had been won

It is finished, the battle is over
It is finished, there'll be no more war
It is finished, the end of the conflict
It is finished and Jesus is Lord

Oh, but then I heard the King of the ages
Had fought all the battles for me
And that victory was mine for the claiming
And now praise His name, I am free.

It is finished, the battle is over
It is finished, there'll be no more war
It is finished, the end of the conflict
It is finished and Jesus is Lord.

John 19:16-18

¹⁶ ... And they took Jesus, and led *him* away. ¹⁷ And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: ¹⁸ Where they crucified Him.

John 19:30

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said,
It is finished:
and He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Matthew 28:1

In the end of the sabbath,
as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week,
came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Matthew 28:5-6

⁵ And the angel answered and said unto the women,
Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
⁶ He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.

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