

# 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

**From The Editor's Desk.**

Matthew 2:1-2

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”

Matthew 2:11

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

These gifts the Wise Men brought were also a type of prophecy concerning His life:

*Gold:* Gold was the gift of royalty. Most people in Christ's time, other than the royalty and the very wealthy, could not afford to own gold. Of all the standards of wealth, gold is the supreme gift, a gift fit for any king.

*Frankincense:* Frankincense was mingled with the offering of priests. It was the gift of worship. In the many references in the Bible, frankincense is mentioned as a perfume of love and of the adoration of a king for his bride.

*Myrrh:* Myrrh was a gift for a suffering one. It was myrrh mixed with wine that was offered to the suffering Saviour on the cross to ease His pain (Mark 15:23). Nicodemus also brought myrrh to anoint the body of Jesus after He had died as an offering for sin. The process of obtaining myrrh suggests suffering. The skin or bark of the plant is pierced so that the plant will bleed. Myrrh is a white gum that turns red on contact with the air.

Gold represented the King of kings, frankincense the offering of a Saviour, and myrrh the suffering Saviour.

Many people today, including many who profess Christ, expect to receive gifts at this time of remembering the birth of our Saviour and that to me seems somewhat reversed. The Saviour should be the recipient of our gifts meagre though they may be in comparison to His gift of salvation to whomsoever will.

It is our prayer that we may be like those wise men mentioned in Matthew 2 who diligently sought Him out and presented the best available gifts.

What will you and I bring as a gift to our Saviour? Can we say with the songwriter: “Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to Thee;

Take myself and I will be, ever only all for Thee.” *J.v.L.*

## Things Most Surely Believed Among Us Surrounding Christ's Birth

*Edited extracts from a message by Bro. John R. Schrey*

*Bethel Mennonite Church, Pleasant Mills, PA.*

The basis for our stability and for our being faithful to the Lord is the Word of God and our belief in the Word of God — things which are most surely believed among us.

A brother shared with me some thoughts of what was shared elsewhere for a message, I was rather surprised at his thoughts.

He used the title, “The Conflict Between Christ and Santa Claus.” I thought, “How ever would you make a message out of that?” However, knowing the brother I thought, “Surely he said it well.” I am not sure if we are fully aware of how protected we are from the influence that surrounds us in our neighbours and those around us who are looking at Santa Claus as something great. From being children most of us were taught in the things of the Lord and we most surely believe the things of God and not the things of Santa Claus.

I want you to know at the beginning each of you boys and girls, and each one here, that we have no confidence in Santa Claus. It is a false hope and a deceptive thing. Even though the world might take these points and believe them, we do not believe them. I heard this story how that Santa Claus was supposed to have been having very good travelling one year because of the north winds and his tail wind had been taking him (I am not sure how fast) over Africa and heading for the U.S.. He was supposedly having a great view because of the miles of height that he was travelling. I thought “How can people believe such things?” Maybe they believe more than what we realize.

The brother listed seven points of conflict between Jesus Christ and Santa Claus, I bring them as a timely reminder to trust only God's Word.

1) *The conflict between Jesus Christ and Santa Claus is that the world believes Santa Claus is supernatural.* Jesus Christ certainly is divine. In my mind there is no conflict, but possibly there is a conflict in the minds of some people. Santa Claus certainly is not supernatural either, even though people would believe that he comes down their chimney and he does all these strange things. He certainly is not natural even. It is a fake and it is false.

2) *There is the point of conflict that if you were not good last year and Santa Claus did not give you anything this year he is coming again.* So be good this year and next year you will see him again. That is a fake.

Jesus Christ is coming again but Santa Claus is not coming.

3) *People believe Santa is everywhere in one night.* People believe that. Santa Claus is all over the world and all these different homes in one night. That is a deception of the world. Jesus Christ and God are everywhere present. Jesus Christ can be everywhere present through the indwelling of the heart of the believer. Through the Holy Ghost indwelling our heart, Jesus can be everywhere present. God is everywhere present, but Satan and Santa Claus cannot do that.

4) *Santa Claus is looked at as a miraculous gift giver.* Remember that Christ and God are the givers of “Every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.”

5) *Santa is believed to know all about you whether you are good or bad.* That is not true, but God does. God knows whether you are good or bad. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

6) *Apparently, people believe that he exists forever.* Again, this is a false deception. In contrast God and Christ are eternal.

7) *The conflict is given that much joy is given by Santa Claus.* Well, in Christ we have true joy, but not in Santa Claus.

I thought it might be interesting to share those thoughts. They stirred my thinking. I did not realize that our people would even understand maybe quite that much about Santa Claus. If you have been hearing those things, correct your thinking. The conflict between Santa Claus and Jesus Christ is no conflict to the Christian. There is no comparison whatsoever.

The message that God wants us to receive from heaven is not deception. It is not the Santa Claus business, but truth. It is truth that endures throughout eternity. Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). We cannot serve, or come to God, or worship God except “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). God does not accept deception. God does not accept false worship. God needs to be worshipped “in spirit and in truth,” only.



**MINISTER'S CORNER.*****Keys to Christian Victory***

*Extracts from a message by Earle Zimmerman*

*Given at Danskin Mennonite Church (Part 2) conclusion.*

In the closing paragraph of Part 1 in the November issue we were exhorted to recognise that there are not only negative aspects to conflict but there is a positive side to it that draws us closer to the Lord and that it should move us to wanting to be counted and to stand up for the Lord. It helps us to show our colours, it produces spiritual exercise and spiritual exercise produces spiritual strength.

In this concluding part of the message Brother Earle is encouraging us to focus our attention more directly to some Keys to Christian Victory.

We want to look at some guidelines that actually unlock and open up our understanding of Christian victory. Now we don't need any keys to living in defeat because it is not hard to live in defeat, there are no keys that we need to have to make us go into defeat but we do need to recognise some keys to living in victory. Sometimes you have an individual that might be working in public works and that individual might carry a large ring of keys. Well now generally the more keys that a person has the greater access they have to certain doors, a person might work somewhere and they might just have a real big ring of keys and generally that would indicate that that person can get into a lot of places.

Well there are a number of keys to Christian victory that I think work in same way, when we recognise these keys, when we know what these keys are for then it will help us to, as it were, come to the door of Christian victory and instead of it being a conflict to us we can unlock the door and experience an entrance through that door and experience the blessings that are associated with that. I believe that the greater our understanding is of Scripture, the more familiar we are with Scripture and understand how this verse applies to my situation, I think the greater it can be of benefit to us.

When we are illiterate of Scripture and we don't know Scripture, when we are just reading Scripture just enough to get by you might say, and then it should be no surprise that we are living in defeat.

*Keys to Christian Victory.*

1] The first key then I would like to show you is that we need to have a clear understanding of the source of the power that is available to us, we need to have a clear understanding of that. 1 Corinthians 15:57 says: "... thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory..... "

O victory in Jesus, my Saviour for ever. we sing. Well any victory is not going to help us if it isn't through Jesus Christ. The source of true Christian victory it is in Jesus Christ Himself, it is in the power of the Spirit, and if we are engaged in a conflict let's not try human reasoning, and let's not say yesterday I overcame this one and so we are taking an indifferent attitude toward it. Now, we need to always avail ourselves to come to that source of victory and realise that that power is in Jesus Christ. John 16:33 says: "...but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." 1 John 4:4: "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

And so I think we can recognise that the power that we need for Christian victory is Jesus Christ Himself.

2] Another key for Christian victory that we need to be aware of how that power is available to us. We need to understand how that power is made available to us. 1 John 5:4 says: "...whosoever is born of God overcometh the world:" and so that power is available to us as we are born of God. To the unconverted it is not available to them, they have no right to that power, they don't have that key, that is not one of the keys that they carry because they haven't been born of God. This is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith (1 John 5:4).

We sing that song: Faith is that living power from heaven which grasps the promise that God has given. And so let's learn how to avail ourselves of that power, it is as we are born of God but we also need to avail ourselves to it through faith in the provisions in the power of Jesus Christ.

3] The third key I would like to look at is that we need to recognise the value of the cause that we stand for.

First Timothy 6:12, it speaks of fighting the good fight of faith. The value of the cause for which we are standing for. The Apostle Paul said I have fought the good fight. We think of the occasion there in first Samuel where David raised that question to his brother: Is there not a cause? Well certainly there was a cause.

We need to recognise that the cause for which we are standing for is of utmost importance, it makes a difference whether you and I are faithful or not, it makes a difference if we live in victory or not, it makes a difference in your own life, it makes a difference in the lives of those who are coming after us and the value of the cause that we are standing for is of greater value than anything else.

If we live in sin, if we continue in sin, then we are forfeiting the provisions of Jesus Christ and we have no access to the doors of victory if we are continuing to live in sin. It is a value that is equal to none. For the honour of the Lord and the triumph of His word, in the strength of the Lord firmly stand.

4] Another key to Christian victory is that we must admit our natural tendency to sin.

First John 1:8 it says that if we say that we have no sin, those words would actually carry the idea that if we would say if we have no sin tendency, if we say we have no sin tendency we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

We need to admit our natural tendency to sin. One of the areas in which makes us subject to falling is to not recognise the possibility of our sinning. Prone to wonder Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. To him that thinks he standeth let him take heed lest he fall. (1 Cor.10:12) We need to recognise that we are just men. I knew a man a number of years ago and he was one that had struggles in some areas and he said already: "I am not made of iron." Well we need to see ourselves in that same light brethren and sisters. It doesn't matter what our position is we need to recognise that we are not made of iron, we are just human and we are not above the possibility of falling if we give in to sin, if we give in to the flesh. We must admit our natural tendency to sin. That doesn't mean to say that we admit that we sin every day like some people like to say, No, we had better not take that approach but we need to recognise our proneness to sin. We need to have a certain suspicion about ourselves, we shouldn't trust ourselves too far, we need to guard against being presumptuous. And so a key to living in victory is to admit that we have a sin tendency or nature.

5] Another key to Christian victory is we need to have a working knowledge of the Word.

I mentioned earlier that we read the Word, we need to feed on it, we need to study the Word, a little like the Psalmist said: While I was musing or while I was thinking deep the fire burned. We need to do more than just a superficial reading of the Word. We need to do more than just skim over the top but as we look at the Word, as we study the Word we will learn how to use it in our daily lives for our spiritual benefit.

That doesn't mean that we will become experts, no not necessarily, but we will learn to use it for daily victory. Thy word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path alway. We need to take the promises of God in a personal way. Philippians 4:13 says: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

6] Another key to Christian victory is that we need to desire victory in Christ more than the pleasures of the world.

You know the pleasures of the world come on us sometimes, they might stare us in the face and there are certain things that the world has to offer that if we are honest with ourselves we would say: "Well there is an area that might look attractive to me." There are some people that try to convince themselves, and others, that when you are a child of God when you are born again then sin no longer tempts you and that the ways of the world just simply hold no attraction. Well thank the Lord if they don't. But if you are like most people there may be certain things that the world has to offer that pose a temptation to you that is stronger than some other things.

The secret to victory is that we must want to serve the Lord and live in victory more then we want those things of the flesh. Sometimes there can be a conflict, it can be a struggle, I don't think it needs to be a struggle all through our lives, that everything that is facing us that we are constantly almost on the verge of defeat, No, but there may be some things, there may be an area that you are tempted with that somebody else isn't. And so sin that does so easily beset us and we must always be convinced and desire to live in victory more than we want to give in to the desires of the flesh.

So we need as it were as the song writer expresses it: Stretch every nerve, put forth every effort that is needed to live in victory. Victory doesn't come through that physical combat but it does call sometimes for physical response on our part. Joseph responded in a physical way, he took off, he



ran, (Gen.39:12) so living in victory might call for some physical action on our part to flee but we need to as it were, stretch our spiritual nerves so that we will live in victory.

7] Another key to Christian victory is we need to allow the Word to sanctify our hearts and our lives.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us that we ought to lay aside every weight. Now how do we do that? Well we do that as we allow the Word to purify our hearts, to sanctify us, to set our hearts aside and do the will of God. Crucify all the earthly within me, emptied of sin and self may I be.

8] Another key to Christian victory is: Don't be ashamed to display the pilgrim and stranger concept as we go through this uneven journey of life.

In second Timothy 1:12 it says: "For which cause I suffer yet I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and came persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."

The arm of the flesh will fail us won't it? Well most definitely it will. But let's not be ashamed to display that separated way of life and live in such a way that God is not ashamed to call us His children.

9] Another key to Christian victory is that we must by God's spirit resist the devil.

James 4:7 tells us that we should resist the devil and he will flee from you. In verse 17 of the verses that we read from Ephesians 6 it tells us that we need to use the sword of the Spirit. Then when we do that, when we use the Word then it is not us resisting the devil but it is the power of God that is doing that, and so we need to use the Word to resist the forces of evil.

We sing that song: "Yield not to temptation for yielding is sin, each victory will help you some other to win." And each temptation we do give into will make us weaker. Each one that we overcome will help us to be stronger and so if we are not having victory over temptation it is not God's fault but it is our own fault, we are not availing ourselves of the power that is needed.

Perhaps our mind is a little bit like that of a young man many years ago, in a year book from a high school they usually have a person's name and a picture and then maybe a phrase that this person said, I remember for one

young man that under his name he had: "Lead me not into temptation, just show me where it is."

Now that sounds pretty far off but is it as far off as it sounds? Well not always. Sometimes we fail living in victory because we don't quite want to live in victory. There is a certain enchantment that sin has. Well we need God's spirit to resist the devil and then it says that he will flee from us.

10] Another key to Christian victory is that we need to guard our associates very carefully.

Sometimes young people experience struggles, they are having some problems in their Christian life. It is good sometimes to evaluate who are your friends? Are they individuals that may be living on the fringes? Individuals that are just always having a bit of a problem? That can make a difference in your lives. It is good to evaluate who are your friends. Evil communications corrupt good manners the Scripture tells us (1 Cor.15:3) and so it is important to look at who our associates are if we are having a problem not living in victory.

The songwriter says: Shun evil companions, bad language disdain, God's name hold in reverence nor take it in vain.

11] Another key to Christian victory is you need to avoid idleness.

Individuals that really have not a whole lot to do, there is idleness, we could say or the desire for ease, an aimless wandering about among the worldly will defile us. Well sometimes we talk about children getting into mischief when they don't have enough of work to do. It applies to adults as well. I think it is important that we keep ourselves gainfully employed, we keep occupied, we keep busy because when individuals may not have enough to keep themselves busy it can be a place where the devil gets his foot in the door, as we say sometimes "Idleness is the devil's workshop." and so let's not look on that too lightly. Avoid idleness.

12] Another key to Christian victory is we need to guard our reading diet.

The Scripture says bring every thought into subjection, and perhaps if you are struggling with victory and not living in victory maybe it is in your thought life, I believe it is good to give some thought to what are we reading? What is our reading diet? If we are depending on the world's commentators and journalists for a reading diet why it is a poor diet, they are writ-

ing for the sensational, they are writing to sell their work and they will stoop to any level to get that accomplished. So let's be careful, let's beware that we are not being careless in our reading diet because that will affect our various concepts and it will affect our moral conduct.

13] Another key to Christian victory is that we need to take personal responsibility to live in victory.

Sometimes people make other people responsible to do things for them that only they can do. Well if you are going to live in victory, it is true the life of others affects us, but you are responsible for your own victory. You are responsible, others can influence you, but you can't blame somebody else. Sometimes people might say: "Well the devil made me do it!" Well greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. And so we can't use that excuse. First John 5:8 says: He keepeth himself, and in verse 21 of that same chapter: Keep yourselves from idols. And so there is something that each one of us needs to do.

It is very important that we take personal responsibility in our victory.

14] Another key to Christian victory is that we need to maintain a sincere fervent prayer life.

Now I realise that saying that is easier than doing it because I have an idea that the struggles that I would have in my prayer life are probably no different to yours, but it is important that we do exercise ourselves in prayer and commit ourselves to the Lord. James 5:16 says, The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

We sing that song sometimes: Pray, pray in the old time way.

How was that? Well I believe it calls for sincere prayer, it calls for fervent prayer. God sees if we are just going over the top, God sees if we are just praying to influence or impress people, He sees that. Let's have a sincere and fervent prayer life.

15] The last key I would like to look at the key of perseverance.

We dare not get tired of the battle. Galatians 6:9 says: Be not weary in well doing for in due season you shall reap if we faint not.

The words of the songwriter come to mind where he says: Often weary and worn on the pathway below, When the burden is heavy and the heart

throbs with woe, Then there comes a sweet whisper to quell every side, and do not faint 'neath the load, there is rest and by and by.

We need to utilise all the promises of God.

We ought to look at this living in victory as not something we have to do but rather that we want to do. It is a privilege, it is a provision that God made for us so that we don't come under the condemnation of the devil and so we should want to live in victory.

How is it with you today?

May the Lord continue to grant us the grace that we need to live in Christian victory.



### ***SEEKING THOSE GONE ASTRAY***

"How think ye?" Jesus asked His audience one day (Matt. 18:12). He was probing their hearts and giving them an insight into His purpose. What Christ proceeded to say runs counter to human logic but reveals the heart of the Good Shepherd. His question, "How think ye?" demands an answer from us yet today.

"If a man have a hundred sheep," Jesus proposed, "and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray" (vv. 12-13). Such is the heart of a shepherd that will not rest until all the sheep are accounted for.

This shepherd left all his other sheep in the fold and sought for the one that was missing. We should not think that he was unmindful of the ninety-nine because he left them to search for the one astray. The ninety-nine were safe within the fold; they were sheltered. Their peacefulness there surely was comforting to the shepherd. He was confident in their security, knowing they were in the fold. But there was something incomplete relating to the whole flock, because one was absent.

It seems likely that the shepherd's anxiety for the one missing sheep was in proportion to the satisfaction he felt when noting the contentedness and safety of those in the fold. That is, the shepherd's care and joy for the sheep in the fold was the measure of his motivation to bring the one lost sheep home. The warmth and safety of the fold only sharpened his picture of the peril of that one out on the mountain.

It is said that a sainted mother of a large family of a century and more ago was asked which one of her children she loved the most. She answered, "The one that is away from home until he returns, and the one that is ill until he is well." Certainly, in truth, she loved them all equally. But love has a multiplication effect on one's feeling toward someone dear who is away or not faring well. That is especially true when there is reason to fear that the other is in danger. That is why the shepherd went searching for the one lost lamb.

According to the Scriptures, there is a difference between the state of being prodigal and that of having lost the way on the mountainside. The prodigal son Jesus told about in Luke 15 impudently demanded his portion of goods and hardheartedly took his own way. The Scriptures do not say so, but one is left with no other thought than that the father grieved over his son's ways. But in the parable, Jesus depicts the father as waiting at home for his son's return. The saddened father didn't go looking for his errant son.

Perhaps the determined set of the son's will, evidenced by having trampled on his father's feelings, dictated that it would be of no use to go looking for the boy. The son would have to come to his end out there alone, which is just what happened (Luke 15:17). However, the father was anxiously watching the road; he saw his son coming while yet "a great way off" (v. 20).

In contrast, the lost sheep had been rendered incapable of finding its way home. The fact that, as far as we know from the Scriptures, it did not resist rescue tells us that its straying may not have been deliberate and calculated. Yes, it should have stayed close to the shepherd; its perilous condition was its fault, not the shepherd's. But there are those who, soon after their straying, realize they have taken a wrong course. Satan quickly suggests to them that there is no way to free themselves, and they succumb to hopelessness. They may spend years out on the mountains cold, deep within wanting to return, but needing someone to "find" them. It is these that need to be sought out.

If the value that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, places upon rescuing the one lost sheep is related to the bliss of those safely in the fold, are we similarly affected? Yes, we should share the Shepherd's feelings. Our appreciation for being sheltered in the great fold and comforted by the all-sufficient merit of Calvary will be reflected in our yearning for those gone astray.

The degree in which we share Christ's solicitous care for the lost sheep says something about our thankfulness for the benefit of the fold—the church of God. And it indicates whether we are truly one in the bond of love with the other sheep of the fold. It is obvious that if we have a diminished love and appreciation for the Shepherd, we will not value the fold for what it is. Neither do we love the other sheep as the Shepherd does (1 John 5:1-2). Consequently, we will not be motivated to search out the lost and dying and bring them home. Why would we?

That which comes from the heart penetrates the heart. One should remember that the motive must be a heartfelt desire for the salvation of the souls, unto the Saviour's honor and glory. Genuineness is felt, and it speaks as much as the words one may say or not be able to say. In fact, it is a fruit of the love of God and parallels the unction of the Holy Spirit. There is a tender invitation in the sincere emotion of one's spirit when talking with someone astray.

Many years ago a few meetings were being held in a brother and sister's house in a village in Mexico. Before the service began, the brother reverently related a dream he had had just the day before. He saw his physical heart knit at the top to a larger heart. His heart, while smaller than the other one (he did not know whose it was), was beating and pumping blood through the other. But the other heart was still. As he related the dream, he questioned with wonder what it could mean.

Shortly after the service began, a wayward brother whom he had yearned for entered unexpectedly and sat down. The brother was moved, and so was the erring one. Finally, at the close of the service, they both stood up and embraced each other, with their tears falling together to the dirt floor. Then the brother said, "Now I know what the dream meant. Through my heart being connected with this one, he will come to life."

No doubt there are others who have gone astray and need someone's heart to be knit to theirs. They need someone to persevere in prayer for them and go out and try to find them. That may be their only hope of recovery.

How many lost sheep there are today as compared to the hardhearted prodigals (which might include those who have embraced a false religion), God only knows. But believing that we are in the last days behooves us to not shrink from the effort of seeking the lost sheep. Perhaps one last time we can invite them home. In lands where the church has (or has had) mis-

sion efforts, there are many who once were baptized members but are now on the outside of the safety of the fold. Here the proportion of sheep gone astray may be greater than at home. Perhaps former missionaries will find it in their hearts to once more seek them out and point them back home.

Our efforts may seem futile at times. But Jesus said, "And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray" (Matt. 18:13—italics are the writer's). The numbers that are rescued may be few, but "if so be" that one is found and brought home, it will be worth it to Heaven.

*Brother Gladwin.*



### ***THE SPIRIT OF HOLY VENGEANCE***

Listing the fruit of true repentance, the apostle Paul includes, "yea, what revenge!" (2 Cor. 7:11). This is a potent principle. All who are God's children have been born again through "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Consequently, there is a spirit of holy vengeance that is peculiar to the body of believers. This spirit actually helps establish their identity as being "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God" (Rom. 6:11).

There is a carnal spirit of vengeance that is of the flesh. It is a brother to hate, which is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). The apostle Paul pleads, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). Of this unholy vengeance, true Christians should have no part. When the Apostle spoke of the revenge connected with sorrow for sin, he was only borrowing the sense of retribution very common to the natural man to illustrate a spiritual truth.

What Paul calls "revenge" is a strong feeling of disgust and retaliation in the inner man toward the devil and the old sinful man. The eyes of a repentant person are opened as to how his soul has been used and misused by the devil. He sees how his old flesh has caused him so much trouble. Most importantly, he begins to understand how the works of his flesh have grieved the Lord, whom he now loves. Thus, as his heart is changed, he experiences a complete change of feelings about sin. He comes to have no further sympathy toward the old man. Rather, from deep within arises a determination to step on the old man, despite his cries for life.

This holy vengeful spirit is exemplified in the Old Testament. The Amalekites attacked the Israelites in the wilderness after they had escaped Egypt. That was a despicable act, considering the weariness of the children of Jacob. But "Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." The Lord was so incensed with Amalek that afterward He said, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." God said He would "have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exod. 17:8-16).

After many years, Joshua was chosen to head the children of Israel. Before his death, Moses charged Joshua with this instruction: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee ... How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God." Do we not catch a note of vengeance in Moses' spirit that corresponded with God's feelings, pointing forward to the true spiritual nation in Christ Jesus?

Now let us note how Joshua was to do. "Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about ... that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it" (Dent. 25:17-19). What vengeance!

Amalek symbolizes the old flesh that allies itself with Satan. Having repented and forsaken the way of sin, God says to us, "Remember what the carnal man did to you. Do not forget it. Blot him out!" As a result of repentance, a part of God's deep feelings of revenge against the enemy of the soul becomes resident in the spirits of humble Christians.

Hundreds of years after Joshua's time, Saul was set up as the first king of Israel. It wasn't long afterward that the Lord brought this matter of the Amalekites up again. God said, "I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not" (1 Sam. 15:2-3).

The sad default on Saul's part in obeying God's command is well known. Rather than taking utter vengeance on Amalek, he permissively spared the king's life, along with much cattle. Considering God's strong feelings against Amalek, it is no wonder that the Lord pronounced such a dire judgment on Saul. Saul's lack of sharing God's feelings cost him the kingdom (1 Sam. 15:28).

At that time, Samuel told Saul that the Lord had given the kingdom "to a



neighbour of thine that is better than thou" (v. 28). That "neighbor" who was "better" than Saul was David. God said of him, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). David, in contrast to Saul, felt like God did, and this pleased the Lord.

Years later David penned these forceful words: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies" (Ps. 139:21-22). It is clear that David's strong feelings related to the fact that these men hated his Lord. He could not bear it when men spoke evil of, or resisted, his beloved Shepherd (Ps. 23), the One in whom he delighted and on whom he meditated day and night (Ps. 1:2).

Similarly, the holy sense of revenge has its source in true love and loyalty to Christ. Such a person sees his flesh as that which hates Jesus and despises His government of the heart. For this cause, the new creature in Christ doesn't hesitate to step on the old man. If one's feelings of revenge do not have this basis, they are only indicators of self-righteousness and are in themselves abhorrent to God.

Some critics have found fault with David's strong expression as being unrepresentative of the heart of God. But when one looks at this in the context of the great conflict between God and Satan, and thinks in terms of the "enemies" being fleshly spirits, then David's spirit is praiseworthy.

Immediately following David's expression of vengeance toward God's enemies, he pleads, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. 139:23-24). Let us not miss the point here. These verses are connected with the foregoing ones. David is asking God to search him lest there should be any remnant of a carnal sympathy for "Amalek" within him. He wasn't challenging God to see if He could find anything wrong in him. He just didn't trust himself, knowing his natural inclinations.

If the spirit of holy vengeance would be more alive among us, our struggles with pride, self-will, and worldliness would be put in a different perspective. Would a true child of God coddle and flirt with the confirmed enemy of his Savior, of God (James 4:4)? The vengeance that the spirit of repentance produces does not readily caution against taking "too close a stand" against the things of the world. It rather is blest to see old carnal "Amalek" discomfited and punished.

"Amalek" still lives today. But God's word exhorts His hosts to not be discouraged. We remember "the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Let us pray with David for God's searchlight to shine among us, lest there be any of Saul's spirit tainting our view of the way of salvation.



## **The New Birth.**

*Brother Simon.*

Greetings to all in the name of Jesus. The Lord has given us another opportunity to come together and hear his word. Perhaps we will hear things that we have heard before but we need to be reminded.

Jesus taught, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

Since man's beginning, he has been subjected to opposing forces. On one side is the knowledge of God and His will for mankind, and on the other is pride. This shows itself in self-will and the tendency to promote our own goodness and the desires of our body at the expense of others.

Eve's temptation, perhaps, was more the desire to be better or equal to others (as gods, knowing good and evil) than the desire of knowledge itself. Surely the ability to avoid evil or pursue good would be beneficial. We may tend to think that Eve's sin was disobedience, but the root would be emulation, or pride.

God desired Adam and Eve to follow in obedience so He could provide the protection they needed to live productive lives unharmed by sin. Compare this to the parent who wishes to protect his teenager from an evil influence. The youth feels he is ready to decide for himself. They, after all, have vision as well. In fact, Mother and Dad are "outdated" and out of tune with current issues. Such a youth is being tempted to partake of the "knowledge of good and evil" by pride.

All struggles with our will are a battle between pride and our knowledge of God's will. Therefore, we conclude that the inner root of pride trying to take control is evil. Satan presents this "seed" as his half of the battle for man's soul.

Why did God place the tree in the Garden? Could not the whole struggle have been avoided for all ages? God desired, and still desires, a people who will enjoy His care and blessing. He chose to put them as the crowning

glory in His creation, and this was to be a blessing and joy to them. An earthly father also provides ungrudgingly for his children and takes pleasure in their happiness. He also wishes to protect them from dangers. To accomplish this, he needs power over their lives, as the child only has a narrow vision of the dangers of life. How much narrower is the soul's vision!

God could have created man a will-less being or, better put, a being without susceptibility to the pride presented by Satan. Such a being could not have given God the same praise as the creature of choice does. The ability to choose presents the possibility of the wrong choice. We cannot blame Eve for her wrong choice. We all have done the same.

Innocence existed in the time before Eve's sin. Before accountability, a child has, in a way, this same "pre-sin" innocence. As children grow older, they become aware that their opinions and the wishes of their parents don't always match. They start to feel that they would like the adult privilege to decide for themselves what would be right for them. They make a choice, and before they know it, they have made an irreversible mistake. They are now in Adam and Eve's position. They attempt to hide their mistake and avoid the consequence of it. They may wish for a punishment to "remove" the sin. They may try penance or confession to feel new again. This may work for a time, but the time arrives when the child no longer can feel free before God. Now the conflict for the soul begins.

God has decreed that sin will never enter heaven again. This fact presses heavily on the mind of the sinner. Upon searching for the old happiness, the sinner sees more and more that he has made many mistakes and is a long way from God. His pride would like to take control and excuse his sins as being the fault of others. Self and pride may get stronger, and the sins of the flesh in Galatians 5 become more prevalent.

Satan wants the sinner to feel that God is unappeasable. The other choice for the sinner is to try to make peace with God again. This choice starts the sinner toward God. In the Old Testament, the sinner needed to bring a sacrifice. God's judgment says that sinners will die. There is no other way to atone for wrongs; it is impossible to bring one's sins along to heaven. Death is the only option.

We can see that with judgment like this there will be no sinners in heaven. So God made a plan; He would allow a sacrificial death of substitution, one body for another. The sinner must obtain a perfect substitute (perfection is the requirement of God), and the sacrifice would be killed

and the blood shed for sin. There is no chance of the life of the sacrifice being spared. With such a sacrifice, sin would be atoned for.

But wait! There is something else to consider. One can lay hold on this sacrifice while the heart is not yet right!

Let's look at the story of Cain and Abel. Both offered up a sacrifice to God. Immediately upon noticing that his sacrifice was not accepted, Cain became angry. Imagine him telling God that He was unfair. After all, they both had sacrificed hadn't they? Cain was jealous of Abel's acceptance. Pride and self-will again show themselves here. It is true to life today.

In order for a sinner to find salvation, he must have the proper sacrifice and a repentant heart. We see that God requires it. Under the Old Testament, a person sinned, repented, sacrificed, and started all over. All the time Satan was ready to jump in and take over if the person would let him. What was needed was a new start with power—something different. A sacrifice that would break the chain of falling again and again was needed. Too many followers today never get past this point.

What we need is the Perfect Sacrifice, a Being of choice who never sinned. This is important. To sacrifice a sinner would be pointless, as sinners are going to die regardless. This Being would be a substitute for all time. God can be satisfied only with perfection, and upon that He forgives. To be perfect, the sacrifice will need to prove himself able to overcome life's temptations. He will be a man of choice, growing through all stages of life. He will face parental instruction, temptations of wealth, power, and fame. He will praise, love, and give God the glory for righteousness. He will be self-less, that is, pride-less.

Then when He has proven Himself, He will willingly die in the place of others. He will die at the hand of the proud people He longs to save. It is belligerent pride, hating true perfection, self-right pride, thinking that one is equal to God and able to discern right and wrong. But Jesus dies the substitute death. His is a death with the shedding of His blood, carrying the sins of the world for all time. He did this for you and me personally.

Is this the end? Oh, no! Praise God, it is only the start. The sacrifice has appeased God, and with this sacrifice, God is satisfied. Christ arose. He broke free of hell and death and sin. God raised Him up, and we can truly be free from our sin if we believe in Him. Now I lay down myself and accept the sacrifice. And now, oh, glorious resurrection through Jesus, I am born again and ready to start anew with my sins forgiven and my will sub-

mited.

As we contemplate this, we may wonder why this sacrifice was four thousand years in coming. Could there not have been four thousand years of rejoicing had He come immediately? Let's look at the nature of man and see if at least part of the answer is there.

As we submit our wills for the first time, we receive the satisfaction that laying down resistance brings. The children of Israel also will also have experienced this. We may be satisfied for a time with this relief, and may even feel that this is all that is required of us. But with time, we see that there is really no new life. Would the sacrifice that God provided have the same meaning if man had not tried to achieve righteousness without it first? Only by realizing our totally lost condition and inability to appease God on our own can we appreciate Jesus' death.

Some try to achieve a balance of their own goodness and salvation by faith in Christ. This type of Christian will only want to acknowledge the love of God, not the judgement of God. Such a one cringes at the thought that he is sinner. He defends the characteristics of his children and those close to him who are not in total surrender to God and the church. He has no long-term victory and little confidence in the brotherhood of believers. He is in need of a complete death in order to bring forth new life. His belief that he is righteous of himself makes the sacrifice of Jesus of no use to him. John says, "If we say we have no sin, we make him a liar." Jesus says, "I come to seek and to save that which was lost." "They that are whole need no physician."

Would to God that we could realize our lost condition without Christ and give our whole lives, in faith accept the sacrifice, and take up a new life in Jesus, directed by his Holy Spirit. Only then do we receive a complete conversion.



## Comments on the New Birth by Menno Simons.

My dearly beloved reader, take heed to the Word of the Lord and learn to know the true God. I warn you faithfully to take it, if you please. He will not save you nor forgive your sins nor show you His mercy and grace except according to His Word; namely, if you repent and if you believe, if you are born of Him, if you do what He has commanded and walk as He walks.

But if you wish to be saved, by all means and first of all, your earthly, carnal, ungodly life must be reformed.

It is this regeneration of which we write, from which comes that penitent, pious life that has the promise, it can only originate in the Word of the Lord, rightly taught and rightly understood and received in the heart by faith through the Holy Ghost.

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Extracts from "The Complete Writings of Menno Simons."*



## THE DEVOTIONAL USE OF SCRIPTURE

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

Psalm 119:105.

IN EACH verse of Psalm 119, the Psalmist mentions the Scriptures, with one exception, and the constant quotation of the Old Testament by our Lord and His Apostles yields abundant evidence of a loving and reverent fellowship with the holy men of past ages, who wrote and spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit. It is especially remarkable that the Lord Jesus in His Temptation, in all His teaching, and in the agony of the Cross bore constant witness to the unique authority of the Word of God spoken through the Old Testament saints.

We may know God, says the Psalmist, through a threefold revelation. Though they have no audible voice or language, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament of space, studded with myriads of stars, shows His handiwork. Though speechless, their words witness for Him to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The closing stanza of this great Psalm unfolds God's handiwork in the construction and direction of our moral nature. Between these golden clasps the Psalmist extols the Scriptures under ten striking similitudes, and that disposition must be indeed extraordinary that does not come within the scope of one of them. The soul that needs restoring; the simple who would become wise; the sad heart who would rejoice; the eyes that would be enlightened; the soul that longs for the gold of truth; the desire for sincerity and reality; the search for understanding and righteousness--all such needs and many more are met from a devout reading of Holy Scripture.

All great ministries which have remained fresh and fragrant through long courses of years have proved the wealth of inexhaustible teaching and inspiration which lies hidden in the Bible. Let us each one resolve to soak ourselves in the Scripture before turning to prayer, as water poured in to moisten the sucker will help to draw water up.

To assist in your meditation on this magnificent Psalm here are the phrases contained in this Psalm which mentions the Scriptures in one way or another and show us the way to God by observing HIS directions. One could spend many hours, days and perhaps a lifetime meditating on and coming to a full realisation of what these phrases mean.

Remember that each one speaks directly of God's ways!

His testimonies  
His ways  
Law of the Lord  
Thy commandments  
Thy faithfulness  
Thy fear  
Thy judgements  
Thy law  
Thy loving-kindness  
Thy mouth  
Thy name  
Thine ordinances  
Thy precepts  
Thy righteousness  
Thy righteous judgements  
Thy salvation  
Thy statutes  
Thy testimonies  
Thy way  
Thy wondrous works  
Thy word

### PRAYER

Teach us, O Blessed Spirit of Inspiration, so to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Thy words, that we may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and be enabled to lead others into a true understanding of and love for its hidden treasures. AMEN.

*An excerpt from The Treasury of David by C. S. Spurgeon.*



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