

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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

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

Matthew 5:15

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From The Editor's Desk.

This year the Easter period was later than most years, a one in 28 year cycle I am informed, and it was the cause of much celebration by many.

Some celebrated it in a thoughtful, sober and reflective manner befitting our Saviour's suffering, death and resurrection.

Some celebrated it in an ecumenical church spirit drawing people with worldly festivities and things to please the flesh.

Some, at least those who do not profess Christianity were honest in their expressions of Easter as a time for having a holiday from their daily tasks.

But as we reflect on this year so far the world seems to be more in need of a Saviour than ever before, there are wars and rumours of war, but we are not to be troubled about that, we are also told of famines, pestilences, earthquakes in divers (many and varied) places – Matthew 24 is where Jesus is explaining this to His disciples after they asked Him what would be the signs of His coming and the end of the world.

Now I am not forecasting or even venturing a guess when the Lord is going to return, Scripture is very clear in the words of Jesus that only His Father in heaven knows when that will be (Matthew 24:36) so it behoves us to be ready daily for His soon coming.

This knowledge should add an urgency to our reaching out to others and letting them know that they can have peace and rest in their lives and not be troubled with all these upheavals.

Firstly we can show it by our cheerful attitude in all of life's circumstances and our total reliance on God to bring us through.

Secondly we can give verbal testimony of God's keeping power in our life, each of us I'm sure can give witness to some event or events in our life where God's hand protected us.

Thirdly I believe that our lifestyle of not concentrating on worldly amusements or material gain but being content with the necessities of life can also be a witness (1 Tim.6:8).

Fourthly we can demonstrate temperance in all things. Apostle Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 9:21-27 and we could very well follow the example given in Titus 1:7-9 which whilst it is speaking of the qualities needed of a bishop they are also admirable qualities which all of us should strive for.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20.



OBEDIENCE AND VICTORY – JOHN 5:24

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

Part 1 in last month's issue outlined the need for obedience if we want to achieve victory and the closing question was: Are we responding to the authority of God?

Now let's move on to the next thought: The practice of obedience.

He that heareth my word and believeth on him. What does that mean?

Well this is also a pre-requisite because we cannot obey until we respond in belief. It is also a part of the practice because our failure to belief in and trust God is rebellion against God.

I would just like to take that word believeth, believeth involves faith and trust, and faith is obedience. To be a believer is to be an obeyer, it is part of each other, we can't be a believer in an absolute real sense without being an obeyer, we cannot be an obeyer either without being a believer. They are a part of each other.

Romans 16:26 we have this phrase: Christ is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

It is obedience of faith. We must see that practical obedience is a necessary part of Christianity.

I want to refer to one verse, obedience and not overwhelming experiences are the mark of the new birth

1 John 2:3, "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."

How we keep His commandments is a way to determine if we know the Lord. Can you see that to be a believer is to be an obeyer, they are one and a part of each other. We cannot separate those two.

People are trying to do it today but you know they are not doing it, they are simply saying that they are not believers when they aren't obeyers because they are a part of the same thing.

Jesus said: Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do the things which I say?

Well He was saying that it is inconsistent to call me Lord when you don't listen to Me, because lordship implies obedience and submission.

In Matthew chapter 7 verse 21 to 23 we have these words

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." [Matthew 7:21-23](#).

Those words here are some of the climaxing thoughts to the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus touched on some of the most practical areas and issues that are facing us, that are putting dividing lines between the so-called church and the true church today. I believe it is not without purpose that this very thing is there - Why do you call me Lord, Lord, but rather many will say: Have we not done many wonderful things, we've had many wonderful experiences. And then the Lord will say: I never knew you.

Why weren't they practising the non-resistance that He spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount? You see it touches some of those areas.

Divorce is an area that He touched in the Sermon on the Mount.

The swearing of oaths, the relationship of the State, the personal relationships one to another, having love, laying down grudges, having true and actual experience rather than a form of it. Is all a part of what is climaxed by those phrases there.

We are surrounded by people that act as though they don't believe and apparently they don't realise that the Lord will take vengeance on them that know Him not and obey not the gospel.

Some time ago at another Mennonite conference which calls there particular part of the Mennonite church "A Believers Church" this subject was discussed. Among the issues that were discussed at that conference was divorce and remarriage and a resolution was passed that whilst divorce comes because of sin, after people have repented of it they would not consider that it would be right to bar them from the fellowship because to do so, because a growing segment of people from their own church said

that if somebody finds themselves having been divorced and they are unable to be reconciled if they have not the grace to live alone they are free to marry.

Well what kind of church is that? That's playing church, that is not real church, at least it is not obedience in faith but it comes under the same category here. We must be clear on these areas in practical obedience.

The practice of obedience means that we should obey authority.

Now I want to expand that thought, it is not the same as I had before, in other words when we encounter authority, God's authority either directly or indirectly we should obey, we should obey authority not just men.

Some people will obey some men or people depending who it is but haven't grasped the fact that the practice of obedience means that we respond to authority wherever that authority resides wherever it is, that is the authority we respond to.

If we only obey certain persons and not obey other persons because we don't like them or consider them unworthy of our obedience because of who they are then we are not seeing authority we are seeing people.

If an officer of the law maybe whom we know and don't respect perhaps or isn't worthy of respect even, he represents the law however and he represents the State authority, if we don't obey because it is him we are seeing people and not recognising that it is an authority not people that must be responded to. No matter who it is, if they represent authority that authority must be obeyed, we obey because of authority.

We can see, we must see more than the person, we must see God at the head delegating it.

Paul could obey a simple believer like Ananias because, when just before he was persecuting those people, because he was confronted by the authority of God. [Acts 9:17](#)

Paul changed his attitude toward the High Priest when he was called into question when he knew it was the High Priest, not because the man was worthy of respect, he wasn't, Paul just indicated that, but he gave him the respect because he represented authority, when Paul knew that he took a different attitude toward that. [Acts 23:4-5](#). And that is what we mean when we say we must, it involves responding to authority.

Now submission to authority should be absolute but there are times when obedience may be somewhat relative.

Let me explain that.

It is never right to be arrogant, never. But if a command to obey another authority violates the authority of God then our first allegiance is to God but we never do it arrogantly. That is always wrong, it is pride that the brother spoke about. We must be submissive.

To boldly challenge authority that is set over us even though that authority might be giving commands that we cannot obey is wrong because we don't challenge that authority.

The Apostle said whether or not it is right to obey your authority as opposed to God's, Judge ye. [Acts 5:29](#). But they knew what they had to do, they had to obey God rather than men.

Now if a husband forbids his wife, now we had some teaching of the place of a husband in the home, if a husband forbids his wife to wear the veiling contrary to God's Word what should she do? She should wear the veiling of course because there is an authority that is above his authority that she must respond to. Now she may not do it arrogantly but must express the attitude of first Peter three like Sarah did to Abraham calling him lord, there must be a submissive attitude, still be submissive but respond to God's authority first.

Jesus said: If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and so on (and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. [Luke 14:26](#).

Now the idea that delegated authority even if it leads directly contrary to God's Word, the idea that that brings no consequences because we are obeying immediately what is over us is a false idea, it is a misconception of Scripture. Now I think we ought to beware of that idea. There is no umbrella of protection for disobedience of any sort against the authority of God, there isn't any, even though some people say there is and even though we might hear that, people come away from seminars and so on saying that in talking about this: That if we obey the authority that is directly over us in direct violation to the teaching of the Word we are protected from the consequences of our disobedience to the Word because we are obeying the authority over us that it protects us somehow.

That idea is inconsistent with the Scriptures, it is wrong. We need to promote obedience.

But our lack of obedience to a command that opposes the Scripture our disobedience to that must not done in arrogance but it is done out of a submissive spirit to the greatest authority.

Now let's move on to the next thought.

We have looked at the practice of obedience.

Obedience involves a way, it involves a practice, it involves a living out of the commands of the Word, it involves being sensitive to the Scripture, it involves being able to be moved to action by what the Word teaches. That is obedience, it is a sensitive attitude to truth and it is a desire to live out the truth in the most practical way and the most complete way.

Now and I say what that finally comes to or boils down to is that obedience boils down finally to our response to the Word and to those God has set in authority.

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

No moving to the protection of obedience - Shall not come into condemnation. He that believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.

The victory part. Obedience brings victory. It puts us on terms with our Judge.

Condemnation is a judicial term having to do with the law and the courts.

Rebellion places one under condemnation, condemnation we are condemned. Obedience aligns us and puts us on terms with the judge.

The victory that is recorded in the passage of Romans chapter 8 never fails to inspire me, I want to read a few verses from Romans eight.

Verse 31:

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ³²He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us

all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall lay any thing [now we are talking about condemnation or charges] Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. ³⁴Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again." [Romans 8:31-34](#)

He is asking what authority in the world or anywhere can condemn what I have cleared. There is no authority that is able to condemn and God has cleared, when God has freed us and God has given us liberty.

I say that is a tremendous thought, it is a wonderful place to live, having made peace by the blood of his cross having been born again. Having submitted ourselves to the authority of God we'd then are on terms with our Judge against whom no authority can judge. Satan is described as the accuser of the brethren, accusing them before God day and night. [\(Revelation 12:10\)](#)

Listen, God will hear nothing against the person if the person has been cleared by the blood because there is no other one that can judge and try but God, God is God alone, God is absolute authority and every and all judgement is finally committed to God and the very person that justifies us is the final Judge of the world.

I say it is a good place to be. It is like coming, it is no comparison really but it is like coming into the law courts and the judge is a personal friend of ours and knows all the details of the case, knows that we are innocent, and we just have to complete confidence that we are going to have a favourable verdict at the end because he knows all about it. He has already cleared us, he has already said what it's going to be because he knows the details.

I say that it is like when the accusations come we are cleared and when God clears us nobody can condemn us. Nobody can.

People can condemn us but judgement is not finally committed to the people, it is committed to God that knows it all. Aren't you glad? I'm glad this evening that the God that knows it all is the Judge of all the earth.

I say that is a sobering thought if you are not right with that God. It is a sobering thought if you are fooling people, that's a sobering thought but I say when we have been washed from the inside out that's a glorious thought, it's a glorious thought to know that we can some day face Him and find Him to be our justifier rather than the Judge that condemns us.

That comes because of obedience.

He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation. He shall not be condemned.

Let's move now to our concluding point: The product and victory of obedience - he has everlasting life.

Not only protects us from being sentenced to condemnation but it also gives us everlasting life.

Blessed are they that do the commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and enter in through the gates into the city. [Revelations 22:14](#).

A guaranteed entrance to life into glory.

This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. [1 John 5:14](#).

Everlasting life begins below with the quality of life;

Eternal life and begun below now fills my heart and soul,

I'll sing his praise forever more who has redeemed my soul.

Our eternal life begins presently. We have everlasting life, we are passed from death unto life.

Some of the qualities, some of the blessings of everlasting life begun below is answered prayer.

[1 John 3:22](#) we have a thought on prayer directly related to obedience:

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

That's part of the victory, answered prayer, being able to have confidence in prayer, knowing that we are heard, knowing that our prayer is not just going as far as the sound of our voice but knowing that it is being heard at the throne.

We can have an assurance when we are being obedient but we cannot have that if we are not, it is necessary it goes along with it. A sense of being in contact, a sense of relationship.

I'm just going to turn to a number of scriptures here in conclusion,

[John 14:21](#)

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

That's a blessing, one of the blessings of obedience a sense of our Father's love, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.

Another one is the manifestation of God to us.

Part of the victory of obedience is to be a sharer, we ought to have the joy of the Lord, to share with our brethren in the joy of obedience.

[John 13:17](#): "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

It is one of the blessings a part of obedience is to have the joy of the Lord in our hearts, living free of condemnation knowing that we are being open, open to know more to obey, open to our brethren to help us to obey, open to the Word to have new revelations of truth or new illuminations from the Word through the Spirit.

I think that the greatest part of the victory is to be a sharer in the victorious climax of events on this old world, of the earth, be overcomers with the overcomers of Revelation, the seven churches, it lists each of those and says He that overcometh, there are a number of things listed there, to be a part, one of the prospects of victory is of obedience, is to be a part of the bride that has made herself white.

How purified your souls are in obeying the truth. Made white. [Revelation 19](#), the bride of Christ the marriage supper that came, they were there because they were obedient. [Revelation 19:7-9](#)

Jesus is going to take to Himself a bride not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but one that is wholly without blemish, a bride that is obedient, that has learned obedience and learned the discipline of being a part of Jesus Christ.

The end time Antichrist system is based upon rebellion, rebellion against the Lord and the Lord's authority.

The ultimate expression of that we have pictured in the book of Revelation where men rise up against the authority of God only to be crushed by that very authority.

This evening by being obedient we have the privilege of falling on that Stone of authority and being broken, and if we don't fall on that now we are going to be crushed by the absolute authority in the final disposition of events in this world. [Luke 20:18](#).

But I praise the Lord tonight for the possibility of being a part of the bride.

The question is: Are we tonight a part of that bride? Are our fellowships a part of that, will we be a part of the Church that He is taking to Himself as part of the bride, are we going to be a part of that victory?

I believe we won't be if the candlestick is removed. We will be if we continue steadfast in promoting obedience.

The requirements are not any different now than they were five years ago or 10 years ago or 15 or 20 or 25 or however long. (*nor will they be any different in the ages to come. Ed.*) Our Fellowship has been no different, we must continue on a course of obedience or we are going to be a part of the rebellion of the end time.

May God help us to be with the victorious ones, the obedient ones.



THE PERIL OF COMPLACENCY

Complacency denotes a self-satisfied apathy or indifference to conditions around us. When someone is complacent about their substandard living conditions, there is little motivation to make improvements, because of indifference to those conditions. Possibly there is an acknowledgement that things are in poor shape but it seems overwhelming to do something about it, so the easiest course is to do nothing. Apathy leads to cynicism, and one becomes critical of society for the seeming overemphasis on having things nice.

The consequences of such attitudes are far-reaching. A mind-set develops that includes a sense of futility or hopelessness and readiness to look away from oneself to place blame for the prevailing conditions. Thus, even when help is offered, there is resistance because of unwillingness to face the unpleasant realities. When children are reared in this environment, usually they catch the attitudes of the parents and often slip to even lower levels of despair.

Applying these truths to the present-day concerns for the beloved church of God, we are in need of the spirit of prophecy to show us just where we stand before God. The minutes of this past year's Area Ministers' Meetings again speak of a deep concern for the infection of worldliness among us. At the same time, a sense of futility is all too prevalent. Some acknowledge that there is indeed a departure from sound practice. Others are reluctant to say that much, wanting to have confidence in the good intent and desire that is often expressed.

At times it seemingly becomes necessary to make choices between two evils, because one thing or activity appears to be preferable over another for various reasons. For example, there is a tendency to take consolation in someone's testimony that he or she is still having personal devotions even though it is disconcerting that there is a lack of evidence of the Holy Spirit's direction in that one's life. The fruit, by which all men are known, indicates either disobedience to the Holy Spirit or else an absence of His direction.

How many times do we make allowances for these discrepancies because we see that there are others who also are in the same condition? It seems difficult to require more, because there would be a disparity unless the same requirement would be applied to everyone. This is where the need begins to seem overwhelming. Consequently, many times some thing or some activity is allowed that we are not comfortable with. This can come sharply into focus in our homes as we try to find a right way for our children, and yet we want them to feel accepted among their peers.

When we compromise heartfelt conviction because of the pressure that bears upon us, we are immediately susceptible to a critical spirit. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a loving fellowship when such a compromise is made. Our confidence in the brethren is affected adversely. This works two ways. One is that as we talk about the issue in question, the accent of the critical spirit is heard and felt by our brethren, and their confidence is hindered. At the same time, when someone expresses a certain support or allowance for that which I have judged as not being right, I also find it difficult to retain confidence in my brother. When this breakdown of confidence takes place, there is a loss of fellowship, and fervent charity is lacking.

Right here is where complacency sets in. I feel self-satisfied and perhaps a bit smug with myself for the convictions I carry. I still believe they are

right, although in actual practice I have compromised them. Because of unwillingness to face my children or my brother, I remain silent while I attach blame to the offending party. I credit myself with lining up with the concerns and admonitions given by the ministry, while I judge others as transgressors because they don't. As the ministry, we also are tempted with critical thoughts when we try to sound the warning and it seems nothing changes.

For some there could be an "ignorance is bliss" syndrome. When concerns are voiced, whether by the laity or the ministry, immediately the focus is on how much better things are than they used to be. Carnal happenings from the past are cited that tend to disannul the concern or make it seem overstated. The concern about drifting towards worldliness doesn't seem to make a connection. Mention is made of how important it is to keep the heart right, while it is implied, or possibly even said, that "things don't matter." It is emphasized that we just need to have confidence in one another, overlooking the truth that there needs to be a true basis for confidence. Again there is unwillingness to face reality, because it seems too hard to make the amendment of life that is necessary.

When complacency becomes a widespread condition among the brotherhood, we are in great peril of deception. The eternal consequence of lukewarm Christian living loses its seriousness. When the gospel standard is considered unworkable in our day, we must find a way to make peace with ourselves. Eventually we begin to believe that we can be saved like we are, knowing that there are reserves in our lives. We may know that we are unwilling to do all that the Lord or the church is requiring. When it seems too hard, or too overwhelming, to come back to the Bible standard of right living, it becomes necessary to believe that the Lord will overlook the failure of full surrender. Otherwise, it would be imperative to become alarmed. We would rise from the condition of apathy that had overtaken the spiritual senses and urgently inquire of the Lord and the brethren, "What must I do to be saved?"

Proverbs 29:18 tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." A translation of the Spanish rendering of this verse is, "Without prophecy, the people are unrestrained." The spirit of prophecy reveals the dangers of a certain course or, on the other hand, the blessings that will be realized if a certain way is taken. When we ignore or reason away this spirit, which is none other than the Holy Spirit, then there is little restraint of fleshly

desires. Restraint is very unpopular in the world today. The people of God are also seeing a lack of restraint in matters pertaining to the flesh. The lines of demarcation have become blurred between that which is legitimate and sanctioned by the Holy Spirit and that which seems legitimate but is not expedient for the children of God. We are bombarded with a myriad of things appealing to the senses. For there to be prophecy in our lives, we will have to be close to God and willing for the restraint of the Holy Ghost.

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. 4:17). Dearly beloved, the time is indeed come for judgment to begin with us. Not only must we properly discern these matters, repentance and amendment of life is in place where there has been complacency. We must shake off the apathy, cynicism, and the loss of true Christian fellowship lest we be of those who obey not the gospel of God and reap the terrible reward of the wicked. May God spare us from such an end!

Brother Galen.



Is Your Dimmer Switch Working?

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

When the sun shines on a beautiful day and someone looks into a home or some other building the light is reflected by the glass and the interior appears rather dark (even though lights may be shining within). If the world were full of the glory of the light of the Son, our witness would be much more difficult to notice on its own. In contrast, as dusk approaches and the light of the glorious day dims, we can look into various dwellings and see the light shining out. The greater the darkness outside, the more clearly our light shines from within. The same is true of our churches.

It is also possible that instead of giving all the potential light that we can give, our lights can be dimmed somewhat or obscured. The world living in near darkness can still see our light but is it at its full potential? How much can we dim our lights before it is noticeable? Are we living

according to the fullness of the glorious Gospel? Are our lamps burning as brightly as they can be?

Is Biblical conservatism, nonconformity to the world, and separation relative to the culture about us? As long as some light is visible, will that work? We hear a lot of “We do not need this or that anymore to be conservative. We can be equally as ‘spiritual’ without them.”

Some even in the evangelical Christian world have accepted divorce and remarriage in varying degrees. Yet, some other forms of “modern relationships” still seem wrong. This is still relativism — “Oh, but we are not like that.”

Progressive thinking is a dimmer switch we cannot afford to use. “As long as we keep to the basics or the important things. The world around us recognizes us for who we are without all those extra things.”

Certain practices are in our midst which dim our witness and are an affront to God. The world has certain expectations of us. Can we assume that God does not?

History says that Nonconformity to the World (Separation) and Nonresistance are two pillars which rise and fall together. We are in danger. “The little foxes, that spoil the vines” (Song of Solomon 2:15) are all about us. Turn off your dimmer switch. Are we willing to bear “reproach” for the cause of Christ?

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain” (Revelation 3:2). “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Peter 4:14).

Brother Keith.

Editor’s Note: The foregoing was submitted by a brother a little while ago and we believe that it is an appropriate meditation to go with the message on “The Peril of Complacency” and “Obedience and Victory” because if we are complacent about our walk of faith and not obedient to Christ and His Word our light will either be dim or go out altogether and victory will not be ours.



FREEDOM IN RESPONSIBILITY

God has a blessed way for us mortal brethren to walk together in fellowship. The foundation of this fellowship is that we are all sinners saved by grace. We are all dependent on the Lord's forgiveness. How sweet the oneness we experience on the common ground of unworthiness and yet being accepted in Christ! However, we find ourselves struggling at times with our brother's deficiencies. Especially in preparing for communion, we sometimes find ourselves in trouble with what we see in someone else.

Through experience, we have come to a knowledge and expectation of what we would like to see in our brother. Down deep we are expecting the brethren to meet these conditions. At times we have a struggle to not hold those who don't get there. We find ourselves feeling responsible, especially in the light of the Bible teaching on being our brother's keeper. We feel compelled; we dare not ignore his failure. How can my brother go to communion when he hasn't seen his need and yet seems to be free? Will God hold me responsible? Is the church slipping? Doesn't the ministry see the problem? Why don't they do something about it? Here I, who see the weakness in a brother, begin to struggle with feelings about the matter, and my weak brother feels free. How can I be freed from this struggle?

Christ is the head of the Church. That alone is sufficient reason for us to be at rest. As we have come to know the Lord, we have every reason to trust Him. He is my all in all. And He dearly loves my brother. He has not forgotten my brother or me in these last times. To know that Christ is furnishing the nourishment for my brethren and me is comforting.

The Apostle Paul writes of the importance of the Head. "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2:19). If we watch, we will see this work of God taking place in most cases. But if we lose our consciousness of Christ, we may wonder why this isn't working in our brother. We forget about the joints and bands that are in place. In place of confidence, offense offers itself.

Again in Ephesians 4:15-16, we read about the Head. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

There is a place for each one to fill in bringing about the increase of the body. But first we must submit our proving, our judgment, to the Lord. The standard that we embrace may be of God, but holding our brother to that standard could be uncomfortably closely related to being unforgiving. It brings us into bondage and makes fellowship less free than we would like. It makes us have enough feelings that, when we could say a helpful word, it comes out wrong.

Why not turn the brother over to God, to Christ the Head? Why not trust him to the Lord? Then I can be available to say something or do something when the Spirit nudges me. I can then freely go to communion because I have done whatever the Spirit has impressed me to do. My brother's failure to meet my mark doesn't close my door. The Lord is working with him, sometimes through me and sometimes through some other means.

In our zeal for the truth, as well as for the unity and growth of the church, it is well to remember our own limitations. The dimensions of the knowledge of the Almighty are infinitely greater than ours are. We tend to measure one another by our own experience. That is possibly a good comparison in many cases. But it can be unfair in other cases. Because of our lack of insight into the particular circumstances of our brother, we must be careful to act, not as much out of knowledge as, by the unction of the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is inspiring our concern, we can act in confidence. If the Holy Spirit is nudging us, then we dare not overlook or ignore it. But then we will be more conscious of Him than of the driving feeling inside. We can be confident of the timing as well as the manner that our contribution will lend into the overall plan.

When the Spirit's leading is followed on our part, then any response by the individual in focus can be attributed to the Lord. When an effort is made on our own, we may find it hard to accept the degree of response by the individual. It can be hard to release the person even when we acknowledge his response.

May God help us that we can each humbly contribute our small part to the safe keeping of the faith in the Church of Jesus Christ. *Bro. Myron.*



THE HIDDEN CHRISTIAN

God intends for His children to be seen and accessible. He said to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth . . . (Job 1:8). God is pleased to call people's attention to the Christian, and Christians are as an open book before the world.

However, in another sense, the Christian is to be hidden. And it is a concern that some are being seen and found outside of Christ Jesus.

Paul wrote to the Colossians regarding the Christian's status in relation to the world: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" [Colossians 3:2-3](#). Here is the essence of the hidden Christian. The sense of being "hid with Christ" is found in being so at one with the Lord that the old man is not seen. Furthermore, being in Christ, the Christian's hiding is in God through Christ's oneness with the Father.

When a Christian becomes lukewarm and less Christ-like, he loses that oneness through which he is hidden. He or she then becomes identifiable as a common carnal man or woman.

In the world of international espionage and counterintelligence of the Cold War era, this matter of identity was of utmost importance. The secret agent's security was not necessarily in locking himself in a dark cellar where no one would see him. It was rather in living the life of a normal citizen. In this way, while he was seen, he was hidden. The better he could live naturally like the citizens of the country and lose himself in their customs and way of life, the greater his chances of remaining hidden.

The controlling government's agencies became alarmed the moment this man's "oneness" with the community and country began to crack, his handlers know that if he lost his identity as a normal citizen, he was in great danger of being found out.

To be hidden with Christ in God is upon similar conditions. One particularly difficult condition (for the flesh) is that a man must give up his old identity. But to remain hidden with Christ (and find security in Him), one eschews the old identity from the heart and desires to be more and more like the Heavenly. One cannot hide in Christ Jesus and still love his former nature. Question: Did God allow Adam and Eve to keep their fig leaf aprons on when He clothed them with the animal skins?

Jesus said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" [Matthew 10:39](#). Christian people need to be con-

cerned about their identity, for to be identified by the world due to the old former nature cropping up is inviting spiritual peril. In the hostile environment of our latter-day world, the Christian's hope and security is in being lost in Christ and hidden with Him in God in a daily life of discipleship.

Another condition of being hidden with Christ in God is that one must take up his cross and follow the Lord. A true Christian sincerely endeavors, through the Spirit, to "imitate" his Savior. Jesus must be Lord and Master of the new believer. Just as soon as one does not submit to the control of the Master, the world begins to see him for who he is—one of their own.

Jesus said that the kingdom is "like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" [Matthew 13:33](#). The working of leaven is such that it quickly assimilates into the whole mass. Leaven is alive, it is active, and it is effective. This is typical of the gospel's work in man. The gospel of Jesus Christ will take full control of a man's life. It also is alive, it is active, and it is effective unto a changed life.

The leaven of which Jesus spoke leavened three measures of meal. Perhaps a parallel thought is found in the words of Paul: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#). The power of the gospel of Jesus manifests itself in the manner of our spirit, the state of our soul, and the deeds of our body. The hidden life is one wherein the leaven of the gospel causes the loaf of life to "rise," and the world sees Christ, not the old man.

To honestly and completely give up our old identities comes only through the death of the old man. Identities are for the living, not for the dead. When a person repents and shows forth the fruits thereof, the old man dies, and with that death, he loses his old identity. He becomes a new creature. He becomes a partaker of the divine nature ([2 Peter 1:4](#)), his life changes ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)), and he gets a new name ([Revelation 3:12](#)). He is now known as a different person.

All of this suggests a practicing Christian, not just a church member who warms a pew on Sunday. People who are Christians only because it is the popular thing to do or because they do not want to be known as backsliders or because of what Mom and Dad believe are not practicing Christians. They will be identified, sooner or later, by the world.

God is one God. He has brought salvation through one gospel. There is one true saving faith. God's people are one. This oneness is in contrast to the confusion of the world and in Christendom. Jesus said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" [John 15:19](#). Those who are not in oneness with God are identified by the world, and the world loves them, regardless whether they are church members and think of themselves as Christians. The world no longer crucifies them because it knows them. This is the perilous condition of any lukewarm and carnal Christian.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, had these words to say to certain believers: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" [1 Corinthians 14:37](#). If this test were put to Christendom today (and it really is), how much oneness would be found with Christ Jesus? How many would truly be hidden with Christ in God? And what the apostle Paul had to say about the validity of his revelation in the gospel must be said of the other apostles as well.

No church can claim blessings with God because of who they are, but only by oneness with Christ and the Father as revealed by the Word. The true Christian church is that people whose lives are lost in, and hidden with, Christ—God manifesting Himself and His doctrine through them to the world.

As the opposition of our times thickens around us, may everyday be a day of hiding in Christ Jesus. To be found in Him on the great Judgment Day is imperative.

Brother Gladwin.



The Anabaptist View of the State

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The Anabaptists based their view of the state on what the Bible says. Romans 13 was to them a key Scripture for understanding the role of the state. The state was ordained by God to restrain and punish evil and to protect the good. They believed this to be true of all governments

regardless of their performance. H. Schnell said, "Even Nero ... and Pharaoh ... and Pilate ... were servants of God." Ambrosias Spittelmaier said in 1527, "Every government that has existed since the time of Adam and exists today has been instituted by God."

The Anabaptists held consistently to a two-kingdom concept—a view which differed from both the Roman Catholic Church and the contemporary reformers. They believed the Christian is a citizen of the heavenly kingdom of Christ. The state, while being God ordained, is a part of the kingdom of this world, from which Christians are to be separate. Anabaptists often quoted the words of Peter: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). While the state was a necessary institution to maintain order in society, they recognized that doing God's will was their foremost responsibility. Therefore they concluded that they were responsible to cheerfully obey the state as long as the state's laws did not violate the higher law of God. Generally, Anabaptists expected that the kingdom of Christ, made up of true Christians, would be a minority in the midst of a hostile world.

The Anabaptists were not antigovernment although they were often falsely charged with having revolutionary designs. The opposite was true. Since the state was instituted by God, they viewed any rebellion against the state as wrong no matter how evil the state was. They willingly paid the required taxes, interests, and customs. If the state overstepped its God-given boundaries of authority and tried to dictate matters in the spiritual realm, even then the beliefs of the Anabaptists did not allow for rebellion. Instead they insisted upon obedience to God first and then quietly suffered the reproaches and punishments of the authorities. So in no way did they nurture a rebellious attitude toward the state.

Anabaptists believed that a state-run church was contrary to the Scriptures. Since the state is part of an earthly kingdom, it has no right to dictate matters in the spiritual realm. No man should be coerced to join a church. They believed the true church consists of members who had joined voluntarily—ones who were baptized as adult believers—not as infants. Anabaptists believed that faith could not be forced on anyone. Each individual has the choice to believe or not believe. He should even have the right to choose what denomination he would be a part of—Catholic, Protestant, or Anabaptist. This concept of tolerated religious diversity, radical to both Protestant and Catholic contemporaries, became a significant

contribution of the Anabaptists to the modern world even though changing the earthly kingdom was not their goal.

Anabaptists were firm believers in nonresistance. Their Biblical reason was that Jesus forbade them to use the sword. He also instructed them to not resist evil, but to be willing to suffer and to allow themselves to be taken advantage of. Therefore, they could not serve in the military. Nor did they sue in a court of law to demand their rights. But, following the example of the apostle Paul, they did demonstrate their appreciation for consistent government by appealing to the authorities for a fair hearing and trial as the law provided for.

The Anabaptists refused to swear the civil oath, based on the Scriptures "Swear not at all" and "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay" (Matthew 5:34, 37). Since the oath was a symbol of loyalty to their country, their refusal to swear was puzzling to the government officials. However, the Anabaptists were prepared to give an affirmation of the truth instead of the required oath.

Anabaptists generally believed that a Christian should not hold a government office. Some did continue holding their office for a while after becoming Anabaptists. Some declared clearly that no Christian should be a magistrate. Some allowed for it under certain circumstances but added that it would be hard to remain in that state for long without compromising Christian principles. While it was sometimes discussed whether a new Christian could retain his government office or not, there was no question whether a Christian should seek a government office. They rejected the idea that it was necessary for officials to be Christians in order to have a good government. In fact, they believed that a government official who did not even profess to be a Christian would be as competent as a Catholic or Protestant to carry out the God-assigned tasks of the state.

What were some specific reasons why Anabaptists did not seek government positions? The first reason was that the Bible gives no warrant for it, and the Bible was their supreme authority. Also, a Christian holding office runs counter to Jesus' teachings. A government official rules by force. He is called to punish evil and mete out revenge. Jesus called His followers to not resist evil. Furthermore, in His model prayer, Jesus taught them to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." When government officials use the sword and mete out revenge on people, they certainly are not forgiving them. If God were to forgive their sins as they

forgive others, how then could He forgive them?

In addition, Christ's example is against taking part in government. Anabaptists often cited two examples. In John 6:15, when Jesus perceived that the people wanted to make Him a king, He did not take the opportunity. Also in Luke 12:14, a man asked Jesus to help him and his brother settle an inheritance dispute. Jesus said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Therefore, following Jesus' example, Christians cannot serve as judge.

Also, the Anabaptists taught against lording it over others as a basis for rejecting the government office. Matthew 20:25-27 was often referred to: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise ... authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." A Christian is called to be a humble servant like Jesus, not a magistrate lording it over his fellow men. Sometimes the question was brought to Anabaptists of Cornelius, who was a God-fearing man and also a centurion. Their answer was that, of course, after Cornelius was enlightened by Peter and baptized into the church, he could not continue as an officer. To the protest that David was a king and yet a man after God's own heart, the answer was that he lived in the Old Testament. They lived by the standards Jesus set forth in the New Testament.

In conclusion, we can condense the Anabaptist view of the state to basically two points, both expressed in Bible verses. First, Romans 13:1: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Since God ordained government, we are obligated to obey. Second, Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than men." We willingly obey government authorities. But if they tell us to do something which would cause us to transgress the higher law of God they have stepped out of their God-given jurisdiction. In such cases we cannot obey them.

May we continue to hold to our forefathers' Bible-based view of the state.

—Wilmer Burkholder

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The Joy of the Lord

He lifts me up when I am down
And plants my feet on higher ground.

When I am weary from the fight
He takes my hand and leads me right;
Along the path that I should take,
He holds me when my heart doth ache,
And toil and trouble seem to make
My spirit sad, my faith to falter.
The plans I make,
Should I them alter?

I do not know which way to go
But He is there the way to show.

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“Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”
Nehemiah 8:10

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