

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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

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

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

From The Editor's Desk

The theme for this edition is mother and there have only ever been two people who did not have a mother but the rest of us including our Lord Jesus Christ have an earthly mother.

Generally each person knows who their mother is but over the years we have met many who have never know anything or very little about their birth mother and we speak here of those who may have been adopted or born in adverse circumstances that precluded the God meant continuation of mother-child relationship.

Our heart goes out those who find themselves in that situation and it is one not of their own making. From personal family experience we know that there is a sense of loss and incompleteness because of a lack of knowledge of a natural or birth mother. Some have been able to find their birth mother and make contact which is not always successful, others have not been able to make contact because of personal choices by the parties concerned and others have never been able to find their birth mother at all.

There are many and varied reasons for this, some societies shun those giving birth out of wedlock, maybe the mother herself feels ashamed and buries the event, official records are generally kept by most societies of such events but they generally offer minimal details other than the bare details of name of mother, date and place of birth and maybe a child's name.

In the case in our own family there were twins born, one was named the other not and no trace has ever been discovered of the fate of the mother, the twins were adopted to separate families compounding the situation.

These events happened many years ago and the people involved have had to hand these things over to God but through it all two things stand out and they are the fact that every person has a mother, (except for Adam and Eve) known or not and secondly our God who knows all and knows what is best for each individual has allowed these circumstances to shape the lives of all those involved including the spouses and descendants and the greatest testimony from one of those twins is the peace that the Lord has given them through His word in Psalm 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up."

It is our sincere prayer that those who do know their mother truly appreciate her and what God has provided for them. For those not in that position God's promise in Psalm 27:10 is for you too.

JVL



From the Pulpit

MOTHERLINESS

A Messenger of Truth Editorial May 2006

It is a concern that while the nation pays lip service to mothers, motherliness is not valued and promoted as it should be. Millions are mothers biologically, but how many are truly motherly? To bring a new life into being is one thing, but to be dedicated to the highest welfare of that child, above all to his eternal happiness, is another.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, had motherly qualities and virtues. While the Scriptures do not give us a great deal of information about her, we do catch glimpses of her in the record of Jesus' life.

She was anxiously careful about the whereabouts of her Son, as any true mother would be. When, at the age of twelve, Jesus was separated from His parents in Jerusalem, Mary's response was typical of motherliness: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" (Luke 2:48). A true motherly mother does not rest at ease until she knows where her children are.

Mary's relationship with her Son Jesus, no doubt, adjusted to her increasing understanding and faith in His mission. But she stayed in touch Him. We notice in John 2:1, "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there with Him."

A touching glimpse of Mary's motherliness is a scene at Calvary: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother..." (John 19:25). At the beginning of her Son's ministry and at the ending, she was there and stood by.

Yes, there are many mothers, but not all are there where the children need them. But, thank God, there are the motherly mothers, whose lives are defined by their sense of mission regarding their children's welfare. Their children are their heavenly treasure, so that is where their hearts are (Matthew 6:21). The latter are the ones who receive the commendation of God—in this life and in the life to come.

In a child's or youth's greatest hour of need, many times it is Mother alone who can fully fill the need. Is she motherly enough to be there? This question has two aspects. First, mothers must be present physically with

their children. Secondly, mothers must be "there" in the spiritual sense. A true mother will sense the child's heart's need and will be in a position with the Lord to be able to help her young. It is sad that so many mothers are not there where they are needed so greatly.

We do not want to speak disparagingly of Hagar, the mother of Ishmael. She did, however, under extreme stress, leave her son to die. Abraham had sent her and the child away with bread and water. "And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off . . . "(Genesis 21:15-16). While one's sympathies might be with Hagar, God called her, asking, "What aileth thee, Hagar?" (v. 17). Far too many children in the modern materialistic world are being left "under the shrubs" while the mother is "a good way off." When mothers are dedicated to motherhood, they will be motherly and will be there with the children.

Mothers of yesteryear would likely be amazed and perplexed upon observing many present-day mothers. The old-fashioned mother was a keeper at home, while Father was the breadwinner. Those mothers did not leave the children at home alone, nor did they often leave and take the children with them.

Today it is different. Harried and socially pressured mothers are going here and there. Sometimes the children are left alone, sometimes with others, and sometimes they are being taken from place to place with Mother. When does such a mother have the time to truly "be with" her child?

Many children are crying within for a motherly mother. The children are not looking for a sophisticated mother with class and status; that means nothing to them. They want a mother who is motherly. A quiet, steady atmosphere at home is where the all-important sense of emotional security is found. Such a home is really the only place where children can be taught the virtues they need to be proper citizens of the country and of the heavenly kingdom.

Paul writes that mothers are "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home" (Titus 2:4-5). Paul is saying more than just that young mothers should stay home, although that may well be included. But equally important, they are to practice the virtue of keeping the home a pleasant place and one that is advantageous for God.

Under the pressure of the present-day interpretation of the woman's role, it is not popular to be matronly. The mind-set and fashion of the world is to maintain the single and free image as much and as long as possible. In the church of God, Christian sisters who marry are dedicated to being mothers and are not ashamed of taking on a motherly appearance. Spiritual husbands deeply appreciate a wife who possesses motherly qualities.

It is said that the greatest gift a father can give to his children is to love their mother. Perhaps nothing makes for more emotional trauma in a child than when Father does not show proper respect to Mother, whom the child instinctively loves deeply. Fathers should also remember that it is motherliness, not fashion or image, that makes Mother special to a child. Therefore, husbands who uphold and honor motherly virtues are also blessing their children.

It has been said, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the nation." Western society is on a fast track to decadence, ignoring the consequences of that truth. Even closer home to most readers of this paper would see the truth that "the hand that rocks the cradle guides the church." Christian mothers should ponder that the fruit of their wombs, nurtured by their vision and zeal for the faith, will someday determine the course of the church if time continues.

Concerned mothers lay the foundation of solid and true convictions in the early childhood of their offspring. Elsewhere in this issue of the Messenger, the reader will find moving testimonies and concerns of such mothers. We pray that God will give the church mothers with such vision and dedication. So much depends on them.

On this Mother's Day, we wish all godly mothers the blessings of God. It is right that we pause to commend them in their calling. Above all, may the incentive of receiving God's approbation induce all mothers to dedicate themselves to being motherly. Solomon's enumeration of the qualities of a virtuous woman certainly gives one the picture of a motherly person. Let the mothers of today experience that which Solomon said: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs. 31:28). *Used by permission Gospel Publishers Kansas.*



VIRTUES OF A GODLY MOTHER

Every born-again woman with one or more children desires to be filled with the crowning qualities of godliness. This begins with her total dependence on God in small and great things. The Master Shepherd overshadows her life and all she does and desires with His goodness and practical wisdom in child nurture.

She will control excesses, teach, correct, comfort, love, instruct, and train her children. She will provide emotional security that she herself has found at the Source of freedom from all fear. Her heart and hands reach out beyond her own home to the poor and unfortunate, contributing to the comfort and salvation of the world around her. Her children will catch this, and prejudices and criticism will be lessened by her example.

She is a co-labourer with her husband and sisters in the faith, serving the church in small, unnoticed gestures of goodwill. In prayer, the Lord reproves the weaknesses of her mother-character, namely, parental pride, partiality, and indulgence of her children. She takes care that these vices do not rule.

Self-sacrifice, as exemplified by Esther in the Bible, will be her vision, for today's keys unlock tomorrow's gates. Faith and constancy ensure her heavenly citizenship.

Godly mothers spend time with God and cast their cares upon Him. They believe that the angels are managing all the affairs which they are physically unable to cover.

Stirring up strife with gossip only subtracts from her credibility and goodness. Therefore she steers away from situations where her flesh would be tempted. In her tongue is the law of kindness, Proverbs 31:26. Others' personal business is not her concern, as her ideals are more noble and pertinent. Her world may seem small to the worldly wise, but her God-given capabilities and good understanding make her life full and pleasurable in a way for which one need not feel sorry.

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil" Proverbs 31:11. She may be tempted to hide things from her husband, but a wise husband will inquire frequently of her spiritual standing and draw from her heart. This open communication promotes loyalty and fidelity.

Many good examples are in the Bible for our learning. The benevolent seamstress, Dorcas; the high ideals of Hannah, who lent Samuel, from his birth, to the Lord; of humility in Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist; of hospitality and faith in the Shunamite woman, to name only a few.

Time is a precious commodity, and idleness does not interest her, as there are many things to learn in the ways of God, homemaking, and child rearing. Her sleep is sweet, and although she may not get her self-prescribed needed rest, the lack of it will not rule the family's morning discussion.

Moodiness and selfish feelings are taken to her closet of prayer and left there as resignation to God's will becomes again a realization. Repentance to God first, followed by an admission to the family of overreaching or overreacting will lead the children to see their own humanness.

Careful spending habits with the family's good in mind will bring satisfaction to the household.

Modesty of dress and generosity daily grace her. A godly mother will possess only clothes that do not draw attention to herself, and she will not be so preoccupied with her wardrobe. She will be most concerned with the godly ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Peter 3:14.

Starting at a young age, mothers should prepare children to release their wills at the call of God. Parents will do this by making simple, genuine requests for obedience and then following through with fitting discipline if the child disobeys. Requiring unreasonable things of our child is using parental authority improperly and will promote rebellion.

With patience, mothers will sacrifice themselves and adjust their own plans as their children, in their childish good-heartedness, request to have their friends over for a meal or the night.

Accessing God's throne with a realization of her unworthiness and total need of Him will start the work of sanctification, adding godliness to Christian mothers. A reward awaits all godly mothers!

Sister Becky



RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CHRISTIAN MOTHER

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it:
Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain"
Psalm 127:1

The first and greatest responsibility of a Christian mother is to love God and to be able to discern His voice. God's Word is precious to her. Her prayers and thoughts turn heavenward as she faces the challenges of raising a family in the fear and admonition of the Lord. She needs a guiding light to buoy her spirits and grant wisdom to care for and lead her children.

It is a mother's responsibility to create a loving, peaceful environment for her husband and children. She loves, respects, and submits herself to her husband. 1 Peter 3:1 states, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." And verse 6 reads, "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." Proverbs 31:11 says, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."

Children are taught by their mother to honor and obey their father. I remember my mother always placing the meat or main dish by Daddy's plate, and if there was enough food for seconds, it was offered to him first. When it came to decisions, Daddy's word was final. Affection and tenderness between parents must be observed by the children for them to feel secure and for them to learn a proper concept of marriage. One of our daughters said recently, "I don't know what I would do if you and Daddy did not get along."

In "Happiness For Our Hearts And Homes" Marjorie Hiebert writes, "Motherhood is the highest calling, noblest work, and greatest opportunity that can come to any woman. It is the privilege of molding a life and shaping a character whose influence will extend into eternity. It is the opportunity of beginning a life and leading it back to God." The hours I spent caring for our babies were precious to me and are now sweet to recall.

Concerning the family one minister wrote, "We must know what to hold to and what to discard. In order to preserve right standards, there must be proper organization and discipline. To have this will, at times, demand a

sacrifice of time, pleasure, and social advantage. With Mary of the New Testament, we would do well to turn from much outside activity and give ourselves to the better part, the personal values of family life" (The Christian Home).

I remember so well coming home from school, eager to tell Mother the happenings of the day. It was rare that she wasn't home. Our young son wrote in his Mother's Day card, "I love my mother because ... she has a snack for us when we come home from school."

Submission, respect, and obedience are basic lessons to be taught at a young age. A firm 'no' brings security. I've been impressed with highchair babies bowing their heads, pinching their eyes shut, and folding their little hands. Mother has been diligent and consistent during family devotions, holding them firmly and, if necessary, placing her hand over baby's mouth. Thus she has taught quietness and respect for others who are listening. This is also much appreciated in a church service setting.

A Christian mother finds many opportunities to teach her little ones about God, and those first impressions are lasting. It takes time and patience to answer the many questions, and may we never grow weary. The rewards are precious. I recall once when I was down on hands and knees making a floor bed for our little boys the baby came and climbed on my back, put his arms around my neck, and said, "I love you, Mommy." What impressed me was his response when I was down on his level.

We need to be aware of the differences in our children's temperaments. What works to bring one child's will into subjection may not have the same effect on another. I read once that the only way a child can overcome an evil spirit is by the discipline of the parents.

Allowing a child to make choices at a very young age fosters insecurity, independence, and disrespect for authority. Mother knows best what little Johnny should eat for dinner and what type of clothes he should wear, so Johnny is not stressed with having to make the decision.

As children grow, Mother gives them small tasks and duties to perform. These increase with age, thus teaching them responsibility. A sense of worth and accomplishment is rewarding enough. Children need not be coaxed or bribed. Constructive criticism is at times necessary, but praise

for a job well done is a great stimulant.

A Christian mother teaches and practices simplicity, modesty, and temperance. She needs to take time for personal talks with her children. I want to pay tribute to my mother, who had ten children, that she found time and opportunity to give us individual attention. Unselfishness, kindness, and thoughtfulness are also attributes of a godly mother. It touches me to recall the different ways my mother reached out to others from behind the scenes.

We need the impressions and instructions of our grandmothers who have trod the way before and are better able to observe our failings. Titus 2:4 reads, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children." At the best, we will make many mistakes. To humbly ask forgiveness of my husband and children is a deep lesson in itself.

I feel unworthy and yet greatly honoured to have been chosen by God to be a mother. May all Christian mothers say with the apostle John, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). May God be praised.

Written by a Christian mother



SEPARATED UNTO GOD

Nonconformity to the World

Being isolated from the world is not the same as placing our total love on God and keeping ourselves pure (unspotted from the world) for His sake.

Leviticus 20:24: "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people."

Leviticus 20:26: "For I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

Exodus 11:7: "...the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

2 Corinthians 6:17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye

separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

Romans 12:2: "And be not conformed to this world ..."

James 1:27: "Pure religion ... before God and the Father is this ... to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The Purpose of Separation

(a) To preserve the purity of the church for the great consummation with the bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

(b) To hold forth the pure gospel of Jesus Christ; to carry out the Great Commission.

(c) To radiate forth the true light to the world.

(d) That the church would be a city (example) that cannot be hid (a people living for God).

The Conditions for Scriptural Separation

(a) The mind and heart must be cleansed of carnal thinking and affection. (In order to avoid copying the world's way of living, the believers must be transformed and renewed [Romans 12:2]. They must see the issues of life from God's viewpoint. Otherwise they cannot discover the full will of God. Do we need to be overly concerned about what is worldly if we are careful that we understand and obey the Holy Spirit?)

(b) Separation is meaningless unless we have a burden for souls. (The cause of Christ is damaged by those who claim to be Christians but, by outward evidence, continue in the course of the world.)

(c) Christians may not belong to organizations such as clubs, lodges, secret societies, the armed forces, labour unions, or fraternities. The Lord requires undivided loyalty. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

(d) There are two kingdoms, a heavenly kingdom and an earthly kingdom. (We belong to one kingdom or the other.) "Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

(e) Mark 12:30: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). (So-called Christians say they love the Lord even while they partake of the world, but this cannot be done.) "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other or else he will hold to the one and

despise the other, ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

(f) For the Christian, separation unto the Lord means following God and the Holy Ghost. Separation for separation's sake is nothing more or less than self-righteousness. If we focus on separation only, it will become an empty religion to us.

The World System

The world as spoken of here is a "system" (of the spirit realm), and this system is the enemy of God. This ordered system is governed from behind the scenes by a ruler, which is Satan himself, the great deceiver, the father of lies.

The Scripture enlightens us as to this "world," which is all around us. Unless we are alert to the unseen powers behind fads, fashion, and that which is highly esteemed by men, we may be deceived. Behind these material things, in the background, there is a power at work for the sole purpose of destroying the works of God, including your soul! Do not let this power grip you!

What makes this system so subtle is that it pleases the flesh and mind. Yet, it enslaves the mind and body and seeks to destroy the soul. Anyone who follows the system of the world is actually serving Satan. James says that to be a "friend of the world" makes one an "enemy of God." (James 4:4).

(a) Pride and lust motivates the world's system. Because of pride, man performs feats that exalt him, acquiring power and prestige. Examples would be in sports and education. Glory that does not glorify God is vainglory. Because of lust, man creates styles and modes to satisfy his craving.

(b) Neither pride nor lust is ever satisfied; they always want more. (This spirit will take you farther than you ever planned to go.)

(c) The kingdom of heaven will be taken to eternal glory.

(d) The kingdom of this world will be thrust into eternal flames. God is allowing the evil forces to work until the end of all things (Ephesians 6:12).

(e) The ways of the world are subject to continual change, including styles of dress. But whatever their form, they centre on pride, selfishness, and ungodliness. The Christian, who has a renewed mind, must examine closely all the changes that come along and avoid all that is against the will of

God. When Christians adopt new things and inventions for use, it must be for reasons other than just acquiring that which is new and popular at the moment. Carelessly accepting the modes of the world shows a heart centred on the evil world and not on God.

(f) The Christian's interests will be in higher things than things of the earth. He is, in effect, dead to the low things of the world. He lives to please God, not himself, his neighbours, or the popular fads and fashions of the moment.

Elements of this World System

(a) Pleasure seeking is a worldly system that is condemned in the Scriptures. "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Timothy 5:6) One of the perils of these last times is being "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:4).

(b) Sports are a worldly system that has become very popular. A few of the more outstanding are the Olympics, ball games, auto races, horse races, boat races, bicycle races, skiing, skating, swimming, tennis, sporty cars, and sport clothes.

(c) Fashion is another worldly system. It is under the direct supervision of Satan, the god of this world. Many are servants to the god of fashion. Fashion takes little consideration of comfort, modesty, or cost. What is unacceptable or even unbelievable today may become fashionable tomorrow and soon acceptable. (The natural man likes to be noticed, and the flesh desires to be approved, which is the motivating force behind the desire for fashion. It is also the source of the power behind peer pressure.)

(d) Television, Internet, and radio programs are designed to entertain and gratify the lust that is in the flesh. Today all these things, and worse, are available in the home via the television and the World Wide Web.

The Nature of the Kingdom of this World

(a) The world is evil in nature, "... this present evil world ... "(Galatians 1:4). (Generally speaking, the world is anything that takes our heart away from God. For example, if our occupation or activities cause us to repeatedly miss church or compromise the faith, they are being used of the world to draw us away.)

(b) Worldliness is downward in its tendency, "...the course of this world..." (Ephesians 2:2). That course is always away from God. (Some ask the

questions, "What was the concern about worldliness that was expressed at conference, where is it, and what is it?" Following are points of concern that were lifted out, as recorded in the official minutes. This list is not all-inclusive.

- (1) Pride in our homes
- (2) Permissiveness
- (3) Self-indulgent lifestyles
- (4) Lack of brotherly reproof
- (5) Lack of parental guidance; an unwillingness to say no
- (6) Following the fashions in clothes and hair styles; expensive clothing
- (7) Repentance that does not bring forth the necessary changes
- (8) A new style of singing, with many minor and sensual chords
- (9) Love of affluence
- (10) Misuse of computers and cell phones
- (11) Inconsistent wearing of the head covering (small coverings)

These things have the accent of the kingdom of the world. Some are a direct disobedience of the Scriptures; while others seem less serious. But the spirit behind them is evil.

(c) Worldliness is contaminating in its influence. To contaminate is to infect by contact or association. Pure religion is essential to keeping "himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

(d) Worldliness is corrupting in its association, "...having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). The world leaves its mark on those who associate with it. For that reason, the all-wise Heavenly Father implemented the doctrine of separation. The church is in greater danger today because of (1) a change from the farm-orientated economy of God's people to a more urban setting, (2) girls and boys of our homes seeking employment at a young age, (3) brethren operating businesses, thus being exposed more to the world's ways.

(e) The world's pleasures are unsatisfying: "For the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). Pleasures last but for a season.

(f) The world is hateful in its opposition to the Christian. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). Read in the Martyrs Mirror of the world's hate toward true Christians. Don't be deceived, human nature has not changed.

(g) Separation does not mean isolation. Isolation would defeat the very purpose of this gospel doctrine. The Bible teaches that God's people are

those "called out" and changed through repentance. Then, as Jesus prayed, they must go among the people but not be of the world (John 17:1). This they do in order to carry the gospel to the lost. Here is an important Bible truth: one cannot carry the true gospel effectively and remain in an unscriptural church or with his former friends to win them. The entire Bible message teaches a "coming out."

Victory over the World

It is true that we must associate with the world to a certain extent, but to what extent? For an illustration, let's assume that you become acutely ill with great pain, and the doctor prescribes heroin or morphine. You would instantly be aware of the danger of developing a craving for those drugs. You would obey your doctor and take them, but with great fear and carefulness. You would be mindful of the consequences if their power should overtake you.

Questions being asked are, How much money can I make, how many things can I buy, or how close can my business or association with the world be before I fall prey to the hypnotizing power of the god of this world? One thing we know for sure is that behind every worldly thing, there is a satanic power. How vital it is for every Christian to have a clear vision of the spirit of the world!

The dividing line between the Christian and the worldling is where the choice is made between walking after the Spirit or walking after the flesh. As far as necessity and service dictate, the difference between how the separated Christian and worldly person lives is not that great. But where pride, lust, and egotism enter, you reach a line in the decision process that separates the worldling, who walks after the flesh, and the Christian, who walks after the Spirit.

Nonconformity is based on our first-love to God. The more we love the Lord the less time we will entertain worldly pleasures.

Keeping the Faith—The Challenge Is Ours

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

"...the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

"...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth" (Luke 18:8)?

(a) To keep the faith, there must be conviction born in every brother, sister, and convert that "the just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). This is "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." All our living must correspond to faith or to the faith.

(b) To maintain the purity of the truth is one tremendous challenge of our generation. Has God brought us "to the kingdom for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)? That which prevails in the world tends to come into the church, including moral impurities. Continued exposure to corrupted standards will distort our consciences if we allow them to do so. How much have we been affected already? Immorality, infidelity, couples living together, single mothers bearing children, divorce—do these things seem as sinful as they did a generation ago?

(c) We are in a life or death struggle against Satan and the forces of darkness. We may have been chosen to man the last watch, the watch when Jesus returns. A vital challenge of our time is to maintain purity. In this, a tremendous burden rests on the home, the parents, the church, and the school.

Separation unto God is not merely maintaining a certain distance between the church and the world. It is maintaining the Biblical standard and level of purity and faithfulness no matter how low the standard of the world sinks.

Brother Don



HOW AM I TO ABIDE IN CHRIST?

Those who are just converted to Christ are, "as new born babes," to grow up to the stature of brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus (1 Peter 2:2).

Apart from Christ Jesus, you have no life. You have no power to resist temptations or to grow in grace and holiness. Abiding in Him, you may flourish. Drawing your life from His, you will not wither or be fruitless. You will be like a tree planted by the river of water (Psalm 1:3).

Many have an idea that they must do some part of this work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, but now they seek, by their own efforts, to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Our growth in grace, our joy, our

usefulness, all depend upon our union with Christ. It is in Him that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but also the Finisher of our faith. Christ is first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end, of course, but also at every step of the way.

King David says, "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:8). Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first. "As ye have received therefore Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Colossians 2:6). You gave yourself to God to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Savior. You could not atone for your sins yourself or change your heart, but having given yourself to God, you believe that He, for Christ's sake, did all this for you.

By faith, you became Christ's, and by faith, you are to grow up in Him—by giving and taking. You are to give all—your heart, your will, your service. Give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements. And you must take all, Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper—to give you the power to obey Him.

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning. Make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus, day by day, you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.

Jesus says, "Abide in me." These words convey the idea of rest, stability, and confidence. Again He invites, "Come unto me ... and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The words of the Psalmist express the same thought: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 30:15). This rest is not found in inactivity, for in the Savior's invitation the promise of rest is united with the call to labor: "Take my yoke upon you ... and ye shall find rest..." (Matthew 11:29). The heart that rests most fully upon Christ will be most earnest and active in labor for Him.

In John 17:20-21, Jesus prayed for us. He asked that we might be one with Him, even as he is one with the Father. The Savior has said of Himself, "The Son can do nothing of himself" (John 5:19). But, He said,

"The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). Then, if Christ is dwelling in our hearts, He will work in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). We shall work as He worked, and abiding in Him, we shall "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

When Christ abides in my heart, my whole nature is transformed. Christ's spirit, His love, softens my heart, subdues my soul, and raises my thoughts and desires toward God and heaven.

Brother Dave



Resting on God

O God, most high, most glorious, the thought of Thine infinite serenity cheers me, for I am toiling and in turmoil, troubled and distressed, but Thou art for ever at perfect peace. Thy designs cause thee no fear or care of unfulfilment, they stand fast as the eternal hills. Thy power knows no bond, Thy goodness no stint. Thou bringest order out of confusion, and my defeats are Thy victories: The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

I come to Thee as a sinner with cares and sorrows, to leave every concern entirely to Thee, every sin calling for Christ's precious blood; revive deep spirituality in my heart; let me live near to the great Shepherd, hear His voice, know its tones, follow its calls. Keep me from deception by causing me to abide in the truth, from harm by helping me to walk in the power of the Spirit. Give me a more intense faith in the eternal verities, burning into me by experience the things I know; Let me never be ashamed of the truth of the gospel, that I may bear its reproach, vindicate it, see Jesus as its essence, know it the power of the Spirit.

Lord, help me, for I am often lukewarm and chill; unbelief mars my confidence, sin makes me forget Thee. Let the weeds that grow in my soul be cut at their roots; grant me to know that I truly live only when I live to Thee, that all else is trifling. Thy presence alone can make me holy, devout, strong and happy. Abide in me, gracious God. Amen.

WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE? John 5:2-9

Oh, to be whole—what a beautiful thought! Am I not whole? Is there something in my heart that I would really not care to have our Perfect Example ask of me? Maybe I have already been impressed with a certain area in which I need cleansing.

Jesus came upon the scene of the impotent man lying by the side of the pool waiting for the stirring of the waters. Earlier, Jesus had also seen, a great way off, a man in whom there was no guile (John 1:47). God has a plan for the impotent man, the guileless man, and the man who has the desire to be whole.

"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

"Rise." Rise to what occasion? This is the beginning point of being whole. Yes, it takes faith to rise. To rise would invite us out of our present status. Do I have a desire to leave the place of dwelling that has been my lot for the last period of time? I may have even felt that all was not in order, but my self-tendencies may reveal the true hidden man of the heart.

"Take up thy bed." An act of doing is being depicted. Again, this is a follow-up of our first touch with the Lord. The Lord has invited, and now He asks for a heart that will follow one step at a time. A little touch of compassion, a small word of encouragement, or a prayer in behalf of a fellow pilgrim may be some aspects of commission that will be asked of you from our Lord.

To "walk" after the Lord heals us is a continuation of faith. This part of this verse coincides with other verses such as to "run and not be weary" (Isaiah 40:31), or "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). As the Holy Spirit leads, we can hear the still small voice. What do we do with those impressions? If there is an act of obedience, truly we are walking.

The sower went to sow seed in several types of ground. As one grows, he or she may be of the nature of the stony ground or the thorns choking the tender plants. One takes faith that the Lord has saved him, but the cares of life press in upon him, and his faith becomes wilted. This would be the case of rising and taking by faith. But without the part of obedience, the roots are not firmly planted and, eventually, become a dried up memory.

The seeds, which have brought forth a bountiful harvest, portray the walk. God is continuing to bless those who are walking the walk of faith.

We can be totally whole, yes, totally whole in thought, in action, and, most

of all, in spirit! As we journey through this life, God wants whole workers. Truth in the inward parts is what God desires of us. This truth is not a truth of just knowing our spiritual position but a knowing and an action of dealing with those things as the Holy Spirit gives direction.

May we all be able to "walk" in the way the Lord would have us.

Written with concern,

Brother Lavern



THE NEW BIRTH

Jesus taught, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 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. That 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 died 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 submitted.

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.

Brother Jerry

Rest and Pray

When skies grow dark, as they sometimes will;
And the road is rough and leads uphill;
And the load gets heavy along the way,
Just stop a moment to rest and pray.

When strength is failing, and it would seem
That thru the clouds there is scarce a gleam
To light your feet o'er the rugged way
Just stop a moment to rest and pray.

When things go wrong, as they oft will do;
When cares are many and joys are few,
Remember that Christ, too, came this way;
Then stop a moment to rest and pray.

When all is darkness within – without,
And the path obscured by mists of doubt,
It will grow brighter from day to day
If you stop a moment to rest and pray

Do others meet with success, while you
Seem just a failure in all you do?
The Light of the World will show the way
If you stop a moment to rest and pray.

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