

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

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

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

Matthew 5:15

From The Editor's Desk.

As people of God we should always endeavour to encourage one another and especially so where our circumstances are far from what we consider ideal, or perhaps even acceptable, when it comes to being able to be part of a fellowship of likeminded brothers and sisters with whom we can interact and worship on a regular basis. This is the case in not only Australia but other places too I am sure, and we must admit to feeling discouraged at times, especially for those that have been endeavoring to follow the path that Jesus trod without the interactive support of others and often for a number of years.

The articles selected for printing often can leave us feeling left out when we read of Bible Schools, youth gatherings, revival meetings, worship services and social get togethers that are part and parcel of everyday life for the people from whom these articles come. Yes, we do earnestly yearn for that sort of fellowship and interaction, but I sometimes wonder, after having visited some of those communities, if we should not look more at the blessings that we have of not being so busy with others and church related activities that we neglect or become too weary to attend to our daily walk with God by way of spending time in our prayer closet and in His word.

Let us not become despondent or discouraged but instead put our trust and hope in Him who is able to provide for all our needs, if we persevere to the end and run the Christian race we will finally have that glorious fellowship in heaven with Him and all the saints. We are not alone in these days of our afflictions for there are many suffering saints around the world who have even less freedom to worship and access to Christ centered materials.

May the Lord bless each of us as we journey in faith to that city of God's making.

Revelations 22:14 & Hebrews 11:10

“Blessed *are* they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.”

JvL.

MINISTER'S CORNER.**"Hold That Fast Which Thou Hast"***Bro. Ray Auker, Denver, PA*

This admonition (Revelation 3:11), given to the church at Philadelphia, is of the Lord, who is holy and true, knowing the works of all men. The message is not one of condemnation but rather of encouragement to constancy in faith and service. The church at Philadelphia represents a revival church that keeps the Word and is not ashamed to identify with Christ. She is promised divine protection as she, with patience, keeps what is committed unto her. This message reveals that her faith and practice is accepted of Christ.

Along with the message of encouragement comes the command to "hold that fast which thou hast." The Scriptures are filled with many similar commands to steadfastness. "Lay hold on eternal life," "stand fast," "be ye steadfast, unmovable," "hold the traditions," and "we ought to give the more earnest heed lest at any time we should let them slip."

As a church, we have been blessed with a heritage of faith and practice and a church life that promotes spirituality. God has enriched us with opportunities that surpass those given to many previous generations. Christ calls us today to hold fast to what He has entrusted unto us.

Hold fast to sound doctrine.

The Bible is the Word of God and "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." This gives the Bible supreme authority in all of life. The Bible is the text for preaching and teaching. The cardinal doctrines are taught from its pages: salvation only by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; separation from the world; separation of church and state; nonresistance in all areas of life; and nonconformity in attire.

Hold fast to sound church life.

The believer and the church cannot be separated. The church is the body of Christ; Christ is the Head, and every believer a member of the body. Church membership is for those who know the lordship of Christ and are baptized upon confession of faith, each submitting one to another in the fear of God. A Spirit-filled individual appreciates a disciplined church that holds fast to a uniform standard and puts away evil by excommunicating members who fall from the faith. Sound church life is strengthened in

maintaining a consistent practice of the seven ordinances; Communion, Baptism, Feet Washing, the Christian Woman's Veiling, the Holy Kiss, Anointing with Oil, and Marriage. Groups who deviate from or discontinue the practice of the ordinances soon adopt the ways of the world.

Holding fast to sound church life promotes a conservative view and a slowness to accept the pressure for change. It includes avoiding generation gaps in practice as the rising generation supports the traditional practice of the church.

Maintaining sound church life calls for a careful maintaining of a safe boundary of fellowship. Pressure from other groups with varying practices will quickly erode the basis for sound standards. Our fellowship should be limited to those who teach all the doctrines and make similar Biblical applications.

Hold fast to a Biblical lifestyle.

The believer is in the world but not of the world (John 17:14, 15). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15). "These ... confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13).

The people of God hold fast to the principles of simplicity in lifestyle. Today, conveniences at affordable prices can quickly lure us into a luxurious style of living. When convenience and ease of life are primary principles that govern our lifestyle, we are easily blinded to the dangers that rob our spiritual life. Computers and cell phones, for example, are conveniences, but they become spiritual detriments when used as more than mere tools. When earning power rules our businesses and vocations, it becomes difficult to evaluate dangers such as the Internet. If we need the newest and the latest, we have lost the concept of contentment and sacrifice. The believer is ready to suffer affliction with the people of God and to esteem the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

Hold fast to a Scriptural mission in life.

The church's first mission is to maintain her own spiritual vitality. Church life is to provide the spiritual and social needs of God's people. Worship opportunities—including Bible conferences, revival meetings, Bible school for youth, and regional Bible schools—are intended to strengthen and unify God's people through sound indoctrination. The family needs to find its social activity within the circle of a spiritual brotherhood. The Christian school, using a Bible-centered curriculum, should in-

still spiritual value into the education of the children. The church that is Spirit filled and unified in doctrine and practice is best prepared to rise to the evangelical needs both in her own community and then to all the earth. Holding fast to the Word is strengthened by the faithful, evangelical zeal in reaching out to others.

Christ's message is the same today: "Hold that fast which thou hast." We live in a world of change in technology and theology. We live in an evil generation that cries for change despite principle, quickly calling practices "old-folkish" and "out-of-date." The Word of God is traded for the philosophy of men. The Creation account is rejected for a theory. Child training and discipline is exchanged for self-expression. Home life fails because many fail to hold fast to Biblical principles regarding marriage. Authority is viewed as restrictive rather than as a means to hold fast to laws that are for the good of mankind.

Holding fast takes much effort. It is far easier to change with the crowd. As society adapts to change and moves farther away from the principles of truth, the Lord calls us to continue holding fast that which we have. We may not run with them to their excess of riot. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (I John 3:13).

Holding fast is an imperative today as it has always been for the people of God. The promise of Christ's return should inspire us daily and strengthen us that no man take our crown.

CHILD OF MINE

Dear child of Mine,
Fear not the unknown future
Or what it holds in store for you today.

Just take My hand and
Then hold tightly to it;
I will not let you fall or drift away.

Your future I can see,
And I will help you.
My loving arms are now supporting
you.

So, child of Mine,
When all you see about you
Seems dark and looks so positively
blue,
Remember I am watching up above
you.

In My care and love, you are secure!
Trust Me, and you will make it .
Safe home to heaven's golden shore!

Sister Heidi. AL

KEEPERS OF THE MASTER'S VINEYARD.

Based on Luke 13:6-9

Are you a keeper of the vineyard - a dresser of the vine?

Have you accepted the Master's commission

When He called and said, "Take care of what is Mine"

Do you bend your head in prayer and seek Him on bended knee?

Do you search His word for how He wants you to be?

Have you sought Him for support in time of stress and anxiousness?

Have you sought Him in times of ease, to express your thankfulness?

Keepers of His vineyard do not shirk your task,

Even though at times it seems too much to ask.

You need to remember what the Master has entrusted to your care.

It is His vineyard with many vines which He wants you to prepare.

His vineyard He has planted and bought with His own blood,

And now this very vineyard He has placed in your charge.

He provides you with manna through His Word to feed His precious vines,

It is soon He will be coming back and say to you, "Account for what is Mine"

Have you fed, watered, pruned and trimmed His vineyard for His glory?

Or have you sought to edify yourself and profit from the crop?

If you've laboured for the Master's glory by providing fruit, you have naught to fear,

But woe betide if self you have served, for cast out you will be when He appears.

J v L. 10/2004.

All the parables Jesus spoke had a very direct application in the lives of His audience and there is no doubt that Jesus, being the Christ and the Son of God, meant them to be applied to all those who hear His words until the moment of His return. We are no less His audience than those who heard Him speak over 2000 years ago. His words speak to us today through Scriptures and will continue to do so until He returns to gather His own.

In the Gospel of Luke Chapter 13:1- 9 Jesus uses a parable which in the first 5 verses refuted the theology of His Jewish audience that said; if a calamity such as being killed by your enemy or by a building collapse than those that died must have been sinners. Jesus says; "I tell you nay, but except you repent you shall likewise perish." He then continues with a story about an unfruitful tree in the Vineyard. In verses 6 to 9 there is a tremendously important lesson for all of us.

Some commentators say that these few verses only apply to, or spoke about God's people, Israel, but 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that all scripture is given for reprove, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. We therefore cannot just pass this small portion of scripture of as being unimportant; at the very least we can see in it the duties and responsibilities of the keeper of the Vineyard -- the vine dresser.

Each one of us at some time has the oversight of others, the responsibility of bringing them up in the nurture of the Lord and thus is a 'vine dresser.' The Vineyard here spoken of, and in other parts of scripture, can be seen as the church or God's kingdom on earth, ownership off course belongs to God, Who has placed it in the hands of His Son, Jesus Christ. The vines or trees in the Vineyard can be compared or portrayed as the people in the church or our families. The vine dresser is responsible to the Master of the Vineyard for its upkeep and the fruitfulness of the vines. Each person who has the spiritual oversight of others, is a 'vine dresser' let none of us shirk our responsibilities by saying, "well I am not an ordained minister," The truth of the matter is that all of us have a God-given ordained task or gift (talent) and we will be required to give an account of the stewardship of that task, gift or talent. (Ephesians 4:11) If we read the parable of the unprofitable servant it will clarify God's word on the matter of individual accountability as it applies to us. (See Matthew 25:15-30)

The ownership of the Vineyard carries with it rights and privileges which it is not our place to question. God owns the Vineyard, His rights are absolute. When we read the parable of the hiring of labourers for the vineyard we can see that the owner decides what He will do, even if some may consider it unfair, whom are we to question God's prerogatives? (See Matthew 20:1-16)

He, as Master and owner, chooses those whom He wants to work in His Vineyard, He calls and we answer. For some the Vineyard we work in is our home (our family) for others it may be the mission field and yet for others a combination of these things as well as perhaps a ministry position in the brotherhood of believers.

No matter what position you hold, you have been called by the owner of the Vineyard to be His vine dresser, He has supplied and will continue to supply you with all the material to "dress His vines" He has given you all you need to serve Him in your capacity as vine dresser. 1 Corinthians 12 outlines some of the gifts- talents for working in His vineyard, there are other passages of scriptures which also outline God's provisions for us to be able to work in His vineyard. Whatever our needs may be during our time of work in the Master's vineyard let us also remember that the Master Himself has promised that His grace will be sufficient. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

All of us, when we have come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and have placed ourselves in His hands, are commissioned to take the gospel to others and that alone makes all of us labourers in His vineyard. Like any occupation unless we have a real desire and determination to carry out the task at hand it will most likely not be well done. It is the same with our work in the Vineyard; our motivation needs to be a real warmth of love to Christ, the Master of the Vineyard, His truths and His people.

If we have that motivation then the task of dressing the vines for the Master's honour and glory will be like an anthem of praise on our lips and be pleasing in His sight.

As we dress the vineyard let us not forget to intercede for it, those we preach to, and those we teach. It is not sufficient to give ourselves to the Word of God, we must also give ourselves to prayer, so that as we work as vine dressers we continue to draw strength from Him who is the provider of all we need. In and of ourselves we can do nothing but through Him all things are possible.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13.

Joseph van Loon.

Guarding the Reading Material of Our Children.

Brother Melvin Burkholder French Creek PA.

The subject we have before us is guarding the reading material of our children. In the matter of discipline the scripture has a lot to say about it because it is something that has been around for a long time and so has reading. However we live in the middle of the information age and there are a lot more books around then there wherein Bible times or were in Jesus time and so there is more selection that needs to be done today. I do feel however, as an introduction, to say that guarding reading material does not mean eliminating reading. We can go off balance in a couple of ways here, we can be families of non-reading people but we don't want that, we are not interested in being non-reading persons. How many books have you read the last year anyway? How many have your children read? Do you ever read a book? I would challenge you to that. We are not looking at eliminating reading but looking at guarding what is being read.

Jesus expects us to be a reading people. I was impressed with how many times He asked; did you not read? He said unto them: "Have you not read what David did?"(Matthew 12:3) And He answered have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female.(Matthew 19:4) And Jesus saith unto them: yea, have you never read out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise.(Matthew 21:16) Jesus saith unto them: Did you never read in the scriptures the stone which the builders rejected is the same come to the head of the corner.(Matthew 21:42) Have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God saying I am the God of Abraham.(Matthew 22:32) Jesus answered Satan: It is written man shall not live by bread alone,(Matthew 4:4) It is written thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God,(Matthew 4:7) It is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.(Matthew 4:10) Jesus expects us to be a reading people and not merely a reading people but a Bible reading people. One of the interesting footnotes in Anabaptist history is that the Anabaptists were so desirous of reading the scripture that the first thing that they did, the new converts did, was to put forth all efforts to learn to read and they were so successful that their enemies said: The devil must be teaching them, they are doing it by the devil's power." They were not doing it by the devil's power, they were do-

ing it because of their own motivation in the power of God and it shows how they valued reading.

The Bible is our most important reading material and may we give the reading of the Bible more than lip service. It is easy enough to say: Yes, the Bible, it is really important to read the Bible, we must read the Bible.” But do we read the Bible? Do we read it every day, do we read it with expectation and with devotion? We read not only the Bible, I would like to impress upon us that we should be reading other things too, there is a lot of good reading. I think that reading is our window, maybe we could say books are our windows on the world. If we knew only what we experience and what we see with our two eyes we would not know very much and we will never know very much, but we can know a lot more if we look through our windows, our books .Books make time travel possible. Time travel is something of science fiction but books enable us to travel in time and, in a sense, the only way we ever can. We can read in the minds of other centuries, we can see the happenings in other centuries through reading, we cannot do it any other way. Through books we can meet the best minds of the centuries. A man's character, and his personality as well as his thought is stamped on the printed page. We are to be a reading people.

It is interesting to me that when God wanted His creation to meet Himself, mind to mind, He sent Jesus on earth yes, but that is not all He did. When God wanted us to meet Him mind to mind, He inspired persons to encode His thoughts in writing and then He directs us to give attendance to reading, and we meet the mind of God in the written word of God. We are to be a reading people.

The written word is a very powerful thing. We are talking about guarding because while the written word has great power for good, it has great power for evil, it is a two edged thing. It has power for good, it has power for evil. The written word has great emotional effect. One author said: “When a totalitarian dictator wants to take over a nation one of the first things he does is to corral the writers, because of the power of the written word.” Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Uncle Tom's cabin, 500,000 copies were printed in five years and it crystallized opposition to slavery to such an extent that Lincoln when he met Harriet Beecher Stowe said: “So this is

the little lady that caused this Great War.” The power of writing. The power of Uncle Tom's cabin came from a concrete experience, from experiencing vicariously through her writing the experience of slavery and feeling it, not merely by reading about it, but experiencing it and living through it. Experiencing empathy gives the written word great power.

Nathan the prophet got through to David in a similar way to what Harriet Beecher Stowe used to get through to people about slavery. When Harriet Beecher Stowe wanted to get through to people about slavery was like she did not write an essay describing it, she wrote a story that they could live through, and when Nathan the prophet wanted to get David to understand what Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba had experienced. He did not go to him with a sermon on adultery but with a story. He told a little story about a rich man and a poor man and a sheep, you are familiar with that story, and he involved David's sympathies and David entered into that story and identified and condemns himself. (2 Samuel 12:1-7) The power of writing. It wasn't the written word there but the spoken word, same idea, the power of the word.

There are many examples in history, ‘Old Ironsides’ was a famous ship in the war of 1812, it was to be scrapped in 1829, Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote the poem; “Old Ironsides” and the people rose up and rescued the ship and it is in the Boston naval yard today. Thomas Payne wrote the pamphlet, “Common Sense” and helped to bring about the Declaration of Independence a half a year later. Someone has said; give me 26 lead soldiers and I will conquer the world. What they meant by that was the leaden movable type of 26 letters, give me the printing press and I will conquer the world. There is a lot of truth in that, a tremendous power in the written word.

Now the written word can be dangerous, as I said it is a two edged tool, it may cut for good or it may cut for evil, I have experienced that kind of thing in myself, in my own life, I remember when I was 17 or 18 and studying a correspondence course, I believe one of the things I needed to go through was the literature course, and I remember the tremendous power of the 20th century short story writers and how they could create a world in which black was white and white was black. It made right seem

foolish, right principles didn't work, there is power in that, power for evil when black becomes white and white becomes black and confusion and deception set in. Now because literature is so powerful, because the written word is so powerful, we need to select carefully what we read and guard our homes.

I would like to give five principles for selecting reading material. I know that censorship is a bad word today in the news, nobody likes to hear about censorship, but some books deserve only burning and the first principle I would like to say is:

Number One: Reject the clearly evil.

Consign to the flames or the trash heap that which is clearly evil. We have a wood stove at home and it has been used to burn several books this winter, they heat about as well as wood. In Acts 19 we have something like that as well, some books that were clearly evil, Many that believed came and confessed their deeds in many of them which used curious arts also brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver, so mightily grew the word of God unto them.(Acts 19:18-20) It was the battle of the books, and the word of God prevailed, the clearly evil books were burnt. That was a victory for God.

Number Two: Select only the best.

As someone has put it; do not read good books, life is too short for that, read only the best books. There is a lot of truth in that. Books which are good, and there are a lot of them, but the Bible tells us to approve of those things that are excellent, so select even among the good. Somebody said: How can you read 50,000 words a minute? and the answer is that you can decide in one minute if a 50,000 word book isn't worth reading, we need to select. There are far too many books to read, far too much reading material. In the United States alone there are 80,000 new titles a year, world-wide half a million, contrast that with the 16th century when there were about half a million books printed in the whole century. In the 17th century about 1 and 1/4 million, in the 18th century about 2 million, in the 19th century about 8 million and now we get about half a million a year in the 20th century. Solomon said of the making of many books there is no end.

(Ecclesiastes 12:12) Daniel said in the end times knowledge shall be increased. (Daniel 12:4) The library of Congress has about 16 1/2 million books and that's some years ago, there are millions more by now. 327 miles of bookshelves and most of them are not worth reading. Select only the best. Insist on value in your reading and in your children's reading. What value does this reading material have? Does it have a historical value, does it help you understand the past and present and the future, history has that value. Does it have a spiritual value, does it make you a better Christian or does it cool your affection for God? Does it have the social value is it help you to do understand others better, or get along better? Select only the best.

Number Three: Choose that which is true.

Reading is engaging the mind, the New Testament tells us what will be very familiar to us all; "Think on that which is true." (Philippians 4:8) Truth is the ultimate test of worthwhile reading and a test of truth is does it square with God's word? Does it square with God's word? If it does not square with God's word it is not good writing, it is not good literature, it might be clever literature, it may be powerful literature, it may be effective but it is not good because it is not true, to us it is bad literature and the better it is in those other things the worse it is, the more effective it is. If it does not square with the word of God the more dangerous it is to us. Choose that which is true.

Now does this rule out all fiction? Fiction is that which is not true by definition is it not? Are you going to throw out the Wee Lambs after that? The stories in Wee Lambs are not literally true but they are true to life and I think much fiction is ruled out by the criteria of selecting that which is true but some fiction is not literally true but it is true to life. I think of the story that Nathan told David about the poor man and his lamb and the rich man, it wasn't literally true, but it was true to life and it was true to the principles of right and wrong, and if it was not literally true in fact, it was most certainly true in meaning and there is some writing that is like that. It is not literally true in fact but it is true in meaning. We recognize the possibility of truth in symbolic or allegorical literature. One author told a parable in which trees represented persons or classes and spoke to each other and Aesop told fables in which animals converse and teach truth, often profound, and there is some worth in those things. We choose that which is

true, not that which is fanciful, that which is not true to life, that which especially teaches principles that are not true. You can write a story, a powerful writer can write a story that would make what others say sound like a bunch of nonsense, truly that could be done, because he could create a world in which it didn't work. A lot of caution needs to be exercised.

Number Four: We prefer authors.

In our selecting we should prefer authors who share our worldview, our view of the world. Every author has a worldview, it permeates his writing, it bleeds through, it is what he writes between the lines instead of on the lines. We see the world ourselves as proceeding from God, a product of His creative thought, sustained by Him and answerable to Him. We see ourselves as created in His image but distorted by sin and so forth that is our worldview. Authors who write with an evolutionary view, God ignoring, God dishonoring worldview, generally are unacceptable to us even though they may be completely silent on the subject of God or religion. Silence sometimes speaks with a loud voice. The President of Boston University in his 1951 report said; (he might say the same today but other people today would not say that.) "When we leave religion out of our educational program we practically announce that life can be explained without God, which is the same thing as saying that either God does not exist or is of no consequence" Silence speaks loudly. Sometimes people question whether children, or whether they themselves, will be influenced by the understated positions of the author. Jack London is evolutionary but does that mean if I read "Call of the North" that I will become an evolutionist? Well not necessarily, but I do think that we should understand that readers are unconsciously, we and our children, are unconsciously influenced by an author's viewpoint. That's the way it is, it really is.

And I would quote from C. S. Lewis in "The Abolition of Man" and that is a recommended book for you, he is talking about school books but I'll give it anyway, it applies to any writing, he says; "The authors may never have given the question five minutes serious thought in their lives, I am not concerned with what they desired but with the effect their book will certainly have in the schoolboy's mind. I do not mean of course that the schoolboy will make any conscious inference from what he reads to a general philosophical theory, the very power of the authors depends on the fact that they are dealing with a boy, a boy who thinks he is doing his English

and has no notion that ethics, theology and politics are all at stake. It is not (and this is the crux of it here) it is not a theory that they put into his mind but an assumption which 10 years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, will condition him to take one side of a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all. The authors themselves I suspect hardly know what they are doing to the boy and he cannot know what is being done to him."

Number Five: Principles of selection.

Reject the frivolous and silly, maybe they are not clearly evil. But such things as romance novels are unrealistic, fosters discontent in daughter and mother alike, it treats marriage as an end rather than a beginning, treats marriage as the mountaintop rather than the foothills from which the ascent begins, stops the beginning.

Detective and mystery novels. The mystery we need to solve is how to untangle the twisted strands of simple life, and the trail we need to follow has been blazed by Jesus Christ and leads not to a culprit but to a Saviour. Let us reject the frivolous and the silly.

Now some policies that will safeguard our children and ourselves.
Some policies for the home.

Number One: Regulate the time and place spent reading.

This is to safeguard our children especially. On the place: there should not be too much reading done in bedrooms and out of the way corners where no one observes, because we as parents are responsible to know what our children are taking in and we need to have it set up so that we can tell. And then on the matter of time: there should not be too much time spent reading, especially reading stories. Someone called reading the great waste, and I don't like that. Francis Bacon said: "reading makes a full man" and why call it a waste then? Why we call it a waste because in Bacon's day reading was different from reading today, maybe back then there were fewer books and those that did exist were of a serious nature, they were not frivolous, they were not silly, and people took up a book with a purpose. They took up a book with a serious intention to learn something, books were expensive, not many existed, the quality was good. But now today, in contrast, people read to kill time rather than to redeem time, they

read for fun rather than for benefit, they read to escape reality rather than to face issues. They read to avoid thinking rather than reading to stimulate thinking. Now you just think about that. There is a time to stop reading and there is a time to start thinking and people who are brought up on a diet of lot of light reading, and know that reading is a way to have a good time, and the more exciting the book the better the time they have, are people that have not learned some things that they ought to have learnt. We regulate the time and what is read in order to prevent that damage from being done.

Second policy: Parents should read first what the children are reading.

In your family you should have the policy of the children submitting to you the book or the material that they want to read. And it doesn't matter a whole lot where that comes from, maybe if they come from their ministers or something like that it may be a little different, but if they come from church and say we were at Church this morning and Jane gave Mary a book and wants Mary to read it, that book needs to go through the parents hands. Books should be submitted to the parents for review. You should read them, of course you could read them very rapidly and you could decide in one minute if it is not worth reading, that can be done very rapidly, but you may need take more time at it than that.

Number three policy: Public libraries and bookstores are not good places for children to browse.

They are not safe places to turn children lose, as a matter of fact I don't think libraries are safe places for adults to browse in. It is a good place to go on a specific mission but it is full of a lot of temptations for the aimless browser and so much the more for our children. Make it a policy.

Number four: Encyclopedias and reference books require editing.

Especially on the matters of pictures and somewhat in the articles too. Most encyclopedias have things in that our children should not be looking at, and it is difficult, I know, to say that they must be edited and yet I don't see any real way around it. Let's be willing to put something into it to safeguard our homes.

Number five: Magazines are not free reading for youth.

Now let's take for example the National Geographic. I have known about National Geographic from the time I was a little boy and I know what about to expect in it and it has not changed a great deal, there is a lot of good things in it, a lot of very interesting and informative reading in it

but it needs to be safeguarded, and it can be safeguarded. You cannot take all the evolution out of it but you can certainly do a job on the pictures. Things like the Reader's Digest, generally that is what we consider more innocent and yet about every issue has things in it that our children should not see. I would not recommend getting the Reader's Digest, and yet some people do. It is like a brother told me in our congregation he said: "We used to get it but when our children started getting older they stopped getting it because of the difficulty of safeguarding it." And it must be safeguarded. Take a good look at it, it is not just the articles on subjects that they are too young to be reading about, but it is the permeation of some of the looseness in society today that just bleeds through and the little anecdotes and whatever else might be in there.

We get the US News and World Report, we do not turn it free or turn it loose and let the children at it, sometimes I'll read an article from it, sometimes I'll say they may read this or that in it, that might be possible, I think it is good to share some items from the news but I do think we should be safeguarding, it is very important that we are looking at these things and that we are aware of what's happening with our children. I get the US News and World Report, because I am under the impression that Time and Newsweek are worse because they cover the cultural scene more thoroughly and the cultural scene is degenerate.

Number six: Check out the family bookshelf especially for books that you have not read for years.

Reminds me of a little story I read one time, I think it was in one of James Dobson's books, a man came to him and said: "How can I get my daughter to read this book?" And he said: "Put it on the top of the bookshelf and then forbid her to read it." We had better know what is in our bookshelves and to say; "Do not read!" it is sometimes not enough, sometimes maybe it is, I don't know, it depends may be on your family. Let us be cautious. Newspapers must be used with supervision. The comics, the singles ads, movie ads and so forth, and even the general mail, the family mail. Some of the catalogues are full of filth, or mail flyers, some catalogues seem to delight in the suggestive and vulgar, I think our policy should be that the mail should go to the parents.

These are some policies that with the Lord's help will help us to safeguard our homes.

May God help us to be careful what we stock our minds with and what we allow our children to stock their minds with.

SNAPSHOTS.

Brief excerpts from historical publications.

This month we are publishing some brief excerpts from what are known as the Epistles of Cyprian, one of the early church fathers. He was born about 200 A. D., converted to Christianity in 246 AD and accepted the office of Bishop of Carthage in 248 AD which he held until his martyrdom in 258 AD.

Many of his writings have survived and may be found in the 10 volume edition of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. His writings are seen as not only having intrinsic worth but also serve as an illustration of the social, religious feelings and usages that prevailed among Christians at least in the first three centuries after Christ. Cyprian wrote strongly against the schisms that were already appearing in the church at that time, this one relates to a call for the unity of the church. Although written over 1700 years ago there is much in this that is pertinent to the church today and as you meditate upon what Cyprian says, I have no doubt, that you can relate many of his concerns to the state and behaviour of many of those that profess Christianity today.

May we learn from the lessons of history and not repeat the failures of past eras, but more importantly avoid endangering not only our own salvation but that of those who follow us.

On the Unity of the Church.

Since the Lord warns us, saying, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and since He bids us to be simple to harmlessness, and yet when their simplicity the prudent, and what else, beloved brethren, it befits us then to use foresight and watching with an anxious heart, both to perceive and to be aware of the wiles of the crafty foe, that we, who have put on Christ the wisdom of God the Father, may not seem to be wanting in wisdom in the matter of providing for our salvation?

For it is not persecution alone that is to be feared; nor those things which advance by open attack to overwhelm and cast down the servants of God. Caution is more easy where danger is manifest, and the mind is prepared beforehand for the contest when the adversary avows himself. The enemy is to be more feared and to be guarded against, when he creeps on us secretly; when, deceiving by the appearance of peace he steals forward by hidden approaches, whence also he has received the name of the Serpent. That is always his subtlety; that is his dark and stealthy artifice of circumventing man. Thus from the very beginning of the world he deceived; and flattering with lying words, he misled inexperienced souls by an incautious credulity. But as he endeavoured to tempt the Lord Himself: he secretly approached Him as if he would creep on Him again and deceive; yet he was understood, and beaten back and therefore frustrated because he was recognised and detected.

From this an example is given to us to avoid the way of the old man, to stand in the footsteps of a conquering Christ that we may not again be incautiously turned back into the nets of death, but foreseeing our danger, may possess the immortality that we have received. But how can we possess immortality unless we keep those commands of Christ whereby death is driven out and overcome, when He Himself warns us and says, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments?" And again: "If you do things that I command you, henceforth I'll call you not servants, but friends." Finally these persons He calls strong and steadfast; these He declares to be founded in robust security upon the rock, established with immovable and unshaken firmness, in opposition to all the tempests and hurricanes of the world. "Whosoever," says He, "Heareth My words and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who build his house upon a rock: the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat up on that house; and it fell not: for it was founded on the rock." We ought therefore to stand fast on His words, to learn and do whatever He both taught and did. But how can a man say that he believes in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do? Or whence shall he attain to the reward of faith, who will not keep the faith of the commandment? He must of necessity waver and wander, and caught away by a spirit of error, like dust which is shaken by the wind, be blown about; and he will make no

advance in his walk towards salvation because he does not keep the truth of the way of salvation.

But beloved brethren, not only must we beware of what is open and manifest, but also of what deceives by craft of subtle fraud. And what can be more crafty, or what more subtle, then for this enemy, detected and cast down by the advent of Christ, after light has come to the nations, and saving rays have been shown for the preservation of men, that the deaf might receive the hearing of spiritual grace, the blind might open their eyes to God, the weak might grow strong again with internal health, the lame might run to the church, the dumb might pray with clear voices and prayers, seeing his idols forsaken, and his temples deserted by the numerous believers, to devise a new fraud, and under the very title of the Christian name to deceive the incautious? He has invented heresies and schisms, whereby he might subvert the faith, might corrupt the truth, might divide the unity. Those whom he cannot keep in the darkness of the old way, he circumvents and deceives by the error of a new way. He snatches men from the church itself; and while they seem to themselves to have already approached to the light, and to have escaped the night of the world, it pours over them again in their unconsciousness, new darkness; so that although they do not stand firm with the Gospel of Christ, and with the observation and Law of Christ, they still call themselves Christians, and walking in darkness they think that they have the light, while the adversary is flattering and deceiving who, according to the Apostles word, transformed himself into an angel of light and equips his ministers as if they wear the ministers of righteousness, who maintain night instead of day, death for salvation, despair under the offer of hope, perfidy under the pretext of faith, antichrist under the name of Christ; so that while they feigned things like the truth, they make void the truth by the subtlety. This happens, beloved brethren, so long as we do not return to the source of truth, if we do not seek the head nor keep the teaching of the heavenly Master.



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