

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 5:1

From The Editor's Desk.

Jesus said: “Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6)

Jesus said unto them: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35)

With these few words, of the many that our Lord spoke, we are both directed as to what we are to hunger for and the fulfilment that will be ours when we do so. Firstly, if we desire to be blessed of God we must seek righteousness- in both the Old and New Testament, God is the only one described as righteous (Jeremiah 23:5-6) Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. In the New Testament Paul confirms this; *Acts 7:52* “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers” The words “Just One” come from exactly the same Greek word ‘*dikaios*’ which is elsewhere shown as ‘Righteous.’ i.e. John 17.25 when Jesus prays to His “Righteous Father.” From these and many other scriptures we learn that one of the characteristics of God is His righteousness which we are to hunger for. I am sure that all of us at some time have been really hungry and thirsty for physical nourishment and that feeling, I believe, gives us a very small idea of how we are to hunger and thirst after righteousness – the word ‘craving’ springs to mind here. In the second of our key verses we are promised that we will never hunger and thirst again if we come to Jesus, the Righteous One.

To this end we need to seek out that which fulfils the key scripture verses, we can find that fulfilment in the Word of God. It is our prayer that the articles/sermons/inspirational prayers published herein maybe an encouragement to each of us to seek the blessing and filling spoken of in Matthew 5:6, that we may never more hunger or thirst by following the words in John 6:35. It is a life long journey, just as in the physical we need to periodically eat and drink to sustain life, so also we need spiritual food and drink to sustain our spiritual life. May the Lord bless us in our hungering and thirsting for the Bread of Life – Jesus Christ. JvL.

MINISTER'S CORNER.

Bro. D.Ressler, Newark, DE.

A Sunday School Devotional.

As I consider the Sunday School and the goal of the Sunday School, I think one of the outstanding summaries of the goal of a Sunday School would be that we would learn truth and exalt Jesus Christ.

In John 6, Jesus brings out that He is truth, and that He is The Truth. John 1 tells us that He was “Truth made flesh and dwelt among us.” In this case He says, He is the “bread of life.”

I would like to think a little about that bread. Sometimes a wife asks her husband to stop for two staples for the household and it is usually bread and milk. We look at bread as quite important to our life.

In the first part of John 6 Jesus did a miracle which is recorded a couple of times – giving bread to the hungry. Later in this chapter He talks about the Bread of Life. I want to begin reading with verses 32 -35:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. ³⁴Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. ³⁵And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

And verses 47-51: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. [48] I am that bread of life. [49] Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. [50] This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. [51] I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

And finally verse 58: *This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

Let us think a little bit about this living bread. This living bread Jesus said, is His flesh that He would offer for the sins of the world. This certainly is what is in focus in all of our Sunday School. We focus on the blood, and the gift of Jesus to the world.

Twenty times in the book of John the word “bread” is used. Seventeen of those times are in this chapter 6. Thus, I did not read everything in this chapter about bread. As I thought about the bread which Jesus was giving, He likens it or at least He contrasts it to the manna in the wilderness. There were a number of things which the bread from heaven could be likened unto the manna in the wilderness. One of the things is that the bread we receive through Jesus is provided by God. Certainly, the manna in the wilderness, was provided by and sent from God.

The manna in the wilderness was available to anyone who went out and picked it up. The truth is available to any man that will come and partake of it. Then, God was faithful in giving them manna – enough for everyone. I understand that everyday there was some left over when He sent it, because once the sun came up, it melted away. There was plenty for everyone and God was faithful; every day except for the Sabbath in supplying their needs. Is that not the way it is, every time we come to Sunday School, every time we come to the Word of God, God is faithful and we can receive the manna we need?

The people were satisfied. It was a diet that would satisfy. There were some times that they complained about it and God meted out judgement, but there was nothing wrong with the diet. Anyone who was not filled, it was their own fault. This is the way it is. There are people who sometimes become disenchanted with the Word of God. They think there ought to be another way, but God’s Word does satisfy and if we partake of it we can find satisfaction.

I also thought about people needing every day to get the bread. We certainly find that in our spiritual life, we need to get the bread every day. There was something about the people who disobeyed in the gathering of this bread. Some of them said, “We are not sure it will be there tomorrow so we will take plenty home today.” They found it rotted. Also, when it came to the Sabbath day some decided they would simply wait and get it the next day, but it was not there. In order to use the Word of God and the value of the Word of God, it is when we are obedient to the Word of God. “I am the bread of life.” If we will not be obedient and will not follow Him, then the word will not work in us what it should.

Jesus brings out that there is one difference. The bread that they ate under Moses – those fathers are dead. He was talking to a Jewish people who knew the story about the bread in the wilderness. He is saying that if we

will accept Him, and the gift that He gave of His flesh, we will have life everlasting. That is much better than the manna that we could pick up. As I think about filling our heart with the Word of God and filling our hearts with what God gives us through the Word, and through His Son Jesus, certainly we would need to testify with the very words of Jesus when He says of those who come to Him, "shall never hunger," or "never thirst." (John 6:35) We are satisfied.

May the time we spend in Sunday School, with our families, in personal relationship with the Word of God be the kind that satisfies our hunger and thirst spiritually, and that we will find there the guidance and direction we need.

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Distinctive Worship Patterns (Part 2)

Freewill Offerings.

God's relationship with man is affected by the free will God has given him. God desires man to willingly choose to serve Him in all areas of life, including giving. Peter said to Ananias, "Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5:4). The proceeds from the property Ananias sold were his own; no one was forcing him to give them away.

History reveals that when a group thrives spiritually, freewill giving also thrives because of a firm commitment to Christ and His church. The Martyrs Mirror abounds with stories about individuals who gladly sacrificed for the good of others. When a person was willing to give his life for the Lord, his view of earthly possessions dimmed, and he gladly sacrificed for the needs of others. During the Reformation Era, as brethren and sisters became destitute, those who possessed goods shared willingly with those who were in need.

As Mennonites immigrated to America, they brought along with them this Scriptural practice. However, conviction regarding this principle eventually weakened. During the Depression some found it difficult to meet

their obligations within the brotherhood and began using an assessment program within the church, basing payments to cover losses on the assessed value of assets being covered. During the same period, more progressive Mennonites increasingly used commercial insurance. For these churches, collecting funds by freewill offerings became an outdated practice.

With the beginning of the revival regroupings in the 1960s, Biblical conviction again grew that God's people should place their trust in Him and should seek to meet the needs of the brotherhood through freewill offerings. Canceling insurance policies was a real step of faith for those who had become accustomed to carrying insurance.

How does the concept of freewill offerings benefit us?

Our trust is in God and His church, not in insurance companies.

Our responsibility to our brethren and their needs binds it together in love. We should see giving as an opportunity to experience the blessing of sharing with those who experience loss and difficulty and not as an undesirable expense. As we willingly give of our own, we are not attracted to an insurance-type arrangement or to raising funds through special fund drives and benefit sales.

We sense a responsibility to protect ourselves and our brethren from unnecessary financial risks. Little has ruined personal accountability more than the insurance mentality. Today people take unnecessary sick leaves or make unnecessary doctor visits in order to feel that they are getting their value from their insurance policies.

God's way works. May we put our faith in God as did our forefathers and continue trusting Him to help us meet our needs one day at a time.

N. L. Martin, Moravia, NY. Reprinted by permission from The Eastern Mennonite Testimony.

Watch constantly against those things which are thought to be no temptations. The most poisonous serpents are found where the sweetest flowers grow. Cleopatra was poisoned by an asp that was brought to her in a basket of fair flowers. Sharp-edged tools, long handled, wound at last.

Charles Spurgeon

SNIPPETS.

Composers/Writers of Hymns used in the Mennonite Church Hymnal

WARNER Anna Bartlett

Born: August 31, 1827, Long Island, New York.

Died: January 22, 1915, Highland Falls, New York.

Buried: United States Military Academy, West Point, New York.

On her gravestone is the second verse of her hymn “We Would See Jesus”

Pseudonym: Amy Lathrop.

Anna’s father was Henry Warner, a wealthy New York City lawyer. When he lost most of his fortune in the 1837 depression, the family was forced to move to their summer home (Good Craig) on Constitution Island in the Hudson River. It was then that Anna and her sister Susan began writing to earn money.

They also conducted Bible classes for cadets at the nearby Military Academy at West Point. In memory of her, the Academy’s Constitution Island Association manages the Warner’s island property as an historic site. Anna’s works include:

The Law and the Testimony

Dollars and Cents (the story of her family’s financial trials)

Hymns of the Church Militant, 1858

Wayfaring Hymns, Original and Translated, 1869

Hymns:

Jesus Loves Me (*TCH*)

O Little Child, Lie Still and Sleep

One More Day’s Work for Jesus (*CH*)

The World Looks Very Beautiful,

We Would See Jesus (*CH*)

Self-Discipline

from “*The Silver Lining*” by Willis Ehnle

The only time church discipline is necessary is when self-discipline fails. Therefore, we should teach and embrace self-discipline more.

The Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." The first part of this sentence means that he kept his body under control. The second part means that he made his body obey him. If we do the same, we will be able to refuse everything that is not good or wholesome, and we will be able to do everything that is good and wholesome.

A body is not all there is to a human being. More importantly, we are a spirit and we also have a soul. Both the soul and spirit are non-material; you can't touch them with your finger. However, I understand that the soul has more to do with our personality while the spirit has more to do with our God-consciousness. Our bodies return to dust but our spirit and soul live on. Our bodies are just a temporary dwelling place for our spirit and soul.

Our bodies should not dominate our spirit and soul; rather, our spirit and soul should dominate our bodies. Therefore, if we say, "My body feels like doing this so I'm going to do it," we are operating or functioning on the wrong basis. The determining factor is what is right or wrong, edifying or not edifying, according to God's Word. Our bodies must be our servants, not our masters. Self-discipline is to have our bodies under the control of our spirit, and, in the case of children of God, our spirits under the control of God's Word and the Holy Spirit, which work together.

Scripture which requires self-discipline to fulfil is found in I John 2:15. "Love not the world." Here the word "world" does not mean the beautiful things of nature which we all love, but those things which make for a carnal life instead of a spiritual life. Even the most spiritually minded child of God will have carnal inclinations so long as he is in the body, but it is imperative that we each have enough self-discipline to keep those inclinations from taking over and dominating us, body, soul and spirit.

Self-discipline is necessary, not only to keep us from going the wrong way and doing the wrong things, but it is necessary for us to go the right way and to do the right things. As much as possible, we should do those things which are good for our spiritual well-being as well as avoid those things which are bad for our spiritual well-being. As much as possible, we should eat those things which are good for our bodies and avoid those things which are not good for our bodies, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 6:19, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

The only time church discipline is necessary is when self-discipline fails. Let's encourage each other to keep our self-discipline healthy and working for the Spiritual life.

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Harnessing the Cell (Mobile) Phone

Few modern inventions seem to be more indispensable to daily living than the telephone. Millions reach for it every day. They slip it into their pockets, plug it into their ears, clip it onto their belts, or harness it onto their heads.

Fifty years ago, our family's one and only telephone was firmly attached to the end of the hallway in our house. A cord attached to the wooden box limited how far one could walk and talk. A small crank that extended out of the right side was turned to call the operator. We told her the number we wanted to call. Our telephone number was 18R6. This meant we were on line 18 and our ring was six short rings. It was a party line; we could listen to anyone who happened to be on the line when we picked up the receiver.

Twenty-five years ago someone with a burst of imagination made this prediction: "I can visualize a day when phones will be small enough to carry in your shirt pocket. There will be no wires attached to them. You will be able to stand beside your car or truck and call anywhere in the world!" What sounded like science fiction then is now reality.

Today mobile phones are capable of taking and sending still or moving pictures. These telephones can access the Internet and can also be used to call a home computer to check E-mail or other personal data. Hundreds of computer games and over one million songs of the latest recordings are available for selection. Map directories are available that are capable of giving visual and audio turn-by-turn directions to practically any location.

Newer mobile phones are also often linked to the Global Positioning System. Parents can pinpoint their children's locations, and others can determine their own to within three feet of any spot on earth. Text messages can be sent to a friend or to a group of friends all at the same time. Live television is also now available with this telephone. Rings can be personalized with a host of different ones to choose from. And every time a new mobile phone brochure is printed, even more choices seem to be available.

Why review all this? If we are going to harness something, we should have an idea of its size and strength. Only then can we know how stout a harness is needed. Is there too much latent strength for the reins of the harness to be freely placed in our hands and the hands of our youth? Are we capable of harnessing this innocent sounding telephone without it beginning to harness us? Could it begin to draw us away from the "simplicity that is in Christ"? How much do we need to be tied to this "untoward generation"? How close does a true "stranger and pilgrim" snuggle up to the things of this world?

We have benefited much from the telephones of bygone years. But if we choose to keep using the newer versions, we need to take definite steps to make certain we do not become ensnared by them. Following are some steps to take if we have mobile phones in our families:

- * Keep the telephones basic and use them for traditional telephone uses. Many of the features noted above have a subscription fee. Do not subscribe.
- * Delete as many of the unneeded features as possible. The Internet connections can still be disabled. Disable them.
- * Think through the camera feature. It can increase the telephone's potential for mischief. If you cannot find a mobile phone without it, you can still scuff or grind the window over the camera's eye.
- * Share a basic family mobile phone when possible. Normally it is not necessary to buy a telephone for every teenage member of your family.
- * Require permission for mobile phone usage. Free calling after nine o'clock or on weekends may not be the blessing it first seems to be. Some may not know when enough is enough.
- * Discourage behind-closed-doors usage. Exceptions to this should be few
- * Expect accountability. Restrict privileges if trust is betrayed. It is better if parents own all the telephones of the household. It is not betraying trust if parents check the call log when telephones are being recharged or review the monthly statements with an eye for excessive usage.
- * Be convinced that computer telephone games do not build strong Christian character. Be appreciative of our position against all computer games. Many computer games undermine the New Testament principle of non-resistance.
- * Be assured that children or youth with free access to electronic devices will soon know much more about them than their parents know. There are unlimited features for curiosity to explore.
- * The mobile phone should not become a status symbol! Keep it more hidden than displayed.

* Be careful that your "airtime" on the mobile phone does not hinder your "prayer time" at the throne. God loves to answer the calls of His people (Jeremiah 33:3).

* Recognize that driving and telephoning may be a very poor mixture. Cities and states are beginning to act on this potentially dangerous combination. Make wise decisions concerning this issue even if your area does not have any regulations about it.

* Choose a traditional type of ring. You do not need to listen to a waltz or a polka every time your telephone rings. Consistency requires that you do not have musical rings that violate church guidelines.

* Be Courteous. Do not allow your cell phone to interrupt any conversation or appointment already in progress. When a telephone is carried with you, this can easily happen. Christian courtesy also dictates that you leave your mobile phone behind when you enter the house of God for worship.

If guidelines like these seem to be too restrictive, we may already be in the mobile phone's harness. Unless we take steps to free ourselves, we can anticipate being strapped in tighter and tighter.

America (and Australia) is fast moving toward the time that there will be a cellular tower on "every high hill." Their influence will reach "under every green tree." To those who know Old Testament history, this has an ominous sound. May God help us to know where to stop with the sensational and foreboding array of electronic equipment available to us today.

H. Erb, Scurry TX.

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LYING.

Each evening we have been looking at some aspect of life that we do not often look at before going into the message in an effort to build conviction. Tonight's is in somewhat of a different direction than we have been thinking. Turn with me to a verse in Proverbs 12:22, "Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are His delight." I have chosen to speak on the thought of lying just a little bit before going further. The burden rests in two directions. One is that I discovered over the years that there are individuals who do not understand what lying is. Then, they feel they lie when they have not really lied. Therefore, my burden is in that direction. However, it is also in the other direction too that we would come to understand what lying really is so that we would have conviction against that as well.

First of all we would like to look at some things that lying is not - some things that are not lying, is what I mean to say. For example, a mistake in a statement is not necessarily a lie. If I, or you would tell me something about an accident that happened in the community and you say "three people died," and then later you found out that there were four people who died, you reported it inaccurately, but you were not lying because your intention was not to deceive. Now, if it was significant, it may be right to go and correct it. There is maybe a place to do that. However, inaccurately reporting information where the intention is not to deceive it is simply, that you did not understand it right, that is not a lie. A mistake in a statement is not necessarily a lie.

Neither is a work of fiction a lie. Sometimes individuals do not like to read a book that is maybe not true. It may be true to life, but if the story did not happen the question comes, is that something we should read? Jesus spoke many parables that were true to life but were not necessarily factual and they were illustrations of truth. Therefore, that is not necessarily lying. The use of figurative language is not lying. When Jesus called Himself a "door," that was not the literal truth was it? However, He was using a language to communicate a spiritual truth. It was figurative language. It was understood to be that. If someone uses figurative language to create a false impression then, of course, that is lying. However, as Jesus used it, it was not.

Sometimes I discover that people with an especially sensitive conscience maybe stumble on some of the polite formalities that are used. Someone will say, "Well, how are you?" And you say, "Fine." Then, later you think, "Well, my head hurt, my back was aching and here I told him I was fine." Well, he did not want you to give him a physical report. He was simply communicating to you, "How are you?" What he was saying to you was "I see you are there," and he wanted you to say, "I am fine." In doing that you were saying, "I see that you are there." That is simply a polite formality. He was not wanting to have a physical report.

Of course, if it was your doctor and he wants you to give him a careful analysis of how you are and you do not give it to him, then of course that is in a different category. However, polite formalities or sometimes someone who is late will ask you, "Did you wait long?" and you say, "Not so long," yet maybe it was thirty minutes. Later you think it was long. All he wanted to know was if you were mad at him. That is all he wanted to know. You communicated that it was all right. It is not that he wanted to know the exact minutes and so forth. There are some of those things that we need to understand what the intention of the person is who asks, and what he is really expecting you to say.

In another way, a statement that is general accuracy is not necessarily telling the untruth. For example, if your father calls to you from outside somewhere and asks, "What time is it?" and you say, "It is five o'clock," but it is really two minutes till. Well, you did not tell an untruth. He did not want you to say that it is 4:58 and three seconds. He wanted to know about what time it was, and you gave him what he expected. That is being honest.

Another would be that sometimes a person may say something, and then, due to a change of circumstances, changes his action and someone might say that he said the untruth. For example Peter said to Jesus, "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John 13:8). However, a few minutes later Peter was saying to Christ, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13:9). What had happened? Well, there was a whole different set of circumstances. He had a different light. Therefore, sometimes individuals may say something a little different because of added light. It is not necessarily that they were lying. There is simply a change in understanding. I think Peter is an illustration of that.

Now, if we do make a promise, we do have an obligation. There are times when we may promise something. I dealt with a man recently who promised me something in two days. When the two days were finished, he promised it in another week, and when the week was up it was another week, and when another week was up it was another week. You know, that does start to bring a man's honesty into question, does it not? Thus we see when we make a promise we have an obligation. What if I make a promise but due to unforeseen circumstances, I cannot keep it? Then I, at least, have an obligation to explain to the individual that I cannot, and to "square" with him and have an understanding.

The next one could be easily misunderstood and I want to be careful that we explain it. Withholding a part of truth when it is not necessary or expedient to tell it, is not necessarily lying. Bear with me a little. Suppose a non-involved person asks you about a situation and you can give him a general sense without telling him all the details. That is not necessarily lying. However, if you leave him with the impression that you have told him everything you know about it, and you did not, then that is something different. Or, if the general sense that you give is misleading, that can also be a form of not telling the truth. Or, suppose a school teacher, or a parent who carries responsibility in the matter, asks about the case and you withhold pertinent information with the intention of misleading. That, of course, is dishonest. This would especially be true when we would leave the impression that we have revealed our feelings and we have said all that we really know when we really have not. I personally feel that the Bible

teaches that we do not need to say everything we know about a case to someone who is not involved and not responsible for it. The Scriptures say, "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Proverbs 11:13). Therefore, that principle does run. Of course, if a general statement or details are chosen that misrepresent, on purpose, the total picture, then of course, that is being dishonest and is lying.

Now, a quick description of lying in the other direction. We looked at some things it is not. Here are some things that it is. There is a direct lie. When a child says to his mother, "I did not eat it, I did not get a cookie," when he did, that is a lie. When, Isaac was told by Jacob that he was Esau that was direct lying. We have perjury where a false statement is made. Maybe you sign your tax papers under the penalty of law as having reported accurately but you did not report accurately, and you know you did not. That is a form of perjury, even though you did not say anything. Your signature on that line declaring that it is accurate is dishonesty and it is a form of lying. Now, I discovered a number of years ago that I (unknowingly) misrepresented something on the tax returns. I do not think that was perjury because I did not realize it. I caught it the next year and adjusted it. Therefore, there is that thing too. However, we are speaking about where that thing is done intentionally.

Then there are sometimes what is known as "white lies." I suppose you know what I mean by that. This is when it is worded so that it can be taken one way or it could be taken another way. It may be somewhat accurate but it leaves a wrong impression. For example, the child who told his teacher that his sister did not feel like coming to school. It left the impression that the sister was sick, when she simply did not want to come. Thus, it was accurate on the one hand, but it left a false impression. We sometimes refer to that as "white lies" and that is lying. Quoting out of context is also lying. We may say the words of a speaker but we give it a different slant. We may say exactly what the person said but we through tone of voice, or somehow give it a different slant. That, I believe, is a form of dishonesty.

You will like this one. I read of a speaker who said once, "I like Canada better than the US with respect to Sunday observance." Someone else quoted the speaker as saying, "I like Canada better than the US." Do we see what happens? It gave the thing a different slant, did it not? When we do that on purpose, I am afraid sometimes that kind of thing happens just entirely too often. We give it a slant to leave someone else with a little different impression of someone else.

Boasting can be another. Overstatements about something that we did or something that we said can be a form of lying. Flattery is another form

of lying. That is when someone will say something to you that he would never say behind your back. He says it to you to try to get your goodwill and he does not really mean it. There are also the expediency lies people sometimes do. That is as one skeptic who told another skeptic that a certain speech he just heard was unconvincing. Later, he met someone who was a believer (or on the other side of the fence) and he said it nearly convinced him. It is a form of lying. I believe too that there are lies to God. There is such a thing. We make vows and then we do not keep them.

I would like to challenge us with this. Our churches have what we call counsel services. We need to be careful that we are answering honestly before the Lord in that regard. We have acted lies. Joseph's brothers showed their father a coat. They acted a lie. They showed him a coat and it left him the impression that a wild beast had slain Joseph when it had not.

Someone made a study of a thousand advertising executives who carried briefcases home at night. They found out that two thirds of them never opened the brief cases when they got home. They had only carried them home to impress the boss. That is all they did it for. Can that not be an acted lie? It is leaving a wrong impression. Sometimes, keeping quiet when we have some pertinent information that would clear a matter can even be in this category. I remember in teaching school sometimes you would ask students "Who did this?" Nobody said a word, not one word. They thought they were not lying. However, we know if he knew he did it, and did not say anything it was leaving a wrong impression, right? That is a form of lying also.

You have slander and you also have where we wrongly impute vice to another person when we really had no reason to, or no sure reason. Someone might say, "He was a man of real talent to manage this business." He might then say to another, "Yes, but he sure knew how to "butter up" the boss." It leaves a completely different impression. It is slander. When we state as fact, our suspicions, if we are not lying it is awful close to it, is it not? When we state as fact our suspicions stated as though it is for sure, when we do not know for sure.

Then one other one yet, this is what I would call self-diminishing. It is mocked humility. Someone might say, "I sure did feel terrible about how I performed that job." They are hoping the person will say, "Oh well, you did not do too bad." We need guard that as well. Our old human nature is a little sneaky, is it not? Lying will always bring the worst, and will always lead us to things that are not good and wholesome. Lying eventually will catch up with an individual. Lying affects the character. It causes persons to doubt one's credibility. It leads to an entangling. If you always tell the

truth, you do not need to remember what you told the last fellow because you are telling everybody the same thing. Therefore, you do not need to worry about that.

Lying disrupts the fabric of society. Society operates on a foundation of truth. Some of us travel regularly into some of the third world countries. We cannot appreciate this point enough. There are some countries where deception is simply understood. You cannot trust. It certainly is disruptive. Lying leads others to think that truth is unimportant.

There is the story of some boys whose parents had told them that Santa Claus fills the stockings on Christmas eve. Therefore, they decided one evening to stay up and see how this happens. They wanted to see Santa Claus come and do this. Of course, as they were watching from behind the sofa why who came but father and mother and they filled up the stockings. The one boy leaned over to the other and said, "Now, if the story of Santa Claus is not true, how can we be sure that the story of Jesus is true?"

We see how that lying has a way of making truth seem unimportant. Lying can convict the wrong man. It crucified Jesus. It stoned Stephen. A tongue three inches long can kill a man five feet tall. Lying affects our relationship with God. It is contradictory to the nature of God. Last of all, according to Revelation 22:15, lying will keep us from heaven.

I trust these few thoughts will stimulate our thinking in relation to the thought of lying. *H. Lynn Martin Revival meetings at Cedarvale Mennonite Church, Ontario, Canada*

In Essentials, Unity. In Non-essentials, Liberty

This slogan (or versions of it) is familiar to most; it is an old one. The complete statement, "In Essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, love" comes from Augustine (354-430 AD) over 1500 years ago. Such slogans should be avoided, or at best used very carefully, because they can be misleading. This statement has misled many in the past and is still doing it today. The Scriptures do not speak of some Bible truths as being essentials and others as non-essentials.

Before examining this slogan in the light of the Bible, let us first look at the background of Augustine and the church during the period he made this

statement. The early church had a strong emphasis on spiritual transformation and moral living of individual Christians, resulting in rigorous standards for church membership and Christian ethics. They took Jesus' call to discipleship serious. After Constantine the nature of Christianity underwent a drastic change. Persecutions no longer kept the church pure. Since the way came easier, there was a sudden influx of people in the church who hardly knew what repentance, the new birth, discipleship, living a life-style non-conformed to the world, etc. meant. This resulted in many half-way Christians - lukewarm and antinomian "Christians" [*Ed. Note: Webster's Dictionary defines an antinomian as one who depends on faith for salvation, without works; an antinomian*] coming into the Church with little interest beyond getting "a ticket to heaven." These had little or no interest in living a life in conformity to Biblical teachings. This created conflict in the church that, although they were living in a time of peace from persecution, greatly disturbed the peace among Christians. Before Augustine times two groups, the Novatians and the Donatists, came into existence. Both groups emphasized high ethical requirement for Christians and seriousness of sin after being baptized. To try to bring peace to the Church, Augustine taught that anything close to perfection in Christian living was impossible, and caved into the world views. To make such a view acceptable, he emphasized, "In Essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, love."

There are a couple of things wrong with Augustine's slogan. First, it fosters an approach that boils down Bible truths to the bare minimum "essentials." For instance, Jesus Christ's statement "this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:28-29) becomes the essential truth of Christianity. But we must remember saving belief is not just an intellectual assent of the mind that has no place for repentance, or for grace that produces a new birth, for sanctification, for holiness and obedience, etc. In essence "believe only" eliminated the fact that, "My [Jesus'] sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27), and "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. . . . He who has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:15,21). It eliminates the need for Christ to be both Saviour and Lord.

Secondly, it makes distinctions in Bible teachings that results in a pick-and-choose attitude. It does not follow Jesus' attitude that "scripture cannot

be broken" (John 10:35). Nor does it follow the apostle's view that, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is "a fine way of rejecting the commandments of God, in order to keep your tradition. . . . Thus making void the word of God" (Mark 7:9, 13). Lest there be doubt about the need to teach all Biblical truth, remember Jesus' Great Commission to "make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded" (Matthew 28:19-20). And Paul showed the importance of keeping "all things" when he wrote, "I commend you, because you remember me in everything, and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you" (1 Corinthians. 11:2), and "Stand firm and hold to the traditions which you have been taught by us, either by word or our epistle" (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

The third part of Augustine's statement, "In all things, love," is very good because it has a strong Biblical basis: "you shall love the Lord your God . . . you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (See Matthew 22:36-40).

In conclusion, we need to be careful about slogans, realizing that these may not express scriptural truths and thus can cause great harm to individuals and the Church. A better slogan would be "In Biblical issues, unity. In non-Biblical issues, liberty. In all things, love."

By Leland M Haines, July 11, 1997 -- © copyright 1997 by Leland M. Haines, Goshen, IN. USA The source of article: www.bibleviews.com/Essentials.html.

Things That Accompany Salvation

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation" (Hebrews 6:9).

We present here some thoughts on the importance of continuing in our present salvation in order to receive final salvation in the end. Some of the basic things that accompany present salvation are:

1. ***Abhorrence of evil.*** Though there is a certain carnal pleasure in sin, we now “abhor that which is evil” (Romans 12:9). As we “love the Lord,” we also “hate evil” (Psalm 97:10).
2. ***Repentance and restitution.*** Although repentance is a prerequisite for receiving salvation, it is also a fruit of salvation. As Zacchaeus came to Christ, he desired to restore what he had taken wrongfully (Luke 19:8, 9). And true repentance in the ongoing life of a Christian includes “clearing of [oneself], . . . fear, . . . vehement desire, . . . zeal, . . . revenge” (2 Corinthians 7:11).
3. ***Renouncing the friendship and fellowship of the ungodly.*** The Lord has instructed us to “be not ye therefore partakers with them” and to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:7, 11). They will often not understand and “think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (1 Peter 4:4).
4. Rather than seeking their friendship, we now have ***a real concern for those outside the fold of Christ.*** Newness of life (2 Corinthians 5:17) is very closely related to being ministry of reconciliation,” being now “ambassadors for Christ,” and as such we beseech others to also be “reconciled to God” (verses 18-21).
5. ***Love for the godly.*** We now value highly the company and influence of the redeemed. We love those who are begotten of God because we love Him of Whom they have been begotten (1 John 5:1). We now count it a real privilege to be a part of that building of which Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone since that is the “habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:18-22) the church of Jesus Christ.
6. ***Continuing and growing love for Christ.*** “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious” (1 Peter 2:7). The theme of the redeemed in time and in eternity is to praise and exalt “Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5).
7. As we truly love Christ, we also have ***love for the Word of God.*** This desire is so intense that it is compared to the desire babies have for milk! (1 Peter 2:1-3).
8. ***Finding blessings and fulfillment*** in personal prayer. This is one aspect of being openly rewarded as the Saviour promised to His own as they pray in secret (Matthew 6:6). “Praying in the Holy Ghost” is an important part of being kept in the love of God (Jude 20, 21).

9. ***Willing, full obedience.*** The newly converted one asks, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). Not only of them, but also of all His followers Jesus says, “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (John 14:21).

10. ***Peace, comfort, and assurance.*** As Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, we are privileged to know a dimension of love that “passeth knowledge” (Ephesians 3:16-19). As such, we may “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

11. Closely related is the blessing of ***joy***. This is a part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). By faith in Christ we “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

12. ***Loving to speak of the value and blessing of salvation in Christ.*** As this is in our hearts, we share it with others “for out of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34; Acts 4:20).

13. ***Brightness of hope — longing for Christ’s return.*** While being willing to continue in earthly life, we yet long “to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Philippians 1:23). “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, . . . we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:12-13).

14. ***Renouncing all confidence in self and our own works of righteousness.*** Not only initially, but also continually we “count all things but loss. . . and do count them but dung, that [we] may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having [our] own righteousness. . . but. . . the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:7-9).

15. ***Continued reliance on Christ*** for cleansing, peace, and guidance. Only in Him is “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). We look to Jesus because He is not only the author but also the “finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

As we rejoice in present salvation, let us remember to “look to [ourselves], that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 John 8). “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

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FAITH

Faith can be a mysterious and elusive thing. Consider this verse: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews. 11:1). What happens if you take faith out of this verse? What if there was no substance of things hoped for? What if there was no evidence of things not seen? If you take faith out, there is nothing left at all.

In many situations, all we have is our faith. When we let go of our faith, we lose even the substance and the evidence of that in which we believed. Perhaps this is why many people feel it is optional to believe in God. If a person chooses not to believe in God, in a sense He does not exist to that person. If, on the other hand, we believe in God, He becomes real, and our faith increases when we observe the evidence and proof of His awesome power and His great love for us.

Believing in God is one thing. For those of us who have been raised by God-fearing parents, this is generally not so difficult. But what about believing the things God tells you? What about accepting God's plan for your life? It seems to be in our nature that we desire to know what lies ahead. Actually, when we consider what life would be like if we did know the future, we should be thankful for the way things are. Nevertheless, the desire to know is there.

God must have known that His children would have doubts and misgivings. He knew we perhaps would even question His leading and authority at times. So He provided very comprehensive instructions in His Word, which cover any situation in which we might find ourselves. I will quote from Romans 4 where it speaks of Abraham's strong faith: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform" (w. 20,21).

Verses 23 and 24 apply directly to us as individuals, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

When we have a lack of faith, it makes me wonder what we think of our God. Perhaps we do not grasp the depth of His love. Underestimating God's power is wrong, and ignoring His love is sin. Do we actually think that He will desert us or let us down when we are doing our best

for Him? "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God..." (Romans. 8:28). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans. 8:1). Observing our God's compassion and His long-suffering toward us in spite of our sins should strengthen our faith. It would help us to realize that God wants the very best for us. Following His plan will ensure our happiness while on earth and will secure a place for us in heaven.

Do you have faith? Or do you struggle with doubts? Is the faith that you do have strong? If we are humble, God will help us. He does not require perfection, but He does require a commitment. Faith takes an effort, but if we try, God will help us. We can come like the centurion came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

By Glen Isaac, Manitoba.

What Is a Biblical Christian?

There are many matters concerning which total ignorance and complete indifference are neither tragic nor fatal. I am sure that there are few of us who can explain all the processes by which a brown cow eats green grass and gives white milk—but we can still enjoy the milk! Many of us are totally ignorant of Einstein's theory of relativity, and if we were pressed to explain it we would really be in difficulty. And not only are we ignorant of Einstein's theory but most of us are quite indifferent; yet our ignorance and indifference are neither tragic nor fatal.

There are some matters, however, concerning which ignorance and indifference are both tragic and fatal. One such matter is the answer to the question, "What is a biblical Christian?" In other words, according to the Scriptures, when does a man, woman, boy or girl have the right to the name "Christian"?

One must not make the assumption lightly that he or she is a true Christian. A false conclusion at this point is tragic and fatal. Therefore I want to set before you four strands of the Bible's answer to the question, "What is a biblical Christian?"

1. According to the Bible, a Christian is a person who has faced realistically the problem of his own personal sin.
2. A biblical Christian is one who has seriously considered the one divine remedy for sin.
3. A biblical Christian is one who has wholeheartedly complied with the terms for obtaining God's provision for sin.
4. A biblical Christian is a person who manifests in his life that his claims to repentance and faith are real.

From A Meditation On The Twenty-fifth Psalm.

By: Menno Simmons.

A Compilation of Extracts from various sources.

Psalm 25:20

O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee.

I beseech Thee, therefore, blessed Lord, that thou wilt keep my soul, which is bought with so dear a price, lest I turn from thy truth; for though I may now think with Peter, that I could give my life for Thee, and with Paul, that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from thy love, yet I do not sufficiently know myself. All my trust is in Thee; I have not yet resisted unto blood.

O Lord, preserve me pure and simple in Thy truth, may I may neither believe or teach anything that is not in conformity with Thy holy will and Word, a true faith, sincere love, the right baptism and supper, a blameless life and scriptural excommunication, of those who cause offense in doctrine and life. Preserve me, gracious Lord, from all error and heresy; preserve me as Thou hast hitherto in Thy mercy preserved me. Grant that I

and my beloved brethren may love and fear Thee with all our hearts; and render obedience to the magistracy (government) in all things not contrary to the Word of God. For this, says Paul, is good and acceptable in Thy sight. Preserve me from the wiles of the devil who would fain teach us of another king after the spirit, beside the true King of Zion, Jesus Christ, who rules over Thy holy mountain with the holy scepter of Thy Word, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, is seated at Thy own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; under whose feet all things are put; who hath all power in heaven and on earth, before whom every knee must bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of Thy great name.

If I travel east, west, north or south, I find in all places, nothing but vain obstinacy, perversion, blindness, avarice, pride, wantonness, rioting, drunkenness, pomp and splendor, strife, envying and ungodliness. I find (I repeat), violence, false doctrine and an impure, deceptive employment of Thy sacraments, throughout the world; I find the influence of tyrants triumphing in the courts of all princes; that, the learned speak like the beast, are ambitious, avaricious, gluttonous, earthly and carnally minded, and teach according to the lusts and desires of men; there are scarcely any who seek for truth, and if there are, they must bear Thy cross;

O Lord, keep me in simplicity, under Thy cross, that I may not deny Thee and Thy holy Word in the time of temptation, nor conceal Thy divine truth and will under the mask of hypocrisy, lies, equivocal expressions, so that at the appearance of Thy dear Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, I may receive with all the saints the promised kingdom, inheritance, and reward which with firm assurance and perfect confidence we daily hope and expect by the gracious promise.

O God of Israel, create in us a pure heart, that longeth for Thy blessed word and will. Send forth faithful laborers into Thy harvest, who eat and gather the grain in due season; perfect the builders who lay for us a good foundation, that in the last days Thy house may be established, and appear above all the hills, that many people may go thither and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths," Isa. 2:3; that we may walk before Thee, in peace and liberty of conscience, all the days of our lives, under a good government and blameless teachers,

with a Christian baptism, true Supper, godly life, and a just separation; that Thou mayest in power be eternally honored and praised in us, as in Thy beloved children, through Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with thee, O Father, and thy Holy Spirit, be praise and everlasting dominion, Amen.

A MEDITATION ON RESPONSE.

Israel's Response to the Law's Demand

*Then he took the **Book of the Covenant** and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "**All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient**" . . . Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you **will walk** in His ways and **keep** His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you **will obey** His voice. ([Exo 24:7](#) and [Deu 26:17](#))*

God's law demands **wholehearted obedience**. "*This day the LORD your God commands you to **observe** these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to **observe** them with **all your heart** and with **all your soul**" ([Deu 26:16](#)). When the Israelites heard this summary requirement of the law, they confidently promised that they would obey. "*Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you **will walk** in His ways and **keep** His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you **will obey** His voice.*" Forty years earlier, when the Lord first gave His law to His people, they responded in a similar fashion. "*Then he took the **Book of the Covenant** and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, '**All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient**.'*"*

Their intentions were certainly commendable. However, their performance was definitely unacceptable. Even before they had departed from the mountain where the law was given, they plunged into disobedience. "*They have **turned aside quickly** out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a **molded calf**, and **worshiped it**" ([Exo 32:8](#)). Soon after the death of Joshua (who led them into the Promised Land), they **repeatedly** rebelled against the Lord their God. The book of Judges documents this clearly: "*And the children of Israel **again** did **evil** in the sight of the LORD" ([Jdg 3:12](#)); "*And the children of Israel***

again did evil in the sight of the LORD" ([Jdg 4:1](#)); "Then the children of Israel **again did evil in the sight of the LORD**" ([Jdg 6:1](#)); "Then the children of Israel **again did evil in the sight of the LORD**" ([Jdg 10:6](#)).

Twelve hundred years later, Stephen would summarize Israel's history of disobedience. "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You **always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you**" ([Act 7:51](#)). What a sobering evaluation of those who were so confident of obeying the law of God.

Dear Father, I humbly bow before You, confessing that I am so often like the children of Israel. I confidently promise to live in obedience to Your will. Then, I quickly stray from Your path and indulge my own will. Thank You for Your forgiving grace. Yet, I earnestly cry out for more. I need Your transforming grace to renew my inner man unto increasing obedience to You, through Jesus, my Lord, Amen.

The Victorious Voice for God

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. (Luke 23:46)

The Cross is a tragedy to man, but a tremendous triumph to God, an absolute triumph. Listen to the clear, ringing voice—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit"! The spirit of the Son of God only? No, the spirit of the whole human race incarnated in the Saviour of the world. My spirit was there, your spirit was there; and by God's mighty grace and the gift of His Spirit which Our Lord shed forth after He ascended, we can know experimentally His complete salvation for body, soul and spirit.

Never put it on the shallow line that on the Cross the physical sufferings of Jesus were so great that His mind was blinded and He imagined His Father had gone from Him; that line does not touch the depths of identification with sin to which Our Lord went. Neither is it true to say that God was angry and hid His face from Him; if one may put it so—God was never more pleased with His Son than when He bridged the gulf between God

and man by the sacrifice of Himself. When the New Testament speaks of the sufferings of Christ, it is suffering in connection with our salvation and in no other connection—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" He suffered "according to the will of God." It is not the suffering of a man; this is the Eternal Christ of God tasting "death for every man." The agony in Gethsemane represents the incomprehensible mystery of 2 Corinthians 5:21. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us. . . ."

It is only by thinking along these lines, bare-souled, and humbled before God, that we can understand what a wonderful thing our salvation is. Salvation is an immense marvel to me—I, a sinner, can be made into a saint; but it is only possible because of what Jesus Christ did. Are the unfathomable depths of suffering through which Our Lord went to mean less than entire deliverance from sin for us? The reason sanctification is so easy for us is because of Gethsemane. The Holy Spirit received as a gift into our personal life brings the supernatural marvel of the salvation wrought out by Our Lord. That is the message the Spirit of God has given to be proclaimed to the world. It matters not how sin-stained a man may be, through the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross he can partake of that wondrous salvation.

"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." What was finished? The rehabilitation of the human race back to where God desired it to be. It was not the salvation of individual men and women like you and me that was being finished, but the whole human race was put on the basis of Redemption. Redemption is not going to be finished: it is finished. Believing does not make a man redeemed; believing enables him to realise that he is redeemed. To any man who thinks, the basis of life is not reason, but Redemption. The miracle of the work of God is performed when he places himself on the "It is finished" side of the Cross. We take our salvation and our sanctification much too cheaply. We ought to rejoice when a man says he is saved, but remember what it cost God to make His grace a free gift. It cost agony we cannot begin to understand. The Christian faith means that the historic Cross of Christ is the pinhole in actual history through which we get a view of the purpose of God all through. Jesus Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

*From: Oswald Chambers, Bringing Sons unto Glory,
(United Kingdom: Marshall Morgan & Scott) c1944.*

A GRAVESTONE EPITAPH

**Remember friend, as you pass by; As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, thus you must be, so be prepared to follow me.**

However, a concerned reader then added this line:-
To follow you, I'm not content UNTIL I know, which way you went !!

Do you know where you will be?

*When we stay our feeble efforts
And from struggling cease,
Unconditional surrender
Brings us God's own peace.*

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