

The Second Condition of True Spirituality

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

True spirituality is achieved by yielding to God's will, which is revealed through Scripture, the Spirit, and a commitment to following God's leading.

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Surrendered Life"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer preaches on the importance of not quenching the Spirit, emphasizing that the Spirit is 'quenched' by any resistance to God's revealed will, divine appointments for service, or providence in life. He highlights the need for believers to yield themselves to God, acknowledging that true spirituality is realized through yielding to God's will and living a sacrificial life, following the example of Christ's complete yieldedness to the Father. Chafer stresses that yielding to God's will is not about specific actions but about a continuous attitude of surrender, leading to a life of joy, peace, and fulfillment in doing God's good and perfect will.

Transcript

"QUENCH not the Spirit" (I Thessalonians 5:19) is another explicit command to the believer concerning his relation to the One who indwells him.

WHAT IS IT THAT QUENCHES THE SPIRIT?

The Spirit is "quenched" by any unyieldness to the revealed will of GOD. It is simply saying "no" to GOD, and so is closely related to matters of the divine appointments for service; though the Spirit may be "quenched," as well, by any resistance of the providence of GOD in the life.

The word "quench," when related to the Spirit, does not imply that He is extinguished, or that

He withdraws: it is rather the act of resisting the Spirit. The Spirit does not remove His presence. He has come to abide.

According to the Scriptures, the believer's responsibility in realizing true spirituality is again crystallized into one crucial word, "yield." "But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13).

Such an attitude of heart toward the will of GOD becomes those who "are alive from the dead," and any other attitude is no less than rebellion in the family and household of GOD. Our Father is never mistaken.

His will is always infinitely best. Therefore we must not "quench the Spirit", We must not say "no" to GOD.

When we have entered Heaven by His grace, and have gained the larger vision and understanding of that sphere, we shall look back over our pilgrim pathway on the earth and have either joy, or regret, as we contemplate the life we have lived. There is a life of no regrets. It consists in having done the will of GOD. That divine plan and purpose will be recognized through all eternity as that which was GOD's very best for us.

THE YIELDED LIFE

To be yielded to Him is to allow Him to design and execute the position and effectiveness of our life. He alone can do this. Of all the numberless paths in which we might walk, He alone knows which is best. He alone has power to place our feet in that path and to keep them there, and He alone has love for us that will never cease to prompt Him to do for us all that is in His wisdom, power and love to do. Truly the life is thrice blessed that learns to yield to the will of GOD.

Nothing could be more misdirected than a self-directed life.

In our creation GOD has purposely omitted any faculty, or power, of self-direction. "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

It is the divine plan that the element of guidance shall be supplied in us by GOD Himself. One of the results of the Adamic fall is the independence of the human will toward GOD; yet man is most spiritual and most conformed to the design of his Maker when he is most yielded to the divine will.

What greater evidence of the fall do we need than that we must struggle to be yielded to Him? How much we feel we have gained when we can say, "Thy will, not mine be done"! It is because our daily life will be helpless and a failure apart from the leading of the Spirit, and because the Spirit has come to do this very work, that we cannot be rightly adjusted to Him, or be spiritual, until we are yielded to the mind and will of GOD.

A full dedication of our bodies to be a "living sacrifice" is the "reasonable service" and is an issue of first importance for the child of GOD.

Following the doctrinal statement of the two-fold work of GOD for us in our salvation, as recorded in Romans, chapters 1-8, and after the dispensational portion of the Epistle concerning Israel, the message of the book turns at chapter 12 to an appeal for the manner of life that becomes one who has been thus saved from the guilt of sin and for whom salvation has been provided from the power of sin.

It is at the very beginning of this great portion of the Scriptures that this practical appeal is made. The passage states: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present [the same word as 'yield,' in Romans 6:13] your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed [transfigured] by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The words, "I beseech you" are far removed from being a command. It is a pleading for that manner of life which becomes the children of GOD. It is not something that we must do to be saved: it is something we should do because we are saved.

The first exhortation in this practical portion of this Epistle of salvation is for dedication of the whole body as a living sacrifice. This should not be called "consecration"; for consecration is an act of GOD. The believer may lay down, yield, or dedicate; but GOD must take up and apply what is presented.

That is consecration.

Again, there is little Scripture to warrant a supposed "reconsecration." We cannot partly choose the will of GOD as the rule of our lives. We have not chosen to do His will until we have really become willing to do His will. True dedication, therefore, does not call for a reconsecration to GOD.

There is no mention here of some particular service that might be made an issue of willingness. It is only self -dedication to whatsoever GOD may choose for us, now, or ever. Such is our "reasonable service," if it is "holy and acceptable unto God."

When we are not conformed to this world and when we are transfigured by the renewing of our minds, we will make full proof in our lives of "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" for us.

Thus yieldedness is presented as the first and all -important issue for the one that is saved. Following in this portion of the Scriptures there is much teaching about service; but even the appeal for service could be of no avail until there has been a presentation of the whole body as a living sacrifice.

CHRIST THE PATTERN

One of the human perfections of the Lord JESUS was His complete yieldedness to the will of His Father. The Scriptures bear abundant testimony to this.

In Hebrews 10:5-7 we have the record:

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God."

He was yielded to His Father's will. His yieldedness included even His human body ("but a body hast thou prepared me"), the sacrifice of which was to give value to every acceptable animal sacrifice that had gone before, and to supersede any attempted sacrifice that might follow. When He was nearing His Cross He said: "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Again, it is recorded of Him in Psalm 22 that He said to His Father: "But thou art holy," and this He said at the darkest hour of His crucifixion when He was crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Yet again, in Philippians 2:8, we are told that He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

The absolute yieldedness of the Son to do the Father's will is not only the supreme example of a normal attitude of a child of GOD toward his Father, but such an attitude is to be imparted and maintained in the believer's heart by the Spirit, after the first act of dedication has been accomplished.

The following passage is an exhortation to this end:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). The first word of this passage is most illuminating; for in this little word "let" is compressed the whole Bible teaching concerning the believer's responsibility toward the possible manifestation of CHRIST in the daily life by the Spirit. We could not produce such a manifestation; but we can "let" it be done in us by Another.

The issue, it is clear, is not that of resolving to do anything: it is rather that of an attitude of willingness that Another may do according to the last degree of His blessed will. Then, lest we might not realize the exact character of the mind of CHRIST which we are to "let" be reproduced in us and might be unprepared for the out-working of those particular elements in our daily life, an explicit and detailed description of the elements of "the mind of Christ" is recorded.

These elements are fundamental: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him" (vs. 6-9).

It should be noted that these particulars which taken together form the "mind of Christ" are not mentioned merely to relate facts about JESUS CHRIST: they are presented that we may be fully aware of just what is to be reproduced in us, and just what we are to "let" Him do in us and through us. The divinely produced manifestation in the believer's life will be "the mind of Christ"; but this, we are assured from all Scripture, is wrought by the power of the Spirit. "For to me to live is Christ." That is an effect. The cause is the power of the Spirit of GOD. Out of much that the passage reveals, at least three things may be mentioned:

First, CHRIST was willing to go where His Father chose.

He was at home in the glory. It was His native environment; but He came into this world with a mission and message of grace. "GOD had an only Son and He was a foreign missionary." Such was His Father's will for Him, and His attitude may be expressed by the familiar words:

"I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord."

Second, CHRIST was willing to be whatever His Father chose.

"He made Himself of no reputation ." He was not only willing to lay aside the garments of His glory, but He was willing, as well, to be set at naught, to be spit upon and to be crucified. That was the Father's will for Him and His attitude may be expressed in the words:

"I'll be what You want me to be."

Third, CHRIST was willing to do whatever His Father chose.

He became obedient unto death, and in so doing, His attitude may again be expressed in the words:

"I'll do what You want me to do."

Many sing the words of the hymn above quoted who may never have faced the question of a positive surrender to the will of GOD. There can be no true spirituality until this surrender is made. But when it is done, GOD imparts the sufficient power for the realization of all His will. This passage closes with these words: "For it is God which worketh [energizes] in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Thus He undertakes and continues the flow of every spiritual reality in the life that is normally adjusted to Him (Galatians 3:3).

Our Lord when dealing with this great theme of the Christian's responsibility in being wholly yielded to GOD, spoke of it as abiding in Him (John 15:1-17).

The results of the abiding life are three-fold:

(1) Prayer is effectual: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you";

(2) Joy is celestial: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full';

(3) Fruit is perpetual: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

These results include all that is vital in a spiritual life and are conditioned by CHRIST upon obedience to all that He has said: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

Abiding, then, is simply yielding to the known will of our Lord, just as He was yielded to His Father's will.

A yieldedness to the will of GOD is not demonstrated by some one particular issue: it is rather a matter of having taken the will of GOD as the rule of one's life. To be in the will of GOD is simply to be willing to do His will without reference to any particular thing He may choose. It is electing His will to be final, even before we know what He may wish us to do.

It is, therefore, not a question of being willing to do some one thing: it is a question of being willing to do anything, when, where and how, it may seem best in His heart of love. It is taking the normal and natural position of childlike trust which has already consented to the wish of the Father even before anything of the outworking of His wish is revealed.

This distinction cannot be over-emphasized.

It is quite natural to be saying: "If He wishes me to do something, let Him tell me and I will then determine what I will do." To a person in such an attitude of heart He reveals nothing. There must be a covenant relationship of trust in which His will is assented to once for all and without reservation. Why should it not be so? Might not our reluctance sometimes be stated in the words, "I know thee, hard task-master!"

Is He a hard taskmaster? Is there any hope whatsoever that we of ourselves might be wise enough to choose what is best if we keep the directing of our lives in our own hands? Will the Father, whose love is infinite, impose upon His child? Or will He ever be careless?

We make no promise that we will not sin or violate the will of GOD when we yield to Him. We do not promise to change our own desires. The exact human attitude has been expressed in the words: "I am willing to be made willing to do His will."

Let it be stated again that this question, so simple in itself, instantly becomes complicated when related to any concrete issue of obedience. It is the question only of the will of GOD in the abstract in which we have

the assurance that in every detail He will work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. He will work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

We may experience long waiting to ascertain what His will may be; but when it is clearly revealed, there can be no room for debate in the heart that would not quench the Spirit.

KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

There is often a desire to understand more fully just how we may know the will of GOD. To this it may be answered:

First, His leading is only for those who are already committed to do as He may choose.

To such it may be said: "GOD is able to speak loud enough to make a willing soul hear."

Second, The divine leading will always be according to the Scriptures.

To His word we may always go with prayerful expectation; yet it is most perilous to treat the Bible as a magic lottery.

We do not learn the meaning of a passage by "casting lots."

We do not find out the will of GOD from the Bible by opening the Book and abiding by the sentiment of the first verse we may chance to read.

It is not a matter of chance, nor is our relation to His Word so superficial that we may expect to find His blessed mind for us by blindly reading one chance verse.

We are to study and know the Scriptures that every word of His testimony may instruct us.

Third, He does not lead His children by any rules whatsoever.

No two of His children will be led alike and it is most probable that He will never lead anyone of His children twice in exactly the same way. Therefore rules are apt to be misleading. True spirituality consists in a life which is free from law and which is lived, to the minutest detail of individuality, by the power of the Spirit.

Fourth, The divine leading is by the Spirit who indwells the Christian.

It follows, therefore, that true leading, in this dispensation, will be more by an inner consciousness than by outward signs. After we have faithfully met the conditions for a spiritual life, we have "the mind of the Spirit."

He is both able to convince us of what is wrong and to impart a clear conviction as to what is right. Because of our present unique relation to the Spirit, it is hardly necessary, or wise, to depend much on "fleeces" or a "pillar of cloud"; though sometimes He may lead through these external things.

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

We must learn the reality of the indwelling Spirit and what it means to "walk" in Him.

To be guided by the Spirit is to be moved through the most delicate relationships the heart can know. The "bit and bridle" must give way to the glance of the eye (Psalm 32:8, 9).

At this point Satan, appearing as "an angel of light," will seek to confuse the mind by presenting his counterfeits of the leading of GOD. Every Christian should be aware of this danger. To misdirect the believer's life, Satan makes use of a morbid conscience, a mistaken impression as to duty, or a lack of understanding as to the exact teachings of GOD 's Word. However Satan's leadings are to be detected since they are irksome, painful, and disagreeable.

The leading of the Spirit is sweet and satisfying to the heart of the one who is yielded to GOD. We must remember that the will of GOD is said to be "good," "acceptable," and "perfect" (Romans 12:2), and that when we are walking with Him, He works in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). He it is Who is working in us "that which is well pleasing in his sight" (Hebrews 13:21).

On the divine side, the yielding of the human will is seen to be imperative.

The Father cannot suffer rebellion in His household, nor can He realize His blessed designs for His child until His judgment is freely acknowledged to be best. There is a distinction to be noted between chastisement for correction, which may often be repeated, and the once for all "scourging" which every son must receive (Hebrews 12:6).

One is unto correction as often as it is needed; but the other is the once for all conquering of the human will. When our will is thus conquered, it does not follow that our will is weakened in relationships with our fellow men. The will has been yielded to GOD.

How simple all this might be; yet what years of scourging many have suffered only because they would not be normal in relation to the mind of GOD for them! Not all affliction is to be counted as scourging. When it is scourging, we shall be conscious of our own stubbornness in not yielding. There need be no uncertainty concerning this matter.

Yielding to the mind and will of GOD is a definite act which opens the gate into the divinely appointed path, wherein we may walk in all fellowship and service with CHRIST. A child of GOD cannot consider himself to be in the appointed path if, within the range of his understanding of himself, he has no consciousness that he is subject to the will of GOD.

"I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" was the pattern of yieldedness as revealed in CHRIST. It is recorded of CHRIST in Psalm 40:6 that He said to His Father: "Mine ears hast thou opened" (lit. bored).

This is doubtless a reference to the law of the bond-servant who, having been set free, yielded himself to his master forever (Exodus 21:5, 6) . "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (II Corinthians 5:15).

WHAT IS A SACRIFICIAL LIFE?

The highest motive for yielding to the will of GOD is not the mere desire for victory in life, or for power, or blessing. It is that we may live the sacrificial life which is the CHRIST life. Sacrificial does not mean painful; it is simply doing Another's will. Some pain may be in the path; but the prevailing note is joy, and the blessing of the heart is peace.

Every child of GOD, then, must definitely yield to the will of GOD. Not concerning some one issue of the daily life; but as an abiding attitude toward GOD. Apart from that there can be no true spirituality and no escape from the Father's scourging hand; for He cannot, and will not, suffer His child to live on without the priceless blessings that His love is longing to bestow.

Satan's sin against GOD in the primal glory was a five-fold expression of the two defiant words: "I will" (Isaiah 14:13,14), and every unyielded life is perpetuating the crime of Satan. To be spiritual we must not say "no" to GOD.

"Quench not the Spirit."

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