

# 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.**

It seems but a very short time ago indeed that we spoke of Easter 2007 and the worldly festivities that allegedly celebrate that. The writer was brought up in a culture of Easter bunnies and eggs, hot cross buns etc., it was nice but it never made any sense to me as I got older how those things related to the suffering, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

As time went by and those things were pondered upon and answers sought from Scriptures the worldly celebrations became clear as distractions from Satan so that people would not think of God's greatest gift to mankind, His Son Jesus, and Him crucified for our sins that we might go free from eternal condemnation and hell.

For the Christian to celebrate Easter in itself is not I believe wrong, it is the manner of the celebration which we should question and examine in light of Scriptures. It would perhaps be most appropriate to reflect on the life of our Lord and Saviour, but especially those last few days when He supped for the last time with His disciples, the time in the garden of Gethsemane as He submitted His will to the will of the Father and allowed Himself to be taken into custody, His suffering at the hands of those who hated Him because He challenged their authority by His words and actions. Read Isaiah 54 to grasp more fully our salvation prophesied through His suffering and death: "...He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter...."

There is also room for rejoicing as we read in the Gospels of His resurrection, the crowning victory over death and sin – forever!

I believe we can celebrate that with the greatest of joys and overflowing gratitude to our God and Jesus Christ, it has given us an assurance that we can be saved from our sins and live for Him and in Him all the days of our mortal lives and then abide with Him and all the saints in heaven for eternity. Oh what joy that will be when my Saviour I see!

It is our earnest hope and prayer that you will give time to meditate on the sermon by Brother Paul Weaver and celebrate this greatest of all events that ever occurred or will ever occur: "The Resurrection of Christ Jesus."

*J.van Loon.*

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**MINISTER'S CORNER.****THE RESURRECTION.**

*Bro. Paul R. Weaver (1921-2002).*

*"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).*

I had to think what a tremendous important event took place in the resurrection experience. I thought this morning to speak about the resurrection as a vitalizing of faith and hope. When Jesus was crucified, the disciples beheld all that happened. Those things happened so fast that they almost forgot about the things that He had said, and that it was necessary that He would go this way, and that He would rise again. A few times in His ministry Jesus talked to His disciples and said what would happen. "The day will come when the Son of man must be taken, and He will suffer and die and be crucified, but I will rise again." Always at the end of speaking of the fact of His suffering was the fact that He would rise again.

It is true that when these things happened it was such a new thing that the disciples somehow were stunned a bit. I suppose maybe if we were there, we would have been a little like they were. However, we have heard these things for many years of our life. We have heard the facts of the resurrection. They become a known truth that we speak about. I, again, want to help us to look at the facts and see what this should mean, and what it will do for us when it grips us fully. We are thinking about the fact that Christ arose. In that fact, He has made possible the power that should touch and transform our lives as well, by the power of the resurrection from Jesus Christ from the dead.

Paul says in the Philippian letter that he desired that he might be able to somehow show the experience of His suffering and to know "the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3:10). Paul was convinced that the life that he now lives was "by the faith of the Son of God" (Galatians 2:20). It calls for our faith. We see the need for the exercising of faith in the healing of the lame man in the book of Acts. It was necessary that he had faith. It was necessary that there was a faith expressed on the part of Peter, when he reached out his hand and took him by the hand and said, "Arise" (Acts 9:34). Faith was needed on both sides.

The apostle Peter also, in his epistle written to the Church says "Blessed

be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). Peter recognized again afresh, that it was the experience that transpired before his eyes that he was in the midst of a vitalizing experience. It was something that spurred in him a measure of dynamic power.

*That experience caused him to search the Scriptures those days they were together until the Holy Spirit came upon them in a measure greater than before.* I believe they studied the Scriptures like in no other time. They began to piece the things together and remember all the things that the prophets had spoken about Him that should come to pass, and had happened before their eyes. John wrote about these, "things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1). It is good for us to be somewhat involved and realize what God is doing. Therefore, the fact of the resurrection should add a spark, be a revitalizing, and should put something of a dynamic force into our faith, and into the hope that we have that is for us far beyond this life — that which lies in the eternal.

In John 14 Jesus was talking about His going away. He was going to "prepare a place" (verse 3), a "mansion" (verse 2) and He must go away. He will come again and where He is we can be also. Those are beautiful thoughts — thoughts that we ought to cling to. There are mansions because Jesus said so. We believe it. We cannot explain it all, but we believe. It should be a revitalizing of our faith. In that same chapter in verse 19 Jesus said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also." That is the glorious experience.

The world will lose sight. The world today around us is keeping a time of great festivities perhaps and they are taken up in their commercial interests and the social expressions and all that goes with the "Easter" season. That ought to be a very fickle thing with us, should it not? In the depths of all of this, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the thing that revitalizes and brings vitality to our faith, to our living, and to the purpose to which we live and hope that we can "attain" [Philippians 3:11].

*We are inspired by the fact that Jesus rose again. The resurrection opens up unto us something that the world does not experience.*

We would not expect them to, but to us who are of the power of God of whom Jesus said, "the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me." "They will soon forget all about Me, but ye shall see Me." We are called upon to keep

our eyes glued and fixed on Jesus as the One who has gone through death for us and "become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Through Him, we too, might be able to rise unto the resurrection of life and we shall receive eternal life. Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

Luke 24 is largely the experience of the Day of the Resurrection. We see a little bit of something portrayed in the Record that is kept for us of how they struggled with their thoughts and with their imaginations, with their discernment and maybe some preconceived ideas. They needed to work them through because they saw things that they could not explain.

In the early hours of the day following the Jewish feasts and preparation, we see a few women going to the sepulchre because they had observed where Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus [John 19:39], had "begged the body of Jesus" (Luke 23:52) to put in his tomb.

Scholars of today and theologians are coming up with some new light on what happened the week when Jesus was crucified. They propound a lot of questions of why and how that a consistent Jewish man would have given room to have Jesus put in his new tomb, and so on. Nevertheless, the answer is simple to those who believe because we believe that God superintended over all of it. God could make the men's hearts respond according to the need of the hour.

*They borrowed a tomb, an empty room, and they borrowed a lot of things in His death, but the cross was His own.*

Jesus took and bore it, but the grave could not contain Him. Praise God that He has risen. He arose because death had no power over Him. He was not a sinner and a transgressor, and subject unto death as was Adam and all the descendants of Adam on down till today. We are subject to death because of sin. Jesus was the triumphant one and "knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, the things that were used in that day were not permanent. He did not need them permanently but only to fulfill.

When they discovered that He had given His life and life had gone out of the body, there was a dead form on that cross. They marveled that He was already dead. That was again another fact that Jesus had power. God was at work. Men were not. Men can only bring forth death, but Christ and God are able to bring forth life.

*The power of life is with God and Jesus had that in His hands.*

The early morning little band of followers (some of whom were not far

from the cross during the last hours of Jesus' earthly life before He gave His life) saw the sufferings, and they were quite taken with all that was allowed. We wonder too, that it was necessary and that all that suffering needed to be. You know, the suffering was for us. Jesus was willing to go that route of the fleshly body and suffer in the flesh to help us to realize that if suffering comes our way we can reach out, by faith, to a source that is greater than that power that was present there in the attempts of men to put Him to death.

*We can overcome those kind of adversaries and afflictions that men endeavour to bring by the power of our faith in our God.*

We are encouraged again to know that Jesus is risen. When they came to the tomb they wondered who would roll away the stone [Mark 16:3]. However, when they got there the stone was rolled away. It was an empty tomb. There were two things especially to note that goes along with this story of these individuals. When Peter and John came running to the tomb and saw an empty tomb, one of the things that they were commanded to do was "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6). See the empty tomb. What else? "Go ... and tell" (Matthew 28:7). Go and make it known that He is arisen, and remember having said to you He will arise the third day and meet you in Galilee. Go meet Him.

The Scripture says, "Come and see. Get a glimpse. Realize it is an empty tomb." The tomb could not contain Him. Even the great watch of the security that these professing people of God (and adversaries of Jesus) remembered, that when He was alive, He said that He would arise again [Matthew 27:63]. Somehow they marked that a little bit sharper than the followers of Jesus. Sometimes individuals who like to counteract and are ready to argue, know some things about the Scriptures a bit better than we do. However, they remember for the wrong purpose.

They said "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, after three days I will rise again. (64) Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first" (Matthew 27:63, 64). They had crucified Him. They thought that they now had Him — this 'troublemaker' out of the way. They wanted to be sure now to seal that tomb. They set a seal on that tomb. They set watchmen there. We know what happened. When the angel descended from glory and rolled back the

stone and sat upon it, what happened? These watchmen "became as dead men" (Matthew 28:4), in the presence and the power of God. Therefore, they knew that He had arisen. They said to these men who were there and supposed to be watchmen and guardsmen, "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept" (Matthew 28:13). "And if this gets you into trouble we will secure you." They were ready to stake their lives against the very truth and the facts to simply try to cover up, rather than to accept the fact that they had no power in this hour.

We see the power of God working. Men were helpless. There was nothing they could do. When the program of God came to a point and a time, the third day He arose and nothing could stop it because God was there. *Today we are challenged to simply believe the Word, are we not?*

How often do we falter around the Word when we think of circumstances, face oppositions, and a number of adversities that maybe are spoken of against Christianity? Does our faith continue to stand strong in the Lord? Do we remember what the Lord has said so that we can still go on believing? In Luke 24:11 we read, "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Even with all these striking facts and evidences, as they told the story, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and other women who were with them told these things unto the apostles and "they believed them not." After all of this, when Jesus met the disciples for the first occasion, Thomas was not there and he said, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

That is only a testimony of our faith maybe, and how much we falter, and how much we feel that "If only we could have been there. Then we could believe." "If I could have been there to behold that and all that happened, I could believe." These were men who had travelled with Jesus and saw the miracles He did, and knew the power that He had. Yet, they could not conceive the fact that Jesus could lay down His life and take it up again. These tales seemed like "idle tales," and they could not believe it. It was too much.

Then as we go through this chapter, in verse 13, we behold two disciples. We do not know who they were. After they came back they found the eleven disciples together and told them about what had happened. Thus, it was probably not any of the named eleven apostles, but they were disciples

at least. These two went toward "a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. (14) And they talked together of all these things which had happened" (Luke 24:13-14). It was a good subject to talk about. It was good to talk it over. It was good to see two brethren walking together pondering over truth and facts that had some relation to their experience.

*We get our encouragement at times in talking things over with brethren.*

They were talking these things over maybe in somewhat of bewilderment and misunderstanding. These things were so new, so hard to grasp, and hard to conceive that the One who had manifested such power was crucified. They saw men take Him, not fully realizing that He was giving Himself and that it was not the power of men. Jesus said on one occasion "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). Peter used his sword and cut the ear off the servant of the high priest. Jesus having healed it said, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take Me" (Matthew 26:55)? "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels" (Matthew 26:53)? "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53), but, "I lay down My life" (John 10:15).

In the resurrection we see Jesus taking up that life again. These were things that they pondered "And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. (16) But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him" (Luke 24:15, 16). As they were talking Jesus might have been asking, "What is this thing that you are talking about that seems to be so sorrowful, sad, and heavy of heart?" One of them said, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Great things had taken place those couple of days before. They said, "Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: (20) And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. (21) But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day. . (verses 19-21). "And now we have some more strange things come to our ears." "And certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; (23) And when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of

angels, which said that He was alive" (verses 22, 23). Jesus asked the questions to His disciples, "Why seek ye the living among the dead" (Luke 24:5)? "He is arisen, He is alive as He said." I want us to again recapture, or be stimulated in our faith that we follow one who is a living Lord and not one who is dead.

*We follow One who is just as alive today as ever, and more powerful than ever.*

He is now seated at the right hand of God. As a result of the resurrection we have an intercessor. He is alive and interested in us. We have trust. They had been building faith around this particular individual. He was a great prophet. He was mighty in deeds, in works that He did and the Word that He spoke. Even the elements of the universe responded to Him when He rebuked the waves, and oh so many things, and He had power. He had done so many things in the days of His ministry. Nevertheless, those rulers, the chief priests, had condemned Him to death and crucified Him. They understood the crucifixion but not the resurrection.

In verse 25 it speaks about the Master who was withholden from them and who talked to them. From this time onward He began from Moses and the prophets to expound unto them all the Scriptures. Before that He rebuked them by saying, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." God has shown us a path of His footprints, some of His faith, sufferings, and movings through the ages. The record has been kept by the Holy Spirit for us. The words of the mouth of the prophets when they spoke of the things of the Lord are kept for our learning.

*Let us not be afraid to believe all that the prophets have spoken.*

Finally, this whole picture comes together. We put the puzzle together, as we would say and we see the full picture. Today we are this side of Calvary and we say, "Well, we do not disbelieve." Is our faith still as vital and rich? Do we glory in the fact that we have a risen Lord and we have One whom we are called to serve that has the power of God to be with us to do the things that He said He would do when we go out and face the world?

I suppose it was with them a little like it is with us today. We think, "If God is so powerful, and we go out to witness and testify we could mention only a little and they cannot lay hands on anyone because we are serving a risen Lord." However, we find throughout history individuals who were servants of the Lord since the resurrection of Christ in the New Testament era — men whose lives were taken by wicked men and they lost their

physical life. Then, we are confused sometimes and think, "If we have all this kind of power, we should be able to rebuke these kind of powers that are before us and God will deliver us without any sufferings, or controversies, and we simply march through." That is the result of the disciples thinking in their day. They failed to fully understand all that was said.

Today, the Scriptures say we are not promised a bed of ease, and we are not promised even to be spared of our physical life. However, we are promised power to overcome the enemy of our soul and we can live eternally. Finally it does not stop at the end of physical life, if our faith is strong and revitalized the fact is that our faith must move us beyond the experience in the physical flesh to lay hold on the victory we have in Christ in the eternal ages — in the eternity to come.

Today, we take up our discipleship following Him who was crucified. Though Jesus could have, in His day subdued all those enemies, it was necessary to redeem us. We do not know why it is necessary for some today who witness for the Lord, to be like the apostle Paul who was put in prison and the apostles who died and were martyred for their service and faith expressions and labours in behalf of the kingdom. We cannot answer all of those things. But we are called upon to keep our eye fixed on the One who overcame so that we can overcome with Him.

As He came forth as the first fruits of the resurrection we can follow. We too shall be able to live eternally with Him. May our hearts not be slow to believe but to develop a faith that is anchored in the work and the Word of the Lord Jesus.

*The facts of Christ's resurrection are a central truth and foundation of the Christian faith.*

It is important that we believe with an unquestioning confidence in it. We have statements from the Apostle Paul's expressions in 1 Corinthians 15 — the resurrection chapter. Paul endeavoured to help us understand the experience of the resurrection as it is. Jesus made it possible. The resurrection is a central and a foundational truth by which the Christian faith is founded, and for which we live as we follow the Master. We need to embrace it without questioning and without a loss, but rather with confidence.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:17 "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (20) But now is Christ risen from the

dead, and become the first fruits" (verses 19, 20). It is a centrality of the course and the foundation for the Christian Church, to the New Testament time as long as time shall last. Verse 23 says, "But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." This outworking and the manifestation will follow through when we have that.

Jesus' resurrection was necessary for us for the fulfilment of Scriptures. Luke 24:44 says, "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me." Jesus told this to those two men on the way to Emmaus. It is necessary to believe the word of the prophets and those who prophesied. Over and over again in Jesus ministry He did this because of what was spoken by the prophets, so that they may be able to put it together. Everything needed to happen that the prophets spoke of. They did not speak something that was contrary or out of place, or that Jesus needed to somehow fit in to fulfill. It happened according to the prophets. We are reminded of it in the accounts, as Jesus lived His life on earth, that these were the things that were the fulfilment of the words of the prophets.

The resurrection finally brings us to the facts that these things were fulfilled. There are other things yet, of course, that the prophets have written in the Scriptures, even of those things which "shall be hereafter" (Revelation 1:19). Much had been centred around the resurrection — the things that the prophets spoke because it was the fulfilment of man's redemption when the plan of salvation was made complete and the perfect sacrifice was made. Now that redeemed body of believers who follow Him will someday be taken out of this world to live with Him in glory. That is the end results of the great work of God and the fulfilment of the great plan.

God's whole plan was laid out in the Old Testament Scriptures all the way through. We see God's great interest in man's need and fulfilling that need by providing salvation, bringing it to completion, and not stopping here with being able to have seen Him live on earth. The fulfilment of this all will go beyond into the greater experiences of the fulfilment in the eternal ages to come. Our faith must go beyond simply our belief and experience in the present. What the resurrection symbolizes shall finally be our portion when we go beyond the experience here on earth dealing with sin.

*The resurrection is necessary for the forgiveness of sin.*

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins," Paul

says. Finally, the resurrection was not only that He gave His blood and was called the perfect "Lamb of God" (John 1:29), to be able to die and to have His blood shed for the remission of the transgressor. If that would be the end what would be the reality of the hope beyond that? "Nothing," Paul says, "you would still be in your sins." You would still be guilty before God. Today, we can experience redemption and be delivered by the power of God over sins that are our plague continually. Finally, one day we can be with that number that shall be taken out and be in the presence of the Holy One where Jesus is today.

*The facts of the resurrection make the way to be justified before God.*

Paul says in Romans 4:24, 25 "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; (25) Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Jesus stands in the presence of the One who was just. He became the "justifier," for us in the presence of God. He satisfied the just demands of that. Therefore, today He is there interceding for us. It is a hope — our offenses have been removed and we stand justified in the presence of God.

*The resurrection experience and truths are necessary so that we can have a blessed hope.* In 1 Corinthians 15:19-23 we have these words, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (20) But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. (21) For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (23) But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming," This shows to us that sin came through man into the world. We have experienced the results of a fallen nature that came passed down to us from the first man Adam. Jesus Christ came into the world in the form of human flesh and lived among men. By man came the sinless Man who could provide redemption and salvation. Now He has given Himself so that we can be free.

We can experience eternal life through Him by the One who was Victor — not the one who was defeated but we follow the One who was Victor. He proved His power because He did not merely disappear. He did not become made into earth and His body decayed. Rather, He took up that body and came forth in a new body. He came forth in the power of God and manifested His power over all nature, all flesh, and all powers that are

known to man. Jesus has proven and shown to us that nothing can withhold Him.

*The resurrection gives power and effectiveness to preaching.* It is the power of Christ. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). There is a lot of religion that is bound around a dead person. The Christian religion is the only religion that has that living Lord as the central and powerful one. All the rest are dead men. Today, let us be sure. We have a message — a living message to dying men that they can be redeemed. They can experience the redeeming power.

*It brings power and effectiveness for faith.* "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain" (1 Corinthians 15:17). We put our trust in the living, unlimited power of God. By the acts of that which has taken place before, gives reason why we can continue to exercise faith in that which He has spoken and shall come to pass in the future. We see all things of earth and men's devices and even the devil's power that was set against, and hoped to demonstrate and hold Him. It all gave way to the power of God when He was resurrected. The grave could not contain Him. Death had no power to hold Him.

*The resurrection gives proof of His being the Son of God.* The resurrection gives proof that He was the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead. This verse we have in Romans 1:3-5. The apostle Paul says, "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (4) And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: (5) By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name." Finally, there is nothing else that is able to stand alongside of that as credentials for the reason of our faith and our discipleship to follow the Lord Jesus. Paul spoke of the Son of God who arose from the dead by the power of God. It gives us the credentials and effectiveness to give this message, and to go forth to the world.

*The effectiveness of His resurrection it broke the bars of death.* Really the effect of it was that it delivers man from the very captivity of death. Many today fear death because they have no hope beyond the grave. They fear the fact of death because they face the unknown with guilt on their conscience. Brethren and sisters, we can go freely claiming the powers of God

and the resurrection of His power working in us and making us new creatures in Christ. If that reality is true and our spirit witnesses with His Spirit "that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16), we can go forth with confidence. It is a revitalizing to our faith and our hope.

*The resurrection makes it possible for the future accesses with God and to believe in the resurrection of Christ is part of our confession of faith.* Paul said in Romans 10:9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead. . ." We may pass over that rather readily at times but that verse is one that we work with when we tell men what is necessary to obtain salvation. They need to confess the Lord Jesus with their mouth and believe in their heart. One of the parts of that belief is that God raised Him from the dead, because that puts the power in it. It puts a dynamic in it because it is a power that cannot be contained. It should enthuse us a little bit. It should get us a little bit excited about our faith. It is that which finally is part of what we profess — that we are following a living Lord and we are not merely following a form. We are following One who is alive.

*His resurrection to the children of God means that we have a living advocate with the Father today.* The results and the effects finally give us opportunity. We have One by the throne of God today making intercession — an advocate. Jesus Christ the righteous is my advocate today to help me in my Christian experience. It is He to whom I can come daily, and need to come daily, and keep the records clear between me and my Lord. He is there seated today at the right hand of God for me and for you if you are a child of God.

*The resurrection fact means a new body for eternity.* This is one of the glorious things that follows. Finally, this old body finally wears out and we have no more use for it. We look for the time when we can receive a new body and we will have a body like unto His glorious body. We could take time to read in the 1 Corinthians 15 all about the various bodies that are for their purpose in their special sphere and effectiveness. It will be raised a spiritual body. That is what we are talking about. Again, as our faith stands, it does not stop at the grave. We look for a new body and we look for a new heaven and a new earth — raised up with a new body.

*The resurrection means that we are brought to stand before the great Judge of all the earth and justified, uncondemned.* There will be a resurrection of all men. Another fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that

the righteous shall come forth and be able to stand before God justified in the provision that God made in Christ. There will be also a resurrection of the unjust who will also come forth. The resurrection message finally tells us of a future coming event. We ought to prepare to meet our God.

*Given at Centreville Mennonite Church where Bro. Paul Weaver was a Minister of the Gospel. Used by permission from "The Pulpit Exchange"*

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### Family Worship – Article 3 Meaningful Family Worship

Family worship is an outworking of adoration, reverence, and praise for the Lord. It is not a feeling that can be gotten by personal effort and laid down at will. It is a love that is present not only at the time set aside for worship, but is present in all of life. In order for family worship to be meaningful, parents must have that worshipfull spirit in their lives. Otherwise, it becomes only a form and has no power or influence in their own lives nor does it inspire their children to worship the Lord, who made all things and who only is worthy of our worship.

Without that spirit of worship, the time set aside for family worship becomes only sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Inattention does the same thing. A monotonous, dull routine tends to divert interest from the Word.

The central theme of meaningful family worship is God and His Word. There is no substitute for reading and explaining the Word. The sense of the Word must be given to young children so that they can begin to understand and absorb the Word in their minds. No Bible storybook, no matter how good it is, should take the place of reading the Bible. It can be used as a diversity, but not in place of the Bible. Some object that the Bible is too hard to understand. That is one of the reasons our children should begin to learn to understand the Word when they are young. If they need to wait until later in life, they have missed the best time of their lives.

Family worship is a good time to encourage Bible memorization. You may not be able to spend much time at it, but repeating a short passage together will help rivet it in the absorbent minds of the children. It will also brush up the verses for the adults and older children.

Family worship is a good time to sing. Singing is an important part of our public worship services. Because of this, we should also stress its importance in family worship. Teach simple children's songs that teach lessons, that talk of God and His Son, Jesus, that praise God for all He does for us, that give solid practical basis on which to build a life that will be useful for God later on. Make singing enjoyable for everyone. If you can, learn some new songs. But do not always work on new songs, because children need repetition to learn songs and to enjoy singing them. At times, older children get tired of singing the same song that the preschooler repeatedly picks. But repetition is a necessary part of the learning process. Teach the older ones patience with the little ones.

As children learn to read, have them participate in reading the Bible. A good practice is to take turns, each reading a verse around the family circle. The younger ones may need more coaching, but it brings its dividends. Another practice that helps children concentrate on what is being read is to afterward ask them to give a thought or answer a question on what was read. The younger ones may be asked only to give a word that was read in some verse. The older ones should be expected to produce questions or thoughts about the passage. Do not settle for less than their capabilities.

Another good practice is to read a short portion of a good book, such as the *Martyrs Mirror* or *Pilgrim's Progress*. This can be the inspiration that some of the older children need in order to take interest in this type of reading. In the *Martyrs Mirror*, it becomes very laboring to read everything on doctrinal issues. Do not eliminate all of it, but some parts are repetitious, so limit them.

You are probably asking, "When do you find time to do all of these things? We just do not have time to spend an hour each morning or evening to do all of this." You are probably right. You do not need to do all of these things every day. Our practice as a family has been to sing a hymn on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. On Tuesday and Thursday, instead of singing, we read a portion from the *Martyrs Mirror*.

You do not need to spend a long time for family worship, but you should be willing to devote fifteen or twenty minutes of each day in worship and seeking the Lord's guidance, since He has so graciously given you the whole day!

What is the best time of the day for family worship? Some say that the morning is the only time to have it, and others say that it is all but impossible for them to work family worship into their morning schedule. My opinion is that the morning is the best time for several reasons. First, if we begin the day

with the Lord, the tone is set for the rest of the day. Second, usually everyone is more alert in the morning. I remember a home where they had family worship in the evening. Because of the late hour, some of the children fell asleep between verses and were wakened to read their verse. Could they get much out of the reading and explanation the parents gave? These suggestions are not the only way to keep family worship meaningful, but they can help to make the time more profitable for everyone.

Use some variation in your selections for reading. You may follow the guide in the Rod and Staff Sunday school books for your daily reading. That is good, but it may be more meaningful if you at times read some passage directly related to a current circumstance, such as a sickness in the family, a birth, a death, or a certain struggle the family is experiencing. Whatever you use, let it be your guide and not your master. You should use some pattern, and not just a haphazard way of selecting where to read.

It also adds interest if on Saturday morning you follow a different routine. We find it inspirational to each give a memory verse and a thought about it, and then sing a song or two. Other Saturday mornings we sing four or five songs and then have sentence prayers specifically mentioning something we are thankful for. Prayer is very important. Teach the young children to pray, possibly by repeating after you a simple prayer directed to their needs. Have the older children pray also. It is good to give several specific prayer requests that should be remembered in the prayer. That helps children to learn to be conscious of and to reach out to others' needs.

Children need to be taught to sit reverently in family worship just as much as in church. It is easier to keep a reverent attitude if family worship is held in the living room instead of around the breakfast table. It may also be necessary to take the telephone receiver off the hook to avoid interruptions.

Whatever way you do it, try to make it meaningful and inspirational for all involved. To have family worship only sporadically shows what priority you place on worshipping God. Your children will catch that. Make sure they have no reason to catch the wrong vision from your pattern of having family worship.

—*Lee Schrock, The Christian Contender, 1999.*

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## Gaining Inspiration From Old Testament Worship (Part 3)

### Trimming Our Lamps

Lamps of the Bible era were uncomplicated devices, designed to hold oil and a wick. The wick was usually flax, perhaps twisted. Keeping a lamp burning brightly required not only replenishing the oil but also trimming the wick.

The lamp tender used snuffers and a snuff dish to trim the wick. When Bezaleel made the golden candlestick for the temple, he also made snuffers and snuff dishes out of pure gold (Exodus 37:23). Snuffers would probably be called tweezers today. When a person trimmed a lamp, he picked off the ashen end of the wick and placed it in the little pan.

Christians are known as "children of light" (John 12:36; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). How might our lamps need to be trimmed? Anything that hinders our shining brightly for God should be trimmed. Otherwise, our light is less than it should be. Fanny Crosby cast this thought poetically when she wrote,

When Jesus comes to reward His servants,  
Whether it be noon or night,  
Faithful to Him will He find us watching,  
With our lamps all trimmed and bright?

When we become aware of trimming that will help us shine more brightly for Him, we should do so immediately. Just as a smoky or dim lamp was cheerless and unsatisfactory, so are we to God and our fellow men when we neglect to maintain our lamps.

Perhaps our speech needs to be trimmed to let our "communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay" (Matthew 5:37).

What we feed our souls through reading and music needs to be considered. Those things have an effect on our light. Sometimes our lights burn low because we have been listening to ourselves foment discouragement. The psalmist trimmed his lamp by speaking thus: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God" (Psalm 42:5).

The Christian worker wearies and needs times of refreshing before continued usefulness. Prayer, Bible study, and worship trim our wicks, providing fuller, brighter light.

When we find that our lamps need to be trimmed, we should not become discouraged. Quality oil is always available, for God Himself supplies the fuel for the lamp. But it is up to us to control our hearts and keep them on fire for God, even if ashes form on the fringes. Many people seem to think that the blessing of a uniform, steady Christian experience is beyond reach. But this is not so. If we but keep our lamps trimmed by governing ourselves more assertively, we will know the joy of the Christian graces at work.

We have Jesus Himself to help in this necessary work. It was both prophesied and fulfilled, The "smoking flax [wick] shall he not quench" (Isaiah 42:3; Matthew 12:20). Let us use His help to do our part in keeping our lamps trimmed and brightly burning.

*Jonathan Erb Used by permission from: "The Eastern Mennonite Testimony"*

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## **SNAPSHOTS.**

Brief excerpts from various Anabaptist publications.

## **Doctrines of the Bible by Daniel Kauffman. Editor.**

### **THE DOCTRINE OF MAN**

#### **Chapter 1.**

The most remarkable thing about man, outside of the fact that he was created in the image of God, is his capacity for development. This is true, both in paths of righteousness and in the ways of sin.

Man is of a dual nature, in this that he is both fleshly and spiritual. On the one hand, he is like God; while on the other, he is like the animal creation. As a being like unto God he is intelligent, enjoys spiritual fellowship, is the possessor of a soul that has eternal existence. As a being like unto the lower animals, he is subject to the limitations of the flesh—to sickness, pain, and death.

Comparing man with God, we find him inferior to God in every point on which the comparison is made. The difference may be expressed in two words: finite and INFINITE. Yet, as already pointed out, man has the capacity for development, his room for growth is unlimited, since he may

continue to grow a whole life-time without reaching perfection, and the longer he serves God the more he becomes like the Divine Model. Man's largeness depends wholly upon how fully he yields himself to God and repudiates the dominion of the flesh.

Comparing man with the lower animals, he is far above them in intelligence, dominion, and power—his capacity far beyond them, either for good or for evil. While the lower animals are governed through instinct, man is blessed with reasoning powers which give him an immensely larger sphere. When an animal dies, all that is left is a carcass that returns to dust. When a man dies, his body returns to dust while the soul continues to exist forever. But when man, like the lower animals, submits to the dominion of the flesh, he sinks into depths of depravity unknown in the animal world.

The practical question continually confronting us is, Will we, like the lower animals, grovel in the dust? or will we, like God, dwell in the heavens?

*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. —Genesis 1:27.*

The psalmist, evidently meditating upon the goodness and mercy of God and considering the great contrast between the Infinite God and finite man for whom the Creator did so much, burst forth in wonder and praise, exclaiming, "WHAT IS MAN that thou art mindful of him?" Drawing our deductions from the Word of God, as in the light of this Word we make a study of ourselves and our fellow creatures, let us attempt an answer:

1. Man is a finite image of the Infinite God.

After God had supplied the earth with vegetable and animal life, there was still no creature that bore His own image. So God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26). Man, like the Creator whose image he bears, is a compound being. When God said, "Let us make," etc., He used language that indicated the Trinity of the Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Ghost), as the trinity of man is indicated in that significant expression, "Spirit and soul and body" (I Thess. 5:23). Man is a compound being, also, in the fact that he resembles both God and the animal creation. In physical structure there is much in the way of similarity between man and the lower animals, and, like them, man is subject to sickness, pain, and death. On the other hand he is endowed with a mind that enables him to rule the world,

and all the moral attributes of God, named in a previous chapter and which God possesses to perfection, are possessed by man to a limited degree. Man, while bearing the image of God, can never hope to equal Him; for in all things God is perfect and infinite while man is imperfect and finite.

2. Man is the noblest and greatest of all God's earthly creatures.

The intelligence of man gives him the mastery over the animal world. Man alone possesses a spirit that enables him to commune with his Maker, receiving revelations from God by which he governs his life. Moreover, he is the possessor of a soul which is not only in communion with his Maker here, but which will, at the point of dissolution between soul and body, take its flight to the great God who gave it. Well may we, with the psalmist, burst forth in reverent worship and say, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works" (Psalm 139:14).

3. Fallen man is the vilest of creatures on earth.

The man described in the preceding paragraph is the man as God created him, or as restored through the atoning merits of the blood of Christ, and not the fallen, sin-polluted creature that now inhabits this sinful world. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea are all filling the places which God ordained them to fill. Some of them seem rather depraved, the whole animal creation having been affected by the fall of man; but they are all governed by instinct, accommodating themselves to their surroundings as best they know how, and filling their places as God designed that they should. Of man alone is it true that he has proved traitor to his Creator. He fell from his lofty station, and instead of shining in the image of God he has descended into the lowest depths of vice and degradation—in his sinful state an utterly depraved being. It is reserved for man alone to make the disastrous descent from the lofty state of being a child of God to that of being a child of the devil. Read Jeremiah 9:17; Romans 1:18-2:2.

4. Man is the object of heaven's love.

When we think of the woefully depraved state of fallen man, and then think of what God has done and is doing for him, we may well wonder with the psalmist, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" And here is where the amazing grace, the marvelous goodness, and the unerring wis-

dom of God become manifest. Man, notwithstanding his total depravity, is, after all, possessed of a soul that is worth saving, and God moved heaven and earth to bring this about. The love of the father of the prodigal son (Luke 15), in watching and longing for the return of his wayward son, is but a faint illustration of the love of the heavenly Father for His fallen creatures, in giving His only begotten Son as a sacrifice to bring about their redemption and restoration to Him. They who respond to this wonderful grace can truly say, "We love him, because he first loved us."

Read John 3:16, 17; Romans 5:1-8; I John 3.

#### 5. Man is God's servant.

In the beginning God placed man into the Garden of Eden and commanded him to dress it and keep it. Gen. 2:15. While many unfaithful men are the voluntary servants of sin rather than of God, there is a sense in which all men are the servants of God—the righteous willingly so, the unrighteous at times and under circumstances when it pleases God to use them in carrying out His plans. In the latter sense Nebuchadnezzar, whom God used in bringing chastisement upon rebellious Israel; Cyrus, whom God used as His servant in restoring Judah to the promised land; Pharaoh, whom God raised up to fill the place he did in connection with the children of Israel; and the men who had a part in crucifying Christ, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," were all the servants of God. Willingly or unwillingly, constantly or at such times as God may have special need for their services in carrying out His will, all men are the servants of God. In unwilling service, however, wicked men receive no reward. See Acts 1:18-25 concerning the fate of Judas. Concerning the service of the obedient, read Romans 6:16.

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### **The Social Embrace**

*Martin L. Hoover, Lebanon, PA*

The social embrace is the practice of folding another in one's arms as a way of greeting that has become popular in the world. Because we are in the world, the customs of the world bring influences and pressures on our

churches and homes. The challenge is to not become part of the world even though we are in it. As Christians we need to be careful that we do not adopt practices that disregard or undermine the principles of God's Word and the practical applications of the Word made by the church.

The greeting of guests and friends in Bible times included various practices unknown to society today. Included in this greeting was a kiss. In the culture of Bible lands, the reception process was practiced with dignity, honor, and respect toward both friend and enemy. The Bible does not indicate that an embrace was part of their normal greeting.

The Bible, however, records embracing being practiced in special situations. When Esau and Jacob met, they did fall on each others' necks. Because they were brothers and had been separated for many years, this was different from the normal greeting. Also because their relationship had been marred by anger and treachery, their embrace was a sign of forgiveness and a desire to live in brotherly peace.

Another example of embracing is recorded in Acts 20, when Paul embraced the disciples from Ephesus before departing for Jerusalem. He had just told them that they would not see his face again. This too was not a normal occurrence and understandably would have been a very emotional time.

In the world the social embrace has become a light and casual gesture of acknowledging friends. Sad to say, it has also crept into religious circles. Its popularity has grown along with the moral decline of society. It crosses gender lines and does not retain the dignity of the Biblical practice of the greeting. Its loose practice violates God's standards for modesty and further contributes to the breakdown of the moral standards of society.

Occasionally we meet individuals who observe this practice. As a rule our closest friends should not be among those who practice the embrace. If we face this problem regularly, we may need to evaluate the tone of our friendships. Perhaps we are not keeping our lines of separation from the world distinct and should put more distance between ourselves and the world. Keeping the arm somewhat stiff when shaking hands with an individual that practices the embrace will help identify our position on this practice and may deflect an even more awkward situation. A handshake and a friendly smile will communicate our acknowledgment and goodwill.

As mentioned earlier, our homes and churches face pressures from the world. The social embrace has occasionally been seen in our circles, espe-

cially when guests are meeting the bride and groom after a wedding. In such cases, the Christian Salutation and handshake are being dropped in favor of the embrace. This is a classic example of how the world's practices, rather than fulfilling Biblical commands, undermine and destroy them. If we permit the practice of the social embrace, it will soon become a normal practice among us and will displace the practice of the Holy Kiss.

*How can we avoid the snare of accepting the social embrace?*

We avoid accepting the social embrace by giving the Christian Salutation its proper place. We do this first by recognizing it as a direct Bible command. This practice is not man's idea but a God-given command. Biblical directives for the Christian Salutation include the following passages: 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; and 1 Peter 5:14. The Christian greeting is an appropriate greeting for all church functions, including funerals, weddings, and visits in the homes of our brethren and sisters.

The social embrace is avoided as we as older members set examples for the rising generation by practicing the Christian Salutation ourselves. As our youth become members of the church, we expect that they too observe this ordinance, even when meeting their peers. As they regularly observe the Christian Salutation, they become comfortable with its observance.

We also avoid accepting the embrace by teaching and promoting a high moral standard in our homes. We embrace our little children because it fills an important part in their emotional development. However, by the time our children reach school age, this emotional need is largely met and our love should be expressed in other ways. Teaching our children right conduct, modesty, and reserve in the home will go far in helping them maintain acceptable conduct in relating to those about them.

We ever need to strive to keep our walk Christ like and free from the world's alternatives for Christian living and conduct. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

*Reprinted with permission from; The Eastern Mennonite Testimony.*

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