



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Distinctive Anabaptist Teaching: Meaning of Baptism

Matthew 28:18–20 are very familiar verses. It is the commission of our Lord to His disciples. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have com-

manded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” 1 Peter 3:20–22 says, “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (21) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting

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away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (22) Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”

We are considering distinctive Anabaptist teaching as it relates to the meaning of Baptism. The verses that we read were two very important verses to the Anabaptists in the 1500’s. It was

the command of Matthew 28 and the very clear teaching that Baptism was “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” On these the Anabaptist forefathers, our early leaders, preached and taught this distinctive doctrine.

The doctrine of baptism is not a new doctrine. Baptism was practiced in the Early Church. We know that down through the years into the dark ages, as we call them, many of the simple

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Bible truths were lost. They were replaced by rites and practices which deviated from the Bible.

I appreciate the emphasis on the authority of God's Word. The early Anabaptists, and we today, need to understand as it says in Matthew 28 that the making of disciples of all nations, the teaching of the "all things," the baptizing of those new believers, has been, and continues to be an important command to the followers of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

I want us to notice what was distinctive about the Anabaptist teaching on baptism. Why is this distinctive teaching a part of our belief and practice today? As we look at history, we know that in the 1500's the Roman Catholic church was in a very formal time. There was much corruption and evil in the church. One of the practices of the Roman Catholic church was infant baptism. They said it was necessary to baptize children lest they die in their sins. That is what they told everyone. They preached that. That is where they stood.

Luther broke away from the Catholic church but he justified infant baptism with the thought that the child appropriated faith from the congregation. Baptism was that which the child could

then appropriate faith from the congregation. Bucer another reformer called infant baptism, "a guarantee of godly training." Bullinger, who was a leader after Zwingli said, "it was the Christian parallel to the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision."

Menno Simons had many questions when he first left the Catholic church about infant baptism. However, he came to this conclusion as he studied the Scriptures and listened to others share about the Bible and what it taught. Menno Simons said, "That there is no one who spoke from the New Testament." We speak of the authority of the Scriptures. The early Anabaptist men were known as men of the Word. They knew the Word and they promoted what it taught. Together they promoted believer's baptism. Infant baptism was one of the reasons the group became known as Anabaptists — baptized again.

The call of these early leaders was to return to following the New Testament teaching. This was in contrast to Catholicism's teaching of works, and the teaching of Luther of faith alone. In stark contrast to all of that stood Michael Sattler and his writings of the Schleithem confession written in February of 1527. In

this confession the rite of infant baptism was condemned. He said this, "It is non-apostolic." He stated that any congregation trying to establish right church life would not use this practice. Any congregation who is trying to establish a Biblical concept of baptism will not even have second thoughts about infant baptism. That is how clearly they understood the New Testament to be on infant baptism.

Article I of the Schleithem confession says, "Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him and to all those who with this significance request it (baptism) of us and demand it for themselves. This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the Pope. In this you have the foundation and testimony of the apostles. Matthew 28, Mark 16, Acts 2, 8, 16, 19. This we wish to hold simply, yet firmly and with assurance." There are many other confessions of faith that we have down through the years. Many of them say basically the same

thing.

Another closely related aspect that became very important to the Anabaptist was that by baptism the believer came under the discipline of a Biblical people, a discipline which he, himself helped to make and enforce. Do we see the Scriptural way in which they saw the type of baptism? Baptism is being that which brings us into the Church. It is the initiatory rite to become a member of the Church. By doing that, it was also a call to accept the fact that the truth that these men were teaching and practicing. It drew them together into a disciplined fellowship. They believed that if the door of the entrance was closely watched, a strong and true church could be maintained. Along with baptism was the carefulness and the seriousness of church membership.

What then is the meaning of baptism to God's people? 1) First of all what is baptism? It is "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21). By that we mean that it is a conversion experience, or a complete change from a corrupt conscience. I do not know if you remember the day you were baptized? We know that there was a salvation experience before that. I remember that day as a young

Christian and the seriousness of the hour in which the bishop read these words about having “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” Each time we witness a baptism it should again be a means of reinforcing in our hearts and minds this very fact. As we practice the ordinance and we see others baptized, we can then be thankful anew of what God has shown to us and done in our life. He has changed our heart from an evil heart to a heart that is pure. It is a heart where there is a good answer — an answer of a good conscience toward God.

The New Testament meaning of baptism also includes that it is an initiatory rite by which we are received into the Church. Matthew 28:18–20 which we read tells us that we are to “Go,” to “make disciples,” “to teach,” and “to baptize.” The teaching regarding baptism is that which we then receive church membership. The New Testament example as we see over and over again is that when a person gives evidence of the new birth — conversion, he is to be baptized. One who has given that testimony, given that evidence, will give an evidence of faith, repentance, and conversion.

Acts 8:37 gives us the account of the Eunuch’s conversion. It

says, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [be baptized].” That is the answer. The Philippian jailor asked, “what must I do to be saved” (Acts 16:30)? Paul’s answer was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). Mark 16:16 says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Over and over in Scriptures we see the aspect of faith, belief, and baptism.

Repentance — the people said after Peter’s message, “Men and brethren, what shall we do” (Acts 2:37)? And Peter’s reply was, “Repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). John, before Christ’s ministry preached repentance and baptism. Over and over again in Scripture there is this call to repentance and then baptism. It is never the other way around. It is never baptism and then repentance. It must be repentance and then baptism. *In Acts 3 we notice that conversion is needed.* Acts 3:19 says, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Repent and be converted. Saul needed to have a change of heart and mind. We see how God called him to his conversion there

on the road to Damascus.

Baptism also typifies the remission of sins. Acts 2:38 says, “Repent, and be baptized.” It is not the washing away of sins. It is like I heard one person give the story one time of a group gathered at a stream for a baptism. Afterward one said, “I felt like my sins went downstream.” Is that Biblical baptism? Is it the washing? Is the water, the washing an important part of that? It typifies the remission of sin. It is the washing of regeneration by the Word, by the blood of Christ. It is typified then by baptism — the washing away and the removal of our sin. It shows that it has already happened, not that it will happen.

Baptism is also an act of obedience. Over and over in Scripture we are told “repent, and believe and be baptized.” The great commission, “Go . . . baptize” is a command. These things are what the Scriptures teach us as to the meaning of baptism.

In conclusion, the Anabaptist teaching is Bible teaching and Bible doctrine. Baptism is an outward testimony of the inner experience — the desire to live a holy life. That is what the Anabaptists were saying when they requested baptism. They were saying, “We have been

cleansed of our sins. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. We have put off the old man. We have put on the new. We want to show by baptism what has already happened in our life.

Early Anabaptists believed they should place little stress on the observance of this ordinance but rather the importance was what it means in daily life. Baptism typifies our standing before God. That was what is important, and that is true. We do not want to diminish the command. We do not want to make light the act of baptism, the actual working out of that. Nevertheless it is so important that we understand what it is expressing, what it is telling.

Acts 9:1–19 gives us Saul’s conversion experience. It is so simple and it portrays the total experience of each one of us — conversion, repentance, and the faith that was required of Paul before baptism. May we again today appreciate the meaning of baptism. May we appreciate the distinctive teaching that comes to us from those who have gone before. It is not that we venerate them, but because they esteemed the Word of God, we too can hold forth these principles as truth for today. May the Lord bless.

Distinctive Anabaptist Teaching: Discipleship and Crossbearing

Our topic is “Discipleship and Crossbearing” as an Anabaptist distinctive. We might say, in a way, it does not have a tangible side to as baptism does, for example. Baptism was something that the Anabaptists confronted the law over — the laws that were at that time. They went to prison because they were re-baptizing, because they did not baptize their children and those kinds of things. Nevertheless, discipleship and crossbearing was very real to our forefathers. In that way it was a tangible thing but it did not have, you might say, the “official” side to it.

Perhaps in the area of discipleship and crossbearing they were accused rather of thinking they were perfect and believing that they were better than the rest because of their godly character. Many times that was actually used as slander against them. They said that they were hiding serious sins by their outward hypocrisy. That was some of the challenges that they faced in their day.

Discipleship and crossbearing are not new terms. In fact, they are quite popular in our day. Do not all Christian churches believe the Bible teaches cross bearing?

Have you not heard Christian professing people talk about discipling the new believers that have come to their congregation? These terms are very popular in our day. We can find books with titles like *True Discipleship*.

The first chapter of that book has some very sensational things to say about discipleship. It mentions about those who are followers of communism (this book was written probably in the '60's and therefore that was a very prominent idea in those days). There were people who were excited about communism and what it could offer the world. Also, it mentioned that there are cult followers such as the Mormons of whom the idea is that they put Christians to shame in their zeal for their cause.

I talked with a man recently who told me that this idea of crossbearing and discipleship is preached in the fundamental churches of our land. People get so excited about how they should go and do something. They feel at the end of the service that they ought to really do something for Jesus. Therefore, they may come to a conclusion like this, “We should take our neighbour children with our family to King’s

Dominion [a recreation theme/amusement park] for a day, and give these people an experience in a Christian family.

Well, they do something all right. We shake our heads and wonder how they are supposed to help these neighbour children learn about Jesus at King's Dominion. That is because of the distinctive Anabaptist perspective. I would also like to say as other brethren mention, that it did not begin with the Anabaptists. These teachings are Bible teachings. They are not Anabaptist in the sense that we can say that we defined them or that we made them. Perhaps we did give some definition to them. I say we did not define them. They are defined by the Scriptures. Maybe we illustrate them. Faithful Anabaptists in their distinctive approach to these Scriptures have illustrated the Bible truths. I trust that is still happening in our day.

Why do we have a different view? We will take the time to look at the Scriptures. We want to remember that these Scriptures which we want to look at are very well explained by many professing Christians, but what the Bible says is not the problem because many times we say the same things. What it means for us is where the difference appears.

We will notice a few of these Scriptures that are the basis for discipleship and crossbearing. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). 1) *Discipleship and crossbearing mean that there is a supreme love for Jesus.* As I mentioned, I suppose all Christian churches would agree that there must be a supreme love for the Lord Jesus Christ. However, that does not mean the same thing to everyone.

2) *Denial of self.* "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Matthew 16:24). Do we see that phrase, "Let him deny himself?" What does it mean to deny self? That means different things to different people. It means something to us that it does not mean to others because of the distinctive nature of the teaching that we have received over the years and because of the heritage that we have. We would not think it appropriate to take our neighbour children with us to King's Dominion. That is not denying self. It is entertaining. Therefore, that is where the problem appears. There is a distinctive difference.

3) *Also in this verse it says we are to take up the cross.* “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross.” We need to take up the cross. As you notice, this is a personal cross. What does that mean? Some of the Catholics felt that to carry a cross on a necklace, or on a chain around their neck was a way to carry the cross. We know that is not what it means. What does it mean to take up our cross and follow Jesus?

4) *Also from this verse it says “follow me.”* Maybe that is what helps us to understand the difference and why it is distinctive in Anabaptist heritage. Follow me is a very important point here. What does it mean to follow Jesus? We want to think about that some more.

5) *A love for the believers is part of the discipleship and crossbearing.* “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). The way that the Anabaptists groups believe that is distinctive. Some people look in on the Anabaptist groups and they think about the barn raisings and such things, but there are deeper things that enter in. What does it mean to love the believers?

6) *Obedience to God’s Word.*

This is taken from John 8:31, “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” We could go to Matthew 7:22 and read the verses about the people that said, “Lord, Lord . . . we have done so many things for thee.” And He says, “I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23). It is because they did not obey Him. They knew His Word but they did not obey Him. Therefore, obedience to God’s Word is another mark of discipleship and crossbearing.

7) *Forsaking all.* “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). Other things could be included. Discipleship and crossbearing means forsaking all for Jesus.

The terms, and these Scriptures that we looked at are clear and unequivocal. By that we mean that they are not misunderstood. As I said, many around us, even books very clearly explain what the Bible says. It is not easy to mistake the meaning of these verses. However, our title is worded as it is, discipleship and crossbearing as an Anabaptist distinctive because, while the Bible is very clear on what it says, it means something quite different to many people

and means different things to different people, we might say.

Everyone who calls himself a Christian says that they believe in the atoning blood of Jesus. They have faith in Jesus. Therefore, there are many of the fundamental truths that we believe alike. However, when it comes to what it means for Jesus to be Lord of the life then there is a lot of variety in thinking.

Supposing in our mind, let us go back to 1536 (simply picking a year). 1536 — a man and his wife are poor, peasant farmers and they do not get to town very often, but they go to the village church faithfully. The last time they were at church the priests gave them solemn warnings of the heresy that is spreading through the land and to beware of the new teaching. They do not know what it is, but he also announces that there will be a public burning in the town which is some distance. They go there for supplies once in a while and they decide to go to this execution.

As they go a few weeks later, they get close to the town. There are crowds of people. They are so crowded. They can hardly get close to the market square where this execution is to take place. They hear lots of things being said. Some of them are talking

badly about the heretics, but you know they also hear some that are talking with admiration about these people. They are talking about their knowledge of the Scriptures and how some go joyfully to the death, calling on the bystanders to confess their sins as if they had found deliverance from sin.

Therefore, because of what they hear, they decide they would like to get closer. Therefore, they press on with new interest to get to the marketplace. When they get there, they discover that it is someone they knew from their childhood home community. They always knew this man to be a good person. As a youth he was respectable and seemed to have an interest — he was spiritually minded. They meet some of the relatives and some the acquaintances from the hometown where they had grown up. They maybe had moved to a different area. They discover, yes this was the same kind of person. He was a godly man.

However, the reason he was here today was because reading the Scriptures to his neighbours and expounding to them the truths of the Scriptures. For that reason he is dying today. They discover that. This story could be repeated. I did not base it on any factual story, but we know that

those kinds of things happened.

Thus, the couple goes home with great stirrings of heart. Maybe weeks or months go by and then they hear the notice that someone will be having a secret meeting in their home reading the Scriptures. They decide to go. They hear about these Scriptures in their own language on baptism. The one who reads the Scriptures expounds to them that when it says to “Repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:38), that cannot be babies. We must remember this was new to them. They all also know that this kind of personal faith in the Lord Jesus, as I mentioned, that it was new truth to them. If they would embrace this, it could cost them their lives. They understand that right at the beginning. Since these are new words and new teachings maybe some more months pass before they actually make a decision for Christ.

Do you know that Ulrich Zwingli believed this idea of adult baptism — baptism of believers. Ulrich Zwingli believed that but he was not an Anabaptist. Many other people heard those truths in those days, but they did not become Anabaptists either.

What is the Anabaptist distinction? Maybe there were those who said, “Well yes, that is what

the Bible teaches.” What made them different? I am sure you have the answer already, but we need to hear it again. They took the Word of God seriously. They decided to live it as an expression of their faith — an expression of their obedience, and this they did. Many, did this rather than choose an easier way, knowing full well that they may need to go to prison, knowing they may need to leave their children to the care of others because their lives would be taken. That was what was distinctive.

Were these people living the commitment of the Scriptures we noted? We looked at those seven Scriptures. Let us just think a little bit longer about that. 1) *Who had a supreme love for Jesus Christ?* Was it one of these faithful martyrs? Many who died left no record of their life or death. There are some who are recorded in *The Martyr’s Mirror*, but there are many others. Hebrews 11 talks about Old Testament saints, many who gave their lives for the cause of faith in Christ. We do not remember their names, but they had a supreme love for God or for Jesus Christ.

Zwingli was not willing to do this. He wanted the approval of men. He wanted the authority that the city counsel could give to him. He did not want to lose his

position in life. Did he have a supreme love for the Lord Jesus? That is the distinction of the Anabaptist's teaching and cross-bearing. We do what Jesus says. We love Him above all else.

I think there was a story in one of the reading books used many years in our schools — not so much anymore. Four men were on their way to baptism and they were apprehended. The guard asked, "Are you going to visit your girl friends?" "No, we are going to be baptized." They stood and told. They gave their testimony of their love for Jesus that He was the supreme love of life. Therefore, those men gave their lives for the sake of the Gospel.

2) *Who denied self?* We mentioned already the saints of Hebrews. Let us read them. "[Many] others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: (37) They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (38) (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:36–38). This true testimony and description would

fit the Anabaptists of the 1500's, would it not? It could easily describe the Waldensians before the Anabaptists.

It also fits the name or fits the life of another name — Menno Simons. He was a priest who lived in the comforts and luxury of the priest's office. One day he decided to deny self, and then he was on the run for the rest of his life. He denied self like Jesus. He had no place to lay his head, but was always running.

3) *Who chose the cross?* Again, I mentioned how, what a cross that would be to know that if I follow Jesus I may need to go prison or give my life. I may need to allow someone else to carry on the responsibility of raising my sons and daughters for the Lord. Oh, what a cross that would be. Families in Switzerland whose lands and farms and goods were confiscated, wandered about destitute. That is the cross, what it cost the person to be a Christian. It is not some mystical thing, but it is what it cost to follow Jesus.

We do not know as much about that as perhaps we ought to. I would like especially for our young people to understand the heritage and what we know of church life, in our godly homes and Christian homes. Many of the things that we benefit from

are because it is the effort to bear the cross in a dying and sinful world. We need to say no to the things of the world. That is what the cross is all about.

4) *It is to follow Jesus. Who is following Jesus?* Who would do like Jesus would do? There is another book written by Protestants called *In His Steps*. I read this when I was a young man. I was kind of intrigued by the idea of these worldly socialites who went to a church decided that they would do something for Jesus. Therefore, in their vocation or their calling they tried to live for Jesus and do as He would do. However, you will notice that it does not have the Anabaptist understanding to it. It does not have the New Testament understanding to it, because they did not leave their way of life. They did not start walking a narrow way. Were they really following Jesus? It seems like it falls so short.

Here is a quote. Some of you will recognize it. “Nothing can be purer and gentler than the inner motives of Mennoism — Mennonites. What thought so near to the blessed Master and so far from the acrimony and bitterness of men has their scruple which makes all strife and warfare unChristian. And the iron purpose that they have exhibited

for four centuries in maintaining their doctrine that the only genuine baptism could be that in which mature consciences of the individual took part. Who dares to assail as an inexorable prejudice? Then there is the brotherly charity which counts it so unworthily to be cared for even by the public institutions which their toil most largely contributes to maintain.

Their trouble is their drab clothing and their peculiarly fashioned garments have caught the eye of the gaping world — the visible peculiarities of dress which after all are as harmless as they are meaningless when compared with that in them which is invisible. Their strong Christian natures, earnest Christian piety, deep devotion to principle and their unswerving fidelity to truth, their Christian conduct in secular affairs, their godliness in everyday life and their charity that ‘vaunteth not itself’ [1 Corinthians 13:4].” That is some of E. K. Martin’s thoughts on this. Who has followed Jesus? Who is following Jesus? Who is walking the narrow way choosing to say “No,” to the world? That is how we follow Jesus.

5) *Who loves his brother?* As I mentioned, the barn raisings have caught the attention of our society. They “ooh” and they “ah”

about those kinds of things, but who loves his brother so much. I understand that it was even part of the commitment to become part of the church that in the early years maybe it was not only understood but stated that a person's earthly goods could be and would be available for the well-being of the congregation at the time they became a member of the church. Well, that is one side of it.

The other side is this: who loves his brethren so much that he is willing to submit himself to them, to their input in his life? "I love this brother so much. I love this sister so much that they have this thing to share about me about my life that I am willing to accept that. I am willing to learn from it. I am willing, like the apostle Paul says, "while the world standeth [not to eat meat for the sake of my brother" (1 Corinthians 8:13). That is certainly a distinctive approach. I do not know. I have talked to many so-called Christians in my work, but there do not seem to be too many who like to be told what to do. That is sadly lacking.

6) *Who has been willing to apply the Bible in meaningful and practical ways?* In modesty? Christian woman's veiling? Separation? Nonresistance? That is Bible

obedience. That is an Anabaptist distinctive.

7) *Who has forsaken all?* Again, this is one we hardly know about, at least most of us. What does it mean to forsake all to become a follower of Jesus? The movement was initially energized by first generation commitment. Have you ever read the book *Hidden Rainbow*? I know when they first made their commitment they were not joining a Mennonite church but you know they lost their families. Their families wanted nothing to do with them when they gave their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, you know where it led that family. It led them to the Mennonites. They became part of the church here in the New World.

I would like to mention too, that we today are energized and revitalized by the first generation commitments that come into our midst. We need to support them and be there for them. We can perhaps share in that in what it means to forsake all as we relate to these dear brethren and sisters.

I would be happy to share more stories about how this distinction was expressed, but more important is the reason behind the stories. I had this thought that came from Friedman's book *Mennonite Piety Through the*

Centuries. These Christians of the Anabaptists in the 15 and 1600's were willing to die because they had the assurance that they were authentic disciples of Jesus Christ. That is why they were willing to go to the stake. That is why they were willing to die. That is why they were willing to leave their families to the care of others because they had the assurance they were the real disciples of Jesus.

How do we get there? I would like to present three things. I would also like to mention that perhaps the reason why people are being attracted to Pietism and the need for feelings is because these three areas we are talking about are lacking. I would like to also mention before I forget it that these three items are found in a summary, in a very brief and concise manner in our baptismal vows which helps us to understand that yes the idea is still alive. It has been preserved, not because of us personally, but it has been preserved by a faithful people and a heritage that we should value and treasure very highly.

What gives the assurance that we are authentic disciples of Jesus? 1) *The true Christian view conversion and baptism as a solemn vow not to sin anymore.* Are you truly sorry for your past

sins? Are you willing to renounce Satan, the world and all works of darkness and your own carnal will and sinful desires? That is what we say when we give our vow in baptism.

2) *The true Christian chooses to walk the narrow way.* That is here again in the vows. We are willing to renounce the world. Are we willing to say "No," to the world and walk a narrow way? Even though it may seem a bit odd sometimes?

3) *The true Christian knows the spiritual uplift that transforms him and makes him ready to join in with those who will not only help him but will challenge him to be like Jesus.* Maybe this one could have been first. That is the need of brotherhood. The true Christian knows that he belongs to Jesus when he is in it with others in Christ. That is in John 5 that those who are true disciples of Jesus also know and appreciate the brethren and those who also love the Lord.

One of the challenges is this: How will we keep this alive? We might say that we, in this generation, are being tested in ways never experienced before. Maybe that is what we need. If we will maintain this faith, if we are going to maintain the distinction of being true disciples and bearing the cross in this genera-

tion then we need to face some things that no one has ever faced

before to test whether we actually have the same spirit or not.

Scripture References

Matthew	13:35		89	1 Corinthians	
7:22	89	Acts		13:4	93
7:23	89	2:37	85	Hebrews	
28:18–20	81	2:38	85, 86, 91	11:36–38	92
Luke		3:19	85	1 Peter	
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From the Previous Issue:

“Behold the Lamb of God” — John 1:29, 36

From a message by Nevin S. Weaver

Friday, March 25, 2005

Dohner Mennonite Church

Safeguarding the Social Life of Our Youth

From a message by David L. Sensenig

Tuesday, January 12, 1999

Winter Bible School

Woodbury Mennonite Church

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 50.

Death.

I. Natural.

1. The result of sin. — Genesis 3:19; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.

2. Certainty of death. — Psalm 89:48; Ecclesiastes 8:8; Hebrews 9:27.

3. How characterized in Scripture.

a. Return to dust. — Genesis 3:19; Psalm 104:29.

b. Sleep. — Deuteronomy 31:16; Matthew 9:24; Acts

7:60.

c. Dissolution of earthly tabernacle. — 2 Corinthians 5:1
(2 Peter 1:14).

d. No return. — Job 16:22.

e. Shadow of death. — Job 10:21; 12:22; 24:17; Psalm

23:4.

f. To depart. — Philippians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:6.

g. No repentance. — Ecclesiastes 9:10.

h. Illustrates conversion. — Romans 6:2; Colossians

2:20.

II. Spiritual.

1. The first death.

a. The result of sin. — Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; 1
Corinthians 15:56; James 1:15; 1 John 5:16.

b. Description.

i. Darkness. — Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:79.

ii. Carnally-minded. — Romans 8:6.

iii. In trespasses and sins. — Ephesians 2:1.

iv. Blindness. — Ephesians 4:18, 19.

v. Living in pleasure. — 1 Timothy 5:6.

vi. Dead works. — Hebrews 6:1; 9:14; Revelation

3:1.

2. The second death.

a. Description. — Revelation 19:20; 20:14, 15; 21:8.

b. Has no power over those that overcome. — Revelation
2:11; 20:6.

c. It is eternal. — Proverbs 14:12; Daniel 12:2; Matthew
25:46; Mark 9:44, 46, 48; Jude 7.

d. Banishment from God. — 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

e. Society with the devil. — Matthew 25:41.

THE RESURRECTION.

I. Old Testament prophecies.

1. Job. — Job 19:25–27.

2. David. — Psalm 16:9–11; 17:15.

3. Isaiah. — Isaiah 26:19.

4. Ezekiel. — Ezekiel 37.

5. Daniel. — Daniel 12:2.

II. Our Saviour's teaching.

1. The Sadducees confuted. — Matthew 22:23–33.
2. A reference to the resurrection of the just. — Luke 14:14.
3. The eventful hour. — John 5:28, 29.
4. Power of the Son to raise His own at the last day. — John 6:39, 40, 44.
5. Christ the resurrection and the life. — John 11:25.

III. The Resurrection taught by the apostles.

1. Peter. — Acts 4:2.
2. Paul. — Acts 17:18; 24:15; 26:8; Romans 6:5; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Philippians 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18;
3. John.
 - a. How the saints shall appear. — 1 John 3:2.
 - b. The first resurrection. — Revelation 20:6.
 - c. The final resurrection. — Revelation 20:12, 13.

1. Was man created subject to death?
2. Distinguish between physical and carnal death.
3. Do all die at their "appointed time?"
4. Discuss the spiritual resurrection.
5. Were any resurrected before Christ?

LESSON 51.

Hell.

I. Signifies —

1. Place of departed spirits. — Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 14:9; Acts 2:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 20:13.
2. Eternal abode of the lost — Psalm 9:17; Revelation 20:14.

NOTE. — It is to this last meaning of the word that the following references apply.

II. For whom prepared. — Matthew 25:41.

III. Who will go there?

1. The devil. — Revelation 20:10.
2. The false prophet. — Revelation 20:10.
3. The wicked. — Psalm 9:17; Revelation 21:8.
4. All whose names will not be found in the book of life. — Revelation 20:13.

IV. The punishment according to unfaithfulness.

1. A comparison. — Matthew 10; 15.
2. An illustration. — Luke 12:47, 48.

V. Nature of the punishment.

1. It is terrible. — Revelation 14:10, 11.
2. It is everlasting. — Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:44, 46, 48; Revelation 20:10.
3. The remorse and anguish. — Matthew 8:12; 13:42.

VI. A means of escape. — John 3:16; Hebrews 3:15.

VII. What a knowledge of these facts should do.

1. It should fill every ransomed soul with prayer and thanksgiving for their deliverance.
2. It should awaken careless church members to a sense of their duty.
3. It should cause popular preachers to stop the pernicious practice of lulling their congregations to sleep.
4. It should cause professing Christians to stop explaining away the terrors of future punishment.
5. It should cause every sinner to flee from the wrath that is to come.
6. It should cause God's people to redouble their efforts for the rescue of the lost.

1. Will there be recognition among the lost in hell?
2. Will there be degrees of punishment?
3. When will the doomed enter this abode of the lost?
4. Was hell prepared for the wicked?

LESSON 52.

HEAVEN.

I. Signifies —

1. The firmament. — Genesis 1:8, 14–17.
2. The broad expanse. — Psalm 19:1; Isaiah 40:22.
3. The dwelling-place of God. — 1 Kings 8:30; Isaiah 6:1; 66:1; Matthew 5:34; 6:9; Hebrews 8:1; Revelation 4:2, 3.

NOTE. — It is to this meaning of the word that the following references apply. The “heaven of heavens,” mentioned by Solomon, and the “third heaven,” mentioned by Paul, refer to the dwelling-place of God.

II. For whom prepared. — Matthew 25:31–34.

III. Description. — Revelation 21; 22.

IV. The rewards.

1. Heavenly mansions. — John 14:2.
2. A crown of righteousness. — 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4.
3. “All things.” — Revelation 21:7.
4. These blessings to continue forever. — Psalm 16:11; Revelation 22:5.
5. Beyond description. — 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 12:4.

NOTE. — Let men sing of the glory of God; let poets paint the picture in the loftiest flights of the imagination; let the preachers unfold the scene in forensic flights of oratory; let revelators reach the heart of the power of language to portray what God has revealed to them — when the saved of earth shall ascend into the realms of eternal glory, their eyes shall behold a scene which beggars all description.

V. Who may enter?

1. The poor in spirit. — Matthew 5:3.
2. Little children. — Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16.
3. Those persecuted for righteousness’ sake. — Matthew 5:10; 1 Peter 3:14.
4. The adopted children of God. — Romans 8:14–17.

5. “Church of the first-born” and “just men made perfect.” — Hebrews 12:23.

6. The elect. — 1 Peter 1:1–4.

VI. The goodness of God.

1. His will that men might live. — Ezekiel 33:11; John 3:16.

2. All have like chances before God. — Acts 10:34; Romans 2:10, 11.

VII. What a knowledge of these facts should do.

1. Fill our hearts with praise forevermore.

2. Fill the enemies of God with shame for their ingratitude.

3. Convince the world of the goodness, mercy and love of God.

4. Cause us to put forth increased efforts to swell the ranks of God’s army.

5. Move the friends of God to carry the glad tidings of salvation to every creature.

6. Lessen our desire for earthly fame.

1. Shall we know each other in heaven?

2. Will there be degrees in heaven?

3. Will our growth continue on the other shore?

4. Would a sinner enjoy himself there?

5. Will we have the knowledge that some of our friends on earth are lost?

I have learned that God’s withholdings keep us nearer to Him in our walk than His gifts. When He withholds we live upon Him. When He gives, we too often forget Him and try to live on His gifts. Blessed be the man who has learned the secret of getting as much good out of what he has not got as he does out of what he receives. The good we get from what we receive is for time, while the good we get from God’s withholdings lasts forever. — Dr. W. A. Mason.

Youth Book Reprint

Andrew Dunn: An Irish Story *continued*

Andrew now began to speak more plainly to his family than

before, and would tell them of the love of Christ in giving Himself to redeem perishing sinners. For some time he seemed to them all, except his youngest daughter, as a person beside himself. She, from the beginning, heard his words with much attention, and in a short time came to him, and with a countenance expressive of the feelings of her mind, confessed "that she had been deeply affected by the things he had spoken; that the thought of them had never left her by day or night; that her mind was in such a state of uneasiness that she now came to him for advice and consolation." Andrew was greatly delighted by what he heard; he told her the importance of not trifling with such serious thoughts, endeavored to set before her the love of Christ to the chief of sinners, and bid her comply with His invitation to come unto Him without delay, that she needed nothing to recommend her to Christ but her wants, which He would freely supply. Soon after Andrew had the satisfaction of seeing his wife and son convinced of the truth, and humbly seeking Salvation at the foot of the Cross; so that there remained now of his family only his eldest daughter who was not a true believer.

Matters went on in this way for

some time, and it was now more than a year since Andrew had his first conversation with Father Dominick, during which period, by applying all his spare time to the study of the Testament, he had made himself a pretty good master of it, and was able, by the grace of God, "to give to every man that asked him a reason of the hope that was in him." [1 Peter 3:15] In the meantime Father Dominick had called to know what had kept him from confession and Mass. At first he wanted courage to own the truth, and made some excuse for his neglect; but afterwards began to consider that he need not be ashamed of what he had been taught by the Word of God, and that it was his duty openly to avow his conviction of former errors. He resolved, therefore, that next time he would speak to him plainly, and having acquitted his conscience before God, patiently abide all consequences.

Second Encounter with Father Dominick.

Soon after this Father Dominick called upon Andrew, and sharply upbraided him with his neglect of duty. "Aye," said Father Dominick, "I guessed this would be the consequence of your inquisitive spirit. You have

learned, it seems, to despise your clergy, and you are no longer afraid of penance. I expected no better from your presumption in taking upon you to read the Testament. If I had you in a foreign country I could soon set matters to right by clapping you into the Inquisition, and make you pay well for your presumption in disputing the authority of your clergy. But in this country that vile principle of 'liberty of conscience' is so much in vogue that every man may think for himself, and our power stands on the most precarious footing."

"Without intending to show any disrespect to you, sir," replied Andrew, "I cannot help expressing my thanks to God that I live in a country where every man may judge for himself, nor do I think it much to the credit of religion that torture must be employed to keep men faithful to it." He then addressed him as

follows: "Do you expect, sir, to bring me back by such arguments as these? If you do, you are indeed much mistaken. A conviction that I was wrong has produced the change in me which seems to give you so much offense, and nothing, I hope, but more convincing reasons on the other side will bring me back again. If you expect to do anything with me, come into my house, and set before me your reasons. If I find them satisfactory, you will not find me obstinate."

Father Dominick began, as he cooled, to feel a little ashamed of his conduct, and resolved to go in, and dismounting, he tied his horse at the door, and took his seat by the fire within. Andrew sat down by him, and all the family drew nigh to hear a conversation which promised to be so interesting.

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