

The Heartbeat of

The Remnant

September/October 2012
Volume 18 Number 5



Avoiding the Kingdom Detour

John D. Martin
See p. 4

The Remnant

Publisher

Ephrata Christian Fellowship
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Ephrata, PA 17522

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The Heartbeat of the Remnant is published bimonthly by Ephrata Christian Fellowship. Subscription is available upon request, at no cost. *The Remnant* is financially supported by the gifts of God's people as they respond to the promptings of His Holy Spirit. We request your prayerful consideration of this need. Send subscriptions or contributions to the above address, or call 1-855-557-7902 or 717-721-7775.

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“The fruit is perfect love. We recognize by this fruit that the Father and the Son have made their dwelling in us, and they live in us.

The fruitful ones are the ones who love the Father and the Son, and keep the words in unity. But those who do not love Him do not keep His words ...

The true revelation of Jesus Christ is to sense and recognize that the will, work, and good pleasure of the Father is performed in us, by Christ in us. ”

~Pilgram Marpeck - c. 1545

From the Editor

What is our core driving force?

Whether we recognize it or not, we are all led by ideologies and principles. Good or bad, principles act as underlying forces that guide us in our everyday lives. Unfortunately, for the most part, the primary principle that guides many people is simply the pleasing of self. Christians, however, should be led by a different principle. Life—especially the hard things in life—tests our ideologies and reveals what is really driving us at the core.

A few weeks ago, we heard the shocking news that Beachy Amish minister Ken Miller was found guilty of kidnapping charges

and now awaits sentencing. The news sent a wake-up call to the conservative Anabaptist world on many different levels. This case reveals to us that times are worsen-

ing. More and more cases like this are likely to challenge our integrity in the near future. Things like this are going to stretch our thinking and redefine our boundaries within the two kingdoms.

The Ken Miller case is perplexing. Dealing with the tangled web of a child custody case between a divorced homosexual civil union couple is confusing even by secular standards. The laws that led to Ken's convictions weren't even laws five years ago. Honorably, when faced with an appalling situation, Ken Miller acted by his convictions. When challenged by the state, Ken told the truth. As a result, Ken may spend a few years in prison as a convicted felon.

This case makes me feel that it is time for us to examine situations like these. We need to talk about them, discuss scenarios, and hear from one another. The subtleties and chicanery of modern government, legislated morality, and secular politics have never been our friends. Nonetheless, our ideology (or rather, our theology) should remain one that champions painful truth telling, as well as respect for government and governing authorities—as long as it does not violate the laws of God. As times get worse, more scenarios like this will affect us. Get ready; as hard times come there will again be persecution.



Ken Miller and family

Considering our rapidly declining society, I was made to think about another time, not too long ago, when society took a plunge. This was the time around WWII. Lately I've been reading the new biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer entitled *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* by Eric Metaxas. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was quite an amazing man. But he was guided by a bit of a different theology and ideology than Ken Miller. Nevertheless, I was very impressed with Bonhoeffer's life.

Early on in his spiritual journey, Bonhoeffer was confronted with a radical challenge to put the teachings of Jesus into practice. He did some radical things during this time. He formed a community of radical Bible students, spoke out against sin and compromise in the church, challenged the concept of Christians' involvement in war, and even traveled to the inner-city churches of Harlem to discover a passionate faith that he did not find among American Evangelicalism or German state-church Lutheranism.

But as the evils of Hitler and the disaster of German Christianity of his time deteriorated before him, Bonhoeffer's new kingdom theology was tested. As a student of Luther, Bonhoeffer's theology of the two kingdoms took on a kaleidoscope of different shades of gray. Once the Nazi plot began to reveal its sinister agenda, the courageous young Bonhoeffer was



Bonhoeffer with school children

torn by conflicting ideologies and loyalties. Eventually, Bonhoeffer became compelled to defend the confusing hybrid of German state-church Christianity, and thereby became entangled in a complex web of deception.

Things went quickly awry for Bonhoeffer. Acting as a spy for the resistance movement, there was not much he wouldn't do to give the impression to everyone that he was a good Nazi. Bonhoeffer wrote letters praising Nazi politics, publically cheered the defeat of conquered countries, and even shouted and wrote the Nazi credo, "Heil Hitler!" Eventually, Bonhoeffer was arrested and executed as a spy in a conspiracy attempt to kill Hitler. To my disappointment, Eric Metaxas, his biographer, de-

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The Gospel of the Kingdom

Based on a message preached by John D. Martin



Introduction

This message takes us straight to the core of the matter. And what is that “matter”? The “matter” is the distinction between the gospel of the kingdom and the typical “gospel” message that is preached in your average “Street Corner Evangelical Church” in North America.

A few have written us over the last few years with sincere questions about this distinction, which we have tried to bring out in articles in previous issues. For those who are struggling to see the difference between the typical modern “gospel” message and the gospel as preached in the early church and historic Anabaptism (and other groups), we recommend a thorough contemplation of this article.

This article presents the core. If you cannot “see” this article, you will never fully grasp what we have been saying in previous articles about the encroaching distortion of the gospel message in our churches. We could well title this article, “Gospel 101.”

Detour!

My concern for this message is to expose a detour that our Anabaptist churches took in the past century. As I was growing up, the message that I heard was what I call a “save ME gospel.” Now the term “kingdom of God” was used very loosely—as it is in many church circles—but I don’t think I ever heard, in all my growing up years, a message specifically on the kingdom. In this message I want to make it very clear what the kingdom of God is.

It is *not* about us! That is where the problem came in the shift of focus when I was growing up. The main thing in the messages that I heard was “We need to get saved!”

That certainly is true, but “getting saved” is a means to an end; *not* an end in itself. Unfortunately, “getting saved” was made an end in itself, and much of the revival preaching was focused on that end. Therefore, I would like to make it clear what the original gospel of Jesus Christ really was.

The original gospel message

The original gospel was the *gospel of the kingdom*. Jesus began His ministry by saying, “Repent ...” Now, the classic words usually following this would be, “... or you will be lost,” or “you will go to hell!”

But Jesus did *not* say that. He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” In other words, “The kingdom is right there for you to grasp, it’s at hand.” Six verses later, after calling His first four disciples, it says He “went about all Galilee ... preaching the gospel of the kingdom.” Mt. 4:23 Do you know that Jesus never called the gospel anything else but “the gospel of the kingdom”? In every instance where you find the content of the gospel described, it is “the gospel of the kingdom.” Every time, in the entire gospel record!

Jesus’ two most important statements were the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord’s Prayer. Both of these begin and end with an emphasis on the kingdom of God. “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of God.” “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

Referring to the end of time, Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” I ask you a searching question: Has the gospel of the kingdom been preached unto the ends of the earth, or has it been a “save ME gospel”?

Now I want to make one thing clear before proceeding: God uses imperfect means. I believe the gospel has been preached in many parts of the world, and despite a wrong emphasis, many people have been reconciled to God.

Parables of the kingdom

Basically all of Jesus’ parables focus on the kingdom: the kingdom is as a treasure in a field, the kingdom is as a merchant, the kingdom is as a net, the kingdom is as leaven, the kingdom is as a mustard seed ...

I want to ask you a question: If I were to ask you what the seed was in the parable of the sower, what would you say?

[Response from someone in the audience: “The Word of God!”]

That’s what most people say! And that is true in a general sense, but *specifically* it says it is the “word of *the kingdom*”! I never noticed that until recently. We are so used to reading our Bible through certain lenses. Six months ago I would have probably said the same thing [as the responder from the audience.] When Jesus interprets the parable of the tares, He says the seed is “the children *of the kingdom*.” That excites me!

Here I am, speaking to approximately 400 seeds! What should happen is that all you seeds will go out there and be planted and grow up to be a kingdom expression of the gospel! Not just a personal experience of people getting ready to go to heaven, but a kingdom expression of the gospel should grow up around every kingdom Christian. Because you are the “seed of the kingdom.”

The kingdom in church history

But, when we turn to the history of the church, it is not very far along before we see a drastic change in focus. How many of you can recite the “Apostles’ Creed”? [A few raise hands.] Tell me, what is the word that the Apostles’ Creed begins with?

“I.”

That’s interesting! The Lord’s Prayer begins with “*Our Father*.” Neither the Apostles’ Creed nor any of those other major creeds after the first centuries say a single thing about the kingdom. Only the Creed of Constantinople says at the end, “... and He shall come again to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.” It places the kingdom “out there” somewhere in the future, but says nothing about its present reality.

The result of losing the kingdom centrality in the gospel is a difference in a person’s outlook. If the focus is on ME, then the preaching I heard all my life was truly “gospel preaching,” where the most important thing in the world is for me to “get saved.” And before I proceed, I want to make it clear that “getting saved” is a very important thing, and heaven and hell are two very important realities we must resolve in the right way.

But that is *not* God’s most important concern for the present age. What God wants is a *corporate expression, a society of the redeemed*. Thus, personal salvation is an important *means to an end* and not an end in itself. God cannot express His kingdom until He has redeemed people that He can use to *show to everyone what the whole world would be like if everybody obeyed the King!*

That’s what Christianity is all about. We are talking about community, society, corporate relationships, so that the world looking on can say, “Wow!” It is like what the queen of Sheba said when she saw Solomon’s court: “What a great God they must have! What a beautiful kingdom! I cannot believe what I see! I did not know that human beings could live together this way!”

That’s what kingdom is all about!

But you see, if you concentrate only on your personal salvation and you don’t really make the kingdom to be the heart of your gospel—as did Jesus, Paul, and the others labored to teach it—then you have individual Christians who have no vision for submission to a corporate practice. I wonder just what the world looking on does see?

The great paradigm shift

Now, I stand here guilty with all of you; we have all been involved in this paradigm shift. It is because we have not been taught that *the end of our salvation is to be involved in something larger than ourselves*.

The kingdom of God is the society of the redeemed. As I mentioned, this gospel of the kingdom was lost in the early centuries to an individualistic salvation. And during the last century Anabaptism swallowed it also, and we wonder why we have so much individualism now. It is the fruit of a distorted gospel. We need to get back—it is a burden of my heart—to the kingdom gospel, instead of a “save ME gospel.”

Jesus used the word “kingdom” (in reference to the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God) at least 124 times, and He never referred to the gospel as anything else. If Jesus focused on the kingdom, then that is the centrality of His message, not a marginal issue. He said, “I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.” Lk. 4:43 He tells us very explicitly why He came—to preach the kingdom!

I think the Devil has used every strategy he can think of to get the focus off the kingdom.

Gospel distortions

Is the kingdom ever taught today? Well, in dispensationalist circles, the kingdom is to happen somewhere off in the future. You know, I think the Devil has used every strategy he can think of to get the focus off the kingdom. I really do! So the dispensationalist has put the kingdom off into the future ... it is coming. This makes Jesus' teaching irrelevant for today. That is what some people do with the teaching about the kingdom.

Other people, such as Augustine and Calvin, made the kingdom the central theme of their teaching, but it was a carnal kingdom ruled by force. Thus we have these two distortions, two wrong concepts, of the kingdom of God. So the message is lost.

Why did Jesus focus His message on the kingdom of God? Because that was God's original purpose; that is why man was created. Salvation was *not* the main theme of God's original work with man. Man was not "lost" when he was created. God created man so that he would have dominion and express God's authority on this earth.

The first use of the word kingdom in the Bible is in Exodus 19:6, where it states, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests ..." That makes it very clear what serving God is all about.

We are mediating God's rule on earth. He is the King; we are simply His subjects expressing His rule and authority, first of all in our own lives and fellowships, and then to the conscience of the world around us. Notice God says "ye shall be unto *me*," not unto us (as humans) a kingdom of priests. The purpose of the kingdom is to show God's benevolent rule, through us.

The world does not understand God. When they think about God, they view Him as a negative entity, as some sort of grumpy sovereign out there who enjoys giving lots of rules to make life hard ... His ways are not good, and if you follow them, you will never be happy. That is the world's concept of God. Therefore God's purpose is that through this society of the redeemed, this little colony of heaven on earth, the world would get a glimpse of His

true attractive character and have a desire to respond properly to Him.

Now the Devil has perverted the idea of the kingdom, which is why people have difficulty with it. Some leaders have perverted the idea of God's kingdom and left a bad taste in our mouth. In the Old Testament, God initially wanted all men to be that kingdom of priests, but this purpose got lost, so He chose a nation. We will not take the time to do so now, but it is an interesting study to go through the Old Testament and see what God wanted to do with that nation. He told them, "I want to lift you up on high, so that all the nations will say, 'What a God they

have! What laws they have! What nation has been more blessed?'" He said, "I will make you the lender and not the borrower. You will be number one among the nations ... *if you keep all of my commandments.*"

You see, that is the only way people will be blessed, by a total surrender. Now, I told you of the fragmentation that has taken place in our churches. We don't understand submission of our lives to God and to each other for the sake of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom come!

We saw that in the Old Testament that God wanted a kingdom that would demonstrate to the whole world what a nation would look like if God was the King. And only briefly did the world ever see that, under David and somewhat under Solomon. That was it. Then we come into the New Testament.

I want to show you that the preaching of the gospel as being the *gospel of the kingdom* didn't end with Christ. My goal with this message is to make all of you *passionate church builders*. I want you to forget about yourself, and get your relationship with God established, and then *lose yourself in something bigger than yourself!*

Look in Acts 19:8. What did Paul preach? "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God was Paul's message; it was *not* a "save ME gospel." Now look at Acts 20:25. "And now, behold, I know that ye all,

Brotherhood
Fellowship
Church
Kingdom
Community
Body of Christ

I want you to get your
relationship with God established,
and then lose yourself in
something bigger than yourself!

among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.”

I want to ask you another searching question. When you “preach the gospel,” do you preach the kingdom of God? I hope so, and if you haven’t been doing so, I hope you start! Now let’s go to the end of Paul’s life, described in Acts 28:23. “And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God.” Again, we see that *the kingdom* was the message! Then after Paul ends up a prisoner in his own rented house, what is he preaching in the very last verse of Acts? “The kingdom of God!”

Now, I think if Paul’s gospel had been a “save ME gospel” it would not have been stated that way. The coming of the kingdom of God was the message.

A present reality

This kingdom is a present reality, and the effects of the kingdom show, as in 1 Corinthians 14:23-25. This is what should happen when the kingdom is genuinely expressed.

If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

This is the kind of authority that the gathered body has when it is gathered in unity. It is a true kingdom expression of authority. Psalm 89:7 tells us that “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”

The *ekklesia*

What is the church, as denoted by the Greek term *ekklesia*? If you ask most people what that means, they will say, “the called out ones.” My question is, “called out to what?” Are they called out just to enjoy each other’s fellowship?

In Acts 19, when the uproar took place in Ephesus, the town clerk came on the scene and said, “We are going to be criticized for this disorder. If something needs to be resolved, there is a proper order. If anything needs to be done, it shall be determined in a lawful *ekklesia* (assembly).”

If you had gone to a Greek town and asked for the *ekklesia*, they would have taken you to the town council! It was a governing body; *ekklesia* means a body of people *called out to govern* (*guide, lead*). Now suppose you went to the U.S. Congress when they were dismissing, and asked them what had happened that day. Suppose they said, “We had a wonderful fellowship together! We were so encouraged! We had a fellowship meal, and it was a wonderful potluck dinner; you should have seen it! I was so glad I came to Congress, because I was so discouraged, but now I am really inspired!”

You would probably say, “That is not the reason you were supposed to be meeting together! You were *not* supposed to be there for yourself! You were supposed to be there to make good laws for this country, for yourself, for the assembly, and for the whole nation.”

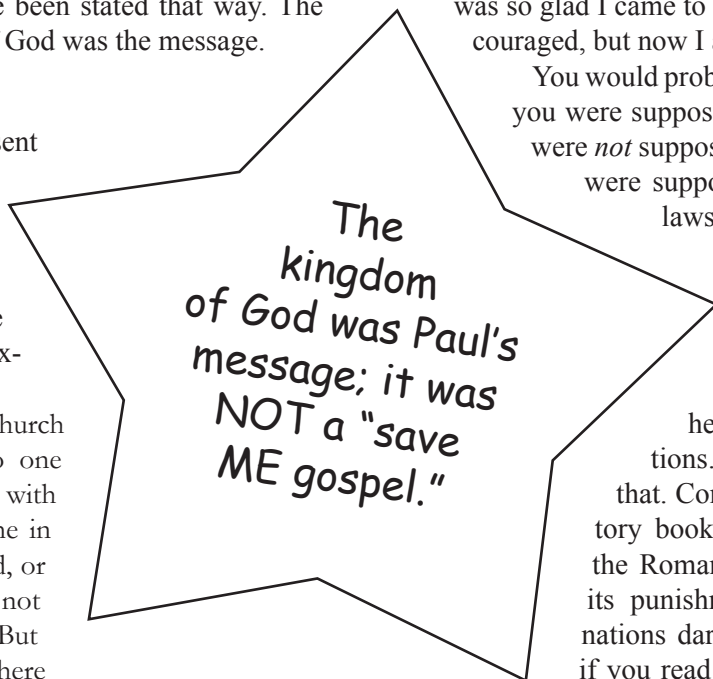
A kingdom of peace

And that is why *we* are here, to give guidance to the nations. The early church demonstrated that. Concerning the *Pax Romana*,¹ history books tell you that it was because the Roman army was so formidable and its punishments so terrifying that other nations dared not resist Rome’s rule. But if you read the early church writings, you get a different story. They say the reason for those 200 years of peace—which coincided with the first centuries of the church—was that the Prince of Peace had come and established a kingdom of peace, and this kingdom’s prayers and influence were keeping the world at peace! Interestingly, those 200 years of peace ended about the same time that the early church began to lose its practice of nonresistance.

The most tragic compromise the church ever made was its compromise of nonresistance.

Since that time, some of the most horrible things have happened “in the name of Jesus”: the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery in America, the American Civil War, and World Wars I and II.

¹ Two hundred years of internal peace in the Roman Empire, with no major wars or disruptions.



People say, “What do you do with a man like Hitler?” Well, most of the people in Germany were Lutherans. If the church had never lost its stand on nonresistance, Hitler would have had no army! Almost none of the wars

The most important part of the gospel is that He wants us to be an expression of His kingdom here on earth.

in Western civilization would have ever occurred. Do you see now what happened to this kingdom? It got messed up with tragic and unspeakably horrible consequences.

I have to tell you—and I have heard this in testimonies from various people—that the most powerful testimo-

ny of the church has been its testimony of nonresistance. We live in a world that is sick of war, hatred, violence, killing, and all the things that go along with war. To hear that there is a group of people—the Anabaptists—who for 500 years has been able to live together in peace without

the sword is about the most appealing message we could ever give to the world.²

I hope that by now you understand what the gospel of the kingdom is: a gospel that says, “Yes, God wants to save human beings and take them to heaven, but the *most important* part is that He wants them to be an expression of His kingdom here on earth.” I will again state my definition of the kingdom of God: *A group of people who show to everyone what the whole world would look like if everybody obeyed the King!* ~

This article is only the first half of the spoken message. The second part shifted the focus toward some practical applications of the kingdom of God. Those desiring to listen to or read the whole sermon may visit <http://www.elcristianismoprimitivo.com/english/embracing-the-gospel-of-the-kingdom.htm> where it is available in video, audio, pdf, mobi, and epub formats for free download.

² This testimony has not been without flaws, but it is a marvelous testimony still. And, there have been other groups that have lived out kingdom Christianity through the ages as well.

VOICES FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

Come, Come, O My Young People!

For if you become not again as little children, and be born again, as saith the Scripture, you shall not receive the truly existent Father, nor shall you ever enter into the kingdom of heaven.

For in what way is a stranger permitted to enter? Well, as I take it, then, when he is enrolled and made a citizen, and receives one to relate to him as a father. When this happens:

- he will be occupied with the Father’s concerns
- he will be counted worthy to be made His heir
- he shall share the kingdom of the Father with His own dear Son

For this is the firstborn church, composed of many good children; these are “the firstborn enrolled in heaven, who hold high festival with so many myriads of angels.” We, too, are firstborn sons, who are reared by God, who are the genuine friends of the Firstborn.

We are the first of all other men who have attained to the knowledge of God; the first who have been wrenched away from our sins and the first who have been severed from the devil. ~Origen

Keep God Before Your Eyes

Heinrich Zschokke



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Introduction

The Jura Mountains are the “foothills” of the majestic Alps. Rising to only 5640’, they in no way compare to the main range in size and majesty. Although the bottom lands of the Jura range contain some rich soils, the rocky highlands are noted for raising fish, geese, horses, and cattle. Obviously, such a place is not the first choice for farmers. See title photo ...

But when persecution drove most of the Anabaptists out of their homelands in the Canton of Bern in the late 1600s and early 1700s, a few Amish families found refuge with more tolerant lords in these poor, rough regions of the Jura Mountains. The land was mediocre, but at least the bailiff wasn’t knocking on their door.

It was here in these rock-strewn heights that a man by the name of Heinrich Zschokke spent some time among these believers. After his extended visit, Heinrich wrote the following overview of his stay among them. Although his account of these folks could possibly be charged with sentimentalism, there is much to be said from the simple realities he found there ... a people who based their life on the teachings of Jesus and left a shining testimony of grace. Grace to overcome alcohol, gambling, lying, and other common sins, as well as grace to care one for another in a real way.

Our generation is waiting to see Christ’s kingdom manifested among His children ... can they find it among us? What would a traveler spending a few weeks or months in our communities have to say about us?

We share this report as a provocation to love and good works. ~

Heinrich’s report

They live separated from each other on solitary farms in forests and mountains where, with great diligence, they wring from the least desirable soil an abundant fruitfulness. A mighty race, of purest bloodline, truehearted, peaceful, intelligent, and benevolent. All the neighbors esteem them. Both Catholics and Protestants of the area trust them more than their own people. These honest folks were driven from their homes in Canton Bern because they will neither swear an oath nor carry a weapon. The Prince-Bishops of Basel, wiser and more tolerant than most Protestant authorities, received these persecuted disciples of Menno¹ to their worldly realms. I do not know whether the Anabaptists are tainted with heresy as here and there a theologian insists, but the Lord says, “By their works² you shall know them!” In this, it appears to me, they do not stand in peril. One only needs to visit them, and to live with them, and he will come to like them, yes, even to admire them, especially since one finds so few among Christians who are worthy of admiration.

They put me in a mood as if I were living in the sacred times of the early Christians; so content, so God-fearing, without burden of shame, hospitable, and industrious. They lived there in patriarchal simplicity and piety. Among them are no drunkards, no gamblers, no night-revelers, no liars, and no jealous neighbors. Seldom does a dispute rise among them, and when it does occur, it is gently resolved by one of the elders. They address each other, whether brothers or sisters, as *Du und Du* (You and you).³ One helps another without pay during hay and harvest seasons, or whenever necessary. Temperance and cleanliness afford them good health and extended age. An old man of more than 70 years, who was their preacher (pastors they have none)⁴, led me vigor-

They put me
in a mood
as if I were
living in the
sacred times
of the early
Christians.

1 In all reality, these believers would most likely have referred to themselves as disciples of Jesus. The phrase is probably Heinrich’s way of identifying them.

2 Heinrich misquotes the text of the Bible slightly here, using “works” instead of “fruits.” But, since our works—be they good or be they evil—are the fruit of our heart, his quote is not really in error.

3 This is in reference to the German informal or familiar speech. The point is that they knew each other well enough to address each other as family members or good friends might.

4 Probably referring to paid ministers, appointed by the state.

ously over the mountain and valley—like a lively youngster—to visit the families of the brethren. Such genuine love between marriage partners, such tenderness between brethren, such obedience of children toward their parents I witnessed there. Practically their entire education rests simply in the example of the parents for their children and the few words, “Keep God before your eyes.” And still they inherit an upbringing which is often more noble than the finest given in the whole world. What a people, what a Christianity, which is in need of no lawyers, no pastors,⁵ no judge, and very seldom a doctor!

On Sunday they gather alternatively, once with this, and next with that preacher, to worship in earnest either in



Heinrich's description of the Amish in the Jura Mountains matches this drawing of a "Swiss Anabaptist" from the same time period.

the open or in a barn, or in a large room. The preacher speaks what is on his heart, according to the needs of the people, or he may read from some old, edifying book. He administers baptism, officiates communion, and performs marriages; yet he is a farmer like all the others. Baptism is normally not administered at communion, but often precedes the marriage of an engaged couple. Yet I must say along with all this that their devotional books, prayer books, and hymn books with their martyr songs smack of ancient times, and are therefore somewhat obsolete.⁶ The worship service finished, those who have come from a distance are invited to the noon meal by those on neighboring farms, returning a favor the guests had at another time extended to them.

Clean, but unadorned; as are their simple homes, so also their furnishings and clothes. As with every church group in the Christian world, the Anabaptists too have some religious whims and peculiarities. It would not seem

5 See footnote number four.

6 This and following "negative" comments indicate that Heinrich was not just trying to write a flowery, "stars-in-the-eyes" report, but he is simply describing what he saw as the good and the bad in these people. Having both positive and negative points lends credibility to the positive points in his report, since if everything was "positive" (or negative) one would wonder if the author was trying to distort reality.

so peculiar that the married men—to indicate their manliness⁷—allow their beards to grow ... if their dress were medieval, oriental, or after an Old Testament fashion, like the names of their beautiful daughters. But the short gray coat, the short trousers, and the stockings drawn up over the knees do not harmonize well with the majestic beards. Buttons are forbidden on their clothes; instead they are fastened with hooks and eyes.⁸ The women appear just as plain; no gold, no velvet, no silk, not so much as a bright or multicolored ribbon to flutter from a maiden's straw hat. Yet the maidens know how to find a means to adorn themselves without bringing their religion into danger.⁹ One need only to observe how these slim and attractive mountain-dwellers know how to set a hat, or see the delicate hatbands, made of straw, interwoven with straw flowers, and yet all so modest. ~¹⁰



This drawing from the 1800s shows a "typical Anabaptist weaver and preacher." During this time, pressures to enter the military caused many Amish to immigrate to America. Those who stayed soon drifted into compromise, and the Amish ceased to exist as a nonresistant and nonconformed people in Europe.

7 Not in a sense of being a show-off or "macho man," but as a means to differentiate between the genders.

8 At that time, buttons were sort of a stylish thing, especially the big, military-inspired brass buttons.

9 Heinrich seemed to have an "appreciative eye" for the young ladies, obviously something he needed to deal with. At the same time, he reveals a root of fleshly adornment sprouting among the young girls of this otherwise humble folk—accomplished by "the putting on of apparel." The phrase "without bringing their religion into danger" probably means, "pushing the limits as far as they can without getting into trouble." People notice these little inconsistencies! "The little foxes spoil the vines ..."

10 Leroy Beachy, *Unser Leit ... The Story of the Amish*, vol. 1, 2 vols., 1st ed. (Millersburg, OH: Goodly Heritage Books, 2011) p. 180-181.

LOVE IS LIKE FIRE

Peter Riedemann (1506-1566)



Introduction

The author of this article, Peter Riedemann, was born in 1506 in Hirschberg, Silesia (now Jelenia Bóra, Poland). At the time this article was written, however, Peter was in Gmunden, Austria ... sitting in prison. He had been captured while on a mission journey.

Peter was, arguably, the most articulate of early Anabaptist writers. Thankfully, his works lack some of the vitriolic name-calling that was a part of the culture of the day, even in some Anabaptist writings. Believe it or not, the following article (which is but an extract of the beginning) was sort of a “Confession of Faith.” Have you ever seen a Confession of Faith that begins with an enthusiastic outflowing of praise for the beauty of God’s love?

Undoubtedly Peter would have preferred to have written this defense of his faith in the comfort of his own home. But like many blessings in disguise, the opportunity to write came in the form of a prison term (the first of three!). If he had not been captured, his busy life of preaching and shepherding Christ’s flock may not have permitted him time to write long articles about his faith. But once captured, he put his pen to the paper as a way of explaining to the authorities what he believed.

Much could be said about Peter Riedemann (hopefully some day we can get a biography of him

in *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*) and his “confession.” We could speak of his interpretation of the Christian faith, how that it was more concerned with orthopraxy (correct living) than orthodoxy (correct theology); how he viewed justification as the act of actually “becom[ing] devout and just before God.” When the spirit of a man was set on fire with that great love of God ... it burned up the dross and left only those things that were “completely pure, holy, and godly.” We could speak of one of his definitions of faith: “faith is a power that works righteousness and easily carries out all God’s will.”

Peter most likely never had any formal theological training. His articulation of the Christian faith sprang from a simple reading of the Bible, and following hard after the Lamb that was slain to take away the sins of the world.

Without further ado, we turn to Peter’s confession. May the ardor of God’s love burn in us!

The love of God

God in his almighty power and divine nature hovered in the wind before there was a place to stand, and before the foundation of the world was laid; he, the infinite Being, was alone in his glory. It seemed to him not enough to be alone, however, as there was nothing to praise and glorify his name, for he wanted praise. So in his wisdom, which endures for ever and never changes, he created heaven

and earth and filled them with his glory—that is, with all creation, the work of his hands in which we recognize his invisible being and eternal power, if we note and observe it. On looking at it, he declared that everything was very good, made according to his will and without blemish; but among them all there was no creature able to give him the praise he wanted. So he said, “Let us make human beings in our image, that is, beings who are perfectly pure and completely without blemish.”

Then he made a man and a woman and gave them dominion over all the work of his hands, except the tree of life and of the knowledge of good and evil. Regarding this tree, he said, “When you eat of it you shall die.” But

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the human beings whom God had made for his praise soon turned away and forgot their Creator's command and all the good things he had given them. They exchanged obedience for disobedience and ate of the forbidden fruit. This caused them to fall, and their descendants also, for the wrath of God came over them, and as a result the earth, too, came under

a curse, and as a punishment bore thistles and thorns where they had hoped for good. God had expected goodness and obedience from them, but they had been disobedient and caused thistles and thorns to grow. Therefore eternal death and damnation came over them and all their descendants, and it became impossible for any of them to attain what the one man, Adam, had lost—that is, God's favor and grace; for the wrath of God had come upon them and they lay in the power of death under sin, as under a heavy load that none of them could lift. Only the one eternally powerful God, against whom they had sinned, could do so through his dearly beloved Son.

But God in the very great wrath which had befallen us could not restrain and hide his love. This was impossible, for he himself is love. So he had to show himself and make himself known, and extend love to the human race, and after the curse give comfort once more through his promise. In order that man might have comfort and hope, he said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between your seed and the woman's seed, and her seed will crush your head.” This seed is Christ our Savior, who crushed the serpent's head, that is, robbed the Devil of his power and dominion.

What great love that is! God comforts us, his greatest enemies, with such a glorious and wonderful promise to free us from death (which we had willfully deserved) and give us everlasting life freely, without our earning or deserving it.

So loving is his compassion! Like a spring that overflows, his mercy flows over all who desire it, calling them to this grace and saying, “Everyone who is thirsty, come to the water, and those of you who have no money, come buy wine and milk without price!” Who has ever shown anyone such love as the Ruler of all has shown, even to those who despised him? He still cares daily for them, and gives them food and drink, clothing and all they need, also strength of body. Truly, what can a man have that he did not receive from him? And what could he achieve that was not done by God beforehand and given him? Yet who is thanked less for a gift than the One from whom everything comes, the One who cares for us as a mother does for the child at her breast, and wants nothing evil to befall us, but wants to save us from it all, if only we listen to his voice? For as a bird cares for its young, he watches over us to help us, saying, “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will hear you and help you.” He is a faithful God who soon forgets all our transgressions and favors us with his noblest gifts.

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God's love is seen in that he did not spare his dearly beloved only Son, but sent him into the world and gave him up to death as atonement for our sin. What great love that is! He makes his only Son whom he loves alive again in us who were dead, and leads us to his kingdom. What more should he have done than he has already done, or what more should he have shown us than he has already shown? God wants to give us everything with him. But not only that; he has already given himself to us to be our Father and accepted us as his children by freely forgiving our sins. We have not repaid him for this, nor does he want any recompense except that we believe in his name and in Jesus Christ his Son, whom he sent to be the Savior of the world.

The love of Christ

Christ Jesus, the eternal Word of God Most High, was with the Father before the creation of the world and made all things together with his Father—as it is written, “Before the world was, I was, and rejoiced in his presence continually, and when he prepared all things I helped him,

for through him all things are made, and nothing was made without him.” Everything that has been made, however, has being and remains in him and through him will once more be perfected. He came from above to his property, but they did not receive him; but to those who received him he gave the power to become children of God. What great love that is! Christ Jesus, the eternal Father’s Son, left the glory beside the Father which he had had before the world was made and came into the world in the form of a servant, endured poverty, temptation, and suffering to set us free from the yoke of misery and servitude. The lord of all lords and king of all kings became poor for our sake that we might become rich in him. We see the love of Christ in that he gave his life for us and suffered death to free us, who were guilty of death; for it is written, “No one has greater love than to give his life for his friend, and you are my friends, if you do all that I command you. I lay down my life in order to receive it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down myself.” Christ had such love for us that he gave his life and suffered the most humiliating death, namely death on the cross.

Thus he became a curse for our sakes. For it is written, “Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree.”

How could he have a greater love than this: he suffered so much poverty and misery, and shed his blood in death and so broke down the middle wall of partition and wiped out all that was written against us. He made a sure path to the Father for us and earned for us the Father’s favor. See how he spared no effort but did all that was necessary for our blessedness simply so that we might find joy with God and that he might cast off the heavy load that had lain upon us. We could rid ourselves of this in no other way than through him, since Satan had bound us so tightly with his ropes and stood like an armed man, keeping us in his power until the appointed time of grace came to us from God, when he sent the strong hero, Jesus Christ our Lord, against whom no one can prevail. He took away Satan’s power, burst the chain and the prison that held us, and forced Satan to obey him. He redeemed us, his people, in order that we might cleave to him alone and serve him with all our hearts.



Peter may have written his confession from this castle's prison, located in the lake at Gmunden, Austria.

Now, whoever recognizes the love of God the Father and of his dearly beloved Son, and takes to heart the great grace that has come to us through him, will truly set his heart to serve him, obey his commandments, and delight in them by day and night; he will treasure and love the testimony of his God, and have no fear of what may happen to him as a result. He will let nothing hinder him in this or turn him aside: as it is written, “What can separate us from the love of God—tribulation or death, hunger or thirst, heat or frost, fire, water, or sword? As it is written, we are killed all day long and are counted as sheep for slaughter, but in all this we more than overcome for the sake of him who loved us.” Such a man, however, will watch carefully over his witness to the Lord, and will hold unhindered to God’s will against his own will, which he gives to die with Christ. He strangles and kills it, so that his whole will is changed and renewed, and he becomes a new creature in Christ. He puts on Christ and truly surrenders himself to God. Just as previously he surrendered to sin, obeying it and serving it, and going from one sin to the next, now, after having recognized

God, he gives himself and his members to God as weapons of righteousness that they may be holy. Now he no longer lives, but Christ lives in him and brings to perfection everything in him that is pleasing to God, so that he may praise God with an honest heart. For the true praise of God is to keep his testimony and love his name wholeheartedly.

Let us love God

Let us love God; for he has loved us first and sent his Son into the world, through whom he has made us holy and sanctified us to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices well-pleasing to him through Jesus Christ. This is the love of God: that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. But whoever says he loves God and does not keep his commandments is a liar. In such a man there is no truth, for whoever loves God remains in God and God in him. We recognize that we remain in God and he in us if we keep his commandments.

The chief of all God's commandments is, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one. You must cleave to him, serve him and love him with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, and all your strength." So to love God is the fulfillment of all his commands, and to love him with all my powers is to honor him with all my works and to give him praise. This means that in all I do and want to do, I look first to see whether I seek to increase God's praise in it. If I find that he will be praised by a deed, I joyfully carry it out for God's sake, regardless of the consequences for me. Where that is not so—where I do not find God's praise in it—it is useless work. I should leave it undone



But if I consider my words and find neither God's praise nor the betterment of my neighbor, I should stop, as James teaches, keeping my tongue in control and remain silent.

For all speech that comes from faith brings betterment and merits God's Spirit and praise. But if I consider my words and find neither God's praise nor the betterment of my neighbor, I should stop, as James teaches, keeping my tongue in control and remain silent, lest my words grieve God's Holy Spirit; for the wise man says, "Where there are many words, lies are not lacking." This is enmity to God and cannot come from truth. Hence the Holy Spirit teaches us, saying, "Do not accustom your mouth to indecent words, for they give rise to sinful thoughts."

To love God with all my heart and soul means that in all my thoughts I praise God, and give no room to sinful thoughts that arise from my flesh, nor listen to them, but

fight against them with all my power, and through God's mercy turn to the throne of grace and cry for help and deliverance: "O Lord, free me from this body of death, and do not let the Enemy overcome me! Come quickly to help me!" In this way your devil with all his wickedness is overcome. This is the good fight God wants us to fight, the fight in which he has placed us. Only he who fights honestly will receive the crown.

Everyone who loves God with his whole heart, mind, soul, and strength would rather be dead to the world, and would rather die than continue for even a short time thinking a useless or vain thought. I will be silent lest he bring forth words and work through which he profanes God's precious name. It befits us to have such love for our God and Christ—not only with our words, but with power, for he dearly loved us first in his Son, and showed us great kindness. For not everyone who says, "I love God" (and everyone says this) really does love God, but only he who shows it in power. As is written, he who loves me keeps my word and walks in my precepts. Such love works God's work and makes us alive in faith. Whoever loves like this is born of God.

Let us love one another

Now, whoever loves him who gave him birth should also love one who is born of him, that is, whoever loves God should love his brother too; for whoever says he loves God and does not love his brother is a liar; for how can he love God, whom he cannot see, if he does not love his brother, whom he sees. So the man of God should also have brotherly love, as it is written, "Love one another with brotherly affection and each serve the other." Christ gave us this command. Finally, when he wanted to leave the world and return to the Father, he said to his disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: even as I have loved you, you also love one another. If you have love for one another, men will know you are my disciples." But brotherly love implies that we lay our lives down for each other, just as Christ did for all of us, and gave us an example to follow in his footsteps. So I should not live for myself alone, but live to serve my brothers—not seek my prosperity and betterment, but theirs, my whole life long; also, I should take

Everyone who loves God with his whole heart, mind, soul, and strength would rather die than continue for even a short time thinking a useless or vain thought.

care not to let my brother be grieved or weakened by my work or words. For when my word has grieved a brother, I have lacked love. Whoever does not love his brother is still in death and darkness, as John writes. “Anyone who does not love his brother is a murderer, and we know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” Whoever loves his brother, however, penetrates through from death to life, for he loves his brethren. So let us love everyone—not with words and with our tongues, but in deed and truth. For if someone who has the goods of this world sees his brother in want and does not share with him, how can God’s love abide in him? It is rather Cain’s love that is in him. He was evil and slew his brother, because his works were evil and his brother’s upright.

Christ, our Master, gave himself completely to us with all he had and kept nothing back. He himself said, “All that I have received from my Father I have given to you.” He has become our own with all that he has, and we have become his, so that he is in us, and so that we live and move in him. In the same way we should give ourselves to our brethren and keep nothing from them, but gladly give them love, life, and all that is ours in order to become one indivisible body whose head is Christ. Whoever remains in such love remains in Christ and Christ in him, and he will bring forth much fruit for eternal life. But whoever does not abide in me, says the Lord, will be cast out to wither and be burned. That is the end and the recompense for the hypocritical and ungentle love of which the world is full.

Brotherly love should come wholeheartedly from pure hearts and not be tainted but remain pure. God the Lord knows what is in man; he searches the heart and mind. Thus neither outward show nor hypocrisy means anything to him, no matter how fine they seem, for God is not deceived. He wants a sincere, renewed heart. As it is written, “A broken and contrite heart you will not despise.” God wants to be praised in spirit, heart, and conscience. As he is a spirit, he does not look for outward ceremony which is not founded in the heart. That is an abomination to him however fine and good it seems. What comes from the heart in faith, however, and is carried out in deed is a pleasing and fragrant offering to his glory.

Love your neighbor as yourself. This is the second commandment and is like the first. On these two depend all the law and the prophets. Indeed, the law: you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit

fornication, you shall not defame, you shall not covet, and all other commandments, however many there may be, are fulfilled in the saying, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But love of one’s neighbor, as Christ himself teaches, consists in this: what you would like men to do to you, do to them first—then you will fulfill God’s law. Now, no one desires evil to befall him; he desires good from all, therefore, in obedience, we should first show men love, loyalty, and goodness, then they will not speak against the praise of God. In this way we gladly make ourselves of service to all men for Christ’s sake, that his name may be praised through us, also by unbelievers, for when they see how we serve they will have no ground for blasphemy. Such love flows from brotherly



As God is a spirit, he does not look for outward ceremony which is not founded in the heart.

erly love, as Peter shows us when he says, “Supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with modesty, modesty with godliness, godliness with brotherly love, and brotherly love with the love of all. If these things are in you, you will not be lazy or unfruitful in the knowledge of God and of Christ.” It follows that every human being who is born of God is inclined to show his neighbor love, loyalty, and all that is good spontaneously and without end.

But whoever wants to strive for perfection is obliged, in order to reach this goal, to love all who hate and despise him as well. For Christ taught, “to the men of old it was said, ‘You shall love your friend and hate your enemies,’ but I say to you love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven, who makes his sun rise over the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.” For that is God’s way: through patience he calls sinners to repentance. So the children who have received his Spirit should walk in its footprints and be disciples of God. Paul teaches, “Be followers of God as beloved children.” Through patience and through returning good for evil, they should point their enemy to uprightness, for

it is written, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink, for in so doing you will heap fiery coals on his head." Perhaps this kindness may affect him so that he considers deeply and turns over a new leaf. He will think, "I treat this man badly, and he repays me with kindness and does all he can to serve me and is my friend. Oh, what am I doing? I want to change and do as he does—leave the evil and pursue the good, for what does it help me to live in wickedness and oppose the will of God?" When this takes place—when you move a human being to have a good conscience—you have helped a soul from death to life, which is sure to be rewarded by God. Where this does not take place—where God sees you repay evil with good—he will say in his heart (even though he does not let it be seen), "This man accepts everything patiently that I maliciously do to him, and is so ready to do good to me—he is truly better than I am." In this way your well-doing becomes a witness to him. Such love is a band of perfection. But if he does not better himself and repent after such a witness, he increases God's wrath upon him in the day of judgment. When love takes hold of a man, he is pleasing to God and approved by man. Where there is need, he walks and abides in God, and God in him, and his life and all his work is accomplished in God; for God's clarity enlightens and surrounds him so that he walks in the light of God's grace and is no more surrounded by darkness. Bright radiance and great light has enlightened his heart, and he is defended by the Holy Spirit and led with sure conscience to the peace of the saints. Whoever does not have this is blind; groping for the wall, he does not know where he will fall or that the pit of hell is close to him.

What love is

As so much has been said about love so far, we must show what it is like in order that it is better understood, that one may not think he has love when it is only an illusion. Love cannot hide itself because its nature is light. It must shine and show itself in active work, serving all men and doing good. For love does everyone good. It is ready to serve; it is kind, gentle, mild, patient, humble, pure, temperate, modest, sympathetic, brotherly, warm-hearted, good, compassionate, gracious, lowly, forbear-

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ing, loyal, and peaceable. Love is not repulsive; it is not proud, puffed up, boastful, envious, or drunken; it is not self-willed, disobedient, deceitful, quarrelsome, or thieving. Love does not gossip; it is not jealous, irate, or spiteful, it despises no one, but bears all things and suffers all things; it is not revengeful; it does not repay evil with evil; it does not rejoice in what is wrong, but rejoices in truth. Only love does God's work.

Love is like fire, which goes out before it really ignites if one puts too much wood on it, as those who work with it know. But once it really flares, the more wood one puts on it, the better it burns, so that even houses and whole forests are burned. But when there is no more wood, however, it dies and grows cold. It is the same with love. When it is first kindled in a man, small troubles and temptations smother and hinder it; but when it really burns, having kindled the man's eagerness for God, the more temptations and tribulation meet it, the more it flares, until it overcomes and consumes all injustice and wickedness. But when love is not practiced, when the man grows lazy and careless, it flickers out again; the man's heart grows cold, faith declines, and all good works cease.

Then the man stands like a withered tree fit for the fire, as Jesus himself says. Love flows from faith; for where there is no faith there cannot be love, and where there is no love there cannot be faith. The two are so entwined that one cannot be pleasing to God without the other.

What faith is

Faith is a certain assurance of what we hope for, a clear revelation and a conviction of things that are not seen, a conquest of the world, the Devil, and the flesh; it is a sure guide to God, an assurance of the hope and purification of the heart; through it a man becomes completely pure, holy, and godly. But faith is also a justification, because through faith in Christ we become devout and just before God—as a gift. Faith is a power that can do everything—nothing is impossible for it. As Christ testifies, "If you have faith like a mustard seed, say to this mountain, 'Get up from here and cast yourself into the sea,' and it will obey." Or, "Be it done for you as you have believed." Faith is also an assurance of the conscience that it stands firm and trusts God's promise. Thus it is a confirmation

of the supplication, for God does not disdain the prayer of the believer, but must grant his request since it comes from faith. John says, "We are certain that we have received what we have asked him for."

As Paul teaches, faith is a power that works righteousness and easily carries out all God's will. A man who says he cannot carry out God's will shows that he is not a believer but an unbeliever, for all things are possible to him who believes. It is easy for him to walk in the footsteps of Christ, who has said, "My yoke is easy and my burden light." The man who does not believe considers him a liar and accuses him of not meaning it; that is, he accuses him of loading unbearable burdens upon us, although in fact, he has placed the very lightest that he could upon us; for he took upon himself and carried a heavy burden which we could neither move nor carry, and he has reduced the burden of all the commandments to one commandment, namely love, that we may the more easily grasp it and reach our goal.

Whoever believes also confirms and testifies that God is faithful in all his promises. "For he who is righteous through faith shall live." However, it is impossible to believe before one knows God and the strength of his power as well as his love and faithfulness to us. Paul writes, "How can they believe before they hear?" Therefore God sent his own Son into the world, who has proclaimed to us the name of God, our Father, in order that we can believe and have hope in God, as it is written: "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sing your praise in the great congregation." Further, "I have made known your name to the children of men." John writes, "No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son of the Father has made him known to us." And "We have believed and bear witness that God is light, and we know that our witness is true." He revealed God's will so clearly that nothing is left that he has not told us. He went before us, not with words only but also with deeds and power, and he has shown us the way to follow him. For he walked in obedience to his Father unto death—even death on the cross, which he endured for our sin. So the Father awakened him again and raised him up as king over all the kings of the earth and gave him a name that is over all names; at the name of Jesus every knee

will bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and all tongues will confess that God has made him lord of all lords and king of all kings. His kingdom endures for ever and has no end, as is written: "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill." Mount Zion is the community of believers gathered and united in love by the Holy Spirit through unity of faith, building up those who are consecrated through the blood of Christ to be a holy house. That is why Christ, after he had risen and before he took possession of heaven, appeared to his disciples and commanded them to be his witnesses of all they had seen and heard, and said, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to

all creatures; he who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

Here Christ follows the method of his Father, who arranged everything in his creation not in confusion, but in the right order. First he created the earth, and then the grass that came from the earth as food for the cattle, in order that they, when made, might have fodder and not suffer want. The cattle, however, were food for man, prepared before man was made, so that each created being would have what it needed before it actually was. God acts wisely in all his works and sees that everything is rightly ordered. Christ did the same: when he wanted

word of his good deeds to be spread among the children of men, he first sent the disciples saying, "Go!" and commanded them to preach the Gospel.

They did not go of themselves, but through being sent they received strength for their task and were not unfruitful. In the same way Paul writes:

How can they hear without preachers; how can they preach before they are sent? Yet, have they not heard? Their voice has gone out into all the world, its sound to the end of the earth; thus faith comes from hearing, hearing through preaching, but preaching through the Word of God. ~

He went before us, not with words only but also with deeds and power, and he has shown us the way to follow him.

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ENDURING UN

An interview with Bro. Dean Stump

The Heartbeat of the Remnant: Good evening, Bro. Dean!

Dean Stump: Good evening to you!

THTR: The seed for this interview was actually planted a couple of years ago while looking through some of the old issues of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*. I had gathered one of each back issue and placed them in the office for reference. The first issue came out, what, 1995 or 1996?

DS: Maybe earlier ...

THTR: Anyways, paging through them, I noticed quite a few testimonies and testimonial-type articles in the 1990s and early 2000s issues. And to be honest, my heart just kind of sank, because too many of those who had given those testimonies have not gone in a good direction. Some have turned away totally, and maybe do not even profess any Christianity. Some of them still profess, but do not seem to be in as good a place as when they gave the testimonies.

This last while we have not printed too many conversion testimonies, mostly because hardly any have been sent in; maybe one in the last couple of years. But to be dead honest, after reading some of those earlier testimonies and articles, I feel a bit “scared” to publish any—although let me say that we certainly are willing to do so. My “fear” is this: what if we print this great “born-again” testimony, and three years down the road we are embarrassed or ashamed of the direction the person has gone?

In thinking about all this, I thought maybe it would be good to have a testimony about enduring. In fact, it would be good for all of us to yearly, on the date of our spiritual rebirth, to take account of our life and review our progress.

So in thinking of a testimony of endurance, I thought of you. I have known you for 20 years or more now, and you have not totally thrown in the towel nor drifted seriously off into error. And, you have been in some of the very same type of churches and situations that some of those who have drifted or fallen away were in, so you know the same temptations they knew.

In light of all this, I would like to ask you a few questions. First of all, have you experienced a time in your life where you kind of “woke up” one day (or over a period of

days and weeks) and realized, “Hey, I need to do some backtracking here ... I’ve drifted off the course or gone down a side trail”?

As an example of someone who did just that, I am thinking of a former New Order Amish couple I knew in another state. They had felt they had come to a new-birth experience, and for whatever reason they left that church and started going to another one. A couple of years down the road, the man suddenly realized, “Whoa! Where are we going?” He sat down with his wife and they realized that they had drifted to the point of feeling comfortable wearing shorts and having a TV in the house. It was like, “Whoa! How did we get here? We abhorred these things a few years back!” So have you ever experienced a drift like that in your life, maybe not even that far, but something similar?

DS: I would say that in my experience, when I had been a Christian about one year—and let me say that up to that point I had not had a lot of fellowship and my work environment was not very good—I started realizing, “Hey, where am I spiritually? Where am I going?” I determined at that point that I was going to “plug in” at a church somewhere. I was converted in February of 1989, and I started attending Charity Christian Fellowship in December of 1989. In March of 1990 I started working for Bro. Denny [Kenaston]. I had quit my job and felt from my prayer time that God was going to allow me to have a Christian employer. So I quit. They didn’t want me to quit, and asked, “What are you going to do?”

I told them, “I don’t know, but the Lord is going to lead me.” About a week later Bro. Denny approached me with an offer for a job.



INTO THE END

concerning perseverance in the faith



It was at that point in my life that I made some definite choices to go a direction that would help me put my roots down and set me on course.

THTR: So before you made that choice, you could look out into the future and see where you were headed—and it was a place you didn't really want to end up at spiritually ...

DS: Right. I made a definite choice there. It was a choice of "I want to go deeper with the Lord. I don't want to live my life 'on the edge,' so to speak." That was in 1990, which is 22 years now, and I have been in the same type of church since.

About 10 years ago I started really thinking about the question, "Where are we going? I have a family, children growing up here. Where are we headed as churches? Are we passing on the faith to the next generation?"

That became a real concern to me and it helped me to take a more open approach to other conservative Anabaptist groups, and I have grown in my appreciation for the more conservative groups that have maintained a spirituality and keep many of their young people. This has helped me maintain a course for my family.

THTR: I am glad you mentioned this. I had planned to divide this into

two parts, first in a personal way, then in a corporate way. So I am glad you brought out about enduring corporately. But I want to talk first about the personal aspect.

One thing I have said in reference to "backsliding"—and I don't know where I heard this from or if I just made it up myself—is that some people seem to get converted and six months later he/she may be back out wallowing in the mire ... drinking, nightclubs, etc. So we say, "He/she backslid." But I have made the statement, "Half of the people who backslide do so a quarter of an inch at a time." What do you think of this saying? Is it valid?

DS: I heard a person making a confession in one of our solemn assemblies one time, repenting and turning back to God. He made the statement, "I think the Devil's middle name is Gradual!"

When I take inventory of my own life, I cannot say that I am where I want to be in my devotion to Christ ... the cares of life, a full life can distract from our love to Him.

THTR: In our churches we have what I would consider a good amount of teaching on the devotional life. Beyond the typical devotional things of reading the Word, prayer, and church attendance, what are some practical things that you have used to help you keep on track? What do you do to check up on yourself?

DS: Well, I was in business, and I had a great opportunity to "sell myself" to my business and make money. I held myself in check there. I didn't want to bring my boys into the "successful business" world and have it be to them that money is just an easy thing to come by. People asked me, "Well what are you going to do if you sell your business?"

I would tell them that I wanted to raise my boys on a dairy farm. And people would think, "You can't make a living milking cows. What are you going to do, just farm until your money is all gone?"

That didn't scare me so much, because my goal was not to make money, but to raise up godly young men. That's my vision; to raise young men and teach them the disciplines of life.

Another purposeful decision was that when I had the business, most of the value was in the equipment, and I didn't insure that. The temptation was always there to make sure "all the bases are covered" and worry about what if someone has an accident, so that the business wouldn't take any loss. I was always aware that one good-sized accident would put me out of business. This was a way to keep me cast upon God, and a way to keep me from drifting into building up my own little kingdom here on earth.

THTR: Those are some great examples for us North Americans. The deceitfulness of riches has caused thousands and thousands to drift away ... slowly but surely.

In thinking of some real practical examples of how to give ourselves a "spiritual drift checkup," my mind goes

back to something Bro. David Mast preached at Ephrata Christian Fellowship, maybe six years ago or so. He said, “Pull out the photo albums from 10 years ago and take a look at how you dressed.” What do you think about such a suggestion?

DS: I think it is a real indicator.

THTR: That would be in the area of dress. Usually we don’t “blow out” in one area and every other area of our life is in good shape. Some other areas we can check is how much time we spend online or in the newspaper. Can you think of any other real practical areas to check ourselves from where we were 10 years ago?

DS: That is very convicting to me. I am freer today than I was ten years ago to look at “the Holstein world.” We don’t get the newspaper and we don’t have the Internet. No television. So we don’t have a lot of those distractions. But one I can give myself to is the milk cow world.

THTR: I really like that example. When we lived in South America, we had some people who got converted, and when they would get discouraged they would go back to drinking. We would hear that one of the brothers in the church got drunk, and it would hit us pretty hard. I mean, we would ask ourselves, “How could someone turn back to drinking?”

But for people like you and I who grew up in a conservative Christian atmosphere and who never drank a drop of alcohol in our life besides communion wine, when we get discouraged, we don’t turn to the bottle. I go back to sport hunting, and you go back to milking Holsteins. When Peter got discouraged after the death of Jesus, what did he say?

DS: “I go a fishing!”

THTR: That’s right ... “Let’s just go fishing. This Jesus is dead. We might as well resume life as before.” Peter’s life was probably wrapped up in fishing before Jesus came along. So when we think of drifting into world-

liness, each one of us should regularly look at what we were wrapped up in before we were Christians, which for me was outdoor sports, hunting, fishing, etc. From 10 years ago, from five years ago, from one year ago, where are my values in those areas?

DS: I appreciate this talk, brother!

THTR: Let’s move on to corporate drift now. I would like to divide this up into two areas: first, doctrinal or theological drift, and then practical areas. As I looked back

through those testimonies I referred to at the beginning, there was one person who had a testimony, and I was told that this person recently walked out of his Anabaptist church into a Presbyterian church. That is some pretty serious theological drift; to walk out of a church that teaches obedience to Christ’s teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, and into a church that blatantly and willfully teaches disobedience to those same teachings of Jesus. And then you have issues like head coverings and modest dress, not to mention a totally different view of salvation. It “blows my mind” that someone can just walk out of a church that teaches those things, into a church that doesn’t, as if he/she was stepping from the living room to the kitchen of



So we don’t have a lot of those distractions. But one I can give myself to is the milk cow world.

his/her house. You know, just taking it all in stride as if nothing major was happening.

Let’s get real practical here. Maybe we’ll step on our own toes. But what are some practical ways to check our “theological drift”? Or maybe that is a weakness in our churches; maybe we don’t check up on this area?

DS: One thing that we are doing is going through our little “Faith and Practice,” just started this last Wednesday evening. I think that is a positive thing we can do to check up on ourselves. We look at how we understood the Scriptures 25 years ago—I guess it was 30 years ago that ours was made—and see where we were and where we currently are in our understanding of the Christian faith and practice. You can hit each point and ask ourselves if

we still believe these things and how they are being put into practice.¹

THTR: Looking back, and contemplating what we could have done better in our churches to hold people in the faith, an illustration comes to mind. The kingdom of God is like a house. The door to the house is called “the new birth.” That one door is the only way to get into the house, and so that door is extremely important. However, the focus really isn’t supposed to be on the door; the focus is the whole house. But what happens is that we sometimes go in the door, and then sit down inside and talk about and focus our attention on the importance of the door, instead of the greatness of the house. Have we perhaps, in the past sometimes, focused too much on the door (being born again) instead of the house (the kingdom of God)?

I am thinking in particular of those who came from church groups that have neglected the new-birth teaching, and people from those groups sometimes seem to think, “Well, I got born again now! I made it now!” In reality, they just got started!

In real practical terms ... I was in one of our churches some time ago when a family gave testimony for membership. There were several teenage children and the parents, and every one of them gave a testimony of “getting saved” or “being born again” when they were anywhere from four to eleven years of age. All five or six of them. They were accepted as members based on those testimonies ...

DS: Four-year-old conversions ...

THTR: And with several of them basically nothing was said beyond that, as far as what was happening or had happened in their spiritual development through the years. My point is, it seems that if we can give a testimony of “I got born again 10, 20, or 40 years ago,” then they must still be alive today. Shouldn’t we be focused on what has happened since then, and if there is still life and anointing today?

DS: Yes! That is something we have taken a look at recently in our fellowship. Bro. David recently had a message on how salvation is a daily choice to surrender ourselves up to Christ. It is a walk.

THTR: In thinking of corporate drift, I think of an illustration that I heard Bro. Joe Tindall give one time of several boats out on the ocean. They are out there, and it is a calm day, and they don’t even have their sails up. They just want to stay where they are and enjoy the day.

What they are not aware of is an underlying current, like the Gulf Stream. So those boats are sitting there, and I am in one and I look out and see Bro. Dean over there in his boat, and he is still about a quarter mile away. And over there is Bro. George, he is still about half a mile



Is there such a thing as drifting on our own conscience?

away. And Bro. Fred is over there, still about the same place as he was this morning. Everyone is in the same place all day. But what they do not realize is that *all* of them are drifting together. So we say that those boats need an anchor.

Here’s my question: Is it possible that we are using our own conscience for an anchor, rather than something outside of ourselves, like the Bible? Our conscience can drift, but the Word of God never changes. Is there such a thing as drifting on our own conscience?

DS: Yes. The conscience needs to be trained.

THTR: What happens is that people no longer feel something is bad or wrong, and they are basing their righteousness on their conscience, rather than upon the Bible, not realizing that their conscience has drifted (many times along with the whole church conscience). But since “I don’t feel anything wrong with it,” fleshly living creeps in.

DS: It seems to me that too many times things are left too “loose-ended,” and each man can do pretty much what is “right in his own eyes.” We focus our attention on “having grace” and “loving one another.” So the person makes a little change here, and the church “has grace” with them. Then the person makes a little change there, and the same “grace” is extended. We need to make the Word of God practical in *our* day and time. We can’t just have, for example, a beautiful message on modesty, and not ever say what that looks like in our day: modesty is not just covering the body, but also about not being form-

¹ Of course, changes are not always wrong. But if we have changed, we need to ask ourselves why, and what moved us to change.

fitting and showy, and not drawing attention to oneself, not being elaborate or costly. If you're going to be modest you are not going to wear name brands that represent the world, even if it is modest in style.

THTR: I heard a message recently by Bro. Rex Blevins, and he preached very lovingly but openly about some weaknesses he saw in our churches. One of those weaknesses was how that there seems to be an unwillingness sometimes for parents to reign in their youth. He used the illustration of “the tail is wagging the dog, instead of the dog wagging the tail.” Is there some validity to that statement?

DS: There seems to be a full sail in some cases. I have a hard time myself knowing where to draw the lines. It seems like since we are afraid to “draw the lines real clear” ... well, it becomes real hard to do just that with our youth. What I see happening is that the convictions are not there in the youth and they are trying to chart a different course. Instead of the parents saying, “No, we are not going that direction. We are going to cut back on the sports. We are not going to dress that way.” Instead of that we have the parents following the children ... I guess that is what you mean by the tail wagging the dog.

THTR: This gets back to the new birth, and some of those testimonies in earlier issues of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* where the people have not endured. I saw that happen in a church many years ago where a teenage girl came to the Youth Bible School. While there, she made a confession to some serious sin she had been hiding from her parents—I don't even know what it was, that is not the point. So she made this confession one evening and cleared that up.

The next morning she got up and was, of course, extremely happy to have it off her chest. Well, one of her friends told her, “Wow, you look so happy this morning! You must have gotten born again last night!”

Well, the problem was that she came back to her home church and I think was accepted as a member of the church based on that experience. But ... she never developed convictions. She was outwardly respectful to her parents and such, but she never seemed to grow beyond

just doing what was necessary to not get in trouble with the church or her parents.

When someone is truly born again, convictions build within their hearts, and the church and the parents don't have to keep ...

DS: ... priming the pump.

THTR: Exactly! But this particular young lady, as I watched her life, never seemed to grow. She never got past “being pretty.” And the last I saw her picture a year or two ago, you probably would consider it inappropriate to hang on your refrigerator. Perhaps we are a little weak on the difference between clearing one's conscience—as this girl did by confessing a sin—and dying to self.

DS: Yeah ...

THTR: And the next morning someone looks at her and says ...

DS: ... you must have gotten born again!

THTR: Are we perhaps a little weak on what it means to be born again? What is your comment on all this?

DS: Well, I have always been very careful, or at least I have always tried to be very careful, to tell someone that they got born again. I want them to have the witness within themselves. I agree that *if* they have surrendered their will, there is going to be something within them

where old things have passed away and all things have become new. They are not going to need you standing beside them holding them up; there is going to be a drive in their own heart towards holiness and righteousness. That is not saying they will not need to be disciplined and taught, but there have to be convictions in their own heart. When I got converted that first summer, I worked for some professed Christian people, but at milking time—morning and evening—they had to play their country music, supposedly for the cows' sake. I had tried to turn it off, but that didn't work.

In my heart, I fled from that. I had something within me that drove me to the Word of God, that drove me to convictions. I remember listening to some country gospel tapes that I had in my car that summer. All of a sudden one evening I thought, “You know what? There is higher ground than this!” And I put it away. There was something in my heart when I was born again that drove me



Is the dog wagging the tail, or the tail wagging the dog?

to higher ground, rather than just being pulled back into what I was coming out of.

THTR: To be honest, that is a great concern to me in our churches. We are not discerning sometimes in our children between when they clear their conscience of a bad deed—which is a good thing to do—and when they just totally die to self and take up the cross to follow Jesus. The fruits are not manifesting themselves.

DS: I appreciate that, brother!

THTR: I had some of those childhood experiences of clearing my conscience, but when I was 18 years old, God led me to see myself for who I really was: a self-centered little wretch who cared only about what gave me pleasure. I saw that I was not like Him. I needed something way beyond forgiveness ... I needed to be changed, converted, regenerated into a new person! And if God wouldn't change me, I was a hopeless case, because I couldn't change myself.

Back to corporate drift, you mentioned something that I have pondered for years. You mentioned growing in appreciation for other conservative Anabaptist churches. I grew up in "Holiness" churches mostly. One thing I noticed is that they lose about 80-90% of their youth it seems² ... and you obviously cannot maintain a church that way if you are not making many converts from the world.

But in the past, the "Holiness" churches were very good about going out and evangelizing and winning souls. I am thinking of The Salvation Army and similar groups in its early days, where they would "set up shop" in the roughest parts of the cities and some of those drunken "bums" would get converted and turn from their sin and immorality and live a holy life. There was a real obvious change in their life. But the problem in those churches has been that they have not been very good at keeping their own children.

In contrast, the Anabaptist people are somewhat the opposite. You can trace some of those family lines back 3-400 years and 15 generations, with God-fearing people all along the way. Originally, the Anabaptists were real soul winners, bringing in tens of thousands into the movement. But the last few generations of conservative Anabaptists have not been real successful at winning souls

from the outside ... yet they have a much greater success at keeping what they have. What do you have to say about this?

DS: It is the will of God for both!

THTR: Well, that is what I was thinking. I have been trying to learn the secrets from both sides! I have grown in appreciation for groups that keep their youth. The Old Order Amish keep about 85% of their youth. The New Order Amish keep about 60%. The Beachy Amish keep about 40%.³ "Our" churches are probably closest in application to the Beachy ... and probably in the retention rate of keeping our youth. I have questioned what we could

learn from churches that keep more of their youth than we do? Of course, keeping someone "in the church" and keeping them "in the kingdom of God" are not synonymous, but could we learn something from others?

DS: Yes, I think there must be. Perhaps humility?

THTR: I have wondered if perhaps it is because those churches make a real distinct line between "us" and "them": the church and the world. Now to be honest, we could probably fault some of those churches in their definition of what is "of the world," but that is not my point. The point is that the line is *clearly drawn*. When the line gets blurry, it is easy for young people to meddle around in that "no

man's land" and get lost in there somewhere ... never to return. These are just some things I have been pondering.

Now, one last question: What do you think of the following little saying? "Flies never sit on a boiling pot."

DS: It sounds to me like 2 Peter 1:5-7, where it tells us "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." Then he continues in verse 8 with these words, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then continuing on into verse 10 we find, "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

Sounds like a boiling pot to me!

THTR: Thank you, brother Dean, and may your pot ever boil! ~

³ These are figures from an "official" study of some sort, but the source is unknown.



Flies never sit on a boiling pot.

² Personal estimation, not an official statistic.



That they may teach the young women ...

Adorned with the Beauty of Holiness

Leora Schmucker

Greetings of love in Jesus' name! We have a great God who is worthy of all our praise, is worthy of all our love, and is worthy of our whole life!

We live in a time when there are many distractions. The prince of this world is truly out to destroy lives at whatever cost. We have amusement parks, video arcades, theaters, Internet, Facebook, fashion malls, and whatever else you can think of . . . it's there. But God would have our hearts stirred to not be entangled with these distractions, but to work for Him and His kingdom. If we are entangled with the affairs of this life, we will have no time left for our Lord. We cannot serve two masters. There seems to be some things trying to steal the time of our dear sisters and brothers (young and old alike). Let us beware of these things, that we can be free from them and in that freedom serve the Lord with our whole hearts.

One thing that we should be aware of is called adornment, and the other is foolishness or looseness. To me it is so amazing how God works. He tells us in His Word what *not* to adorn ourselves with, but He also tells us what to adorn ourselves with. He tells us what fruit should be coming from our lives, and what fruit shouldn't be coming from our lives. For every evil way that presents itself, God also shows us the right way. I know many of us would not go to fashion malls to buy our clothes, but I fear that many of us are still looking for clothes that accent the body rather than glorify our Lord. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Mt. 5:8

Analyzing the Scriptures

1 Peter 3:3-6

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Adorn—to deck or beautify; set off; to embellish by anything external or adventitious; to display the beauty or excellence of

Remember, God wants us to adorn ourselves with things that will bring glory to Him; for example if I put some type of clothing on and when people see me and all they notice is my clothing and how great it looks, I'm getting all the glory. But if somebody sees me and they can see the clear countenance on my face and that I've been with Jesus, then they will give God all the glory that He deserves and we will be displaying the beauty or excellence of God's Spirit in our lives.

Plaiting—folding, doubling, braiding

Apparel—clothing; external habiliments or decorations

Ornament—that which embellishes; or something which, added to another thing, renders it more beautiful to the eye

How beautiful is it to our Lord when we are born again and obtain a broken spirit and become meek and quiet! Can people see the fruit of God’s Spirit in our lives (as ornaments)? Truly that is an ornament of great price! Remember, we can add ornaments to our lives that bring sadness to our Father. Let us not make him ashamed to call us His sons and daughters.

Let us not make him ashamed to call us His sons and daughters.

Meek—mild of temper; soft; gentle; not easily provoked or irritated; yielding, given to forbearance under injuries

Meek—mild of temper; soft; gentle; not easily provoked or irritated; yielding, given to forbearance under injuries

Are we irritated if somebody has something to share with us that will help us in our walk with the Lord? Remember, our Lord wants the

fruit of meekness adorning our new lives.

Quiet—still; being in a state of rest; not moving; peaceable; not turbulent; not giving offense; not exciting controversy, disorder, or trouble; mild; meek; contented

With every new style that comes in, are we quick to change for no spiritual reasons, but simply adding something to our life that only brings glory to our fleshly bodies? Are we content with the standard of God for our lives? Are we firm and grounded in what we believe? Do we know why we believe what we believe?

Subjection—the act of subduing; the act of vanquishing and bringing under the dominion of another

Are we under the dominion of our Lord in every aspect of our lives?

Afraid—impressed with fear or apprehension

Amazement—astonishment; confusion or perplexity from a sudden impression of fear, surprise, or wonder

So we are daughters of Sara as long as we do well, and are not impressed with fear with any confusion or perplexity. God is not the author of confusion, because His way is perfect, converting the soul. Remember, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of *wisdom*,” not the beginning of *confusion*.

2 Timothy 2:4,16,22

(4) No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (16) But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. (22) Flee also youthful lusts: but follow

righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Entangleth—to twist or interweave in such a manner as not to be easily separated; to perplex or distract, as with cares

Are we allowing our lives to be interwoven with the fashions and foolishness of this world?

Shun—to avoid; to keep clear of; not to fall on or come in contact with; not to mix or associate with.

Are we shunning the practices of this world? More specifically are we shunning loose and empty talk?

Profane—irreverent to anything sacred; polluted; not pure;

Vain—empty; worthless; having no substance, value or importance

Remember, what we fill ourselves with will come out. If we are filling ourselves with God’s holy Word, then that will be flowing out of our lives. But if we are filling ourselves with vain things, then that shall come out as well.

Babblings—foolish talk

Is our talk centered on the Bible? Or is it centered on the new clothes that we bought, or the new vehicle we bought, or all the people we meet on Facebook?

Flee—to run with rapidity, as from danger; to hasten from danger; or expected evil

If we are with a group of people whose talk is foolish, do we stay for fear of losing friends, or do we walk (or run) away from the expected or dangerous evil? Remember, the more we interweave our lives with the ways of the world, the harder it is to untangle ourselves.

Lusts—longing desire; eagerness to possess or enjoy; carnal appetite; unlawful desire of carnal pleasure

God will give us the true desires of our heart. We may say that we desire pure things, but if our heart

is yearning for unlawful things, we shall yield to those things. Our lives consist not only in what we say, but more importantly what we live. Take courage; the inward desires of our heart can be forever changed through the spiritual operation called the “new birth.”

Righteousness—a state of living in that which God has declared as right. If we are to follow righteousness, then

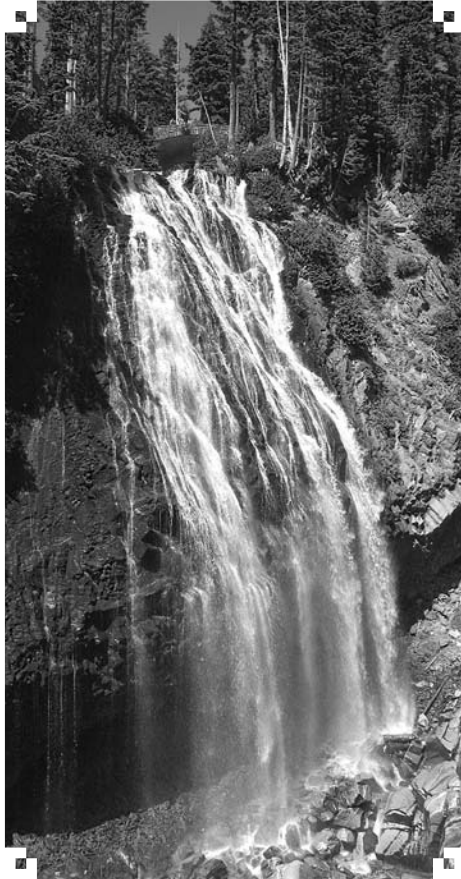
Take courage; the inward desires of our heart can be forever changed through the spiritual operation called the “new birth.”

that means we should follow the teachings of Jesus, and strive to imitate what Christ showed us by His example.

Faith—the object of belief; a doctrine or system of doctrines believed.

What truly does our faith consist of? Do we really believe God and what He tells us through His written Word? Remember, it was because Abraham believed God that he was able to sacrifice his only son Isaac through whom Abraham's descendants would be counted. So if God tells

Do we have
the love
of God
dwelling
within, and
flowing
out of our
lives like
a spring
of running
water?



us in His Word to shun ungodliness because it will lead to more ungodliness, do we believe God and flee those things, or do we think that just a little bit of fun won't hurt?

Charity—love; benevolence; goodwill; that disposition of the heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men, and to do them good; it includes supreme love to God our Maker and universal good will to men

Do we have the love of God dwelling within, and flowing out of our lives like a spring of running water?

Peace—heavenly rest; harmony; freedom from disturbance or agitation

Again, we are to follow the example of our dear Savior Jesus Christ, whose whole life was in perfect harmony with God the Father. Christ was not disturbed or disrupted

by the ways of this world, but He was at rest doing His Father's will. Are we?

Pure—clear; free from moral defilement; without spot; holy; incorrupt;

So we are to follow or have these fruits adorned in our lives, and practicing these things with others who are striving to put them in their own lives. Remember, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!

1 Timothy 4:12-13

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Attendance—service; ministry; attention; regard; careful application of mind

What does our life consist of when we compare our lives to the Word of our Lord?

Conversation—general course of manners; behavior; deportment.

What is our walk really showing about our lives?

Exhortation—advice; counsel; the act or practice of exhorting

Are we encouraging other believers in their walk with God, or are we too involved with the ways of this world?

Doctrine—instruction and confirmation in the truths of the gospel

Are we able to give a clear answer on the faith and hope that lies within us? If we do not continue to seek for answers in God's holy Word, we will not find, and therefore we will not have, a ready answer.

1 Timothy 2:9-10

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Shamefacedness—bashfulness; excess of modesty

So we should be adorned with shamefacedness and not giddiness or sensuality.

Sobriety—habitual soberness; seriousness; gravity without sadness or melancholy

Yes, even if we are sober we don't have to be sad but we can have the joy of the Lord adorning our lives. There should be a light in our eyes because Jesus is the Light of our lives. Truly, if God's Spirit is dwelling within us we have so much to be thankful for. And it should be evident in every aspect of our lives.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying

ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Titus 2:11-12

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. Isaiah 61:10

The jewels of modesty, shamefacedness, sobriety, faith, charity, peace, righteousness, meekness, and quietness are truly jewels of great price. These jewels are worth surrendering our whole lives to God our Maker that we may have our lives adorned with them. But if we are surrendered to the prince of the air, we will have the ornaments of pride, envy, hate, jealousy, and so forth. Which one is the more beautiful?

Revelation 21:2-3

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Are we preparing to meet Jesus? Is God dwelling in us? Is He our God and are we His people?

Remember time is swiftly passing by. We can be here today and gone tomorrow. Do we want to be with Jesus in eternity, or do we want to be with the Devil and his angels? The choices we make for our lives today will affect where we spend eternity. God will not be mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth so shall he reap. Don't be misled; that verse is also for the believer, not just for the unconverted. Each one of us can ask ourselves, "What are we sowing?"

Concerning adornment, are we sowing the thought that outward beauty is very important, or are we sowing the thought that inward beauty is the most precious

thing to have and obtain? And just for clarification, I am not talking about being dirty and unkempt. God is a God of order and cleanliness, but he is not a God of ribbons, bows, frills, laces, expensive and attractive clothing. Remember, the people that design most clothing, design the clothing that it will be appealing and attractive to the eye so that people will buy it.

Again, when people look at us, do they glorify our fleshly body, or are they praising God for the work that He is doing in our lives? It is so important that we understand that it is our inward change of heart that should beautify us. Many people say that we can dress to beautify our-

selves because of how God clothes the trees and flowers. But I believe that God designed plant life with many colors because that is the only way to beautify them. With us, He plants in us a beautiful spirit and does not want beautiful clothing to conflict with His work.

Concerning foolishness and looseness, if we are grounded in the Word of God we will not have time for vain babblings and pleasure-seeking idleness. Let us be busy doing the work of our Lord. For example, helping our neighbor who could use an extra hand, or sharing our

testimonies with people that we meet. Let us not fear man who can only kill the body, but rather let us fear God who has power to cast body and soul into eternal torment.

As we live in these last times, the message is that "as long as you believe in a god, you'll be okay." That is a false message! Jesus tells us there is only one way. Again he says "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Praise the Lord that God gave us an example to follow! ~

Dennis and Leora Schmucker attend Allen County Christian Fellowship with their four children near Ft. Wayne, IN. Leora wrote us that "it is not the hearers only that will be saved, but hearers and doers of God's Word. Noah could have said "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are going to send a flood," but still not listened and built the ark. He would have perished with the rest of the world."~



The jewels of modesty, shamefacedness, sobriety, faith, charity, peace, righteousness, meekness, and quietness are truly jewels of great price.

Fearing God for Selfish Reasons

Charles Finney

They feared the LORD, and served their own gods.

2 Kings 17:33

When the ten tribes of Israel were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, their places were supplied with strangers of different idolatrous nations, who knew nothing of the religion of the Jews. Very soon the wild beasts increased in the country, and the lions destroyed multitudes of the people, and they thought it was because they did not know the god of the country, and had therefore ignorantly transgressed his religion, and offended him, and he had sent the lions among them as a punishment.

So they applied to the king, who told them to get one of the priests of the Israelites to teach them the manner of the god of the land. They took this advice, and obtained one of the priests to come to Bethel and teach them the religious ceremonies and modes of worship that had been practiced there. And he taught them to fear Jehovah, as the God of that country. But still they did not receive him as the only God. They feared him; that is, they feared his anger and his judgments, and to avert these, they performed the prescribed rites. But they “served” their own gods. They kept up their idolatrous worship, and this was what they loved and preferred, though they felt obliged to pay some reverence to Jehovah, as the God of that country. There are still multitudes of persons, professing to fear God, and perhaps possessing a certain kind of the fear of the Lord, who, nevertheless, serve their own gods. They have other things to which their hearts are supremely devoted, and other objects in which they mainly put their trust.

There are, as you know, two kinds of fear. There is that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, which is founded in love. There is also a slavish fear, which is a mere dread of evil, and is purely selfish. This is the kind of fear which is possessed by those people spoken of in the text. They were afraid Jehovah would send his judgments upon them, if they did not perform certain rites and this was the motive they had for paying him worship. Those who have this fear are supremely selfish, and while they profess to reverence Jehovah, have other gods whom they love and serve.

There are several classes of persons to whom this is applicable, and my object tonight is to describe some of them, in such a way, that those of you here, who possess this character, may know yourselves, and may see how it is that your neighbors know you and understand your real characters.

To serve a person is to be obedient to the will and devoted to the interests of that individual. It is not properly called serving where only certain acts are performed, without entering into the service of the person; but to serve, is to make it a business to do the will and promote the interest of the person. To serve God is to make religion the main business of life. It is to devote one’s self, heart, life, powers, time, influence, and all, to promote the interests of God, to build up the kingdom of God, and to advance the glory of God. Who are they who, while they profess to fear the Lord, serve their own gods?

There are many who make religion consist in certain acts of piety that do not interfere with their selfishness.

1. I answer, first, all those of you who have not heartily and practically renounced the ownership of your possessions, and given them up to God.

It is self-evident that if you have not done this, you are not serving God. Suppose a gentleman were to employ a clerk to take care of his store, and suppose the clerk were to continue to attend to his own business, and when asked to do what is necessary for his employer, who pays him his wages, he should reply, “I really have so much business of my own to attend to, that I have no time to do these things.” Would not everybody cry out against such a servant, and say he was not serving his employer at all, his time is not his own, it is paid for, and he but

served himself? So where a man has not renounced the ownership of himself, not only in thought, but practically, he has not taken the first lesson in religion.¹ He is not serving the Lord, but serving his own gods.

2. That man who does not make the business in which he is engaged a part of his religion does not serve God.

You hear a man say, sometimes, "I am so much engaged all day in the world, or in worldly business, that I have not time to serve God."

He thinks he serves God a little while in the morning, and then attends to his worldly business. That man, you may rely on it, left his religion where he said his prayers. He is willing, perhaps, to give God the time before breakfast, before he gets ready to go to his own business; but as soon as that is over, away he goes to his own work. He fears the Lord enough, perhaps, to go through his prayers night and morning, but he serves his own gods. That man's religion is the laughingstock of hell! He prays very devoutly, and then, instead of engaging in his business for God, he is serving himself. No doubt the idols are well satisfied with the arrangement, but God is wholly displeased.

3. But again: Those of you are serving your own gods, who devote to Jehovah that which costs you little or nothing.

There are many who make religion consist in certain acts of piety that do not interfere with their selfishness. You pray in the morning in your family, because you can do it then very conveniently, but do not allow the service of Jehovah to interfere with the service of your gods, or to stand in the way of your getting rich, or enjoying the world. The gods you serve make no complaint of being slighted or neglected for the service of Jehovah.

¹ Finney uses the word "religion" in a positive way in this article, not in the modern negative (and wrong) sense that some Christians use it, as in the saying, "I don't have religion; I have Jesus." There is nothing wrong with "religion." See James 1:26-27.

4. All that class are serving their own gods, who suppose that the six days of the week belong to themselves, and that the Sabbath² only is God's day.

There are multitudes who suppose that the week is man's time, and the Sabbath only God's, and that they have a right to do their own work during the week, and to serve themselves, and promote their own interests, if they will only keep the Sabbath strictly, and serve God on the Sabbath. For instance: a celebrated preacher, in



You pray in the morning with your family, because you can do it then very conveniently, but do not allow the service of Jehovah to stand in the way of your getting rich or enjoying the world.

illustrating the wickedness of breaking the Sabbath, used this illustration: "Suppose a man, having seven dollars in his pocket, should meet a beggar in great distress, and give him six dollars, keeping only one for himself; and the beggar, seeing that he retained one dollar, should return and rob him of that; would not every heart despise his baseness?" You see it embodies this idea that it is very ungrateful to break the Sabbath since God has given to men six days for their own, to serve themselves, and only reserved the Sabbath to himself, and to rob God of

the seventh day is base ingratitude.

You that do this do not serve God at all. If you are selfish during the week, you are selfish altogether. To suppose you had any real piety would imply that you were converted every Sabbath and unconverted every Monday. If a man would serve himself all the week and really possess religion on the Sabbath, he requires to be converted for it. But is this the idea of the Sabbath, that it is a day to serve God in exclusive of other days? Is God in need of your services on the Sabbath to keep his work on?

God requires all your services as much on the six days as on the Sabbath, only he has appropriated the Sabbath to peculiar duties, and required its observance as a day of rest from bodily toil and from those fatiguing cares and labors that concern the present world. But because God uses means in accomplishing his purposes, and men have

² He is referring to Sunday, although he calls it the Sabbath. This was customary use of the word "Sabbath" at that time among many Americans.

bodies as well as souls, and the gospel is to be spread and sustained by the things of this world, therefore God requires you to work all the six days at your secular employments. But it is all for his service, as much as the worship of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is no more given for the service of God than Monday. You have no more right to serve yourselves on Monday than you have on the Sabbath. If any of you have thus considered the matter, and imagined that the six days of the week were your own time, it shows that you are supremely selfish. I beg of you not to consider that in prayer and on the Sabbath you are serving God at all, if the rest of the time you are considered as serving yourself. You have never known the radical principle of serving the Lord.

5. Those are serving themselves, or their own gods, who will not make any sacrifices of personal ease and comfort in religion.

For instance, there are multitudes who object to free churches³ on this ground, that they require a sacrifice of personal gratification. They talk like this: “We wish to sit with our families,” or “We want our seats cushioned,” or “We always like to sit in the same place.” They admit that free churches are necessary, in order to make the gospel accessible to the thousands that are going to hell in this city. But they cannot make these little sacrifices, to throw open the doors of God’s house to this mass of impenitent sinners.

These little things often indicate most clearly the state of men’s hearts. Suppose your servant were to say, “I cannot do this,” or “I cannot do that,” because it interferes with his personal ease and comfort. He cannot do this because he likes to sit on a cushion and work. Or he cannot do that because it would separate him from his family an hour and a half. What! is that doing service? When a man enters into service he gives up his ease and comfort for the interest and at the will of his employer. Is it true that any man is supremely devoted to the service of God, when he shows that his own ease and comfort are dearer than the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and that he would sooner sacri-

fice the salvation of sinners than sit on a hard seat, or be separated from his family an hour or two?

6. Those are serving their own gods, who give their time and money, but they give grudgingly, by constraint, and not of a ready mind and with a cheerful heart.

What would you think of your servant, if you had to dun⁴ or drive him all the time, to do anything for your interest?

Would you not say he was an eye-servant? How many people there are, who when they do anything on account of religion, do it grudgingly? If they do anything, it comes hard. If you go to one of these characters, and want his time or his money for any religious object it is difficult to get him engaged. It seems to go across the grain and is not easy or natural. It is plain he does not consider the interests of Christ’s kingdom the same with his own. He may make a show of fearing the Lord, but he “serves” some other gods of his own.

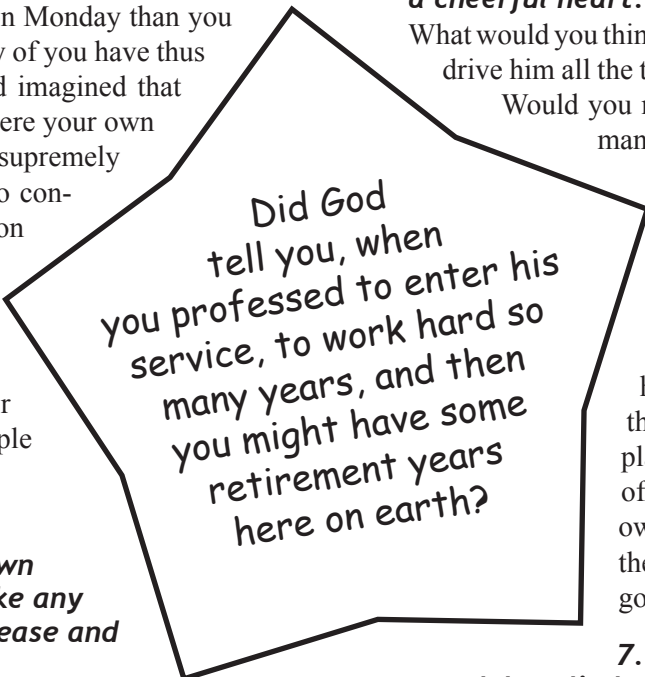
7. Those who are always ready to ask how little they may do for religion rather than how much they may do, are serving their own gods.

There are multitudes of persons who seem always to ask how little they can get along with in what they do for God.

You hear such a man making up his accounts of profit and loss: “So much made this year; then so much it costs for charity, so much obliged to give for religion (OBLIGED to give for the interests of religion!), and so much lost by fire, and so much by bad debts,” and so on. Is that man serving God? It is a simple matter of fact that you have never set your hearts on the object of promoting religion in the world. If you had, you would ask, “How much can I do for this object and for that? Cannot I do more?”

8. They who are laying up wealth for their families, to elevate and aggrandize them, are serving gods of their own, and not Jehovah.

Those who are thus aiming to elevate their own families into a different sphere, by laying up wealth for them, show that they have some other object to live for than bringing this world under the authority of Jesus Christ. They have other gods to serve. They may pretend to fear the Lord, but they “serve” their own gods.



³ Referring to the idea of rented pews, versus a chapel where first-come-first-served seating is used.

⁴ To ask for payment.

9. Those who are making it their object to accumulate so much property that they can retire from business and live at ease are serving their own gods.

There are many persons who profess to be the servants of God, but are eagerly engaged in gathering property, and calculating to retire to their country seat by and by, and live at their ease. What do you mean? Has God given you a right to a perpetual Sabbath, as soon as you have made so much money? Did God tell you, when you professed to enter his service, to work hard so many years, and then you might have a perpetual holiday? Did he promise to excuse you after that from making the most of your time and talents, and let you live at ease the rest of your days? If your thoughts are set upon this notion, I tell you, you are not serving God but your own selfishness and sloth.

10. Persons are serving their own gods who would sooner gratify their appetites than deny themselves things that are unnecessary, or even hurtful, for the sake of doing good.

You find persons that greatly love things that do them no good, and others even form an artificial appetite for the thing positively loathsome, and after it they will go, and no arguments will prevail upon them to abandon it for the sake of doing good. Are such persons absorbed in the service of God? Certainly not! Will they sacrifice their lives for the kingdom of God? Why you cannot make them even give up a quid of tobacco! A weed that is injurious to health and loathsome to society; they cannot give it up, were it to save a soul from death!

Who does not see that selfishness predominates in such persons? It shows the astonishing strength of selfishness. You often see the strength of selfishness showing itself in some such little thing more than in things that are greater. The real state of a man's mind stands out—that self-gratification is the law of his life—so strongly, that it

will not give place, even in a trifle, to those great interests, for which he ought to be willing to lay down his life.

11. Those persons who are most readily moved to action by appeals to their own selfish interests show that they are serving their own gods.

You see what motive influences such a man. Suppose I wish to get him to donate for building a chapel, what must I urge? Why, I must show how it will improve the value of his property, or advance his party, or gratify his selfishness in some other way. If he is more excited by these motives,

than he is by a desire to save perishing souls and advance the kingdom of Christ, you see that he has never given himself up to serve the Lord. He is still serving himself. He is more influenced by his selfish interests than by all those benevolent principles on which all religion turns. The character of a true servant of God is right opposite to this.

Take the case of two servants, one devoted to his master's interests, and the other having no conscience or concern but to secure his wages. Go to one, and he throws into the shade all personal considerations, and enlists

with heart and soul in achieving the object. The other will not act unless you present some selfish motive; unless you say, "Do so, and I will raise your wages or set you up in business," or the like. Is there not a radical difference between these two servants? Is not this an illustration of what actually takes place in our churches? Propose a plan of doing good that will cost nothing, and they will all go for it. But propose a plan which is going to affect their personal interest, to cost money, or take up time in a busy season, and you will see they begin to divide. Some hesitate; some doubt; some raise objections; and some resolutely refuse. Some enlist at once, because they see it will do great good. Others stand back till you devise some means to excite their selfishness in its favor. What causes the difference? Some of them are serving their own gods!



They get excited talking about natural things!

12. Those are of this character who are more interested in other subjects than in religion.

If you find them more ready to talk on other subjects; more easily excited by them, more awake to learn the news, they are serving their own gods. What multitudes are more excited by the bank question, or the question about war, or about the fire, or anything of a worldly nature, than about revivals, missions, or anything connected with the interests of religion. You find them all engaged about politics or speculation; but if you bring up the subject of religion, ah, they are afraid of excitement! And then they get excited talking about natural things ... it shows that religion is not the subject that is nearest their hearts. A man is always most easily excited on that subject that lies nearest his heart. Bring that up, and he is interested. When you can talk early and late about the news and other worldly topics, and when you cannot possibly be interested in the subject of religion, you know that your heart is not in it; and if you pretend to be a servant of God, you are a hypocrite.

13. When persons are more jealous for their own fame than for God's glory, it shows that they live for themselves, and serve their own gods.

You see a man more vexed or grieved by what is said against him than against God; whom does he serve—who is his God, himself or Jehovah? There is a minister thrown into a fever because somebody has said a word derogatory to his scholarship, or his dignity, or his infallibility, while he is as cool as ice at all the indignities thrown upon the blessed God. Is that man a disciple like Paul, willing to be considered a fool for the cause of Christ? Did that man ever take the first lesson in religion? If he had, he would rejoice to have his name cast out as evil for the cause of religion. No, he is not serving God; he is serving his own gods.

14. Those are serving their own gods, who do not make salvation of souls the great and leading object of their lives.⁵

The end of all religious institutions, that which gives value to them all, is the salvation of sinners. The end for

⁵ While we agree with Finney that salvation of souls is important, we would say that glorifying God should be our chief object in life.

which Christ lives, and for which he has left his church in the world, is the salvation of sinners. This is the business which God sets his servants about, and if any man be not doing this, as his business as the leading and main object of his life, he is not serving Jehovah, he is serving his own gods.

15. Those who are doing but little for God, or who bring but little to pass for God, cannot properly be said to serve him.

Suppose you ask a professed servant of God. "What are you doing for God? Are you bringing anything to pass? Are you instrumental in the conversion of any sinners? Are you making impressions in favor of religion, or helping forward the cause of Christ?"

He replies, "Why, I do not know; I sometimes think I do love God, but I do not know that I am doing anything in particular at present." Is that man serving God? Or is he serving his own gods? "I talk to sinners some times," he says, "but they do not seem to feel much." That is because *you* do not feel. If your heart is not in it, no wonder you cannot make sinners feel. On the other hand, if you do your duty with your heart in the work, sinners cannot help feeling.

16. Those who seek for happiness in religion, rather than for usefulness, are serving their own gods.

Their religion is entirely selfish. They want to enjoy religion, and are all the while inquiring how they can get happy frames of mind, and how they can be pleasurable excited in religious exercises. And they will go only to such meetings, and sit only under such preaching, as will make them happy; never asking the question whether that is the way to do the most good or not. Now, suppose your servant should do so, and be constantly contriving how to enjoy himself, and if he thought he could be most happy in the parlor, stretched on the sofa, with a pillow of down under his head, and another servant to fan him, refusing to do the work which you set him about, and which your

But we let this point in the text, as seeking the lost is an important part of glorifying Christ. Later in the article he actually states that glorifying God is the supreme object, so we take it that he "mis-words" himself here a bit.



Those who seek for happiness in religion, rather than for usefulness, are serving their own gods.

interest urgently requires; instead of manifesting a desire to work for you, and a solicitude for your interest, and a willingness to lay himself out with all his powers in your service, he wants only to be happy! It is just so with those professed servants of Jehovah, who want to do nothing but sit on their handsome cushion, and have their minister feed them. Instead of seeking how to do good, they are only seeking to be happy. Their daily prayer is not, like that of the converted Saul of Tarsus, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" but, "Lord, tell me how I can be happy." Is that the spirit of Jesus Christ? No, he said, "I delight to do thy will, O God." Is that the spirit of the apostle Paul? No, he threw off his upper garments at once, and made his arms bare for the field of labor.

17. Those who make their own salvation their supreme object in religion, are serving their own gods.

There are multitudes in the church, who show by their conduct and even avow in their language, that their leading object is to secure their own salvation, and their grand determination is to get their own souls planted on the firm battlements of the heavenly Jerusalem, and walk the golden fields of Canaan above. If the Bible is not in error, all such characters will go to hell. Their religion is pure selfishness. And "he that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for my sake, shall save it."⁶

Remarks

1. See why so little is accomplished in the world for Jesus Christ.

It is because there are so few that do anything for it. It is because Jesus Christ has so few real servants in the world. How many professors of Christianity do you suppose there are in this church, or in your whole acquaintance, that are really at work for God, and making a business of religion, and laying themselves out to advance the kingdom of Christ? The reason why religion advances no

⁶ Finney spares not the rod in this paragraph, but consider his point deeply. It is the error of modern Christianity ...

faster is that there are so few to advance it, and so many to hinder it.

You see people at a fire, trying to get out the goods of a store. Some are determined to get out the goods, but the rest are not engaged about it, and they divert their attention by talking about other things, or positively hinder them by finding fault with their way of doing it, or by holding them back. So it is in the church. Those who are desirous of doing the work are greatly hindered by the backwardness, the complaints, and the positive resistance of the rest.

2. See why so few Christians have the spirit of prayer. How can they have the spirit of prayer? Why should God give them the spirit of prayer?

Suppose a man engaged in his worldly schemes, and that God should give that man the spirit of prayer. Of course he would pray for that which lies nearest his heart; that is, for success in his worldly schemes, to serve his own gods with. Will God give him the spirit of prayer for such purpose? Never! Let him go to his own gods for a spirit of prayer, but let him not expect Jehovah to bestow the

spirit of prayer, while he is serving his own gods.

3. You see that there are a multitude of professors of religion that have not begun to be religious yet.

Said a man to one of them, "Do you feel that your property and your business are all God's, and do you hold and manage them for God?"

"Oh, no," said he, "I have not gotten so far as that yet."

Not got so far as that! That man had been a professor of religion for years, and yet had not gotten so far as to consider his property, business, and all that he had as belonging to God! No doubt he was serving his own gods. For I insist upon it, that this is the very beginning of religion. What is conversion, but turning from the service of the world to the service of God? And yet this man had not found out that he was God's servant. And he seemed to think he was getting a great way in religion, to feel that all he had was the Lord's.



What is conversion, but turning from the service of the world to the service of God?

4. It is great dishonesty for persons to profess to serve the Lord, and yet in reality serve themselves.

You who are performing religious duties from selfish motives are in reality trying to make God your servant. If your own interest be the supreme object, all your religious services are only desires to induce God to promote your interests. Why do you pray, or keep the Sabbath, or give your property for religious objects? You answer, "For the sake of promoting my own salvation." Indeed! Not to glorify God, but to get to heaven! Do not you think the devil would do all that, if he thought he could gain his end by it and be a devil still? The highest style of selfishness must be to get God with all his attributes enlisted in the service of your mighty self.

And now, my hearers, where are you all? Are you serving Jehovah, or are you serving your own gods? Have you been living as servants of God? Is Satan's kingdom weakened by what you have done? Could you say now, "Come with me, and I will show you this and that sinner converted, or this and that backslider reclaimed, or this and that weak saint strengthened and aided?" Could you bring living witnesses of what you have done in the service of God? Or would your answer be, "I have been to meeting regularly on the Sabbath, and heard a great deal of good preaching, and I have generally attended the prayer meetings, and we had some precious meetings, and I have prayed in my family, and twice or thrice a day in my closet, and read the Bible." And in all that you have been merely passive, as to anything done for God. You have feared the Lord, and served your own gods.

"Yes, but I have sold so many goods, and made so much money, of which I intend to give a tenth to the missionary cause." Who hath required this at your hand, instead of saving souls? Going to send the gospel to the heathen, and letting sinners right under your own eyes go down to hell! Be not deceived. If you loved souls, if you were engaged to serve God, you would think of souls *here*, and do the work of God *here*. What should we think of a missionary going to the heathen, who had never said a word to sinners around him at home? Does he love souls? There is mockery in the idea of sending such a man to the heathen.

The man that will do nothing at home is not fit to go to the heathen. And he that pretends to be getting money for missions while he will not try to save sinners *here* is an outrageous hypocrite. ~

Note that the title is not Finney's, and the text has been edited slightly for readability. Taken from "Lectures to Professing Christians."

2nd Quarter 2012 Financial Report

Thank you for your support!



| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 04/01/12 Beginning Balance | \$5,812.50 |
| Receipts | |
| Tape/CD Ministry Donations | \$23,377.01 |
| Remnant Subscription Donations | \$8,930.17 |
| Total Receipts | \$32,307.18 |
| Disbursements | |
| UPS & Postage | \$2,092.62 |
| Tapes, Albums, CDs & Labels | \$3,871.11 |
| Equipment & Software Purchases | \$360.63 |
| Equipment Maintenance & Repairs | \$0.00 |
| Mailing & Office Supplies | \$321.52 |
| Rent | \$2,250.00 |
| Telephone | \$717.88 |
| Website Development & Maintenance | \$479.82 |
| Building Improvements | \$0.00 |
| Miscellaneous | \$102.61 |
| Payroll Expense | \$11,069.78 |
| Books & Catalogs | \$269.17 |
| Remnant Publishing & Mailing | \$10,836.51 |
| Total Disbursements | \$32,371.65 |
| 06/30/12 Ending Balance | \$5,748.03 |
| Difference | -\$64.47 |

Continued from page 3

fended Bonhoeffer's complicated deception theologically saying:

Bonhoeffer was pretending to be a pastor—but was only pretending to be pretending, since he really was being a pastor. And he was pretending to be a member of Military Intelligence working for Hitler, but ... he was in reality working against Hitler. Bonhoeffer was not telling little white lies. In Luther's famous phrase, he was "sinning boldly."¹

What exactly did the biographer mean, justifying Bonhoeffer's behavior, by quoting Martin Luther? Despite the fact that I totally disagree with this author's theology, I think he was actually "right on" in describing what happened. In reality, he touched the deeper ideology that had justified and guided Bonhoeffer's use of deception.

Lying for God

Luther once said, "What harm would it do if a man told a good strong lie for the sake of the good and for the Christian church ... a lie out of necessity, a useful lie, a helpful lie? Such lies would not be against God; He would accept them."

I believe that it was this seed of "tricky" theology that was at the core of the tainted theology that got the admirable Dietrich Bonhoeffer in trouble. As I read all of this, as much as I admired Bonhoeffer's bravery, dedication, and courage, I felt sad about the end of his life. Not that I'm not impressed with him—I honestly feel that I'm not half the man that Bonhoeffer was. However, I feel that we can learn both from his successes and his failures. As I read, I couldn't help but feel that this "Martin Luther seed" eventually yielded sad results in Bonhoeffer's life.

The wisdom of Jesus' kingdom teaching cries out, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these **cometh of evil**" (Mt. 5:37). Wow, the gravity of that last part—"cometh of evil"—really made me think. I'm thankful that in Jesus I find none of this tricky subterfuge or deceit ... "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

But what about us today? In light of our rapidly deteriorating society, we should ask ourselves a few questions ... could mankind ever stoop again to the atrocities conducted by the Nazi concentration camps? Could something like slavery be repeated in our day and age? Bringing it closer home, could major "Christian" organizations like the Protestants or Catholics once again persecute people for differences of theology?

¹ Martin Luther boasted that as Christians we could "sin boldly" and still not affect our standing with God, just as long as our "heart" was right.

In the illusion of our enchanted age, it would seem that such crimes against humanity are somehow beyond us. However, I wonder ... are we more sophisticated now, or are we simply more pacified? A quick scan over history would argue the latter. History has demonstrated again and again that the same ideology with similar situations will always produce similar results. When the pacifier drops out of our mouth, we find out what makes us cry.

As our society melts into another round of moral decay, let's be careful. Let's not be fooled ... economic disasters, stock market crashes, changing laws, societal breakdowns, and even war itself are not the problems—but rather, they are the outward manifestations of the decayed moral ideologies working at the core of our society. Hopefully, as Christians, we are led by different thinking, whether in times of peace or times of turmoil.



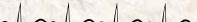
Martin Luther

Jesus has another way

Every day I'm more convinced that the only thing worth putting my life into is the simple, child-like acceptance of the teachings of Jesus. I believe that Jesus meant what He said. But even more, I believe that Jesus' plan for humanity is actually a great idea! Sometimes the ways and wisdom of Jesus don't make sense. Like Bonhoeffer, even sincere Christians often think we need to help God's kingdom along with a little lying, power, money, fighting, and even espionage! I think it is high time the church reevaluate our motivations—reevaluate our trust in the words of Jesus—and then give them a try! Like Ken Miller, some of us may find ourselves imprisoned for taking such a stand. But history has proven time and again that if we trust Jesus like this, we won't be disappointed. Every radical, world-changing movement of God was started from this same ideology.

In this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*, we start off by addressing some of the problems that happen when we allow a detour away from God's kingdom. In a very practical article, we interview Bro. Dean Stump for a hard look at enduring, not just starting. In other articles we look at selfish Christianity, and at how the mighty love of God can burn our ego away.

May that love flame in you as you read this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant!* ~Bro. Dean

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