

The Remnant



3rd Baptism

But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

See page 6

The Remnant

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From the Editor

At work there is this fancy little coffee machine that allows you to make a fresh cup of coffee—one cup at a time. You can select almost any flavor you want. You just pick your flavor, put in this little packet of coffee, and in a minute you have a fresh cup of coffee.

I thought the choices were pretty good to start with. They have the normal flavors like Dark Roast, Hazelnut, Morning Blend, etc. But lately they have been adding more and more exotic names to the menu.

Flavors like Jet Fuel, Donut Shop, Dark Magic, and even Dark Magic Decaf (I don't understand that one). But what *really* surprised me a few weeks ago was their newest "flavor"—Fair Trade.

Now, I actually like the idea of "fair trade products." I even like the fact that Green Mountain Coffee Company was trying to help out these poor Columbian coffee farmers. But somehow I couldn't help but feel convicted—even pathetic—about the choice.

So ... I guess now when I'm sitting down in my nice break room enjoying my freshly brewed cup of coffee, I'm supposed to choose between coffee with hint of vanilla, Dark Magic, or helping poor farmers in Central America. Looking at the choices, I couldn't help but have one of those minutes when you say, "If my life doesn't do something to prosper the kingdom of God more than drinking fair trade coffee in a nice break room, then I might as well just go ahead and die!"



This very day the Arab world is possibly on the brink of a massive political and economic revolution. European countries like Greece and Spain are threatening bankruptcy. Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes in "third world" countries—that's one child every five seconds.

The Bible tells me that the answer to all the world's problems—economically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually—is Christ. But Christ made it clear that He needs living vessels to carry out His dream for the world. That dream or vision is the kingdom of God. I pray that I won't let things like "Fair Trade" coffee inoculate me from the burden and responsibility of really making a difference.

In this issue we have quite a few "flavors" of articles, some short, some long; some "heavy," and some "light." The longer articles touch on the "third baptism" and the long-disputed question as to why God allows evil in this world. Then we have a clarification on the topic of legalism, clearing the air as to just exactly what legalism consists of.

In shorter articles, we have touched on what it means to be rich (in addition, a book review on using our finances for the kingdom of God), confession of sins, leaving—and *not* losing!—our first love, peacock pride, caring for the elderly, winning an unconverted spouse by meek conduct ... and more.

Whether your spirit was just birthed anew into the kingdom of God yesterday or you have been marching with Christ for many decades, we believe there is nourishment for your inner man in this issue. And that is our goal, to provoke the saints to "love and good works," daily, through *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*.

~Bro. Dean



The Rich Family in Church

By Eddie (Smith) Ogan

I'll never forget Easter 1946. I was 14, my little sister Ocy was 12, and my older sister Darlene 16. We lived at home with our mother, and the four of us knew what it was to do without many things. My dad had died five years before, leaving Mom with seven school kids to raise, and no money.

By 1946 my older sisters were married and my brothers had left home. A month before Easter the pastor of our church announced that a special Easter offering would be taken to help a poor family. He asked everyone to save and give sacrificially.

When we got home, we talked about what we could do. We decided to buy 50 pounds of potatoes and live on them for a month. This would allow us to save \$20 of our grocery money for the offering. Then we thought that if we kept our electric lights turned out as much as possible and didn't listen to the radio, we'd save money on that month's electric bill. Darlene got as many house and yard cleaning jobs as possible, and both of us babysat for everyone we could. For 15 cents we could buy enough cotton loops to make three pot holders to sell for \$1.

We made \$20 on pot holders. That month was one of the best of our lives.

Every day we counted the money to see how much we had saved. At night we'd sit in the dark and talk about how the poor family was going to enjoy having the money the church would give them. We had about 80 people in church, so figured that whatever amount of money we had to give, the offering would surely be 20 times that much. After all, every Sunday the pastor had reminded everyone to save for the sacrificial offering.

The day before Easter, Ocy and I walked to the grocery store and got the manager to give us three crisp \$20 bills and one \$10 bill for all our change.

We ran all the way home to show Mom and Darlene. We had never had so much money before.

That night we were so excited we could hardly sleep. We didn't care that we wouldn't have new clothes for Easter; we had \$70 for the sacrificial offering.

We could hardly wait to get to church! On Sunday morning, rain was pouring. We didn't own an umbrella, and the church was over a mile from our home, but it didn't seem to matter how wet we got. Darlene had cardboard in her shoes to fill the holes. The cardboard came apart, and her feet got wet.

But we sat in church proudly. I heard some teenagers talking about the Smith girls having on their old dresses. I looked at them in their new clothes, and I felt rich.

When the sacrificial offering was taken, we were sitting on the second row from the front. Mom put in the \$10 bill, and each of us kids put in a \$20.

As we walked home after church, we sang all the way. At lunch Mom had a surprise for us. She had bought a dozen eggs, and we had boiled Easter eggs with our fried potatoes! Late that afternoon the minister drove up in his car. Mom went to the door, talked with him for a moment, and then came back with an envelope in her hand. We asked what it was, but she didn't say a word. She opened the envelope and out fell a bunch of money. There were three crisp \$20 bills, one \$10, and seventeen \$1 bills.

Mom put the money back in the envelope. We didn't talk, just sat and stared at the floor. We had gone from feeling like millionaires to feeling like poor white trash. We kids had such a happy life that we felt sorry for anyone who didn't have our Mom and Dad for parents and a house full of brothers and sisters and other kids visiting constantly. We thought it was fun to share silverware and see whether we got the spoon or the fork that night.

We had two knives that we passed around to whoever needed them. I knew we didn't have a lot of things that other people had, but I'd never thought we were poor.

That Easter day I found out we were. The minister had brought us the money for the poor family, so we must be poor. I didn't like being poor. I looked at my dress and worn-out shoes and felt so ashamed—I didn't even want to go back to church. Everyone there probably already knew we were poor!

I thought about school. I was in the ninth grade and at the top of my class of over 100 students. I wondered if the kids at school knew that we were poor. I decided that I could quit school since I had finished the eighth grade. That was all the law required at that time. We sat in silence for a long time. Then it got dark, and we went to bed. All that week, we girls went to school and came home, and no one talked much. Finally on Saturday, Mom asked us what we wanted to do with the money. What did poor people do with money? We didn't know. We'd never known we were poor. We didn't want to go to church on Sunday, but Mom said we had to. Although it was a sunny day, we didn't talk on the way.

Mom started to sing, but no one joined in and she only sang one verse. At church we had a missionary speaker. He talked about how churches in Africa made buildings out of sun dried bricks, but they needed money to buy roofs. He said \$100 would put a roof on a church. The minister said, "Can't we all sacrifice to help these poor people?" We looked at each other and smiled for the first time in a week.

Mom reached into her purse and pulled out the envelope. She passed it to Darlene. Darlene gave it to me, and I handed it to Ocy. Ocy put it in the offering.

When the offering was counted, the minister announced that it was a little over \$100. The missionary was excited. He hadn't expected such a large offering from our small church. He said, "You must have some rich people in this church."

Suddenly it struck us! We had given \$87 of that "little over \$100."

We were the rich family in the church! Hadn't the missionary said so? From that day on I've never been poor again. I've always remembered how rich I am because I have Jesus! ~

This story is used by permission of the author. Edna (Smith) Ogan has been called "Eddie" ever since she can remember. She is a lady, despite what we usually think of "Eddie" as being a male name. Eddie and her husband Phil live near Colville, Washington. They had 13 children, 12 of them adopted (several handicapped), and were foster parents to 77 others until they let their foster license expire in 2002. The purpose of publishing this testimony is to remind us as to just exactly what true "riches" are.

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,

With all Thy quick'ning powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.

Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these trifling toys;
Our souls can neither fly nor go
To reach eternal joys.

In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies.

Dear Lord! and shall we ever live
At this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,
And Thine to us so great!

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quick'ning powers;
Come, shed abroad the Savior's love
And that shall kindle ours.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Love Left Behind

The church at Ephesus had many good works, they had much knowledge, but they had left the first love. How do we leave our first love? It seems we too easily get the idea we've *lost* our first love and don't know how to find it. The way it really happens is we choose what will be our first love. It's not lost; but left. Not forgotten, but forsaken.

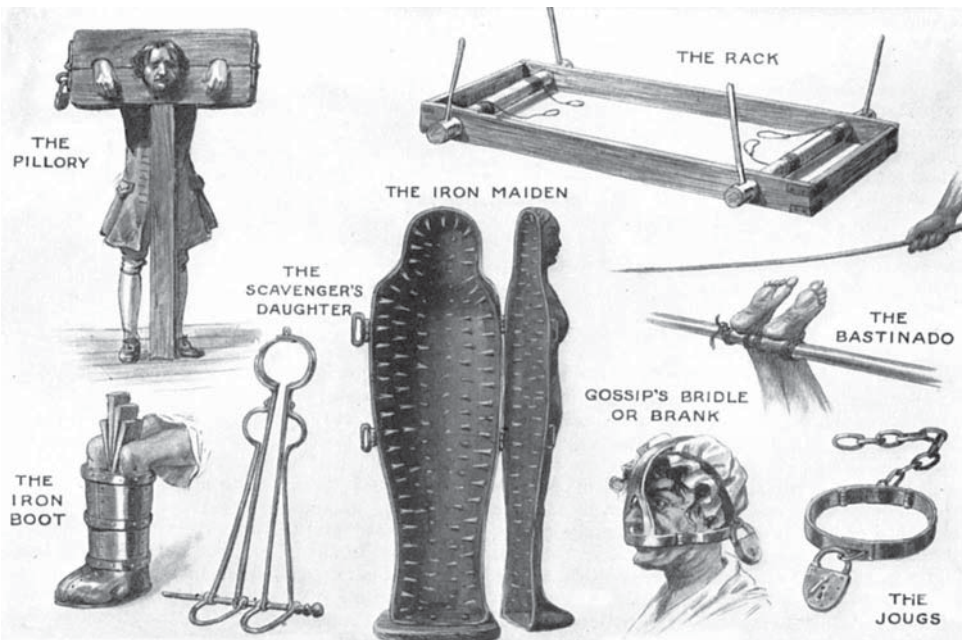
It's like a man walking alone carrying a burden for one he loves with all his heart. As he journeys towards his destination, he sees another bundle containing gold, silver, and other valuables. "Well (he may say), I can't carry both bundles very far, but this looks like a good thing, this will allow me to live more comfortably. I will try it once." And so he goes on for a while until he finds out that these two packages can't be carried together; one will have to go.

"Why, I've hardly picked up this new bundle and I'm getting tired already." After some deliberation he takes the first bundle off his back, finds a good place to put it by the side of the road, and proceeds down the road with the second. "I'll come back and get that later," he decides, "once I've found a secure place to store these other things." Thus he *leaves* his first love, for the second one. ~Daniel Beachy

The Third Baptism

Mike Atnip

I have a baptism to be baptized with ...
Luke 12:50



One could fill a library with the books that have been written about the first two baptisms. In the life of Jesus, our Perfect Example, we find Him being baptized with water by John the Baptist. In quick succession, the Holy Spirit “descend[ed] like a dove, and light[ed] upon him.” It is easy to see two baptisms here; one with water, and the other with the Holy Ghost.

But further on in the Gospel story, we see Jesus commenting about a baptism that He had not yet accomplished: “But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” Lu. 12:50

It was this baptism that the early Anabaptists called “the third baptism.” Sometimes it was referred to as the “baptism of suffering,” or “the baptism of blood.” This latter term came from 1 John 5:8, which tells us, “And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

The “forgotten” baptism

This third baptism is largely ignored today. In fact, it has in some cases been replaced with a baptism that is just the opposite of suffering. By this I mean what may well be called a “baptism of blessings.” This so-called “Prosperity Gospel” is what the Apostle Paul called “another gospel” in 2 Corinthians 11:4 and Galatians 1:16. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of “another spirit” and “another Jesus.” So if someone comes preaching a Jesus that does not live and act like the Jesus in the four Gospels, then we need to beware. In connection with the theme of this article, we can easily deduce that whoever does not preach that the disciples of Jesus should follow their Master into His baptism of suffering, it is “another Jesus.” The Jesus that Paul

preached told His disciples, “he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” Mt 10:38

Yet today we see preachers, famous in this world, telling people about a Jesus that offers them material prosperity. The “proof” is the preacher’s \$23,000 toilet, air-conditioned doghouse, or the \$20 million dollar jet. So instead of preaching a bloody, painful baptism of suffering, a baptism of material blessings is promised to those who believe in their “Jesus.”

I promise you ...

It would seem that a person who is looking for people to follow him would offer his devotees something better than a lifetime of suffering. How many political candidates would get elected if in his campaign speeches he said, “Hey, vote for me and I promise you that I will lead you into the biggest economic depression this country has seen yet!” Yet, Jesus—the Jesus of the Bible—essentially tells His followers something very close to that. “Follow Me,” He told them. And then He voluntarily allowed Himself to be martyred without the least resistance—and He could have called 10,000 angels if He wanted to!

Why suffering?

One of the big causes of unbelief that people stumble over concerning the God of the Bible is the question as to how a “good God” can allow evil to happen. How can a supposedly omnipotent [All-powerful] God allow suffering and evil to continue in the world? How could He, who is stronger than Satan, have allowed him to continue for so long? How can it be that a good God allows innocent children to starve?

Those are valid questions, ones that I don't claim to be able to give a complete answer to, other than two points: 1. Man's choice to sin is the cause of evil in the world, and God allows humanity a free choice. The freedom for a man to choose unrighteousness will affect others around them. Although God sometimes does limit a man from harming others, He does not totally stop sin and its consequences from happening. 2. Suffering is necessary in this world so that the righteous character of God can be made manifest.

We will examine the second point in this article.

The beginning

When Adam chose to disobey God, God was forced to separate from Adam. Adam and his posterity were then left to the whims of their own mind and the temptations of their flesh and those of Satan. By nature—without God's Spirit within to guide and empower—humans will choose that which serves to bring them the most pleasure. This is the opposite of God's nature, which is love, the opposite of self-centeredness. Thus man's fallen state left his character opposed to God's character. Self and love cannot be mixed, just like oil and water do not mix.

When man began to follow his own ways, it was anarchy. In anarchy, every man does that which he thinks best, and this usually translates into doing what brings him the most personal gain and pleasure. So if Bob has 100 acres, but he sees Joe has 200 acres and better cows, Bob plans a midnight raid and kills Joe and takes over his land and cows.

We call that "unrighteousness" because it is not morally right, not what God's character is like. And God's character is the basis that determines if something is "righteous" or "unrighteous."

Man without God will basically act like an animal, as Ecclesiastes 3:18 tells us: "I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts." So just like a wild animal will fight for its survival, killing one of its own over who gets to eat the prey, man fights and kills and strives for the mastery over his fellow man.

Righteous vs. unrighteousness

Humanity without God will be unrighteous. As their morals and integrity degrade (which is the natural course for people without God), humans will cheat and hurt and deceive even those who try to help them. Think of those men who will cheat old grandmothers out of their bank ac-

counts and houses, even though the old lady is very kind to them. This is total unrighteousness: returning **evil for good**.

To limit this unrighteousness and help humanity from slipping into total degeneracy, God instituted human governments. These usually form some sort of basic guidelines to help limit the worst forms of unrighteousness, with applicable punishments for those who break the guidelines. The Law of Moses was one of these governments, albeit a special law that also had many types and shadows of the Gospel built into it.

These laws did not restore humanity to the fullness of God's nature and character, but they did try to put a harness on the worst of man's unrighteous actions. Most governments recognize that murder, stealing, and cheating are wrong and make laws to limit these evils. Basically, instead of evil for good, civil laws say **evil for evil and good for good**. This means that Bob should not kill Joe for his land and his cows, but if Bob does break the moral code and attack Joe, Joe is allowed to return the evil and defend himself. Most of the civil governments of this world operate on this basis, more or less. Under the threat of punishment, most men can live up to the "evil for evil" standard of righteousness. And of course, it is not hard to return good for good. If Bob invites Joe for a barbecue, Joe may well invite him for some watermelon on a hot day.

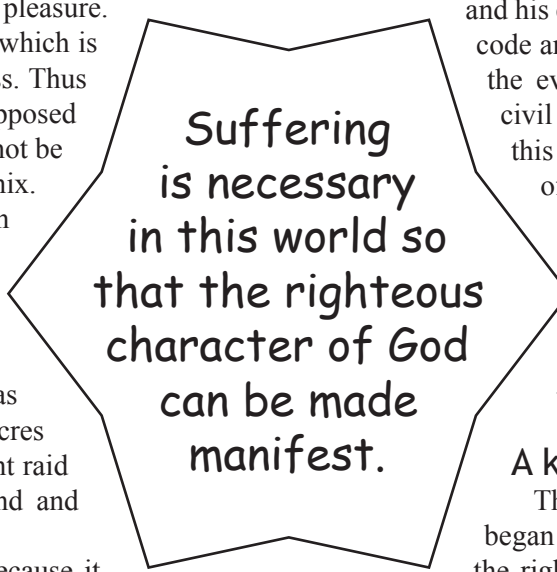
A kingdom of righteousness

Then came the kingdom of God. Jesus began the Gospel message by laying out the righteousness upon which His kingdom would operate. Of course, it would not be unrighteousness: *evil for good*. But, neither would it be *evil for evil, good for good*. It was to be a radically new kingdom. Actually, it was simply a return to God's original intent for man in the Garden of Eden. Christ's kingdom would be a kingdom based upon the heavenly concept of **good for evil!** Now, when Joe hears the rumor that Bob is about to attack him and take his land and cows, Joe visits Bob and blesses him.

So we see the three "levels" of righteousness:

1. Total unrighteousness: evil for good.
2. Righteousness by civil law, or human righteousness: evil for evil, good for good.
3. The righteousness of God: good for evil.

Let's look at a few issues in the light of these three levels of righteousness, starting with war. In total unrighteousness, one nation can attack another for whatever reason. In human righteousness, war is often limited to what may be



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can be made
manifest.

called “just war”: if one nation does attack another, then the attacked people have a right to fight back. In God’s righteousness, when a people are attacked, they do not fight back, but even bless the attackers.

In boundary disputes, total unrighteousness may flare into a shootout if the two parties involved get into an argument. When one side has killed the other, “to the victor go the spoils.” In human righteousness, boundary disputes are taken before a judge, who tries to hear both sides and make a just decision. In the kingdom of God, if one side tries to move the boundary marker illegitimately, the other lets him do so without a fight, and may even tell the offender to take double.

Back to suffering

What place does a baptism of suffering have in the kingdom of God? The answer is that suffering is the only way in which the righteousness of God can be manifested. One early Anabaptist writer even put it this way: “A man can only be made righteous through suffering.” If you are like me, that little sentence will make you shake your head on the first time reading it. But after contemplation as to what he meant, I began to concur. Let me explain.

Jesus told his disciples in Luke 6:32-34 that “if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.” In other words, is it really anything extraordinary for a man to practice human righteousness? Of course, those who do practice “evil for evil, good for good” can congratulate themselves that they are not like the totally unrighteous person who practices “evil for good.” But Jesus came preaching a higher level of righteousness, the righteousness of God, the righteousness that is inherent to His holy character. He told His disciples in Matthew 5:20, “That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

The righteousness that the scribes and Pharisees measured themselves with was the Mosaic law. And this law did hold men accountable to a measure of righteousness that was better than total unrighteousness. Poking out a man’s eye for no reason was prohibited. But if someone poked out your eye, you had a right to poke his out: eye for eye. “Evil for evil” was okay in Moses’ law, but “evil for good” was

outlawed. Jesus told His followers that if they were going to enter into and live in His kingdom, they had to move beyond the “evil for evil” level of righteousness.

Jesus did not leave His disciples in the dark as to some practical applications. He took them through several points of the Mosaic law and lifted the standard up to the righteous character of God, and how that would work out in practical terms.

His disciples were a bit taken aback. At one point, they exclaimed, “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” It seems they questioned, like many people do, whether it would be possible to live up to the new standard.

How could a man practice the kingdom righteousness of “good for evil,” if there were no evil in this world?

The role of suffering

Let’s contemplate the heavenly kingdom’s standard of righteousness. Jesus said it plainly when He told His followers, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” The Apostle Paul put it this way in Romans 12:21: “Overcome evil with good.”

Now, here is the “big” question: how could a man practice the kingdom righteousness of “good for evil,” if there were no evil in this world? If all that was in the world was good, there would be no opportunities for the character of God’s righteousness to fully manifest itself. If there were no unjust (unrighteous) people in the earth, God could never manifest His full righteous character of returning “good for evil.”

Obviously, we would all prefer to live in a world in which there was no unrighteousness. But when we ponder this whole point, suddenly we see the “need” for evil. If all were good, there would never be the opportunity to manifest the character of our good God in its fullness. Only when the true righteousness of God confronts evil, and overcomes it by good, can God’s glory shine its brightest. One cannot suffer triumphantly if he never suffers!

And so to reveal the glory of God, God had to come into an evil place, a place where He would suffer evil, so that He could practice—make manifest—His righteous character trait of “good for evil.”

Thus God came into this world through His Son Jesus to suffer, to triumph over evil by returning good to those who abused Him. His name was glorified through it all.

Made righteous through suffering

The author of Hebrews tells us that the Messiah, “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” It is a little hard for us to think of Jesus having to “learn obedience,” but the author continues, saying, “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

That word “perfect” can throw us into a tailspin if we are not careful. The word “perfect” in the KJV usually means “completed,” or “brought to its finished state.” So when Jesus passed through the final “test” of suffering, and “passed the test” by forgiving and returning a blessing on those who had unrighteously treated Him, His obedience was “perfected.” He had proved that He “had what it takes” to always return good for evil. The righteous character of God within Him had triumphed over every temptation. He now had the right to become the “author of eternal salvation.” In Hebrews 2:10, it is written “For it became him [was necessary for Him], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

An analogy could be like a construction company that is looking for an experienced backhoe operator. When the applicant shows up, they may well take him out back and show him the machine that he will be operating, and say, “Fire it up and dig me a hole over there. I want to see if you can really do this.”

God could have planned it somehow that Jesus just stayed in heaven, and then told everyone to believe that it was possible for a man to walk on earth in a human body without sinning. But God “proved” to the world that it was possible. He proved, through His son Jesus, that it is possible to live righteously among unredeemed people, practicing “good for evil” and holiness. He sent Jesus, permitting great abuse to be heaped upon Him, to prove that this Jesus was capable in all circumstances to overcome the evil with good. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him,” (Is. 53:10) because the Father knew the Son would overcome the evil with good. The righteous response of the Son towards the evil inflicted upon Him was a beautiful aroma in the Father’s nose, qualifying Him to be the “author of eternal salvation.”

The Lion of the tribe of Judah prevailed over evil, and His blood was taken from Him and sprinkled in the inner sanctuary [spirit] of dead humanity to enliven, purify, and forgive. Whosoever would look upon the victorious Son on the tree could be quickened into a new life of righteousness, by the Holy Spirit.

He suffers still

But the Messiah still suffers today ... in His body. And He still overcomes today ... in His body. He is still going through the third baptism, yet today ... in His body. His

Check this box if you would like to opt out of suffering.

There are no opt-out options to the third baptism in the Christian life!

people are still being “baptized” with unrighteous deeds against them, so that the righteousness of God can manifest itself in every generation. Persecutions, banishments, lawsuits, divorces, angry words, abuse, and cursings are still heaped upon the saints.

Yes, it still pleases God to “bruise” His people with suffering, because He knows that the beautiful aroma of His righteous character—which He planted in them—will arise from the situation. Just like a crushed flower gives off a greater aroma, so God’s people produce more righteousness when they are “crushed” in suffering.

God is not a sadist. He does not enjoy watching people suffer because He enjoys watching twisted faces, looks of despair, and hearing screams of pains. But it is only when we suffer that we can return good for evil. If we never pass through evil circumstances, we could never respond righteously to evil circumstances. Thus it remains the lot of God’s people to suffer.

The first letter of Peter is filled with the idea of suffering, and how suffering fits into the Christian life. Although we will not look at all of that letter now, notice one phrase in 1 Peter 3:14: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye.” While I would not insist that the following is what Peter meant, let us consider what may be a new way of looking at this sentence. We probably tend to think that Peter is saying that “If you did what was right and got blasted for it, rejoice.” That is certainly true, and may be what Peter intended. But let’s suppose that Peter means, “If God sends you into a situation where you suffer terrible, unjust treatment—just so God can have you respond with “good for evil” righteousness—rejoice!” In other words, God may allow one of your employees to embezzle \$50,000 from your business, just so that the world can see you respond like Christ would in the situation. God is “bruising” you to get a sweet odor! And we are supposed to rejoice at the opportunity!

No opt-outs allowed

When a man or a woman comes to Christ to be a disciple, no alternative is given to opt out of any of the three baptisms. We definitely need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. How else could we be empowered to live like Christ? We are commanded to go into the whole world, “baptizing them

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Our flesh usually has no problem accepting baptism with water or with the Holy Ghost. But it screams in defiance at the third baptism: the baptism of a bloody suffering. There are no little boxes to check off in the “contract” of the New Covenant, that is, a little box that says, “Check here if you would like to opt out of any of the following baptisms.” Entrance into the kingdom is a total surrender of the will to whatever God has in store; we don’t “bargain” with God.

Jesus told us we need to count the cost before following Him. He said that we must take up the cross and follow Him. No opt-outs. As we have already seen in this article, the only way that the righteousness of the kingdom of God can manifest itself is when evil happens. Evil must happen, or we cannot overcome it with good.

So we must count the cost. If we don’t want to have any suffering in our lives ... then don’t even think of becoming a disciple of Jesus! It is true; God may choose some of us to have less suffering, but if we want to conquer unrighteousness, unrighteousness has to happen to us. We cannot overcome bitterness unless we experience a situation that tempts us to hold a grudge. Being treated nicely doesn’t usually tempt us to bitterness, so we must needs experience treatment—a mistreatment—that isn’t so nice!

Glorification through suffering

Right after Judas left the room on the night before He was crucified, Jesus told His disciples, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.” Jn 13:32

When we think of glorifying God, we often think of singing praises or testifying of the great things God has done. While this is one way to glorify God, there is a better way. That way is to manifest God’s character in trying situations. Others looking on will see the righteous response and glorify the Father.

Jesus glorified the Father on the cross when He openly revealed that He had something within Him that was stronger than the terrible injustice being done to Him. [He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city ... Pr. 16:32] In return, God glorified the Son. It is recorded that when the centurion who was at the crucifixion “saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.” Lu. 23:47

Peter, preaching after Pentecost, told the crowd about the glory of the cross: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.” The glorification of Jesus happened when He was unjustly crucified and responded with forgiveness.

God will also glorify us, if we will accept the suffering in our life and respond righteously. Paul wrote that we are “joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

And in another place Paul expressed the great longing to know God. Not just know about Him, but to really know Him. And in that context, Paul speaks of the role of sufferings in his relationship with Christ, saying, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” Fellowship with Christ consisted of co-suffering with Him. In his letter to Timothy, Paul states

that “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” That simply means that if we will take Christ and His power with us into an unjust situation that we are put into, He will give us grace to return good for evil, thus conquering evil. If we let an evil circumstance move us to respond back with evil, evil has conquered us. But when we let Christ move us to respond to evil with good, we have conquered evil.

Destroying sin by suffering

Peter tells us in his letter, “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.” 1 Pe. 4:1

In 1527, the Anabaptist Leonard Schiemer wrote a letter to the church at Rattenberg, saying, “It is true, Christ’s suffering destroys sin, but only if He suffers in man. For as the water does not quench my thirst unless I drink it, and as the bread does not drive away my hunger unless I eat it, even so Christ’s suffering does not prevent me from sinning until He suffers in me.”¹ When Jesus suffered unrighteous treatment, He “ceased from sin” by not returning evil for evil. In the same way, we can “cease from sin” when we return good for the evil done to us. In this way, sin is destroyed and conquered ... by the Christ living in us!

One favorite analogy among the early Anabaptists was that of a tree in the woods. That tree is a house; but only a potential house. Only after the tree suffers the pain of the

1 Walter Klassen, ed., *Anabaptism in Outline*, ((Kitchener, Ont, Scottdale, Pa): Herald Press, 1981), 90-91.

In Phillipians 3:10, Paul indicates that fellowship with Christ consisted of co-suffering with Him.

axe and saw, turning the tree into useful boards, is the tree really a house.

And so it is with the Christian and righteousness. A child of God, birthed into a new life by a baptism of the Holy Ghost, is a fountain of righteous deeds—or like the tree in the woods, a *potential* fountain. It is only after the believer has been sawn and shaped by sufferings does his righteous character come to any fruitful use. In this analogy, we can now grasp how the one Anabaptist could write that we can only be made righteous through suffering. We are made righteous when God regenerates us, but that righteousness becomes tangible through our responses to unrighteous actions against us.

Fruits of righteousness

In 1536, Andres Keller wrote an anguished plea to the lords who had him imprisoned for his faith:

I hope, dear lords, that you will not act rashly against me. I say this not from deceitful motives, but because I do not want you to incriminate yourselves by doing me violence. What good is it to you to reduce me to this miserable condition? I am distressed beyond misery, I am poverty-stricken and robbed of my ability to work, beyond what I could ever overcome in my lifetime [They had tortured him so severely he didn't think he would ever heal enough to be able to work again.] I have been starved so that I cannot now eat or drink, and my body is broken. How would you like to live for five weeks with only boiled water and unflavored bread soup?

I have been lying in the darkness on straw. All this would not be possible if God had not given me an equal measure of His love. I marvel that I have not become confused or insane. I would have frozen if God had not strengthened me, for you can well imagine how a little bit of hot water will warm one. In addition to this, I suffered great torture twice from the executioner, who has ruined my hands, unless the Lord heals them. I have had enough [torture] to last me the rest of my days.

However, I know that God never forsakes me if I suffer for the sake of his word. I know full well that I have experienced with great pain the Enemy's temptations against you. May God forgive you and all the dear people who have falsely accused me before you.²

Did you catch the righteousness of God manifesting itself?

² Ibid., 93.

The returning of good for evil, the blessing for cursing? Mangled for life because of false accusations, yet forgiving ... that is the righteousness of Christ coming out of suffering! That is the tree being sawn into boards to create a house.

Such poignant accounts of suffering should strike us here in North America as to how little we suffer in our time.

We think it is "suffering" if we leave our lights on at Walmart and have a dead battery when we get back out to our vehicle. Or, perhaps we rip our dress on the rose bush while we pass.

Yet, I know that we all do suffer injustice in some degree. It is part and parcel of life on Earth, and it is a required part of being a disciple of Jesus. People mock us. People steal our goods. People cheat us. Friends turn their back on us. Although the Bible doesn't clearly say so, I personally believe that God purposely lines Christians up to suffer some of these things, quite on purpose, just to manifest His glory.

These are hard things to go through, but if we would just stop and consider the matter, it is the only way that we can clearly manifest the righteous character of God that He has given to us as a great, undeserved gift. And just like the tree needs some working to become useful, we must pass through suffering to produce the full righteousness of Christ.

The answer

Perhaps it will help us to look upon our future sufferings not as "trials" (which they are), but as opportunities for God to overcome evil with good. When evil is overcome by good, then the kingdom of God has come to earth. Someday, all evil will be banished forever, and the kings of God's kingdom (those who overcame evil) will be taken to a place where there will never be any more evil to conquer. What a day that will be!

But until that time, we must, as Conrad Grebel wrote to Thomas Muntzer, "be baptized in anguish and affliction, tribulation, persecution, suffering, and death. [We] must be tried with fire, and must reach the fatherland of eternal rest, not by killing [our] bodily enemies, but by killing [our] spiritual enemies."³

Jesus has told us, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!" Re. 2:10

May the grace of God take you through your third baptism! A crown awaits those who overcome! ~

³ George Huntston Williams and Angel M. Mergal, eds., *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, Ichthus, ((Philadelphia, PA): Westminster, 1957), 80.

When Jesus suffered unrighteous treatment, He "ceased from sin" by not returning evil for evil.

Do Something, Lord!!! Do Something!!!

Brethren, for anything to be truly accomplished, HE is going to have to do it. Period. We are sensing that more and more. Let me try to illustrate how we feel.

A drop of oil ...

Sit with me in the seat of a plane that has been flying for hours. We have reached the middle of the ocean. Look ahead; nothing but water as far as your eyes can see. Look behind; it's the same. Look left and right. Water, water, water stretches out in every direction. Nothing but water can be seen. Now take one drop of oil and let it drop to the water below. "Oh that you, a little drop of oil, would affect this ocean, that it would all turn to oil!" is the cry of the One who drops it.

I am that drop.

God is the One who has "dropped" me.

Oil can't change water.

Water resists oil.

Impossible? Yes. "Do something, Lord!!! Do something!!!"

A bird ...

A small flock of very rare birds circle and land. "I love you birds," speaks their Creator. "You bring glory to Me. Go and create more of yourselves. I want you scattered to every corner of the earth, changing other kinds of birds into the same breed as you are. Hawks, eagles, sparrows, etc.; all should be changed. I want each one to be changed into your likeness."

I am one of those birds.

God is the One who has sent me.

A bird can't be changed into another "breed."

Hawks "eat" my breed.

Impossible? Yes. "Do something, Lord!!! Do something!!!"

An ant ...

A small ant gazes at the majestic mountain in front of him. "Take this mountain," he hears, "and move it over there. I want to use you to show My power and ability."

I am that ant.

God is the One talking to me.

A single ant cannot move a mountain.

By nature, boulders totally resist movement by small creatures.

Impossible? Yes. "Do something, Lord!!! Do something!!!"

And now us ...

These three illustrations may not be all "theologically correct." But, brothers and sisters, do you get the picture? These are illustrations that came to my heart as I looked at the work ahead of us.

I am a very, very small speck.

I feel God has led us to Africa.

He has called us to be a part of the glorious changing process that God wants to do in the lives of the people of Africa.

Many of them have been taught to resist us and our teaching about Jesus.

Impossible? Yes, well ... it sure feels like it many times. (It is impossible for us without HIM!) Thus the cry of our heart to our Father, "Do something, Lord!!! Do something!!!"

Brothers and sisters, GOD is going to have to "do something." This little phrase has been the cry of my heart for years now. But it is taking on a new meaning to me these days in the east coast of Africa. We are sensing more and more the impossibility of drawing these souls to our Savior, without HIM "doing something." We are joyfully attacking the impossible, with the ring of "GO!" from our Commander still echoing in our ears. Impossible? Yes. "Do something, Lord!!! Do something!!!"

Those of you who feel God laying it on your hearts, join us in prayer (and bless us by letting us know). Let us beseech the throne of grace for an intervention from Him, in individual lives. We want to see lives changed by the blood of the Lamb, worshipping HIM as their ALL!

Seeking to serve with you, in HIM,

A brother on the east coast of Africa





Legalism

Its Fruits and the True Grace of God

Based on a message preached by Emanuel Lapp

When one speaks of legalism, it is necessary to define the term. The word “legalism” is not found in the Bible. There are a few things that bother me about how this word has been used many times, and this has been one of the stimulations that caused me to study it. To start with, let’s look at three points:

1. A definition of “legalism.”
2. The fruits of legalism.
3. The true grace of God.

You may have seen the terms “legalism” and “liberalism” used together in a word picture. Supposedly, “legalism” is the one ditch and “liberalism” is the other, and somehow we need to find our way between the two. Quite frankly, that word picture bothers me, because it shifts the focus from off of what the Word of God would have us focus on.

When we think of fruits, we need to remember that fruits are not the tree itself, but rather the natural end result of what has gone before. You don’t plant thorns and get figs, Jesus reminded us. You plant figs and then you get figs. Neither do you get grapes from thistles. So, legalism has its fruits.

The true grace of God also has its fruits. 1 Peter 5:12 speaks of “the true grace of God.” This kind of grace is that which teaches us that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Tit. 2:12 This is the true grace of God. There is a lot of false grace being preached today.

What legalism is not

First of all, I would like to give a disclaimer as to what legalism isn’t. Legalism is *not* a righteous man who feels good about what he is doing. When the Pharisee prayed “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican,” he was not commended for that. He said, “I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” But he was not commended for that. It is never recorded in the Scriptures that he was a godly or righteous man. But much more, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for looking good on the outside—doing some

right things—but their hearts were full of excess and they were devouring widow’s houses, and behind the scenes evil was happening. All of this was cloaked over with religion.

The beginning of legalism

Turn to Genesis chapters 2 and 3. Legalism, or being righteous by law, gives us the picture that there is a righteousness established by man and a righteousness established by God. These two righteousnesses are not equal. In Genesis 2:15-17, we read:

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

In Genesis 3:1-7:

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Reading on in the same chapter, we come to realize that these aprons were not sufficient; they did not cover enough. So God slew an animal, shedding blood, to cover their nakedness.

This was the beginning of man *deciding for himself what was right and wrong*.

They were told to not eat of this tree of “the knowledge of good and evil.” The serpent came and cast doubt upon God and upon what God had said, telling Eve, “Yea, hath God said?” This put a question on God’s word and what God had said. Eve began to look differently upon the tree than what she had before the serpent had spoken to her, tempting her. Eve then turned and looked at the tree and began to question God; then she reached out her hand and took of the

fruit and ate of it, and gave to her husband, and he ate also. And their eyes were opened. No longer were they directly under the guidance of God, and they began from that point to *decide for themselves what was good and what was evil.*

**The essence
of legalism is
to decide for
ourselves what is
right and wrong.**

And that—*deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong*—is the essence of legalism. Making practical applications to biblical principles is NOT legalism. But ignoring those principles, in deference to our own ideas, IS legalism.

Legalism continues

God later gave commandments to people in the Old Testament, and His people were to do them and live by them. But they found it impossible to live a righteous and holy life according to the commandments of God. And so they were confronted with two choices. They could cast themselves upon the mercy of God, as David did. Or, they could lower the standard that God put upon them, to a level they could reach on their own strength by the flesh.

That has been the continual struggle of humanity. We tend to bring down the level of God's law so that we can attain it by our own strength. But that is the essence of legalism, *deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong.* 2 Corinthians 10:18 tells us, "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Jesus Himself tells us, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." The scribes and the Pharisees had a cloak of religion, but they did not do what God said.

Righteous actions are not legalism

A righteous man is not a legalist! John tells us in 1 John 3:7, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." Righteousness is a fruit of the Spirit. And the righteous should feel good about living righteously. It feels good for a child to be obedient to his parents, and it does *not* feel good to be disobedient. The same applies to our obedience to God: it

feels good to obey, and it is right to feel good about obeying Him.

We should feel good about the right deeds we are doing. However, history and Scripture indicate that just feeling good about what we are doing is not a safe gauge. It is possible to feel good about doing wrong, just because we are used to doing it or because we have been taught that way. That is the reason we are told to have our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil." He. 5:14 These "senses" need to be exercised in the Word of God, not in our own reasonings and justifications and ways.

Through my life I have met a lot of different types of people, spoken with them and observed others, from atheists and drunkards to Christians and Muslims and Buddhists. I have found a common strain running through all of these people. I have found a common thread of legalism, although it varies some in intensity and style.

The atheist

There is the atheist legalist. Somehow in his self-will or bitterness, he has decided to believe or reasoned with himself that there is no God. And he has cast aside the Word of God as legitimate and has begun to *decide for himself what is right and wrong.* He has no place to turn to now for direction in the matter of right and wrong, except into himself and his own thoughts. He has no foundation, no absolutes, because he has cast away all restraints that God would put upon him. He fully and freely reaches forth and partakes of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and trusts in it. He has rejected God's word. One person called it "the cold, logical reasoning away of God." And I agree with

**Making practical applications
to biblical principles is NOT
legalism!
As David Wilkerson once said:
"When the church calls
obedience legalism, it is at the
height of apostasy."**

that. We need to be alert, because when we begin to turn away from what God has said, we are taking steps toward atheism, and away from God. Our hand begins to stretch out towards that tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There was a time in the history of Israel when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Ju. 17:6 In effect, that is the same as atheism. It is unbelief in God as the ultimate authority. And every time we take a step towards *deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong,* we

are rejecting the living Word of God, written in the tables of our heart, and are stepping towards unbelief. This happens sometimes in the context of discouragement, when people fail us. Church leaders, parents, friends, teachers ... Let's not react and begin to do "that which is right in our own eyes."

The humanist

The humanist legalist trusts in his own reason. They believe that man is basically good, and all he has to do is become in his mind who he is capable of becoming. The humanist has trusted his own reason, knowledge, and mind, and has rejected the mind of God. This man also fully and freely partakes of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The modernist

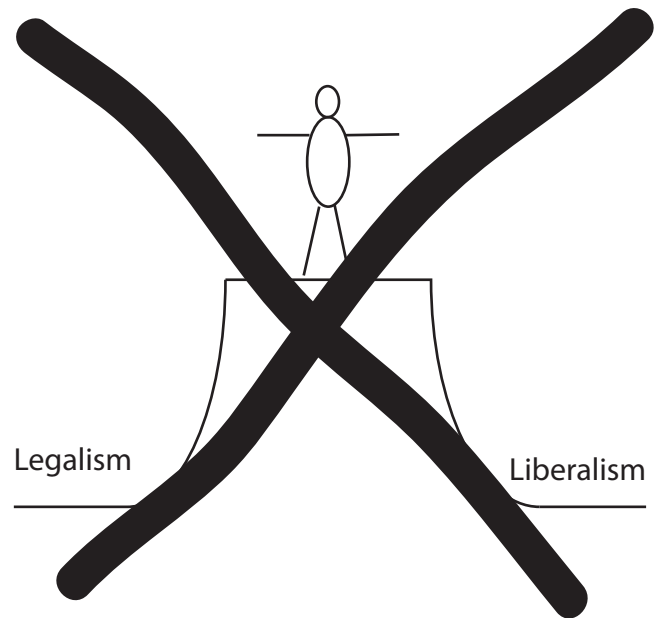
There is another type of legalist, the man who claims to be a believer, but uses his carnal mind and understanding to interpret the Word of God, and does not let the revelation of the Spirit of God guide him. So, anything in the Bible that does not make sense to his carnal mind, he explains away. The feeding of the five thousand is an example: since he does not believe in miracles, he just explains them away. Supposedly, the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand happened naturally, when the people heard Jesus' teaching and began to love one another and started sharing their lunches. Thus, the five thousand were fed in the modernist view. Well, that is a nice story, but that is not the Bible version, but rather man's reason; man exalting himself above God, *man deciding for himself what is right and wrong*.

God has given us reasoning powers. But they are to be used under His direction. God calls to humanity, saying, "Come now, and let us reason together." Our reason was designed to be used under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The willful sinner

Next we will look at the legalist who lives in sin, the one who cannot overcome his "besetting" sin. I have met many people like that, and I have found a common strain in those who do not repent and find grace in Jesus Christ. I have been in this place myself, justifying myself for many years in my sin. The drunkard has many "reasons" for being where he is: "Nobody loves me ..." and all kinds of similar "reasons" why he stays a drunkard. The husband who falls into adultery has "reasons": "My wife is a nag ..."

All sinners who do not find the grace of God in the mercy of Christ will find justification for their sin, *making their own set of rules and reasons*. This happens because no one can live very long in sin—knowing that he is sinning and is lost, and understanding the consequences of lostness—and continue being comfortable with himself. These people will find justification for their sin, sooner or later.



The common analogy presented with "legalism" as one ditch and "liberalism" as the other is not a valid picture, and causes people to miss the meaning of legalism. Legalism is NOT the opposite of liberalism.

Some of the worst sinners that I meet in prisons will have justifications of some sort for their actions. The only ones who do not have a self-justifiable reason for their sins are those who are repentant and are open to receive the Word of God. This is the place we all need to come to ... and stay at for the rest of our life.

The self-willed

Then there is the self-willed legalist. He has a will for what he wants. He says, "I want, therefore I get." So in his heart he knows he has to have a reason for what he does. He searches and finds a reason to get what he wants to get. He soon convinces himself and freely runs after the things he desires, *deciding for himself what is right and wrong*. There are things that feel good to the flesh that we need to avoid and not create an appetite for. We can feed that appetite to the point where it grows beyond reason and our ability to control it. That is why we need to make a choice to stop when we can stop and have our ways committed unto God.

You know, that first beer or first drug or first "whatever"; that first step away from God may be a small step. But it is still a step away from God. It is a step towards the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We may be able to make a choice in that first or second step. The grace of God may not immediately abandon us. But as we continue that choice away from God, the appetite will take over and we will lose control of ourselves.

The religious legalist

The Muslim weighs right and wrong in the balances. He tries to do more good than evil, and hopefully the good will be more than the bad.

The problem with this is, again, that he has *decided for himself what is right and wrong*. He is not depending on what God says. I have talked to quite a few of that strain of man who decides for himself what is right and wrong. I have found the same strain in Buddhism, bowing before a god of stone. It is also in Hinduism, where there is a god for every occasion and need, supposedly.

The Apostle Paul says that he was, as “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” Yet, he was apprehending God’s people and putting them into prison and consented to the stoning of Stephan. Now Paul said he was “blameless,” but I believe that was in the context of his own understanding, as far as he could understand the law. He lived according to the Jewish concept of the law, and had *his own interpretation as to right and wrong*.

Legalism can be defined as, “Scrutinizing the law to look for a loophole for disobedience.”

We see that manifested when he was called, since God told him, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” Ac. 26:14 There were things pricking Paul, and he finally broke down and admitted it. At that point, Paul left his own interpretation of right and wrong and received God’s interpretation. He later confessed that he did “count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” He had confidence in the flesh, but that confidence had to die, that confidence in our self that we are naturally born with.

A covering for hidden sin

As I mentioned at the start, the picture of “liberalism” as one ditch, and “legalism” as the other, bothers me. This is because it takes the focus off of what legalism truly is and tries to get us to look at it as something that it is not. I have known many “liberals” and many “conservatives” in my life, in all kinds of churches, and I cannot say that the “liberal” is any less “legalist” than the conservative. We find them in both “camps.” The legalist is a legalist because he *decides for himself what is right and wrong*.

We are tempted on one hand to be concerned about some things that God has said, but only a few things that He has said. Yes, we are concerned about things that are true and right. We focus on those few points, but then we don’t concern ourselves with other things, perhaps things that are hid-

den. I have seen this happen over and over. Religion then becomes a cloak for sin.

In Matthew 23, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees. He had spent much time with them, trying to get them to see their sin and their need. Finally, the day came to show them plainly what was wrong, and the whole chapter is dedicated to that rebuke. Religion to them had become a covering, and I fear that same thing happens to Christianity. Too often we look good on the outside, but the inside is full of sin. Too often we eye the “liberal” and compare ourselves with them, and feel good about ourselves.

The Word of God touches every area of our life, not just a few areas. We cannot be real strong in one area and really weak in another, without departing from the Word of God.

The “liberal” legalist

Well, there is the “liberal” legalist, and he is busy legalizing that which is right in his own eyes. He has his desires and goals, and loves the world, and busies himself justifying his love. Step by step, step by little step, legalizing to himself what he wants. There is a continual push to draw near to the world, and one excuse after another is concocted to accommodate it. He may speak of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, but step by step he is heading for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Balaam, who “loved the wages of unrighteousness,” was a “liberal” legalist. He just could not accept “no” from God, and kept pushing and pushing until God let him go. And he went, even though he could only bless the children of Israel. But the Bible tells us very clearly that his heart was not right with God. And sure enough, he found a way to get around what God was telling him not to do: curse Israel. He found a way, a loophole, in the Word of God, by teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel.

Balaam was rebuked by the dumb donkey, but I don’t know which is more surprising: the donkey talking, or Balaam answering him. It is the same with the “liberal” legalist. I don’t know which is more surprising: that they do the things God has forbidden, or that they expect to get by with it.

But the rules keep changing for the “liberal” legalist. He takes small steps, but always in one direction. And as the outward things change, inward things change. A person does not begin to wear wolves’ clothing without become a wolf. Sheep do not wear wolves’ clothing. But we are warned that wolves wear sheep clothing. But we never have the opposite warning, that a sheep will begin to wear wolves’ clothing, deceiving everyone around them.

Grace into lasciviousness

Jude 4 tells us, “For there are certain men crept in un-awares, who were before of old ordained to this condemna-

tion, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” These men turn grace into a license to sin. This happens when we *decide for ourselves what is right and wrong*. When we legalize what God hasn’t, we deny our Lord Jesus Christ. That is what these men in Jude 4 did.

Legalism has its fruits. Fruits manifest themselves in the atheist, who has no absolutes. It has its fruits in the sinner, who keeps on sinning. It has its fruits in the self-willed, who continues pushing for his own pleasure and getting overcome by it. It has its fruits in the “conservative” religious man, who continues in his wrong thinking, often very sincerely so, but covering over his hidden sin. It has its fruit also in the “liberal” man, who legalizes his way to the world.

The true grace of God

The true grace of God teaches “us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Tit. 2:12 We find in Romans 12:2 Paul speaking of a transformed mind, that we “may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” There is a way that God has for us that is good for us, and He knows what that path is. We don’t always know, and we need to remember that so that we do not run to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and start *deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong*. The transformation of our mind happens as we focus on the Word of God, and turn to Him ... someone outside our own self.

In Romans 7:24, we see a man under the law, struggling and not finding victory. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But he came to the place where he surrenders it all, and exclaims, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” He had begun to realize earlier in chapter 7 that even though he puts his mind to serve the law of God, there is another law in his flesh that brings him into captivity to the law of sin in his members. He found that his mind in and of itself was not strong enough to overcome sin.

But he finds his answer in chapter 8: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” The Law of Moses could not give power over sin, but the life of Christ Jesus is the overcoming power. There was nothing sinful with the Law of Moses in its place, but it is self that is the problem. Self could not live up to the Law’s demands.

Fruits, the proof

The Spirit of Christ has fruits, works by which we can understand whether it is the Spirit of Christ that moves a



Balaam was a “liberal” legalist, who, although he obeyed God in blessing Israel, later accepted money when he thought of a loophole as to how he could curse God’s people. God had not explicitly forbade him from giving advice to Balak about how to trap God’s people into sinning against God. Balaam followed the letter, but not the spirit, of God’s command. This is legalism.

man or not. Galatians 5:22 names off some of these virtues, and if we have these coming out of our life, then Christ lives in us. “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead [its desires do not control] because of sin; but the Spirit is life [His desires control us] because of righteousness.”

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Pr. 3:5-6 This is the opposite of “legalism”—when we lean not to our *own decisions as to what is right and wrong*. The next verse tells us, “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.” It is not possible to achieve to the full righteousness of God by the law, by determining in our own eyes between the good and the evil. It is not possible to live up to the law in the flesh; we need the Spirit of Christ.

The distinguishing feature between legalism and the true grace of God is that grace will produce a full spectrum of fruit, while legalism will excuse itself from certain aspects.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” Mt. 7:20 ~



SEEDS OF THE KINGDOM

Seed Sower Award

*The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. Matthew 13:24
And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Hebrews 10:24*

In this series, we intend to highlight the work of those who are currently busy introducing the seeds of righteousness, peace, and joy into this sin-filled earth, with the hopes that at least a few lives will receive the Word and be eternally changed. The purpose in turning the spotlight on these works is not to glorify those men and women who are actively advancing the kingdom of God, but rather to stimulate YOU, the reader, into doing YOUR part in YOUR corner. Neither is the purpose meant to be that of asking the readers to donate financially or personally participate in these projects, although that is certainly an option in some cases. Take these ideas, tweak them to fit your situation, and begin to plant the kingdom of God in your environs. The inclusion of any person or church in these articles is not an endorsement by *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* of every doctrine and practice that the spotlighted individuals or churches may represent in other areas of their life. As well, the spotlighted person/group may not endorse all aspects of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Mt. 25:34-40

Often we find that in the hustle and bustle of our lives, we do not have time for interruptions, especially by people who are hard to relate to. Many of us are uncomfortable around the mentally retarded, or those who are different.

This issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* features a schoolroom designed to bring out these children's full potential, and the women who have dedicated themselves to improving their special needs students' lives. They teach the children in one of Hillside School's several classrooms. All the students in the school can spend recess together, which gives the mainstream students and the special needs children a time to mingle and interact.

This school term, 2010-2011, there are 10 students in the special classroom and three teachers. Since there are several teachers to a relatively small class of students, each child receives the individualized attention that he/she needs. Many special needs students need constant one-on-one tutoring, which mothers who are working with other children and running a household find very difficult to give them. The Hillside teachers have the advantage of a focused classroom dedicated only to educating these children.

We believe the heart of God is close to these special needs people and those who care for them. Families who are blessed with these children often reap great benefits in various areas. A special needs sibling builds patience, longsuffering, and unconditional love in his siblings' lives.

The following are the answers to a questionnaire given to three of the teachers at the Hillside school: Verna Martin, Eva Zimmerman, and Elva Hoover.

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The Heartbeat of the Remnant: How many years has it been since this classroom was opened, and what inspired it?

Verna: Hillside Special Ed held their first classes in September 1983. It was inspired by a young man named Enos Hoover. He had several preschool special needs children.

During the year of 1978, he found other families who also were interested in having a school for their children.

They gathered information, held meetings, and were encouraged to press on. With much

perseverance, they got started in September 1979 at Farmersville Mennonite, then moved to Union Grove Mennonite, until it found a permanent place at Hillside Mennonite School. With the helping hand of our Almighty God, the school continues.

THR: What would you say gave you this heart to serve the special needs children in the community?

Verna: Having siblings with hearing impairment and seeing how other people took time for them and the joy it gave my siblings.

Eva: I had special needs siblings and I believe God has put a tender spot in my heart for these people. My parents also babysat a lot for special needs children. As a child, I greatly enjoyed interacting with them. I feel that also had a bearing on my love for special needs children.

Elva: Teaching is a calling. While teaching, I realized I loved working with the learning difficulties of a challenging child.

THR: In what positive way has working with and ministering to these children affected you the most?

Verna: To accept the things I can't change.

Eva: It has given me confidence to use the gifts God has given to reach out to others.

Elva: Getting these children to work at their highest potential brings great satisfaction. Suddenly you don't see them as different, but for who they are and how God created and meant for them to be.

THR: What has been an instance of progress that you have seen in an individual student?

Eva: Shall I pick one student out of the many who have worked so hard and fought so bravely for every step forward? In this work, great strides cannot have more importance than tiny steps.

THR: What are some of the greatest challenges?

Verna: The greatest challenge is knowing ... did they understand? Would they if they could? Did they just not feel like it? Or simply didn't feel well?

Eva: The greatest challenge for me is to put aside "the cares of this world" and simply enjoy these special ones for who they are instead of trying to force them into molds of my making.

Elva: My greatest challenge is presenting the same concept in new and interesting ways until it is mastered. Most books move too fast.

The Special Teacher

"Now say it over again with me: 'Two plus two is four.'" We'll say it over a thousand times, then say it even more. Day after day I teach this lad, who is so very slow. I teach him how to tie his shoes and where the buttons go. I told, 'You cannot teach this child; it is a waste of time.' I gave him a chair, away over there—forget him; he'll be just fine." I can leave him locked inside, not knowing how to cope? I want to teach him—some love, some worth, some hope. I want to help him all I can, though it is hard and slow. "Fellow, let's get started. We have a ways to go." The first thing I must do, to teach this little lad, is to come round and make him know he's not entirely bad. I come to math and reading; he'll learn to write and spell. I come to laugh and live in tune, in many things do well. I come to hours of struggle, the years will slowly pass. I will be glad and so will I, for he has learned at last. I will earn a living, though some may call him dumb. I will know, or even care, how far this boy has come. Why do you do it? There's no reward." But see? The little child I look upon, I'm really seeing me. The Master Teacher, looking down in love on me; I will go through dark valleys and set my spirit free. I will take each one of us—the deaf, the lame, the blind; I will take us, patiently, to live more lovingly and kind. I will be just enough for us our pain and hurt to see, I will be off over there, just where would our lives be?
—Author unknown

(Cont. from previous page)

THR: What is a common need that you have seen in special needs children?

Verna: Acceptance.

Eva: There is no difference from my needs to their needs, from their needs to other children's needs—human needs are the same in everyone.

Elva: Everyone needs love, understanding, and to feel needed.

THR: How would you encourage others to get involved?

Elva: Volunteering or respite care [Babysitting for parents of special needs children] would be a great way to get involved.

THR: Many people are not comfortable around special needs children and adults because they are not sure how to respond to them. Do you have any practical tips on how to relate to special needs people?

Verna: A simple handshake, a smile. They love when people take time to talk to them. Give a positive comment.

Elva: Get down on their level without talking down to them.

THR: What are some of the spiritual rewards for service of this kind?

Eva: Am I doing some great and noble service in which I'll reap rewards? I'm only doing what God has given me a heart to do. I'm doing what I want to do—there is no sacrifice on my part. These special people who in their own unique ways teach love, forgiveness, acceptance, and courage are reward enough. ~



It's just a common-looking schoolhouse. But the kingdom of God—love—extends itself within those walls!

Sweetened by the Tree

Thomas von Imbroich (1533-1558), also known as Thomas the Printer, was a young minister in the Anabaptist movement. He had joined the movement only about four years before he wrote this letter from prison, to his wife.

My desire for you is grace and peace from God the Father and a burning love for all virtue (Co. 1, 1 Pe. 4, 2 Pe. 1), through Jesus Christ our Savior, and that the Holy Spirit strengthen your heart. Oh that you may, unspotted and with a pure mind, persist in doing God's will, until the day of the appearing of the Great God! In that day His furious wrath shall go forth against all the ungodly

ways and the unrighteous deeds which men have worked. But to those who with patience have labored in good works, He shall give blessing, unto eternal life. To Him be praise and honor, now and into eternity. Amen! Ps. 11, Is. 13, 2 Th. 1, Ro. 2

Because we are surrounded on every side by weakness, my dear sister in the Lord, and the determination of the old Adam is difficult to kill, I think it is only reasonable that we stir up one another with the grace we have received (He. 12, Co. 3) so that we do not turn around at the halfway mark, nor murmur with Israel in the wilderness. Remember, a piece of wood in the water can make everything sweet!¹

So, we should not let go of praying like Joshua that the sun go not down until we have exterminated all our enemies. Nu. 11, Jo. 10 We need to remember the example of Saul, who did not destroy what the Lord delivered to him. The Lord wants Jericho to be overthrown and nothing left alive in it. I realize that I am not telling you anything new, how it went with Achan when he hid some forbidden things in the ground, things that his heart lusted after. 1 Sa. 15, Jo. 6, 7

¹ He is probably referring to Exodus 15:25, where Moses threw the tree into the bitter water to sweeten it. If we follow Jesus' example of crucifying our self-centeredness (dying on the tree, which is the tree that makes the water sweet) when we walk into bitter circumstances, those very circumstances can end up being made "sweet."

Thus it is that men are swindled (by the snake, when he dangles a lovely apple in our sight continuously) when they act upon the desires of their natural mind. Paul gives a real warning about resisting these lusts when he said, “Do not live according to the wisdom of the flesh, obeying its desires. But rather mortify your members, so that the outer man decreases and the inner man increases day by day. Because if the death of Christ is not applied to our body, His life will not be revealed in us. 2 Co. 4:11, Ge. 2, Ga. 5, Ro. 13, Co. 3.

So, let the Word of God dwell richly in you unto all wisdom, so that the name of the Lord will be praised. Because the death of Christ is nothing other than a dying to sin, and we are admonished to imitate that death. “Because you are dead,” says the Scripture, “and your life is hid with Christ in God.” 2 Ti. 2, Ro. 6, 8, Co. 3, 2 Co. 4, Ph. 3, Ge. 32

Yes, Jacob’s hip is dried up, death is swallowed up in victory ... because we are dead to sin (which is the strength of death)! We have become godly and righteous through the resurrection of Jesus, in whom we walk in a new life, that is to say, we are created anew in the spiritual resurrection. Is. 25, 1 Co. 15. Ro. 5 He has removed sin from us on the tree so that we could be loosed from sin and live righteously. That is the reason it is no little thing to boast in the death of Christ. How can anyone who lives in sin say that Christ died for him? Ro. 6, Co. 3, Is. 53, 1 Pe. 2, 2 Pe. 2, 2 Co. 4.

Since Christ died once to sin, when a believer now lives, he lives to God. And the life of Christ, which alone is righteousness, is fully reflected in him. Ro. 6 So, I truly admonish each one to hold the Lord Jesus in memory, and do according to the healing words that came out of His mouth. His words are eternal life, and we should kill the old man. 1 Pe. 1, Jo. 6,13, Mt. 11 That is why Paul says, “For it is sharper than a double-edged sword, and divides apart the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow.” Where this is not put into action, it is but a dead letter. This is because whatever has life and moves itself in men will either be the fruit of [spiritual] death or the power of God to life. He. 4, Ro. 3,6,8; Ga. 3

So ... with fear and trembling, let’s walk before God carefully in word and deed, setting before us, as a mirror, the godly clarity of His goodness. Whoever correctly contemplates that goodness shall find consolation that no

tongue can speak. In this are all the treasures and richness of the knowledge and mystery of God. Ep. 5, Ja. 1, 1 Co. 2

For this reason, take pains in everything that you may have a peaceful conscience and not be ashamed in the day of His coming. For the end is coming when the Lord shall say to the reapers, “Apply your sickles and harvest, because the time to harvest is here. The harvest of the earth is withered, so dry that one can hardly see green.” Lu. 21, Mt. 24, Re. 14

But be brave, my dear wife, and take for an example the patience of Leah, the congeniality of Ruth, and demonstrate faithfulness as Michal did to David. Be wise and sensible like Abigail so that you and your house may be preserved. 1 Pe. 5, Ge. 29, 30; Ru. 2, 3; 1 Sa. 19, 25

Be heroic like Judith and gentle like Esther, chaste as Susanna and obedient as Rebecca. And, pray for the life of your children, with the Shunammite woman. Don’t be too easy on them so that they become strong-willed like Adonijah and Absalom, or Hophni and Phinehas. On the other hand, don’t be too hard on them, like Saul was to Jonathan. Ge. 24, 1 Sa. 2, 4, 20, 1 Ki. 1, 2; 2 Sa. 15, 16

You are commended to the grace of God; be useful in continual prayers to God. When you prepare yourself for prayer, think of the Lord’s word where He says, “When a priest enters the tabernacle of testimony to offer incense, being unclean, he shall die.” So, sanctify yourself to the Lord, because He is holy. The God of all grace will give you the Spirit and strengthen you in your inner man, so that you turn not to the right hand nor to the left. Le. 10, Le. 19, 21, 1 Pe. 1

Remember those who are afflicted and tempted, for it is better to go into the house of sorrow than into the house of joy. ~

While in prison, Thomas wrote one of the most widely-used Anabaptist Confessions of Faith, as well as seven letters (of which this is one). He had preached and baptized and started churches along the lower Rhine River.

Did Thomas know that he would shortly need “the tree” to sweeten his 3rd baptism, a beheading? Not long after this letter, Thomas joined the ranks of the martyrs, on March 5, 1558. He was 25 years old when he ended his labors.

Only 25 ...

When a believer now lives, he lives to God. And the life of Christ, which alone is righteousness, is fully reflected in him.

Rise Up, My Love

Megan I. Neill, age 18

Rise up, My Love, and come away,
My Fair One, come with Me;
My love, My Dove, My Perfect One,
For I have chosen thee.

My arms will bear you upward,
My strength will make you strong;
My love for you is better,
And this shall be your song.

My love might take you to be threshed,
Beaten, wounded, bruised;
The chaff removed, the good grain left,
But whole, it can't be used.

My love might take you to be ground,
Though beautiful, you're whole;
My eyes behold the *broken* heart,
The humble, contrite soul.

My love might take you to be formed,
The Potter's wheel might be,
The way I choose to shape and mold
A vessel just for Me.

As clay is in the potter's hand,
The same are you to Me;
Cut, then kneaded, shaped, and formed,
Though now, you may not see.

But while you lay yourself away,
Have your will lost in Mine;
Then I can shape as I see fit,
A vessel fair and fine.

My love might take you to the fire,
Though hot the furnace be;
For only gold refined from dross
Is fit enough for Me.

And glorious jewels and choicest stones
Don't come without the heat;
Pain is before the victory,
As with the clay and wheat.

And if in love I see a cross
Of other sorts would be,
A better way to draw you up,
And bring you up to Me,

Then lay your will aside again,
Accept the cross I bring;
For though you may not understand,
Just closer to Me cling.

And as your will be more of Mine,
The pain will lesser be;
And as you walk this rugged trail,
I'll walk along with thee.

Then let your gaze be set on high,
Your pathway upward lead;
Your thoughts be that of Me alone,
And in My pastures feed.

For My love to you is boundless,
It passes measured line;
My Loved One, thou art pleasant,
My Treasure, thou art Mine.

Thou art all fair, My Loved One,
There is no spot in thee;
Arise, My Love, My Fair One,
And come away with Me.

*Megan Neill lives near Lancaster,
Pennsylvania, where she attends Living
Hope Christian Fellowship.*

Confess Your Faults

Stephen Taylor, age 17

Ephrata, Pa



“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed,” says James 5:16. Through my Christian walk, I have realized the importance of this verse. This verse is a huge key for a young man to have a steadfast walk with God. Now, we can tend to think of “confessing your faults one to another” as a broad kind of confession, like to confess to everyone at church—but for us as young men, it especially applies to our relationship with our dads. How much do you share your struggles with your dad?

When I was about 15, God really began calling me to surrender my life to Him. I tried to dodge it and just not think about it, but I could never fully shake it off. At times I would tremble, but I still would not surrender to Him. I began to struggle with sins that all young men struggle with, but instead of sharing them with my dad and asking for his guidance in my life, I hid these struggles and pretended I didn’t have them, which was very dangerous. I would lie to him that I wasn’t struggling with these things, and acted like everything was OK. I began to grow more and more burdened from hiding these things from my dad, and eventually I found myself becoming more and more dark and rebellious. Finally, I could not take it any longer, and I confessed my sins to God and my dad, and surrendered my life to Him. I had never felt so free in my life!

Unfortunately, after a while, I began to grow loose in my Christian walk. As a result, I started struggling with some of the same things I was hiding from my dad earlier. I wasn’t praying or reading my Bible like I should, and most importantly, I was not keeping an open relationship with my dad. I was starting to backslide fast, and I almost completely lost my faith. But, by God’s mercy, He woke me up from my spiritual deadness and showed me how dangerous of a situation I was in. I immediately asked God for forgiveness and restored my relationship with my dad.

I then grew more and more in the Lord. God helped me to be more faith-

ful in keeping an honest relationship between me and my dad, and also in my prayer life and my Bible readings. This accountability and spiritual discipline were the keys that helped me to find victory in my struggles.

It is always difficult to come to my dad and confess something I’ve done or didn’t do, but the blessing of having a clear relationship with my dad is always worth it. It is always so wonderful to have that “clear heaven” again, and to feel God’s blessing on my life.

Over time, I have realized the importance of keeping an open and honest relationship with my dad. It took me a while to realize how important it was, but once I did, it became a very important aspect in my life. When I had confessed and shared with my dad the things I was struggling with, my walk with the Lord was always much sweeter, and I truly did feel that my conscience was healed like the verse in James says. I would like to challenge us as young men to keep close and honest relationships with our dads. ~

Eyes on the Prize!

Billy Farlow, TN, age 19

I will work, I will live, I will die for the Lord.
I will not be attracted by this dead world!
It is dying, it’s decaying, it is sinking into hell.
Can you hear me, sleepy Christian, as I ring your rusty bell?

There’s a fight, there’s a foe, there’s a race to be won.
Set aside all your games, all your toys, all your fun.
Grab your sword, shield of faith, strap your fighting helmet on!
Stay alert, set your eyes on the prize that must be won.

Are you brave, are you strong, will you leave this world of death?
Or will you be a fool, sleep and slumber like the rest?
Please, my friend, hear the call, don’t with me offended be.
God wants soldiers who are willing to be used extensively!

Keep your eyes on the prize, don’t in sin entangled be.
There’s a crown, you will win, if you fight courageously.
I will go with my sword, I will charge at His command.
I will march with a will, ‘til I reach that Beulah land!



That they may teach the young women ...

Won by Conduct

George Muller

In this issue's Sisters' Corner, we break from our usual custom of having an article by a sister, and turn to George Muller for a powerful testimony of meek service. After all, George only relates the story ... the lady is the one doing the teaching ... by her example! While sisters have a greater opportunity of practicing submission to authority, this blazing testimony of "Christ in you" can be appropriated into the life of the brothers as well. Amen!

During my stay at Basle I attended a meeting one day, at which a venerable, pious clergyman expounded the Greek New Testament to several brethren who purposed to give themselves to missionary service. The passage to which this dear aged brother had then come in the original of the New Testament was 1 Peter 3:1-2, which, in our English translation, reads thus; "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."

After this aged brother had expounded the passage, he related a circumstance which had occurred in his own days, and under his own eyes, at Basle, which has appeared to me so encouraging for those children of God who have unbelieving relatives—and especially for sisters in the Lord who have unbelieving husbands—and which, at the same time, is such a beautiful illustration of 1 Peter 3:1. I judge it desirable to insert the narrative of this fact here. I will do so as exactly as I remember it.

There lived at Basle an opulent citizen, whose wife was a believer, but he himself feared not the Lord. His practice was to spend his evenings in a wine-house, where he would often tarry till eleven, twelve, or even one o'clock. On such occasions, his wife always used to send her servants to bed, and sat up herself to await the return of her husband. When at last he came, she used to receive him most kindly, never reproach him in the least—either at the time or afterwards—

nor complain at all on account of his late hours, by which she was kept from seasonable rest. Moreover, if it should be needful to assist him in undressing himself, when he had drunk to excess, she would do this also in a very kind and meek way. Thus it went on for a long time.

One evening this gentleman was again, as usual, in a wine-house, and having tarried there with his merry companions till midnight, he said to them: "I bet that if we go to my house, we shall find my wife sitting up and waiting for me, and she herself will come to the door and receive us very kindly; and if I ask her to prepare us a supper, she will do it at once without the least murmur, or unkind expression, or look." His companions in sin did not believe his statement. At last, however, after some more conversation about this strange statement (as it appeared to them), it was agreed that they would all go to see this kind wife.

Accordingly they went, and, after they had knocked, found the door immediately opened by the lady herself, and they were all courteously and kindly received by her. The group having entered, the master of the house asked his wife to prepare supper for them. She, in the meekest way, at once agreed to do so. After awhile, supper was served by herself, without the least sign of dissatisfaction, murmur, or complaint. Having now prepared all for the company, she retired from the group to her room.

When she had left the group, one of the gentlemen said: "What a wicked and cruel man you are, thus to torment so kind a wife." He then took his hat and stick, and, without



touching a morsel of the supper, went away. Another made a similar remark and left, without touching the supper. Thus one after another left, till they were all gone, without tasting the supper.

The master of the house was now left alone, and the Spirit of God brought before him all his dreadful wickedness, and especially his great sins towards his wife. The group had not left the house half an hour, before he went to his wife's room, requesting her to pray for him. He told her that he felt himself a great sinner, and asked her forgiveness for all his behavior towards her. From that time he became a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

She used to receive him most kindly, never reproach him in the least—either at the time or afterwards—nor complain at all on account of his late hours, by which she was kept from seasonable rest.

Observe here, dear reader, the following points in particular, which I affectionately commend to your consideration:

1. The wife acted in accordance with 1 Peter 3:1. She kept her place as being in subjection, and the Lord owned it.

2. She reproached not her husband, but meekly and kindly served him when he used to come home.

3. She did not allow the servants to sit up for their master, but sat up herself, thus honoring him as her head and leader, and concealed also, as

far as she was able, her husband's shame from the servants.

4. In all probability, a part of those hours during which she had to sit up was spent in prayer for her husband, or in reading the word of God, to gather fresh strength for all the trials connected with her position. But whether this was the case or not, it is certain that time thus spent (in similar circumstances) would then indeed be spent profitably.

5. Be not discouraged if you have to suffer from unconverted relatives. Perhaps very shortly the Lord may give you the desire of your heart, and answer your prayer for them. But in the mean time seek to commend the truth, not by reproaching them on account of their behavior towards you, but by manifesting towards them the meekness, gentleness, and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹

¹ George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller*, 6th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1860), 125-126.

Feb 6, 1736

Journal of John Wesley

At sea, on the way to Georgia ...

At noon our third storm began. At four it was more violent than before. The winds roared round about us, and whistled as distinctly as if it had been a human voice. The ship not only rocked to and fro with the utmost violence, but shook and jarred with so unequal, grating motion, that one could not but with great difficulty keep one's hold of anything, nor stand a moment without it. Every ten minutes came a shock against the stern or side of the ship, which one would think should dash the planks to pieces.

We spent two or three hours, after prayers, in conversing suitably to the occasion, confirming one another in a calm submission to the wise, holy, gracious will of God. And now a storm did not appear so terrible as before. Blessed be the God of all consolation!

At seven I went to the Germans [Moravian Brethren]. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior. **Of their humility, they had given a continual proof by performing those servile offices for the other passengers, which none of the English would undertake.** They neither desired nor would receive any pay, saying "It was good for their proud hearts," and "their loving Savior had done more for them." And every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness, which no injury could move. **If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth.**

There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the Psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterward, "Were you not afraid?"

He answered, "I thank God, no."

I asked, "But were not your women and children afraid?"

He replied mildly, "No; our women and children are not afraid to die."

From them I went to their crying, trembling neighbors, and pointed out to them the difference, in the hour of trial, between him that feareth God, and him that feareth Him not. At twelve the wind fell. This was the most glorious day which I have hitherto seen. ~

The Peacock Christian

Driving to work recently, I pulled up behind a truck literally covered in bumper stickers. I mean, there had to be 50 of them all over the truck. Many of them were Christian. Others were political. Some were rather personal. But the collective “message” was clear: this truck owner was screaming, “Look at me! Look at me!” This truck was like the vehicular version of a peacock, with its feathers spread wide, and its pride featured front and center. And I thought, “There is something not quite right with that picture.”

Do you know any professing Christians who seem to know a lot about God and the Bible and Jesus and who talk a lot about all that they know, but who just don't seem to ring “true” for some reason? They wax eloquent all day long about this doctrine or that doctrine, or they can impress you with their stories of “conquest” from the mission field, or they can show you the sacrifices they have made on their church's behalf. But when it comes right down to it, something about their attitude, something about the way they carry themselves just doesn't add up. They simply do not exhibit the humility which naturally comes from being in the presence of God. And before you get too wrapped up accusing that person, let me ask you this: is it possible that person has ever been you? You see, having that “Jesus is the Answer” bumper sticker on the back of your truck is one thing, but actually spending time walking in His presence is another thing altogether. And the proof of the latter “thing” is humility.

Can you think of anyone in the Bible who actually entered into the presence of God and who came away arrogant? No, you cannot. Because it simply is not possible to stand in the presence of God, the Creator of the universe,

and feel all high and mighty about yourself. In fact, I would say that Isaiah's reaction to being in God's presence (Isaiah 6) is fairly typical: “Woe is me! For I am a man of unclean lips and come from a people of unclean lips.” That, my friend, is a standard response to meeting one's Maker. The reality is, you simply cannot be spending time in the presence of God and not be humbled by the experience.

Remember our friend, Job? After the onslaught of horrible circumstances in his life, and after doing a little “fist shaking” and asking some hard questions of God, it was time to receive counsel from God. And such counsel! God spent four chapters answering Job. “Where were you when I laid



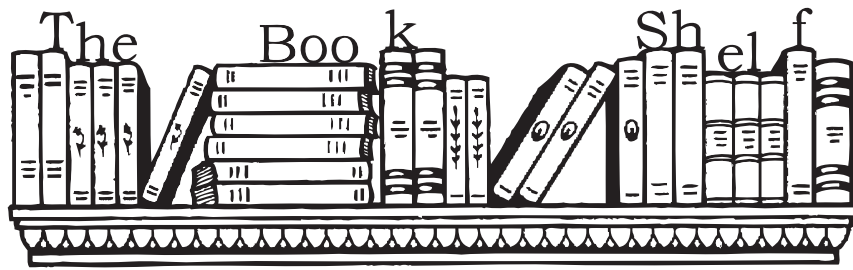
the earth's foundation? ... Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb ... Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? ... Who fathers the drops of dew? ...” Job was humbled, to say the least. Suddenly, he was less inclined to be so obsessed with his own circumstances, and more inclined to “be still, and know that [God] is God.”

So, as I read this account, I just cannot help but wonder if it really is possible to spend any genuine time in the presence of our God, I mean really IN HIS PRESENCE, and not have tons of humility to show for it.

In short, you show me a brother or sister who struggles with arrogance in his/her life, and I will show you someone who does not spend much time in the presence of God.

Moses came out of God's presence with his face veiled, so as not to scare people. It was evident to all who saw him that Moses had just been in the presence of God. Isn't it fair that we should ask ourselves, “How evident is it that I have been with God?” ~

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A book review by Mike Atnip

Like a fresh shower on a hot summer day, *Kingdom-Focused Finances for the Family* by Gary Miller spilled its cool drops of water into my heart. It is not that the teaching was radically new to me. God had personally been working in my life for years on the subject, de-warping my mind from my childhood culture. But believe me, a book—any book—that dares to take a strike at the pervasive affluence of conservative Christians seems a “fresh breeze.” Like one preacher recently said, “Most of the teaching concerning stewardship in our Anabaptist churches seems like a repackaged version of the American dream.”

The book is subtitled “A Call to Biblical Stewardship in Everyday Life.” While the author purposely refrains from tackling some of the deeper questions of finance, like whether *usury* means “interest” or “high interest rates,” he does offer some very practical, pointy advice, and some of it very relevant to our culture and society. For example, speaking of little, habitual purchases, and how these often neglected purchases can affect our budget, he says:

I began to view the small items in a store in a new way. A bag of potato chips at \$1 may not seem too expensive. Surely I can afford a bag of chips! But when I realize that buying those chips every day can cost me several hundred dollars a year, a bag of chips begins to look amazingly overpriced. ... How well would Starbucks sell their mocha latte if the sign said, “Have one each day on your way to work and it will only cost you \$1,123 a year”?

Reading through the book, pithy little sentences like the above seemed to keep jumping off the pages at me. And although many of them are things God has been trying to put into my life for many years now, it was simply a blessing to read a confirmation of them. The book was a real

challenge to look at my own vision and make sure I was not experiencing what he termed as “vision drift.” The author hits repeatedly on the idea that having a vision of kingdom-focused finances is an absolute necessity to make it through our society without getting smitten by its multitudes of temptations. Comparing our choices to the hundreds of colors available at the paint counter of the local hardware store—from pure white to midnight black—it is so easy to slowly drift imperceptibly from pure white to a slightly off-white, then slowly to the next off-white. Before we know it, we have left white and are into a light yellow. When we compare it to the black, we pat ourselves on the back, since our light yellow seems white next to the midnight black.

Writing a review seemed a daunting task. There were so many good points! How do I present them? I finally decided to change the general format of a book review, and just present a very brief overview, then share some of the quotes that struck me. I am sure that others will read the book and find different stimulations than I

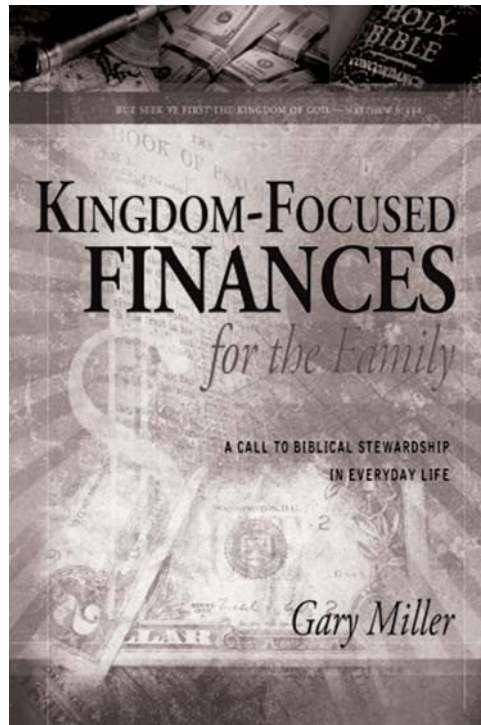
did, but I don’t think any sincere Christian could read *Kingdom-Focused Finances for the Family* and not be smitten and/or blessed.

Overview

The book is divided into six parts. The author starts off with “Practical Stewardship.” He emphasizes that Christians are stewards, not owners of their “possessions.” Just like the child sent to town to buy groceries returns the change to his parents—because the money was not his/hers!—so the things we have while here are not ours. Then comes the bombshell statement:

At some point, money consumed by a steward for personal gratification becomes theft.

Ouch!!!!



In Part 2, the book moves into budgeting, with the idea of bringing into control our helter-skelter financial messes. This section applies mostly to those who have already failed or to those new to managing money. Gary recommends that all newly-married couples track their finances for one year—down to every penny—even if they know how to manage money. This will often prove to be an eye-opener of wasteful spending, when, for example, at the end



If Jesus had given as much warning against Coca-Cola as He did the pursuit of earthly wealth, we would never touch the stuff!

of the year the couple sees just how much money they spent on potato chips or other unnecessary items. One dollar here, one there, and another over yonder equals three dollars gone.

Moving into the third part, the author warms up to his cause. And rightfully so! With a particular passion, Gary seems intent on pointing out the danger and the folly of consumer debt, borrowing to pay for consumables. By “consumer debt,” the author is referring to something that is consumed or quickly loses its value after being bought. He uses for an example, ice cream. When ice cream is bought and eaten, it is gone. It has no value left that can be squeezed back out of it.

On the other hand, real estate often [but not always!] keeps its dollar value. The idea is to not spend on unneeded consumables, much less borrow to buy

them. So suppose Joe American buys an ice cream cone with his credit card. He slurps it down, and has nothing to show for it besides a bill at the end of the month. Of course, Joe might have needed some nourishment, and the ice cream may have provided it in that case. But the point is that in 2008 the average household in the USA had an *average* credit card debt of a whopping \$8,500! This type of consumer debt was rare in our grandparent’s day, and in fact has grown tremendously in only the last three decades ... it has multiplied by five times since 1980!

Part 4 moves into getting a vision. The author emphasizes the need for married couples to be united in their goal

and vision concerning money matters. Part 5 continues with some practical advice, and bringing the children along with the vision. And—God bless him for speaking up on the subject—how peer pressure, called the “fear of man” in the Bible, affects our buying decisions more than we realize ... even in our conservative churches!

The author ends up at the root. It may seem strange to end up at the root, but he hits it well once he gets there! The root of materialism is, of all things, *unbelief!*

We simply don’t believe that Jesus really meant what He said about money. Yes, that is unbelief.

Ouch!!!

Quotables

“Is it possible that those of us who are older have neglected to teach by word and example in some of these areas?”

“Throughout our lifetime we carry something around in our pockets and purses that has the potential of destroying us!”

“If Jesus had given as much warning against Coca-Cola as He did the pursuit of earthly wealth, we would never touch the stuff!”

“Consider housing. Following World War II, the average size of an American home was around 750 square feet. ... Now the average home being built is over 2,300 square feet.”

“The greatest vaccine available against the scourge of consumer debt that is plaguing our society is contentment.”

“Those of us who have been raised in prosperity are at a disadvantage in this fight against discontentment. We have high expectations.”

“As you look at your options [for housing], are you visualizing a shelter or a showplace?”

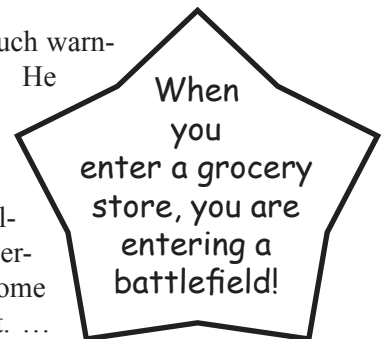
“When you enter a grocery store, you are entering a battlefield, and the individuals behind the scenes are not looking out for your interests.”

“In 1986, there were still more high schools than shopping centers in America, but less than fifteen years later there were more than twice as many shopping centers as high schools.”

“The subtle inner longing for bigger, better, faster, nicer, and newer becomes so normal it doesn’t seem wrong.”

“Can a believer who is serious about financial stewardship really afford [spiritually, as well as financially] to shop just for entertainment?”

“Many Kingdom Christians who have purposed to find fulfillment in nothing other than the Lord Jesus can testify



to the truth of [Psalm 37:4]. Gradually the Holy Spirit has changed them, and as a result, their wants have changed. That inner desire for more earthly possessions has been transformed, and their greatest desire and delight is in the King and His Kingdom. In the past they found their wants gradually becoming needs. Now, as the Spirit works in their lives, they find that they do not want what they do not really need.”

“Many of us who would never think of adorning ourselves with jewelry can be tempted to draw attention to ourselves with the vehicle we drive. ... Am I wasting goods that could be used in God’s Kingdom because of an inner desire to project a certain image?”

“Different financial advisors have said about Americans, ‘We buy things we don’t need with money we don’t have to impress people we don’t like.’”

“Proper giving requires abandonment of self. Too often I want to give without giving up any part of my life. I like to give away clothes I am finished using, money that wasn’t really allocated for anything anyway, or time that was spare time. ... Are you willing to abandon something in order to give? Can you cheerfully give up something you had planned because God has called you to share?”

“We look at what is given [when giving money]; God looks at what is kept.”

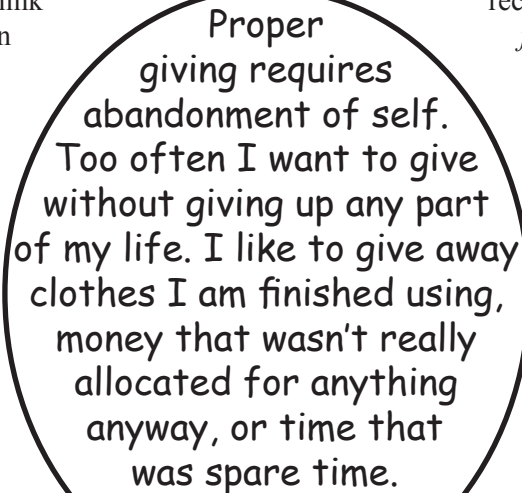
“Even if you are on welfare in the United States today, you are in the wealthiest 10 percent of the world.”

To sum it up

Quite frankly, I am weary of books and teachings on finances that only teach about investing and managing money “wisely,” so that we can be “financially stable.” Yes, managing well is part of stewardship—like not spending \$1,123 a year at Starbucks. But, is there not a reason? Are we called beyond just not wasting God’s resources?

Yes! There is a reason. Gary sums it up with these words:

God is calling us today to more than just well-balanced financial lives. Many godless people in our society have practical budgets, live disciplined lives, and avoid the scourge of consumer debt. In fact, these attributes describe most successful people in business. But God is calling our families to a higher vision. He is calling us to live for His Kingdom and to use the resources He has given for His glory.



Proper giving requires abandonment of self. Too often I want to give without giving up any part of my life. I like to give away clothes I am finished using, money that wasn't really allocated for anything anyway, or time that was spare time.

So, John Wesley was right after all: Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can. In modern American English—we Americans are known for being sort of forthright at times—we might rephrase that to “work as diligently as you can, be as frugal as you can, and then ... give it all away!”

Certainly not a repackaged version of the American dream!

The Heartbeat of the Remnant heartily recommends *Kingdom-Focused Finances for the Family*. A perfect and complete book? No! A noble attack on American materialism, that monstrous idol? Yes! The author is charitable, but does not refrain from mentioning that mammon has gained a foothold (perhaps a death strangle?) even in conservative churches. Only when prophetic voices like this arise is there any hope of genuine revival. *Kingdom-Focused Finances for the Family* is a start. I am personally convinced that no lasting revival will happen in America until mammon is dethroned.

And our society will throw a fit against anyone who dare defy King Mammon!

As mentioned earlier, the author does not give specific answers to some of the finer points of finances; the definition of usury, is borrowing always wrong, is saving for retirement heaping up treasures, etc. Those are questions that we as individuals and congregations need to make applications to. This book is sort of a primer, a “let’s start at the basics” teaching about managing God’s resources well for Him. And remember, for the steward to spend the owner’s money on himself constitutes robbery!

But don’t let the fact that I call this book a “primer” deter you from reading it. If you can read this book without getting convicted or inspired, you are well on the road to perfection; or else hard-hearted.

I will end this review with another bombshell:

It is difficult to read the teachings of Jesus with an open heart while chained to Bank of America.

Ouch! And amen! (And may I add ... let the credit cards burn!!!) ~

Kingdom-Focused Finances for the Family can be purchased online at <http://www.wholesomebookswholesale.com/servlet/the-862/Kingdom-Focused-Finances-for/Detail> or by writing to Wholesome Books Wholesale, 277 Kurtz Rd, Ephrata, Pa, 17522. Or you may contact Wholesome Books Wholesale by telephone at (731) 577-4440.

Helping Students “Get It”

John Stonestreet

While a significant number of Christian students reject Christianity during their university years, far more struggle to embrace a faith that is not really authentic or orthodox. Theirs is a “moralistic therapeutic Deism” as Christian Smith put it; a tame faith that is privatized and perhaps personally meaningful, but which is not publically true, culturally significant, or fundamentally informative to the rest of their lives.

Rather than trying to make Christianity as attractive and entertaining as possible, we ought instead to be sure that what we are communicating to them is actually Christianity. This is very challenging in a culture of information overload, where students are bombarded daily with a multitude of messages, most of which encourage them toward a mentality of adolescence.

Still, there is good news. Adolescently minded cultures like ours inevitably have a leadership vacuum. So, there remains a terrific opportunity for influence for those who produce the leaders, especially if they produce networks of leaders who can think deeply and contribute broadly to a wide variety of cultural institutions.

How can we do this?

Challenge students instead of coddling them. Frankly, it is my opinion that we aim too low with teenagers. Students do not need more entertainment, whether it is from the computer, the Wii, the iPod, or the youth group. We will never effectively prepare students to engage our entertainment-driven culture by replacing it with Christian entertainment. It is foolish to expect students to take Christianity and the world seriously if all they have been exposed to at youth group is games, pizza, and mindless mini-therapy lessons that may or may not come from the Scriptures. The Church should be the place where we no longer believe (and students no longer experience) the myth of adolescence.

Instead, students need (and want) to be challenged with the Scriptures, theology, tough questions, and cultural dilemmas. We see this every year at our Summit Ministries student leadership conferences—students endure over 70

hours of lecture and instruction on worldviews, apologetics, culture, and character. Then they call home and ask for more money—so they can buy books!

I think there is something of the *imago Dei* in these students that screams in rebellion against the low expectations they face everywhere. For proof, see the movement of teenagers started by Brett and Alex Hacks’ recent book *Do Hard Things*.

Give them a thorough education in worldviews and apologetics. Because everyone has a worldview—a basic way in which they see, understand, and interact with the world—education is at its most fundamental level a worldview-shaping enterprise. It is the responsibility of a Christian institution to challenge students with the Christian view of life and world, while exposing the non-Christian worldviews that others hold and which are behind historical movements and cultural expressions.

First, students need to know what they believe. Many see Christianity as merely a private faith rather than as a robust view of reality that offers a tried and true map for life. If students are convinced that the core of the Christian faith is how they can get to heaven and have a happy life, rather than as the Truth about all of life and the world, they do not know what they believe. Of course, there simply is no substitute here for equipping students to dive deeply into the Scriptures. At the same time, however, it is important to help them dive into the Scriptures in the right way. Unfortunately, many students have only seen the Bible handled poorly by other Christians. Often, the only experience with the Scriptures include it being replaced by therapeutic clichés, utilized and memorized completely out of context, tacked on but not central to a lesson, strangely pieced together with other verses to make a point, proof-texted to supplement a devotional book or song lyrics, or largely ignored.

This is very challenging in a culture of information overload, where students are bombarded daily with a multitude of messages, most of which encourage them toward a mentality of adolescence.

When the Scriptures are handled this way, bits and pieces of the Bible only get co-opted into the student’s existing worldview. They may know the Bible, but they don’t think biblically. Rather, the student remains as the central arbiter of truth and interpretation.

The goal is that the Scriptures would transform the student’s mind (i.e. worldview). I fear we may have a generation of students who see the Bible through the lens of their

culturally inherited worldviews rather than seeing the culture through the lens of the Bible.

Second, students need to know what others believe. There are nonbiblical worldviews that are battling for hearts and minds as well as our culture. Historically, Christians from Justin Martyr to Augustine to Pascal to Edwards to C. S. Lewis (not to mention the Apostle Paul) exhibited a strong understanding of the competing worldviews in their culture.

We at Summit Ministries contend that, at minimum, students need to have a handle on at least six major Western worldviews before going to college: secular humanism, Marxism/Leninism, postmodernism, Islam, New Age, and biblical Christianity.

Third, Christians must know why they believe what they believe. Too many Christians cannot answer, and are even afraid of, the challenging questions about God, Jesus, the Bible, morality, or truth. Unfortunately, too many adults dread the moment that a student asks them a tough faith question they cannot answer. This avoidance, of course, does not remove the question. It merely delays the question until the student is in an environment where the question will be entertained (like college). We ought to see these questions as opportunities for the student, and ourselves, to dive even deeper into this faith we claim is true. God is big enough for the question.

Show them that Christianity is not just about what we are against, but what we are about. Proverbs says that without vision, the people “cast off restraint.” One of the main reasons that students are casualties of immoral choices is that they lack a big vision for their lives. While they may know what they are not supposed to do, they fail to understand the life of meaning, purpose, and impact Christ calls them to. Christian students often get the impression that we are merely saved “from,” and not “to.”

The picture of redemption in Scripture is far broader than this, however. We often forget how many words used in the Scripture for redemption are “re” words: renew, regenerate, reconcile, redeem, re-creation, etc. The implication is that salvation is a return to the real life God intended for us before the fall. Christ not only came to save us from death, he came to save us to life—an abundant life at that!

This life is not merely our “spiritual” lives either. Rather, the Scriptures offer us the true big story of the world: from creation to new creation.

Confront them with (rather than isolate them from) the major cultural battles of our day. Challenging students to love God fully by thinking deeply, discerningly, and truth-

fully about His Word and His world is foundational to what a truly Christian education is. Any other educational means and methods that do not include this as a goal, in my opinion, cannot really be considered Christian education (even if there are a plethora of rules, Bible references, and verses to memorize).

According to the way the Scriptures describe the grand narrative of God’s redemptive plan for creation, Christianity is neither a religion of ascetic withdrawal nor a dualistic philosophy that denigrates certain human activity as less than spiritual. Rather, followers of Christ are called to dive deeply—and hopefully headfirst—into the significant historical and cultural issues of the human situation. As G.K. Chesterton once said, “If Christianity should happen to be true—that is to say if its God is the real God of the universe—then defending it may mean talking about anything and everything.”

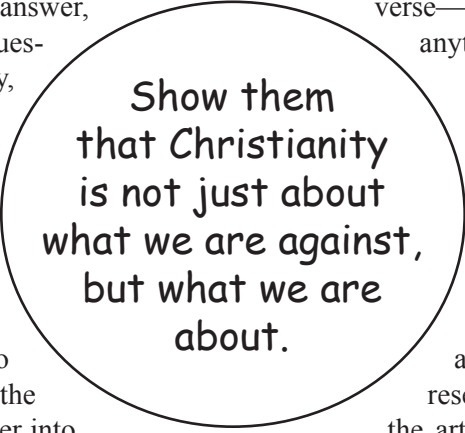
This is what ought to be meant when the language of worldview is used in education. Historically, Christians have sought to understand, and respond to cultural crises. They understood that these crises were the site of the battle of worldviews. Unfortunately, many Christians today are unaware of, disinterested in, or avoiding of issues like embryo-destructive research, euthanasia, emerging technologies, the arts, film, fashion, legislation, human trafficking, politics, and international relations. In Gethsemane on the evening before His death, Christ prayed these astounding words for His followers: “*Father, do not take them from the world, but protect them from the evil one*” (John 17: 15). Our prayer, and preparation, for our children should be no different.

One final word about the spirit from which we approach the next generation. A few months back, I received a thoughtful and appropriate criticism to a talk I often give which I call “Why Students Walk Away from their Faith (and what we can do about it . . .).” The letter asked if I was coming at this issue from a position of fear—fear of the world and the enemy—and very appropriately suggested that Christians should not be fearful.

I must say that I fully concur with this point. The fear of God casts out all other fear. As the late Richard John Neuhaus wrote: “We have not the right to despair, for despair is sin. And, we have not the reason to despair, for Christ has risen.” I hope I am not approaching this issue from fear, though I can certainly see how it could be seen that way.

I hope I am approaching this issue from a perspective of realism, for students really are walking away from or checking out of the faith they were raised with, and we should

Continued on p. 35



Show them
that Christianity
is not just about
what we are against,
but what we are
about.

The Christian Response to Caring for the Elderly

Peter Jansz Twisck (1565-1636)



Unwanted parents long for the grave

Even though I should not complain, but rather thank God, for all my worthy children, I will still try to awaken you to more carefulness, humility, virtue, honor, and obedience, so that you at no time in joy or sorrow become unthankful for your parents. I have often been asked, “Why can a father and mother raise twelve children, but twelve children cannot take care of their father and mother?”

When circumstances make it necessary, children should care for their parents. Many times there is grumbling, strife, and trials. One will say they had the parents long enough, and another will argue that they didn’t have them long enough. So they correct each other; each one concerned that they do not have to support father and mother too long.

Each one should try to do the most, instead of the least. God will not let the deeds of mercy remain unpaid with outward spiritual blessing. When parents are unwelcome and feel that they are a burden, it grieves their hearts and they cry unto the Most High to deliver them and shorten their life, so that they are no longer “in the children’s way.”

God often punishes the ungratefulness of unwilling children by visible wrath. The things that often follow such children should be enough to make each of us wise. Be glad, my dear children, to receive instruction from your father. For whoever does not receive instruction will harvest poverty and shame. Whoever allows himself to be reproved shall come to honor.

God never forgets good done to parents

Alas, in our day, children are too careless, unthankful, unloving, and unkind to accept the instruction on how to respect their father and mother. They are not only instructed in school, but also from God’s Word and His church. My children, try to improve these things and respect your father’s teaching, seeking to live in deeds that your parents have tried to teach you. Do not forget your duty to help, care, and console them in their home. God will bless you, and you shall again reap blessings from your own children and be rewarded with joy in the eternal kingdom to come. God shall never forget the good done to parents. He who fears God honors his father, serves his parents, and esteems them as a lord. You should foresee their desires and needs, and not wait until they ask for help. Do what you do out of a willing heart, in the same way you have seen servants please their masters.

Duties of children to their aged parents

Sometimes children forget their duty to their parents because of too much money, greed, pleasure, or honor. There are a thousand different tools for Satan. He knows how to disguise himself, as he has done in times past with the Jews, robbing them while under the pretense of serving God.

Christ taught in Matthew 15:4-9:

For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Jesus shows that the commandment to honor father and mother has always included their care and assistance in poverty and need. If this is not honored, the commandment is not kept. In heathen China, the law of the land forbids the oldest son to become a monk, for it is said that he is indebted to care for his parents in their old age. It is both approved by God and heathen laws that children sacrifice their goods and money in an effort to support their parents.

God would place a severe punishment upon those who spend their money and possessions that belongs to the support of the parents, upon worldly, unnecessary pleasures of a luxurious life. It would be the children’s sin if the aged parents had to sweat and seek their bread like the poor, or



Never mock the mind weakened by age.

live from the alms of the church. It would be a sin if the children desired to be carefree and pleasure-seeking, instead of making an honest living for the parents so that they would not be a burden to others. 1 Ti. 5:16

If a believing man or woman be widowed, they should be helped by their close relatives so that the church is not burdened. Children should care for their parents, if they are able, so that the church and the government are not burdened. These things are for all to consider who wish to be found among God's people. Cyprian said, "How can one be held in honor when he is old, if he was not willing to work when he was young and do his duty? For as a person has worked, so shall he also be paid."

Have patience when parents get old

One wise man wrote, "And if your father's understanding fails, have patience with him, and despise him not when you are in the days of full strength." When their parents become old, many children disregard them, saying, "Father does everything wrong." "Mother doesn't know what she is doing." "They both don't understand." "It is best that way," they say ... and so they please themselves in a luxurious life.

It often happens that parents' minds weaken, yet the children should be careful not to despise them, esteem them too little, shame their speech, or laugh at their faulty suggestions. Don't snicker at them as you might a child, even if they are childish in their thoughts. They are your parents, and the Lord wants them to be honored. If their conversation lacks reason, we should not make light of it, but provide good judgment for them. It is expedient and Christlike that you give them no reason to be angered. If they become dissatisfied because of their childish reasoning, we should bear with them since they have become as children in their thoughts. They have overlooked the unpleasant side in you, in your childhood. Both Scripture and nature teach that you now have a duty to overlook the unpleasant side in your elderly parents.

Do not feel wiser than your parents

We have the example of the young student in Critria. After a long time, he came home, and his father asked him what he had learned. The son answered that he would show him. Not long after the father became angry and hit the son. The son was calm and said to the father, "This much I have learned, that I can forbear my father's anger and not be discontent or frustrated toward you."

If nonbelievers can do this, how much more should Christian children, who are raised in the faith of Christ, patiently bear the weaknesses and desires of their parents? We should imitate the sons of Noah, Shem and Japheth—who we as Germans have descended from—who covered their father's shame. But alas, how often the mocker Ham is happy to tell others about the weakness of his parent. Ge. 9:21

All those who desire to make life better should be careful not to disrespect their father or seek to pull the wool over his eyes. This is not right! Sometimes parents are not as dumb as they are thought to be and they can catch the tricks of the children who are deceiving them.

There was once a student who thought he was much smarter than his father. The father felt—and told the son so—that his education was a waste of time and money. The father wished to test his education when the son arrived home, and asked him what he now knew that the father didn't know. The son said maybe he could think of something later.

Not long afterward there were three eggs on the table at mealtime. The son thought he was ready to show his father what he had learned in school. The son asked the father if he knew that out of the three eggs, there were really five. The father said astoundingly that he couldn't understand how that could be, but perhaps maybe the son had learned some new things. The son explained to the father that if you have three eggs, you also have two eggs. And ... three plus two equals five!

The father told the son that he could have the two extra eggs, and he the father would eat the three on the table. The poor student could not get ahead of his father!¹ ~

We should bear with them since they have become as children in their thoughts. They have overlooked the unpleasant side in you, in your childhood.

¹ Peter Jansz Twisck (1565-1636), *A Father's Gift*, trans. by Titus B. Hoover (Port Trevorton, PA: Titus Hoover, 1982), 47-52.

GOD'S PEOPLE KEEP SINGING

Love is Like a Breath of Heaven

Unknown

Unknown
Har. Mike Atnip

The musical score is written in 3/4 time. It consists of six systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are as follows:

Love is like a breath of heav - en. 'Tis from God a - bove.
Love has pow - er that's vic - tor - ious, ev - en gives its life.
Love bears all and love is pat - tient. Love will suf - fer through
Love is ne - ver hard or bit - ter. Love for - gets the past.
Nev - er rude is love's be - hav - iour; ne'er its own would seek.
All that's earth - ly soon is pass - ing; it will end for sure.

Bless - ed truths to us are giv - en, when the Lord we love.
Love can nev - er be con - ten - tious; love de - spis - es strife.
Faith - ful in each sit - u - a - tion; love holds all things true.
And in - stead it binds to - geth - er, to the good holds fast.
Oth - ers best is love's en - deav - or; love is kind and meek.
God - made love is ev - er - last - ing; ev - er 'twill en - dure.

Love is to lay our own life down, as Christ did for you.

In this way the Lord first loved us, there - fore we love, too.

This song has a simple melody, but one person described it as “the most scriptural song I ever heard.” It is a song worthy to add to your collection.

Since I only heard the melody and never had notes or harmony, this music may not match the “official” music, if there is any out there. If anyone knows who the author is, or if any music has been published with this song, please contact me. -Mike Atnip

confront this reality as biblically and resourcefully as possible. This is not something we can ignore. As the historian Will Durant aptly noted: “From barbarism to civilization requires a century. From civilization to barbarism takes but a day.”

I can say in all truthfulness that as I write this, I really do have hope. Fundamentally, I have hope in Christ—He has risen. The day He died was actually the day that death died, and nothing can ever undo that reality. I also have hope in the Church, despite my critical words about it. I am part of this institution which Christ established and announced that the gates of Hell could not stand against. (My reading of Church history has done more than anything else to secure my belief in those words.)

Finally, I have hope because I work with many students annually—both here and abroad—who do, or are fighting to, “get it.” They want their lives to matter for Christ, they want to take the Gospel into all the world (including every corner of culture), and they want to think well about and in this world. They will be better than my generation has been. They will love God better, serve others better, care more deeply, and think more clearly. They want to read good books and they want to live for something bigger than themselves. ~

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Attention!

It has been brought to my attention about a possible misunderstanding of a sentence I wrote in the article “*The Roman’s Road Without Detours, Bypasses, and Dead-end Streets*” in the Nov/Dec 2010 issue. One sentence on page 22 says, “Our beliefs will not be figured in the decision on that last great day.”

This was intended to mean that our doctrinal beliefs (about the Trinity, baptism, free will, prophecy, etc) will not be the determining factor whether we go to heaven or to hell. Our theology affects how we live, of course, but we will not be sent away or kept solely on the basis of our doctrinal beliefs. Some seem to have taken that sentence to mean that faith plays no role in salvation, but that is not what was intended.

Without faith in Christ, no one will be saved, since Christ teaches us the true path of righteousness and holiness and gives us the grace both “to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Through the Messiah’s blood, and only through His blood, can we be quickened into newness of life. The living God can never unite Himself to a dead thing, so it is absolutely necessary that we be made alive by the blood of Christ ... through faith in Him.

Also, I am told that the poem on page 7 of the Jan/Feb 2011 issue is actually by Gerhard Tersteegen instead of Amy Carmichael. Amy quoted many people in her books, but I assumed when I copied the poem that she was the author. ~Mike Atnip

2010 Year End Financial Report

Thank you for your support!



01/01/10 **Beginning Balance** \$35,301.84

Receipts

Tape Ministry Donations	\$165,382.90
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$23,148.00
Total Receipts	\$188,530.90

Disbursements

UPS & Postage	\$17,097.12
Tapes, Albums, CD’s & Labels	\$20,851.23
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$2,054.65
Equipment Maintenance & Repairs	\$1,065.19
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$3,229.50
Rent	\$9,000.00
Telephone	\$2,840.69
Website Development & Maintenance	\$1,086.89
Building Improvements	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,699.60
Payroll Expense	\$88,623.39
Books & Catalogs	\$2,844.20
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$50,692.51
Total Disbursements	\$201,084.97

12/31/10 **Ending Balance** \$22,747.77

Difference -\$12,554.07

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He is
truly
free
who has begun
to be
your
prisoner,
O Lord.

John Cassian (c. 360-435)