

# The Remnant



Brüderliche vereynigung  
ezylicher Kinder Gottes  
siben Artickel betreffend.

Jcem/Byn sendebrieff Michel  
lesli an eyn gemeyn Gottes sampt  
em/ doch warhafftigen anzeyg  
et seine leer zu Rom/burg am  
Steecker/ mit seinem bide  
bezeuget hat.

M. D. XXXV.



DER TÄUFER MICHAEL SATTLER WURDE  
NACH SCHWEREN FOLTERUNGEN HIER AM "GALGENBUCKEL"  
DURCH VERBRENNEN HINGERICHTET. ER STARB ALS AUFRECH-  
TER ZEUGE JESU CHRISTI. SEINE FRAU MARGARETHA UND  
ANDERE GEMEINDEMITGLIEDER WURDEN ERTRÄNKT UND  
VERBRANNT. SIE TRATEN EIN  
FÜR DIE TAUFTE DERER, DIE CHRISTUS NACHFOLGEN WOLLEN  
FÜR EINE UNABHÄNGIGE GEMEINDE DER GLAUBENDEN  
MICHAE SATTLEERS LETZTE WÖRTE BEI DER BERGPREDICT.  
DING: "... ICH BIN NICHT GESANDT, ÜBER DAS WÖRTE  
DESHALB WERDEN WIR SIND  
GE...  
KÖN...  
ZU LEIDEN, WAS UNS ZU LEIDEN AUFERLEGT IST."

## From Prior to Woods Preacher

See page 18

The Heartbeat of

## The Remnant

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## Thank you!

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## From the Editor

**A**round the world, reports of protest are mounting. Six months ago, it was the Arab countries. But lately, unrest has begun to show up here in our corner of the globe. “Occupy Wall Street” is their banner. It started in New York City, but the protest has mushroomed way beyond the borders of New York. Crowds were tear-gassed in Madrid, Spain. Rioters in Athens, Greece, threw homemade gas bombs. Protesters in London, England, overturned cars. Riots and mass arrests have followed in various other cities such as Tokyo, Los Angeles, Chicago, and more.

So what’s everyone so upset about?

A hand-made protest sign held by a tattooed college student reads, “Good morning, 1% ... We, the 99%, just woke up!” The protestors complain that Corporate America, big business, rich executives, greedy stock exchange practices, and even capitalism itself have led our country into financial ruin. Their cry is actually nothing new—it is the age-old cry of inequity and injustice. They complain that the vast majority of the wealth and opportunities of this country are being locked up and controlled by a privileged 1% of the population. As the representatives of the 99%, they feel that they would like to reclaim their fair share of the pie.

Is this protest merely a passing fad? Perhaps. But whether these protests should fade out over the next few weeks or not, I think we should listen and be ready to give answers. I recently heard someone say that the growing gap between the really rich and the really poor is one of the most desperate moral questions of our time. However, while I’m impressed that the protestors have seemed to catch on that the root of the problem is actually “greed,” they still have not understood that the cure they seek is never going to be found in politics—certainly not from government hand-outs.

So what is the cure?

Do the teachings of Jesus have something to say to a scared, frustrated, paranoid, disillusioned generation? Of course they do, as they always have. Jesus’ teachings are timeless—the saving power of the Gospel still changes everything: body, soul, and spirit. To be sure, the cure will never be found in the politics of government-run-communism, political-socialism, or even American capitalism;

but Jesus’ blood—His plan—and His teachings would fix everything.

However, we cannot be born of this world and understand these things. We must be born of God to “get it.” “Except a man be born again, he cannot see [understand] the kingdom of God.” Jn. 3:3 As I recently read, “If we really learned to love our neighbor as ourselves, then capitalism would be impossible, and Communism would be unnecessary.”

An awakened 99% of the population is a lot of people. But I wonder, what would happen if just 1% of the church suddenly woke up? What if we could say, “Good morning, 99% of the church. We, the 1%, just woke up!” Instead of marching on Wall Street, what if we Christians stormed heaven? What if instead of throwing gas bombs, we destroyed the sin of greed? As an awakened church, what if we could hold out hope instead of holding up signs? What

if we would offer salvation in place of protest? What if we practiced true religion by actually putting into action real-life solutions for the world’s poor, in place of marching?

It brings to mind a famous quote President John F. Kennedy once made in a speech. He was supposedly quoting the poet Dante when he said, “The darkest parts of hell are reserved for those who, in a moment of moral crisis, maintain their neutrality.”

In a nation caught up in patriotism, militarism, and materialism, we must pray that God would purify any greed that may have grown in our own hearts, that we may truly shine forth the mind and will of Christ to the needs around us. Jesus is coming back—have we done all we can to fulfill His longing for this, our generation?

In this issue, we take a look at the life of Michael Sattler, well known for his part in the infancy of the Anabaptist revival. About 175 years later, the movement he helped jumpstart was facing a crisis, and Ulli Ammann provides some insights into handling church problems.

Other articles treat the new life in Christ, and the fruits thereof, including kindness and simple living ... and trust in God. Young readers should check out the two first articles, one for the young ladies and one for the young men. Be sure to check out the back cover, and the implications of that little phrase. May we all press into the kingdom!

~Bro. Dean





## Cultivating a Heart for the Home

By Sarah Miller

Dear single sisters:

As an older single lady, it has been on my heart for some time to write to encourage you in cultivating a heart for your home. I have been blessed to be a stay-at-home daughter for almost thirty years—so I have experience in this field. © I know that I often fail, and am an unhelpful, unjoyful, sullen daughter. There have been many ups and downs through the years. These are some thoughts for my sisters who are daughters that perhaps feel at times like “the grass is greener on the other side of the fence,” or that are having a bad day, one of those days when you can’t do *anything* right.

Singlehood is not a state to be despised or avoided. It is to be embraced and enjoyed, not a slogged-through biding time until you are a wife. Desiring to be a wife and mother is a good thing—just don’t live in the future or idealize it and neglect the beauty of your life now. We can (and must be) joyful and thankful where we are *now*. Your knight in shining armor is not going to value you more or know you better than your own family knows you. You will still have the same faults that you have now, after marriage. Use this time to grow in the Lord, to become a mighty woman that the Lord can use how He wants.

Serving, working, using all of our talents for our Lord’s glory ... we need to be doing that *now*. This means that we serve our earthly fathers. If we go off and into the world, how can we expect to have a heart for the home? Sadly, many young ladies are expected to get a job and have an outside career. Then, when they marry, they are to transform into homemakers.

In my reading of the Bible, it seems that women are always to be within the circle of home and family. There is where we are best able to grow and bloom into ladies of God. Women are called to be homemakers, not just when they marry, but in all the time before as well.<sup>1</sup> This is not limiting us, rather, it is giving us a protected space to focus on our serving the Lord. Serving our father by helping him in what he does is glorifying the Lord!

“But it is just \_\_\_\_\_,” you say .... Just as a woman doing cleaning, cooking, and training children up to the glory of God is a holy mission, so is daughterhood. Don’t settle for the “pottage” that this world has to offer! It is chaff compared to the wealth of a joyful, serving daughter, seeking to do her family well all the days of her life. There is no amount of money that could replace a daughter. We are an extra set of hands for our fathers. Perhaps they are used when Mama can’t be in two places at once. Maybe they help fetch and carry for Daddy. They could be used to help a young, overwhelmed mother, or an elderly couple that needs help. Our fathers can’t do it, but he wants to help, so he sends us—his extra hands.<sup>2</sup>

“You are wasting your life,” some foolish people say. But what price could replace us? Satan has some “good deals” for the world. They take the nutrients out of food and sell them back as “vitamins.” They encourage the wives to leave the home and then get cooks, cleaners, teachers, daycare workers, secretaries, nurses, drivers, and others to replace the wives in the home. They take the daughters out of the house and then get assistant cooks, teacher’s aides, secretaries, nurse’s aides, and others to replace the missing daughters. What a deal! Just like the rest of Satan’s “deals,” you should read the fine print.

Ladies, the place that God has called you to is priceless! Don’t ever let the thought remain that you are wasting your years at home. We are filling a vital position—only we willing daughters can fill it. Then, if the Lord adds the calling of being a wife—praise the Lord! If we remain in our first calling (daughterhood), praise the Lord! He is to be glorified in both.

Working in an office somewhere or teaching someone else’s children ... hundreds of others could fill that place. But I cannot replace you, and you cannot replace me, in our place as daughters in the home. We are called to be daughters. Thus let us be, with God’s help, the best daughters we can be! ~

1 When I refer to daughters remaining at home, I am speaking of their hearts. Sometimes the call of service will be physically outside the family home. You can still be under your father’s headship, if that is your heart’s desire.

2 Just as our Lord is an infinite God, so are the ways that He can use us.



# Men Wanted!

By Nathan Manion

Men of thought, men of action. Men who are not for sale. Men who are honest to the heart's core. Men who will condemn wrong in friend or foe, in themselves as well as others. Men whose consciences are as steady as the needle of the pole. Men who will stand for right if the heavens totter and the earth reels. Men who can tell the truth, and look the world and the devil right in the eye. Men who neither stagger nor flinch. Men who are quick at figures. Men who can have courage without whistling for it, and joy without shouting to bring it. Men through whom the current of everlasting life runs deep and still and strong. Men too large for certain limits, and too strong for sectarian bands. Men who know their message and tell it. Men who know duty and do it. Men who know their place and fill it. Men who mind their own business. Men who will not lie. Men who are not too lazy to work, nor too proud to be poor. When in office, in the workshop, in the counting room, in the bank ... in every place of trust and responsibility. When we can have such men as these, we shall have a Christian civilization—the highest and best the world ever saw. —Taken from *McGuffey Reader*

**Job description:** Die to yourself, and let Christ live through you. Preach the Gospel to every creature. Suffer persecution and possibly martyrdom for the name of Christ. Love and obey the word of God. Stand for the truth, even if you are the only one to do so. Be so sold out to Jesus that whatever persecution that you face, you can rejoice that you were counted worthy to suffer for Him.

**Qualifications:** A sinner in need of a Savior, or a redeemed sinner.

**Compensation:** Eternal riches, spiritual riches in heavenly places, Eternal Life. Everything that we need in life will be provided for us as we seek first God's kingdom

and His righteousness. Persecution, being hated by the whole world.

There is a great dearth in the world of godly young men; men who can serve in the local church, and fulfill the Great Commission.

The church as a whole is lacking young men to serve as preachers, teachers of the Word, and as evangelists.

Where are the godly young men?

Why is it that we have a lot of complacent young men who are not on fire for God? I think it is because they are in love with the world. The world is too interesting, too entertaining, so fun to be around. The world has crept into the church and has stolen the hearts of the young men. They may not know it yet.

Are the trappings of this world and eternity in hell worth trading for persecution in this life, and eternal life in the world to come?

Young man, you have a choice: the world and all the pleasures of this life and a miserable life without Christ, or a spiritually blessed life in Christ, with the promised persecution. The choice is yours.

This is your choice: life in Christ, or this present world and eternity separated from God.

What will you choose? Your whole future rests in this decision.

So, if you decided to follow Christ, here are a few things to think about. The Great Commission commands you to go and make disciples out of all nations. With that in mind, here is something to think about:

1. What are the qualifications of a preacher/evangelist? You need to have a calling.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen. Ga. 1:15-16a

There has to be a calling. Here Paul is sharing his calling to preach the gospel. The Lord told Ananias that Paul would bear His name before kings. Here is Isaiah's commission from the Lord to preach:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Isaiah 61:1

2. How did the Master Preacher (Jesus) start out his ministry, and how did He preach?

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Mt. 4:17

3. There is a reason that Jesus ties repentance and the kingdom of God:

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Mt. 10:7

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Mt. 24:14

And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils. Mk. 1:38-39

And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. Mk. 3:14



4. Here is what Jesus told His disciples, and how they responded:

And they went out, and preached that men should repent. Mk. 6:12

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mk. 16:15

And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen. Mk. 16:20

5. When we obey God, He will help us, and take care of us:

The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. Ec. 12:10

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Ti. 2:15

We need to have such a grasp of the Scriptures that we know what they are saying, and to be able to refute the

naysayers. We need to hide God's Word in our hearts, so that we don't sin against Him. Ps. 119:11

The harvest is ripe, so get busy and start sharing Christ!

Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe ... for the day of the LORD is near ... Jl. 3:13-14

The return of the LORD is very soon, so we need to be out spreading the good news everywhere we go.

And, Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Re. 22:12

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Re. 22:20

Jesus is returning quickly; where is the evangelistic fervor to get the gospel to the ends of the earth?

Where are some young men who are willing to give their all for the kingdom?

Are you willing to preach the gospel for Christ?

Where are the young men who are to rise up and be the next generation church leaders, pastors, evangelists, teachers, and church planters?

I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. Ps. 40:9

Which of us can say "Amen" to this in all sincerity?

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Ac. 8:4

When there was persecution, the disciples were obedient and spread the gospel as they went.

So young man, what is your choice?

Is it the world? This is what you will find: an empty life without Christ, broken relationships, anger, resentment, bitterness, hate, dishonesty, guilt, sorrow, worry, anxiety, and a guilty conscience, just to name a few of the things that you will experience. This will lead an eternity separated from the Risen Savior.

Or is it the Risen, Almighty, Returning Savior of the World?

If so, the Lord bless you and prosper your walk with Him. A few things you will experience are: agape love, the joy of the Lord, the peace that passes all understanding, spiritual blessings in heavenly places, a life lost for Christ, persecution, imprisonment, and death.

The stakes are high. The question is, will you lose your life to save it in eternity? Or will you seek to save your life in this present evil age, just to lose it in the world to come?

Young man, the choice is yours. I can't choose for you. What will you choose? ~



# The Law of Life

Mike Atnip

Two sparrows. Two sets of wings, two sets of legs, two sets of eyes, two hearts, two brains. Yet the difference between the two birds is so vast. It is the difference between life and death.

One sparrow has all the form and features that can make it flutter, sing, and fly high into the skies. Its leg muscles are intact, yet it cannot hop. Every part of its throat is formed to sing, but no song cheers the sunrise. Every feather is in place on its two wings, yet it cannot fly.

The law of death has become ruler over this bird.

The other bird has no body part that the dead one does not have. No extra muscles, no extra vocal chords, not one extra feather. Yet with a flip of the wings it leaves its roost and, chattering happily, flies off into the skies with an agility that marvels us.

The difference between the birds is the difference between life and death. The one operates under the law of death, while the other operates under the law of life.

## Law in Romans

To understand Paul's letter to the Romans, one has to understand Paul's use of the word "law." If you are confused about the matter, you need not feel alone! Even the apostle Peter wrote concerning Paul's letters: "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

The early church also struggled through the difficult passages. Origen, born in the second century, expressed it this way:

We have often said ... that the Apostle mentions many kinds of law in this epistle [Romans] in such a way that when he passes from one kind to another it is scarcely possible for this to be detected except by a reader who is sufficiently attentive.<sup>1</sup>

Origen then goes on to explain that the word "law" in Romans can refer to natural law (the moral law that God puts into the conscience of everyone in conjunction with what we might call "common sense"), the Mosaic law, and the unchangeable principles of cause and effect in the spiritual world (similar to the law of gravity in the physical world). In this article, I will refer to this last type of law as a "law of spiritual physics." As Origen explains, sometimes Paul glides from "law" to "law" without any parentheses to explain to what type of law he was referring! In fact, Origen explains, the same verse may refer to different kinds of law, with just one word: "law."

## The law of death

Death, darkness, and cold have something in common. Cold is the absence of heat. You cannot create or introduce coldness into heat. You can only take away heat, and the absence of heat leaves coldness. In the same way, you cannot create or introduce darkness into a room full of light. Darkness is the absence of light, and the only way to make darkness is to shut out light. You cannot shine darkness into a lighted room to make a part of a room go dark. No, the only way to make a corner dark is to shut out the light. In the same way, death is not a substance or action. Death is simply the absence of life. The only way to create death is to take away all life. Death, darkness, and cold in themselves are not a force, substance, or object. They are all simply the absence of something.

So how does something die? Simple: the life is taken away. In the case of sparrows, the physical life is taken away, and the body slumps to the ground, unable to do anything. In the case of spiritual death, the Spirit of God is removed from man's spirit, and man's spirit dies. This is called spiritual death.

A man can be alive physically, while spiritually dead. People in such a condition are said to be "under the law of sin and death." Since the spirit is dead, the person's body (the lusts of the flesh) and soul (the pride of life) take con-

<sup>1</sup> Thomas P. Scheck, *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5* (Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 210.

trol, or, in some cases, an evil spirit moves into the man's spirit and begins to rule the man.

What happens in the conduct of a spiritually dead man?

Suppose he is walking down the street. He sees something. His body craves it. His emotions are moved toward it. He knows it is bad for him. The natural law of his mind tells him that. Yet, he is powerless to stop himself. His mind and conscience scream for him to stop himself, yet his body and emotions won't let him. Yes, on some occasions he can choose to do what he knows is right and do it. But he cannot consistently do so.

The *law of sin and death* (which says that any son of Adam without the Holy Spirit *cannot* consistently overcome sin) has gained the victory over his mind once again.

### The law of sin

The law of sin is quite simple. This law can be compared to laws of physics, like the law of gravitation. The simplified version of the law of gravity says that any lifeless solid object will fall to the ground if dropped. That is simply the way things operate. We would be quite foolish to try to live in defiance of that law, say, like jumping off a building and expecting our good looks or intelligence to keep us from hitting the ground below. Or perhaps, thinking that we can overcome the law of gravity by the power of positive thinking. You know, just tell yourself 1001 times that you will not fall to the ground if you jump off the Empire State Building ...

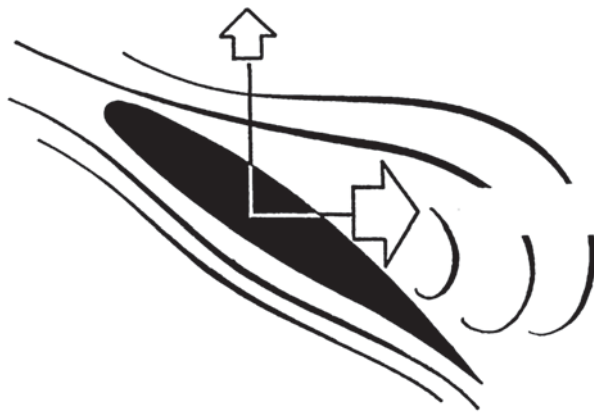
The law of gravity can be overcome, however, by introducing a stronger counteractive law. We will use the law of aerodynamics for an example. This second law says that air rushing over a properly shaped wing will cause lift. When the upward lift overcomes the power of the downward pull of gravity, the object will be lifted up instead of falling. In this way, birds and airplanes overcome the law of gravity with the law of aerodynamics.

The law of sin and death has several parts:

1. Those who willfully sin shall die spiritually. The nature of God is so holy that He cannot dwell with willful sin—He *must* withdraw His Spirit. That is how sin brings spiritual death.

2. Those who are dead spiritually will not have the strength to consistently resist the temptations that their flesh and soul will present to them. The spiritually dead person may know better, and their mind and conscience may scream for them to not sin, but they simply do not have enough moral strength to consistently overcome sin.

3. Because of sin, the human body has a strong natural tendency towards evil and self. No one has to train a child to lie, steal, hate, or lust. For this reason, our present bodies can never be a part of heaven. To save the human race, the Messiah took upon Himself a human body and walked among us. In this way, He could experience all the same temptations and trials as we do, and prove that He could conquer them.



**The law of gravity can be overcome by introducing the law of aerodynamics. In the same way, the Spirit of life overcomes spiritual death.**

innocent before God until we come to understand His will.

What happens, then, to the child who grows older, and now he meets up with a law that tells him that, for example, lying and stealing are sin? This law may be the teachings of Jesus, the Mosaic law, or simply the natural law of his conscience and common sense. Whatever law it is that informs him of his sin, the man now has a choice to make: to practice sin or not to practice sin.

Most people also have a God-given desire to be righteous and pure. This desire is hidden deep within the spirit of man, but it is present. So, that desire to be upright and virtuous naturally says "Amen!" when it meets with a law that tells it that lying and stealing are sin.

Now, the man finds something deep within him telling him to be virtuous—and he understands now what virtue is—but he finds that his self-centeredness and passions are stronger than his knowledge. In short, such a man then finds himself in ... Romans 7.

Romans 7:9 gives us the time and place of this encounter: "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." When



natural law, the Mosaic law, or even the teachings of Christ enter a man, it brings man to a condition of seeing himself for who he really is. While law is holy, pure, and good, if it is by itself, it lacks an essential ingredient: *life!*

## Human will vs. law

Following his encounter with law, men often try to live up to it in their own strength. This brings them to Romans 7:14-24. He knows what is right, he wants to do what is right, he tries to do what is right ... but he crashes again and again. This is the battle between the human will and righteousness. While men can sometimes will themselves into doing what they know to be right, they soon find that they cannot do it consistently. If men could by the power of their own will live righteously, humans could save themselves. What men find, though, is that the power of sin within them is stronger than their best intentions.

Paul describes this reality in Romans 7:21-23. What we need to remember is that, as Origen noted, Paul passes from one “law” to another in his writings without stopping to tell us that he is referring to a different form of “law.” Let’s look at the verses:

(21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

(22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

(23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Verse 21 describes the “law of sin.” This “law” is a “law of spiritual physics” that says, basically, “we can decide with our mind to do good, but the power of sin will not let us actually carry out our good intentions.” Just like the law of gravity is not overcome by positive thinking, the law of sin is not overcome by our will deciding that we are never going to sin again.

In verse 22, Paul uses “law” again, but this time he is not referring to a “law of spiritual physics,” but to the commands of God. In his heart, the man who has met with moral law (but not yet with grace) decides that he will love and obey that law ... but he quickly finds that there is another “law” at work. This is the “law of spiritual physics”

of sin in the body, which is stronger than human efforts. The man who has met with a moral law—be it the law of Moses, the natural law of conscience, or even the teachings of Jesus—will soon come to the crashing reality that he is a slave to his own passions.

## O wretched man!

This cry arises from the resulting crash with reality in the man who thought he could live godly by his own efforts and will. For some people, this reality is understood

almost immediately upon encountering the moral and ethical laws of God. For others, they flounder for years in their own efforts before coming to realize that moral law is insufficient in and of itself to save a man. Paul said it like this, in Galatians 3:21: “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”

In other words, if all that men needed to become righteous was to know what was right and wrong, the mere giving of a law would have been sufficient to save men. They would hear the law, and decide to obey it. And, zap, they would become righteous.

## The problem

The problem with moral law is that moral law in and of itself cannot give a person life. Law can only show a person they have a problem. Does that make moral law evil? No, Moses’ law was not evil. The problem with Moses’ law was that it had no provision for putting the Holy Spirit back into the spirit of man. And without God’s Spirit within him, man did not have the power within his own will to overcome the “law of spiritual physics” that was part and parcel of a human body.

Men without the Spirit of God are carnal, *sold unto sin*. In short, they are slaves to do things they wish they could stop doing.

## The cure!

Following the realization that he is “sold under sin,” a man is ready to hear about the cure. The purpose of moral law is to bring a man to Romans 7:24. While the cry, “O wretched man that I am” is a desperate cry, it is also a beautiful place to be. Such a person is now ready to hear about the cure. He has experienced and realized the “law



**In the tug of war between right and wrong in the unconverted, the law of sin wins more often than the desire to be upright does.**

of spiritual physics” that says that he cannot overcome sin by his own good intentions. The moral law has only aggravated his conscience and made him comprehend that spiritual death was a part of him, a part that he could not change.

Then comes the good news. The law of sin could be overcome by a greater “law of spiritual physics.” This was the law of the Spirit of life. Just like gravity could be overcome by aerodynamics, the downward pull of sin could be conquered by the upward pull of the Holy Ghost! Paul put it this way: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” In other words, the power of the Holy Spirit would set a person free from the power of sin in his body.

Once the Spirit of God was poured back into the human spirit, “the righteousness of the [moral] law could be fulfilled in us.” Ro. 8:4 In other words, we could now actually do what the moral law called us to do.

## Life!

Paul gives us the secret of salvation in Romans 8:11: “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

The “secret” is, of course, life! This is the same “secret” that makes the big difference between the two sparrows mentioned at the beginning of this article. They both had everything they needed to fly and sing, but one could and one couldn’t. So it is between two people. Both know what is right, but one can do it and one cannot.

What happens many times, though, is that people go through years of living out a form of godliness, with no power. It is like a dead sparrow dropped out of an airplane at 30,000 feet altitude. Such a bird’s wings may flutter and flop, and one could even optimistically say it was “flying” as it dropped through the clouds and fluttered and flopped toward earth.

But a dead bird dropped from an airplane has only a “form of flying.” And people without the Holy Spirit going through the motions of prayer, praise, and mission work have only a “form of godliness.” Such a person caught on camera at certain moments may well appear to be a real Christian. But a dead sparrow falling 30,000 feet

could also be caught by a camera in actions that resemble a live bird.

## The great mystery revealed

For centuries and centuries, God kept the mystery of the gospel hidden in types and shadows. When the day finally came, He revealed it to humanity. This mystery is really pretty simple—at least simple to say. Paul revealed it in Colossians 1:26-27:

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

“Christ in you.” A very simple remedy for a terrible situation! Humanity is a slave to the power of sin ... how to overcome it? Simple. Put the Messiah’s life into them! Let Jesus live in a man, and he can conquer sin!

This dramatic salvation was prefigured in one of the Mosaic ceremonies, the Day of Atonement. On that great day, the life (blood) of a goat was drained from it, and the life was transferred to the inner sanctuary of the temple. Once the blood (life) of the goat was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies (our spirit), everything changed. The inner sanctuary was now made alive by the life that was in the blood. In other words, the life that had been in the goat was now in the heart of man. God and man could now be reconciled, now that man’s spirit was alive once again. After all, a living God cannot unite Himself to a dead spirit ...

The Messiah salvaged the human sin situation by coming to earth and sprinkling His blood (which is a type of the Holy Spirit) into the dead person. “Christ in you, the hope of glory!”

## Why Christ came

Jesus told us plainly why He came to earth: “I am come that they might **have life**, and that they might have it more abundantly.” Jn. 10:10 In what is probably the most well-known verse of the New Testament (John 3:16), it is stated this way: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in



On the Day of Atonement, a blood transfusion occurred, when the life (blood) of the goat was transferred to the inner sanctuary, “quicken” it.

Through Esther's intervention, the law of death instigated by Haman was annulled by introducing a counteractive law.

This was the basis of the celebration of Purim, which is essentially a celebration of life over death!



him should not perish, but **have everlasting life.**” Again, we see the purpose of the Father in sending His Son was that *life* could be put back into them. And the apostle John sums up why he even wrote down the gospel story, with these words: “But these are written ... that believing ye might **have life** through his name.” These are but a few of the Scriptures that tell us of the glorious mystery of the gospel: Christ living in us.

In short, Jesus was sent to earth to put the Spirit of God back into humans. Not all would accept this undeserved gift, but those who did accept it were called out into a brotherhood of those rescued from the power of sin. These “called out ones” were to live out the life that God had originally intended for Adam’s descendents to live. All who had Christ living and reigning in them would form the kingdom of God.

### The gospel according to Esther

Space does not permit a full look at the story of Esther, but this little Old Testament book preaches the gospel. In it, we see an unchangeable law made that sentenced all Jews to death (think, “law of sin and death.”) The Medes and the Persians had decreed that once a law was made, it could never be altered. This was a shadow of the unalterable law of sin and death—try as we might, we humans cannot change that “law of spiritual physics.” You sin, you die spiritually. Then, if you die physically while in a state of spiritual death, you will be eternally separated from God.

However, when the king wanted (through Esther’s mediation) to change his decree, he could not just wipe the law off the records. The Medes and the Persians could not alter their laws once they had been made! In the same

way, the “law of sin and death” cannot be altered by God. It would be against His nature to change the “laws of spiritual physics.” The law of sin and death is a “law of spiritual physics” that cannot be changed without altering the nature of God. If a man willfully sins, God *has* to leave that man. If God would stay in the heart of a willful sinner, His character would be defiled.

So, King Ahasuerus simply made another law that gave the Jews the liberty to kill their enemies, before their enemies killed them. This was a shadow of the “law of the Spirit of life” that would give believers the opportunity to conquer sin, before sin destroyed them forever!

There are other interesting aspects of the story of Esther to explore, but I think you probably get the picture of how God’s people were saved from destruction by the introduction of another law that empowered them to conquer the previous law that had decreed their death.

### Life begins with faith

It would seem unfair to tell about this unique rescue operation that Jesus pulled off without also telling the steps to take to be included in it. It all begins with ... faith.

Two common mistakes made today are:

1. **Trying to live up to the moral law by our own strength.** As mentioned above, many people spend years and years trying to do this. They either justify their failings by saying “God doesn’t expect us to overcome,” or by self-righteousness. Self-righteousness happens when men make their own standard up. And, of course, when men make up a standard of right and wrong, they usually make it low enough that they can achieve it. So men lower God’s standard and then pat themselves on the back because they think they are fulfilling God’s will. But it is

really their own standard of righteousness they are fulfilling, not God's standard. When man changes God's standard of righteousness, it is called self-righteousness.

2. The second common mistake is to try to attain to *life* by **performing the ceremonial aspects given along with moral law**. In Paul's day, this was often realized by



**Dropping a dead bird from an airplane does not make it fly. In the same way, sending an unregenerated person on a mission trip does not make life in Christ.**

were bad in themselves ...), but to those who believed. Indeed, *the Spirit of life* which overcame *the law of sin* was not given to those who went through religious motions, but to those who surrendered in faith. In short, one cannot earn a baptism of the Holy Ghost by merely going through rituals, even though those rituals are biblical. If going through rituals earned a baptism of the Spirit, children playing church might suddenly get baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire!

### **Does Jesus believe on you?**

This is rather a strange question, perhaps. We are used to being asked "Do you believe on Jesus?" However, we need to look at John 2:24 for a definition of faith: "But

practicing circumcision, Sabbaths, new moons, and the dietary regulations of the Mosaic law. Today, the same thing happens with church meetings, baptism, communion, and/or mission work. Whether it is Mosaic ceremonies or Christian duties, *life* cannot be earned by going through motions. That would be like dropping a dead bird out of an airplane at 30,000 feet, with the vain hope that sometime during its freefall it will imitate a living bird's flight close enough that it will magically come to life ...

Paul was emphatic. The undeserved gift of the Holy Ghost (grace) was not given to those who ritualistically performed religious duties (not that the duties

Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men."

Perhaps you are wondering if there was a printing error ... No, John 2:24 is the verse we want, and we want to look at the word "commit" to help us understand what "faith" is.

First, let's look at the preceding verse (23): "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did." Here we see "believed in his name," and we think "faith."

Now, the point ... The word "commit" in verse 24 is the same Greek word as "believed" in verse 23. It would seem strange to say "Jesus did not believe on them ...". But that is exactly what happened.

Now, let's look again at verse 23, to our part of faith, and replace "believe" with the synonym "commit": "... many committed themselves to his name ..."

### **Have you committed yourself to Him?**

To experience the liberation that the Holy Spirit brings to sinful humans, we must believe, that is, "commit ourselves" to Jesus. This is more than a mental assent to a historical truth; it is a total letting go of everything about ourselves and a clinging to Jesus, ready to do whatever He asks. The devils give mental assent to the truth of the Bible. They *know* that the Bible is true! But they have not committed themselves to it. To commit to something means to give oneself over to it entirely. To give oneself over entirely to something is ... ***faith!***

The good news is that whoever will commit himself entirely to Christ (believe on Him) will be given an undeserved gift: the Holy Spirit in his spirit. Christ will come and "dwell in our hearts by faith." This is grace, an undeserved gift. A spiritual rebirth will occur, a new life begin. Old things will pass away, and all things will become new. Our mortal bodies will be quickened (brought to life). And we will fulfill the will of God, on earth.

The law of the Spirit of life will make us free from the law of sin and death.

Sounds like good news to me! Time to celebrate Purim! ~

**One cannot earn a baptism of the Holy Spirit by merely going through rituals, even though the rituals are biblical.**



# A Birthright, or an Empty Soup Bowl?

By Stephen Mast

Many, many years ago in ancient times there lived a man, a rather hairy man, so hairy that his arms were not unlike the back of a young goat. This man lived in a place called Canaan. He was an excellent and skilled hunter, and undoubtedly was the terror of all the wild game in that area.

One day we find him coming in from the field, probably from yet another hunt. He is coming in, and most surely he has had a very hard day, for he is faint. I could imagine that maybe his knees even feel like buckling. He's hungry ... very hungry! As he approaches his home, which is a tent where he lives with his father, mother, and twin brother, the smell of thick vegetable soup<sup>1</sup> greets him. Being famished, the desire to have some of this soup becomes powerfully strong. What more could a hungry man wish for? Prepared to fill his empty stomach, he hunts down the source of the aroma.

Now this man, as the oldest son of his father, has the birthright. The owner of the soup is none other than his younger twin brother. This is where the problem comes in.

When he approaches his brother about giving him some of the soup, brother says, "Sell me this day thy birthright." At this time his birthright seems very insignificant, as it is something he is to receive in the future. And right now, at this moment, he feels like he is about ready to die, so he goes ahead and sells his birthright for a meal. He even confirms the deal by an oath. After he has eaten the food, he is left with an empty soup bowl instead of a birthright. In a few hours his hunger will return and he must look for more food.

<sup>1</sup> Thompson Chain Reference Study Bible gives the definition of "pottage" as "a thick vegetable soup."

I am sure by now you have guessed that this is none other than the infamous Esau. This account appears in Genesis 25, and it ends by saying, "Thus Esau despised his birthright." Other Scriptures don't deal with Esau any more kindly. Hebrews 12:16 calls him a "profane person."<sup>2</sup>

Why was it such a great offense to sell his birthright? After all, was it not his to do with as he wanted? First of all, I believe we need to consider what this birthright really was.<sup>3</sup> It was the right to a double portion of his father's goods, yet much more than this, it was the right to the covenant that God had made with his grandfather Abraham in Genesis 12, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." The birthright which Esau despised and sold contained this promise, which we can see by the fact that it was Jacob's descendants who were the chosen people of God, in whom all nations were blessed. So by following the line of least resistance, the cravings of his stomach, Esau forsook this great eternal inheritance—this unique relationship with God—and was left with an empty soup bowl. How foolish!

Dear reader, if you have been born again, you also have a birthright. By faith in the Son of God you have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Peter 1:4 This inheritance is so rich, so bountiful, so wonderful, so incomprehensible, we cannot even fathom all that it contains. Words cannot even give us the full picture. It is so vast! God has done so much so that we can have this inheritance. If so be that you have left all and followed Jesus, you have a unique relationship with God that the world can neither have nor understand. How precious!

However, there are no less temptations today than there were in the days of Esau. In fact, it seems they increase with each passing day, as the world we live among gyrates ever faster and faster around self-gratification and

<sup>2</sup> Webster's Dictionary gives the meaning of "profane" as, "Not concerned with religion or religious matters."

<sup>3</sup> *Zondervan Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* has this to say: "That birthright was far more than the material possessions of their father Isaac: it was first and foremost the promise of God, the covenant oath given to Abraham and passed down from generation to generation. In despising his birthright, Esau showed that he was a complete materialist and had no concern at all for the special relationship with God granted under the covenant. Later, Jacob was far from blameless in plotting to have the birthright confirmed to him by his father. But his actions showed that he considered a relationship with God an important thing."

the lusts of the flesh. There is an ever greater variety of tantalizing, mouth-watering soups being cooked today, things that appear so innocent, so good, and look like just what the faint-hearted pilgrim needs. There are air conditioners to control your climate and keep you comfortable and at ease, and the time would fail me to mention all the whirring, purring, sputtering machines that with the flip of a switch or the touch of a button will do your bidding and make your life easier. Or, will they????

What happened to the children of Israel when everything went well and they had an easy life? They forgot God.

Almost every store you enter in this country is full of blinking, beeping gadgets to tantalize you, sales staff to persuade you, and an easy pay plan to help you down the path of least resistance and discontentment. Beware, it's a trap! Most churches today have an easy "gospel" which encourages men to not take these things too seriously. Many are the modern-day Esaus who trade their birthright for temporary pleasures and ease of life.

I believe at the moment when Esau sold his birthright, he did not fully comprehend the consequences of his actions. The reality of it hit him much later. Nevertheless, there were plenty of warning signs that should have stopped him before he sold it, had he been alert and not just taking the path of least resistance. Will it be any different for us? When you start down the path of least resistance you may not face immediate consequences, but rest assured, they will come. Your children are watching your example, and will usually go even further down that path than you feel comfortable with. If you want to see the consequences of taking the path of least resistance and doing what is convenient, you need only stop and look at society around you: broken homes, laziness, disobedient children, immorality, far removed from God's order. Society did not come to this overnight; it happened gradually, and it began by taking the path of least resistance.

When you make a decision, what is it based on? Do you truly want God's will at all cost? Do you do God's will whatever it costs? Are your decisions based on God's will, or is it easier to just do the most convenient thing at the moment, and hopefully He will reveal His will tomorrow? Do you plainly declare that you are a pilgrim and a stranger, a peculiar person, seeking a better country, that is an heavenly?

Dear readers, unless we get a heavenly vision and look not at the things that are seen, but the things that cannot be seen and that have eternal value, we will all perish with Esau.

Do you have a birthright, or an empty soup bowl? ~

—Taken from *A Love of the Truth*, Oct. 2011

## Oh Christendom!

by William Penn (1644-1718)

It is at that day proud and luxurious Christians shall learn that God is no respecter of persons; that all sects and names shall be swallowed up in these two kinds, sheep and goats, just and unjust; and the very righteous must have a trial for it; which made that holy man cry out, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Pe. 4:18 If their thoughts, words, and works must stand the test, and come under scrutiny before the imperial Judge of heaven and earth, how then should the ungodly be exempted? No; we are told by Him that cannot lie, many shall then even cry, "Lord, Lord!" set forth their profession, and recount the works that they have done in His name, to motivate Him to mercy, and yet be rejected with this direful sentence, "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity; I know you not." Mt. 7:23 As if He had said, Depart from me, you evil doers; though you have professed me, I have never known you; your vain and evil lies have made you unfit for my holy kingdom. Go away from here and go to the gods whom you have served; your beloved lusts which you have worshipped, and the evil world that you have so much coveted and adored. Let them save you now, if they can, from the wrath to come upon you, which is the wages of the deeds you have done. Here is the end of their work that built upon the sand; the breath of the Judge will blow it down, and woeiful will the fall be.

He casts the eye of love upon his own sheep, and invites them, saying, "Come, you blessed of my Father" (Mt. 25:34); those, who through patient continuance in well-doing, have long waited for immortality. The Judge tells them that you have been the true companions of my tribulation and cross, and, with unwearied faithfulness, in obedience to my holy will, valiantly endured to the end, looking to me, the author of your precious faith, for the recompense of reward that I have promised to "they who love me, and faint not." Oh! enter you into the joy of your Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Oh Christendom! My soul most fervently prays, that after all your lofty profession of Christ, and His meek and holy religion, your unsuitable and unchristian life may not cast you out at that great judgment court of the world, and lose you so a great salvation at last. Hear me once, I implore you: can Christ be your Lord, and you not obey Him? or, can you be His servant, and never serve Him? "Be not deceived, such as you sow, shall you reap." Ga. 6:7 He is not your savior while you reject His grace in your heart, by which He should save you by purification. Come, from what has He saved you? Has He saved you from your sinful lusts, your worldly affections, and vain conversations? If not, then He is not your savior! For, though He is offered a savior to all, yet He is actually a savior to those only that are saved by Him; and none are saved by Him that live in those evils by which they are lost from God, and which He came to save them from. ~



## On Fruit Bearing

Charles E. Orr

The following beautiful language is found in Isa. 51:3: “For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.” Zion is a metaphor signifying the church of God. It is, therefore, the church which the Lord will comfort and whose wilderness will be made an Eden. But what is the church of God? This is a very important question; one which all people should fully understand, and one which is very easily answered. You will learn at once by reading Ephesians 1:22,23 and Colossians 1:18,24 that the church is the body of Christ, and in 1 Corinthians 12:27 we are plainly told that Christians are the body of Christ. They are, therefore, the church of God.

Dear reader, if you are a Christian, you have been born of the Spirit; you have passed from death unto life; you have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light; you have been created anew. You are, therefore, a member of the body of Christ, and all such members make up the church of God.

The children of Israel were the church of God in the old dispensation, and He dwelt in a tabernacle or temple they built for Him. In this more glorious gospel dispensation, those who have been born of the Spirit and made pure in heart are the church of God. In this Holy Spirit dispensation we do not build temples for the Lord to dwell in; for “know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” 1 Co. 3:16 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” 1 Co. 6:19 In this blessed gospel day Christians are the “habitation of God through the Spirit.” If you

are a Christian, God dwells in your heart; your body is His glorious temple. This is a most stupendous thought, but it is true. In your soul is the sweet heavenly manna, the budding rod, and the ark of the covenant overshadowed by the cherubim of glory.

When God created man He placed him in a garden which He had planted eastward in Eden. In this garden God made to grow every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food; also, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil were in this garden, and a river to water it. It is said that God “walked in the garden in the cool of the day.” That was in the day of literal things. We are now in the day of spiritual things, when our bodies have become the temple of God through the Spirit, and our hearts are His lovely garden. It is in this garden He dwells; it is there He walks. See 2 Corinthians 6:16. When the south winds blow and the spices flow out, He comes into His garden to eat His pleasant fruits; He gathers the myrrh and the spices, He eats honey and drinks wine and milk. See Canticles 4:16 and 5:1. This is sweet language, and is expressive of the purity of the Christian heart, where God dwells, and where He walks in the gentleness of His Spirit, delighting Himself in the tender Christian graces that are budding and blooming all along the peaceful avenues of the soul. Like as the gentle south wind blows upon the flowers of the garden and scatters the fragrance; so the Spirit of God fans the heavenly graces implanted in the heart, and a fragrance flows out of the Christian life, awaking admiration in the minds of all who come into its presence.

The trees that were pleasant to the sight and good for food in the literal garden of Eden symbolize the graces of the regenerated heart, which are lovely to behold, which feed the souls of those who look upon your noble Christian walk, and which become a “tree of life” to the desert hearts of men. In the garden of the Lord blooms the rose of Sharon and the lily-of-the-valley. These are beautiful emblems of the Christ-life in the Christian soul. The river which flowed through Eden’s literal garden represents the deep, broad river of peace which flows in the heart that has tasted of redeeming love.

**A young life laden in rich profusion with kind words, generous deeds, and gentle, modest ways, is the most beautiful object that ever graced this mundane sphere.**

A young heart filled with the mild, meek spirit of Christ, and a young life laden in rich profusion with kind words, generous deeds, and gentle, modest ways, is the most beautiful object that ever graced this mundane sphere. Angels look down and marvel, and throughout all heaven is awakened songs of joy and praise. It is your privilege to be filled with Jesus now; to be clothed in white and walk in purity. It is also your privilege as



### *Ye are God's cultivated field!*

you journey down life's way to grow more kindly; to be more and more like Jesus; for the sweet graces of heaven to bloom more beautifully in your heart and life; and the beauty of your young Christian life to give way to more beautiful ripened age. If you attend to all Christian duties and live in prayer and devotion to God, your soul will become more and more weighted down with the riches of heaven, and, looking out through the casement, your soul will hail with joy the convoy that has come to bear it to its home of eternal rest.

The Savior in speaking of Himself said, "I am the vine," and in speaking of Christians He said, "Ye are the branches," and speaking of God He said, "My Father is the husbandman." This very clearly and strikingly illustrates the duty of a Christian, and the position he occupies. Christians sustain the same relation to Christ that the branches do to the vine. As the branch receives life through the vine and bears fruit, so the Christian receives life through Christ and bears fruit. The object of fruit-bearing is the glory of God. You should be desirous of bearing as great an abundance of fruit as possible, and do all you can to increase your fruitfulness, since "herein is God glorified, that you bear much fruit."

The apostle Paul in speaking of Christians said, "Ye are God's husbandry." 1 Co. 3:9 If you will examine the Greek text you will find that a more proper rendering would be, "Ye are God's field." Greek scholars tell us that

the Greek term from which husbandry is translated in our common version signifies a cultivated field. It answers to the Hebrew word "sadeh," which means a field sown and under cultivation.

From this you will be enabled to yet more fully understand the true position you occupy under God. You are His fertile field, where He has under cultivation the precious fruits of the kingdom of heaven. The Husbandman has rooted up every plant that He has not planted, and has sown there the seeds of righteousness.

Not only are your hearts the "garden of the Lord" where blooms the "rose of Sharon" and the "lily-of-the-valley" in all the sweetness of their fragrance and beauty, but they are also the Lord's fertile field, where the amiable Christian graces are to bud, bloom, and bear fruit. Your duty as a Christian is to bear fruit for God, that He may be glorified. Every fruit-bearing branch, therefore, He purges, that it may bring forth more fruit. The successful farmer carefully removes all the foreign growth out of his field, and then cultivates his plants, that he may reap the greatest possible harvest.

Delicious fruits are brought from the tropical clime to this land of ours, and they awaken in our hearts an admiration for that delightful country. We long to travel through those sunny lands. You are God's fertile field. In your life has been placed the beautiful fruits of the heavenly land. As this world looks upon your life and beholds these fruits, admiration will be awakened in their hearts for the fruitful fields of heaven. They will be influenced by your life to seek the kingdom of God and its riches so that they may taste of its fruits now and forever. If you will walk with God and live devoted to Him, those precious fruits of the Spirit will become more plentiful and beautiful in your life as you journey down the way, making you a greater blessing to the hearts of others. To this end you must live. ~

**Your  
duty as a  
Christian  
is to bear  
fruit for  
God, that  
He may be  
glorified.**





# Kindness

*Be ye kind one to another.*

Gentleness is enumerated, by the apostle, among the “fruit of the Spirit,” and yet there are some apparently religious men to be met with, in whose make-up gentleness does not hold a conspicuous place. How it enhances our esteem for the Christian who possesses a large share of it. How it enlarges his sphere of usefulness, and adds grace to his profession of religion.

The rough, honest-hearted man may do good in the world, through the self-denial he manifests, and the true and holy faith which is in him. But of greater efficacy would be his life-labor in the service of his divine Master, if in his daily walk he would give manifest expression to the gentle virtues of love, meekness, and tender courtesy.

Do good graciously. Let young and old bear in mind that a good act done in a rough spirit may hurt more than it heals. A rough manner obliterates the obligation conferred, and sometimes leaves unpleasant remembrances concerning those who have labored for our good.

Almost every heart has within it a store of kindly affections, and if there was only a more general effort made to manifest the warmth of our love, and the gentleness of true Christian courtesy, a change for the better would appear in most families and communities.

One writer says:

I am one of those whose lot in life has been to go out into an unfriendly world at an early age; and of nearly twenty families in which I have made my home in the course of about nine years, there were only three or four that could be properly designated as happy

families. The source of trouble was not so much the lack of love, as the lack of care to manifest it.

What a world of misery is suggested by that last remark! What power resides in the small courtesies of life! In a look, a word, a tone, how much happiness or sorrow may be communicated.

Mercies in rich abundance are showered down upon us by the Giver of all good gifts. If we are grateful, let us manifest it by the love and kindness exercised toward those about us, showing appreciation for favors from others and covering with a cloak of charity the austerity and coldness of those who have not yet learned the secret of dispensing the milk of human kindness.

Kindness and love are powerful levers to operate within our associations with mankind. If we habitually use them, we shall be more and more convinced that the exercise of them is as beneficial to others as it is necessary to our growth and spiritual warfare.

None of this, however, is to be interpreted so as to justify that laxity of discipline so prevalent in the homes and churches in these times when parents—like old Eli—are destroying their children by a destructive tenderness, and ministers and bishops buy favor and popularity—like the unjust steward—by telling disloyalists to sit down quickly and write four score, when the scales of Gospel truth demand a hundred.

Better bear the ill-will of children for a time than by lack of discipline to help them on to transgression and ruin. Alas for that minister who gains to himself friends by laxity, and gathers numbers by tenderness with disloyalties. ~

—Taken from *The Sword and Trumpet*

Do good  
graciously.

Let young  
and old  
bear in  
mind that  
a good act  
done in a  
rough spirit  
may hurt  
more than  
it heals.

Michael Sattler dipped his pen into the inkwell and continued to write. "... the Devil seeks to destroy, Christ seeks to save ..."

Slowly he leaned back and glanced around the spacious room. Wolfgang Capito had become a true friend. It was kind of him—and dangerous, too—to allow Michael and Margaretha Sattler to reside in his home. Capito's deference and compassion were especially compelling in light of the fact that he was a dedicated leader of the newly-founded Reformed Church. Michael was one of "the radicals," a rebaptizer, commonly known as an Anabaptist. These radicals were despised by Catholics and Reformers alike.

Margaretha smiled at Michael as their eyes met. Her husband was struggling through a very difficult time, she knew. But she had confidence in his discernment and walk with God. She would follow this man anywhere, because she knew that he followed the mutual love of their married life—their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

"Are you sure you are ready to leave this place, Sweetheart?" Michael asked gently.

The young wife hesitated. She thought of the beautiful house and grounds, the friendly people, the pleasant accommodations. Her glance flashed around the well-furnished room ... the chairs ... the bed ... the wide window pouring fresh air and light into the house ...

"This is small compared to what you had at St. Peters," she replied laughing, pushing regretful thoughts aside. A moment later her face was sober again. Was it healthy for their spiritual life to live in this luxury? "I'm ready to leave when you are. If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Michael smiled to himself. How he loved his sweet young wife! She was bright, educated, and the perfect combination of a Proverbs 31 and Titus 2 woman. Often Michael thanked God for showing him the principles in His Word that had moved him to leave the monastery. His position had been rich, safe, and powerful, but was void of the joy that now filled his very being.

He remembered well the maelstrom of questions and convictions that had been his when he walked away from a position that was the envy of dozens of his peers. He hoped that he would be as glad of the decision that he was facing now as he was of that one. It had only been a few short years ago, and yet in some ways it seemed like ages ...

He turned back to the table and continued to write. "... the flesh is against the spirit ..."

\* \* \* \* \*

In October of 1517, a monk named Martin Luther had taken a firm stand against the practice of buying indulgences from the church, supposedly purchasing forgiveness of sins. Luther could see no Biblical or godly connection in this practice. His



# The Way of

*The story of Michael Sattler's journey from Cath*

By Da

posting of 95 theses on the church door at Wittenburg is considered the spark that set the fire of the Protestant Reformation blazing across Europe, even though the Bohemian Brethren and others had broken with the Catholic Church more than a hundred and fifty years earlier.

Luther had no intention of starting a new church. He simply wanted to correct a few grievous errors. But the church hierarchy soundly rejected his concerns, and by 1522 the lines were clearly drawn. The Reformation was underway and church leaders everywhere were forced to decide where to take their stand.

In Zurich, Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli founded the Reformed Church, similar to the Lutheran, but with a few doctrinal differences. Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito were among many church leaders who sided with Zwingli.

\* \* \* \* \*

Michael Sattler was born in the early 1490's at Stauffen in the Breisgau, Germany. Even in his youth, Michael had a desire to serve God. He entered the priesthood and joined the monastery at St. Peters of the Black Forest when he was in his early twenties. He advanced rapidly in the ranks of monastic leadership and became a Benedictine Prior at St. Peters. To his dismay, Michael soon found that tendencies to abusing alcohol and other vices were common among the priests of the Catholic Church. He emerged as a leader of reform. He sought, by godly example, to bring his friends and sub-





jects to a renewal of life and practice. To Michael, this meant applying the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

In May of 1525 Michael Sattler came to the conclusion that his position was not Biblical. He was among the socially privileged, a “Cloister Lord,” but he found his life inconsistent with his convictions.

In later years he stated that his

# f the Cross

olicism, to Evangelicalism, to a follower of Jesus

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leaving the

monastery was a “call of God.”

Although Michael was probably influenced by Luther or Zwingli, it is interesting to note that in all his writings he never gives either of them credit for his decision to turn his back on Catholicism. In any event, Michael left the monastery, married Margaretha, a former nun, and was forced to flee to Switzerland by the efforts of King Ferdinand I to exterminate all enemies of the Catholic Church.

In the summer of 1525, Michael and Margaretha arrived in Zurich, a canton of Switzerland. While there, he came under the influence of and joined a recently-formed group of believers called the “Swiss Brethren.” Forming the nucleus of this group was Conrad Grebel, a son of a prominent member of the City Council, Felix Mantz, the illegitimate son of a parish priest, and George Blaurock, another former priest. They were well educated. With Sattler, they were learned in the original Bible languages and were avid students of God’s Word. They rejected both the Sacramental or legalistic salvation of the Catholics, as well as the “sola fide” or “Faith Alone” teachings of the Reformers. They were convinced that salvation is obtained by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus that brings obedience to His words. Michael had found a kindred spirit.

On November 6th, 1525, Michael took part in a disputation with Zwingli. This was the third disputation Zwingli had with his former disciples and he was losing his patience. The outcome was hardly in question. Michael was banished from Zurich and forced to promise, under oath,<sup>1</sup> that he would not return.

<sup>1</sup> Here we see Michael still swearing oaths and even

Michael and Margaretha went to Horb and Rottenburg in Wurttemberg, where he preached to the faithful in forests and private homes. From there he traveled to Strasbourg in Alsace. In Strasbourg, they were warmly received into the home of Wolfgang Capito, a Protestant leader. Here he also became a close friend of Martin Bucer, another leading Reformer.

But now, after many respectful and peaceful discussions with these Reformers, he once again found his position to be untenable. On the one hand, he considered the possibility that these learned theologians could cause him to change his mind about his beliefs. To Michael this would be a betrayal of the Lord he loved with all his heart. On the other hand, if he persisted in following Jesus, he could fall into the hands of the Catholic authorities.

And he had to persist. Michael could not, in good conscience, compromise on issues he felt so strongly about. His vision, formed in Zurich with the Swiss Brethren, was that of a free church, made up of born-again believers and separated from the world. His view was totally at odds with those of Capito and Bucer, who saw the church as the population of a physical location, including *all* the inhabitants thereof. They rejected Michael’s position by constant recourse to 1 Timothy 1:5: “love is the end of the law.”<sup>2</sup>

Michael wanted his farewell letter to the Reformers to be clear and yet as unnecessarily offensive as possible. He laid his pen on the table, picked up the letter, and reread it:

Grace and peace from God our Father through Jesus Christ our Savior. Dear brothers in God! As I recently spoke with you in brotherly moderation and friendliness on several points, which I together with my brothers and sisters have understood out of the Scripture, namely out of the New Testament, and you for your part as the ones asked, answered in similar moderation and friendliness as follows: Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1 that love is the end of the commandment, wherefore it is necessary that all of the commands of God be guided by the same. I am not able so to conceive, in my understanding and conscience, that this may be done as you do it with every point; namely with baptism, the Lord’s Supper, force or the

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(according to some sources) promising to be quiet about Anabaptist teachings. This seems to have been a short relapse in Michael’s life, from which he later recovered and repented from.

<sup>2</sup> It seems to have been a sort of imbalance towards ecumenicalism, where disobedience to Christ is hidden under the phrase of “just love everybody.”

sword, the oath, the ban, and all the commandments of God. What hinders me is the following:

1. Christ came to save all of those who would believe in Him alone.
2. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; he who believeth not will be damned.
3. Faith in Jesus Christ reconciles us with the Father and gives us access to Him.
4. Baptism incorporates all believers into the body of Christ, of which He is the head.
5. Christ is the head of His body, i.e., of the believers or the congregation.
6. As the head is minded, so must its members also be.
7. The foreknown and called believers shall be conformed to the image of Christ.
8. Christ is despised in the world; so are also those who are His; He has no kingdom in this world, but that which is of this world is against His kingdom.
9. Believers are chosen out of the world; therefore the world hates them.
10. The devil is prince over the whole world, in whom all the children of darkness rule.
11. Christ is the Prince of the Spirit, in whom all who walk in the light live.
12. The devil seeks to destroy. Christ seeks to save.
13. The flesh is against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.
14. Those who are spiritual are Christ's; those who are carnal belong to death and to the wrath of God.
15. Christians are wholly yielded and have placed their trust in their Father in heaven without any outward or worldly arms.
16. The citizenship of Christians is in heaven and not on earth.
17. Christians are the members of the household of God and fellow citizens of the saints, and not of the world.
18. But they are true Christians who practice in deed the teachings of Christ.
19. Flesh and blood, pomp and temporal, earthly honor and the world cannot comprehend the kingdom of Christ.



**The current interior of St. Peter's of the Black Forest. As a prior in the monastery, Michael could have had an easy life of material abundance.**

20. In sum: There is nothing in common between Christ and Belial.

Such considerations, and still much more of the same kind, which do not now come to mind, hinder me, my dear brothers, from understanding your general assertion on every subject—which you advocate with the words of Paul—cited above. Therefore, my beloved in God, I know of no comfort in all despair except to address a humble prayer to God the Father for you and for me, that He might be willing to teach us in all truth by His Spirit. Herewith I com-

mand you to the Lord, for as I understand it, I can no longer remain here without doing a dishonor to God; therefore I must for the sake of my conscience leave the field to the opposition. I beg you herein, that you understand this as an act of Christian humility on my part. The Lord will ultimately dispose.

Be mercifully considerate, I pray you, of those who are in prison and do not permit a merciful judgment to be superseded by a blind, spiteful, and cruel one. Those who are in error (if that they were) are not to be coerced, but after a second admonition avoided. Christians admonish benevolently, out of sympathy and compassion for the sinful, and do not legalistically coerce persons [by torture] this way or that. May the Lord God have mercy on us all and give us His Spirit to lead us in the way, Christ Jesus, through whom we can again come into our kingdom, fatherland, and

citizenship. The Lord be with all you dear brothers in God. Amen.

Michael Sattler, your brother in God the heavenly Father.

Michael bowed his head and prayed that his benefactors would receive this in the love with which it was written. Margaretha picked it up and read it slowly. She smiled lovingly, nodded her approval, and handed it back to him. Michael folded it carefully and wrote on the back:

Michael Sattler to his beloved brothers in God, Capito and Bucer, and others who love and confess Christ from the heart.

Silently they donned their coats in preparation to leave Strasbourg and search of a new home. Michael twirled his hat in his hand as Margaretha tied her bonnet. They stepped out into a turbulent and hostile world. The winter air in Strasbourg was cold. But they had each other, and most of all they felt a peace that passeth all understanding. A peace known only to those who know God and keep His commandments.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the beginning of 1527, the Anabaptist movement was in serious danger of disintegrating. Conrad Grebel had died of the plague in the summer of 1526. The execution of Felix Mantz on January 5, 1527, marked the fact that Protestant persecution had reached the level of capital punishment. Confusion and the loss of these leaders and their guiding influence [which had never been particularly strong] were evident in the splintering of the new movement.

Upon his failure to convince the most lenient and open Reformers, Bucer and Capito, Sattler went once again to the receptive and yet far more dangerous countryside in and around Horb and Rottenburg. These villages were located approximately seventy miles east of Strasbourg, in the still ardently Catholic area of Wurttemberg.

Sattler was well aware of the need to somehow consolidate this flagging movement. The term "Anabaptists" was being loosely applied to libertarians, mystics, and even militant social rebels.<sup>3</sup> Time may well be running out to implement the doctrines as agreed upon in Zurich by the Swiss Brethren.

On February 24, 1527, Sattler presided over a conference of Swiss Brethren held at Schleithem in Canton Schaffhausen. He presented to this conference a docu-

<sup>3</sup> This was a correct application of the term, since many diverse people were being rebaptized. The Anabaptist movement was unorganized at that time, and everyone getting rebaptized was lumped into one group. Only later did the Swiss Brethren, Dutch Mennonites, and Hutterites emerge as basically stable groups. The libertines, mystics, and militant social revolutionaries failed to crystallize into anything enduring. Thus, today, the term "Anabaptist" generally refers to the non-resistant groups that came from the rebaptism movement. But in the early days, many diverse kinds of people were practicing rebaptism.



Martin Bucer (l.) and Wolfgang Capito (r.) were Protestant Reformers in Strasbourg. After being forced out of Zurich, Michael Sattler spent time with these men, but soon realized that they were not going to take the reforms all the way.

ment that clearly distinguished the differences between Anabaptism and the State churches, as well as differences with other rebaptizers who disobeyed Scripture. This document, called the Schleithem Confession, was approved and adopted without a dissenting voice. It was copied and widely distributed in the underground Anabaptist communities.

The Schleithem Confession consisted of a cover letter and seven articles. The titles of these articles and basic ideas are:

**1. Notice concerning baptism.** Only those who believe and are converted may be baptized.

**2. We have been united as follows concerning the ban.** Church discipline is applied by withholding fellowship. [As opposed to torture or death.]

**3. Concerning the breaking of bread.** Communion is only for those united in faith and in one body of Christ.

**4. We have been united concerning the separation ... from the evil and wickedness which the devil has planted in this world ...** Separation from the world includes rejecting the idolatry of the Pope, loose living, and participation in earthly governments.

**5. We have been united as follows concerning shepherds in the church of God.** Pastors should be ordained from among the flock and must meet the qualifications set forth by the apostle Paul.

**6. We have been united as follows concerning the sword.** The weapons of true Christians are spiritual, not carnal.

**7. We have been united as follows concerning the oath.** Christians should not swear. Their answers should be truthful without taking an oath.

Much of the power of the Schleithem confession is in the cover letter. The reader of this story is encouraged to read this confession in its totality. It can be found in many of the books on Anabaptist history. It had a twofold purpose: to unify the faithful, and to separate them from the State churches and apostate "Anabaptist" churches alike. It was copied extensively. At one time Zwingli had four copies in his possession.

\* \* \* \* \*

Michael, Margaretha, and at least fourteen others were arrested on their way back to Horb in early March 1527.

Soon after their apprehension, they were taken to the tower at Binsdorf. Michael was there until his trial at Rottenburg on May 15th.

The following is a transcript from his trial, as related in *Martyrs Mirror*:

After a long trial on the day of his departure from this world, the articles being many, Michael Sattler requested that they would be read to him again and that he should have another hearing. This the bailiff, as the governor of his lord, opposed and would not consent to it.

Michael Sattler then requested permission to speak. After a consultation, the judges returned as their answer, that if his opponents would allow it, they (the judges) would consent. Thereupon the town clerk of Ensisheim, as the attorney of said Governor spoke thus: "Prudent, honorable, and wise Sirs, He has boasted of the Holy Ghost. Now, if his boast is true, it seems to me, it is unnecessary to grant him this; for if he has the Holy Ghost, as he boasts, the same will tell him what has been done here." To this Michael Sattler replied: "Ye servants of God, I hope my request will not be denied; for said articles are as ye unknown to me." The town clerk responded: "Prudent, honorable, and wise Sirs, Though we are not bound to do this, yet in order to give satisfaction, we will grant him his request that it may not be thought that injustice is done him in his heresy, or that we desire to wrong him; hence let the articles be read to him."

### Articles or charges against Michael Sattler

First, that he and his adherents have acted contrary to the mandate of the Emperor.

Secondly, he has taught, held, and believed that the body and blood of Christ are not present in the sacrament.

Thirdly, he has taught and believed that infant baptism does not conduce to salvation.

Fourthly, they have rejected the sacrament of extreme unction.

Fifthly, they have despised and condemned the mother of God and the saints.

Sixthly, he has declared that men are not to swear before the authorities.

Seventhly, he has commenced a new and unheard of custom in regard to the Lord's Supper, placing the bread and wine on a plate, and eating and drinking the same.

Eighthly, he has left the order, and married a wife.

Ninthly, he has said that if the Turks should invade the country, no resistance ought to be offered them; and if it were right to wage war, he would rather take the field against the Christians than against the Turks; and it is certainly a great matter, to set the greatest enemies of our holy faith against us.

I appeal  
to the words of  
Christ.



### Michael's answers

Thereupon Michael Sattler requested permission to confer with his brethren and sisters, which was granted him. Having conferred with them for a little while, he began and undauntingly answered thus:

In regard to the articles relating to me and my brethren and sisters, hear this brief answer:

First, That we have acted contrary to the nperial mandate, we do not admit; for the same says that the Lutheran doctrine and delusion is not to be adhered to, but only the Gospel and Word of God. This we have kept; for I am not aware that we have acted contrary to the Gospel and the Word of God; I appeal to the words of Christ.

Secondly, That the real body of Christ the Lord is not present in the sacrament, we admit; for the Scripture says: Christ ascended into heaven and, sitteth on the right hand of His heavenly Father whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead; from which it follows, that if He is in heaven, and not in the bread, He may not be eaten bodily. Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9; Col. 3:1; Acts 10:42; II Tim. 4:1.

Thirdly, As to baptism we say: Infant baptism is of no avail to salvation; for it is written that we live by faith alone. Again: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Peter likewise says: The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the res-

urrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:17; Mark 16:16; I Pet. 3:21.

Fourthly, We have not rejected the oil; for it is a creature of God, and what God has made is good and not to be refused; but that the pope, the bishops, monks, and priests can make it better, we do not believe; for the pope never made anything good. That of which the epistle of James speaks is not the pope's oil. Gen. 1:11; I Tim. 4:4; James 5:14.

Fifthly, We have not condemned the mother of God and the saints; for the mother of Christ is to be blessed among all women; for to her was accorded the favor of giving birth to the Savior of the whole world. But that she is a mediatrix and advocatess, of this the Scriptures know nothing; for she must with us await the judgment. Paul said to Timothy: Christ is our Mediator and Advocate with God. As regards the saints; we say that we who live and believe are the saints; which I prove by the epistles of Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians; and in other places where he always writes: To the beloved saints. Hence we that believe are the saints; but those who have died in faith we regard as the blessed. Luke 1:28; Matthew 1:21; I Tim. 2:5; I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Rev. 14:13.

Sixthly, We hold that we are not to swear before the authorities:<sup>4</sup> For the Lord says: Swear not; but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay. Matt. 5:34; James 5:12.

Seventhly, When God called me to testify of His Word, and I had read Paul, and also considered the unchristian and perilous state in which I was; beholding the pomp, pride, usury, and great whoredom of the monks and priests, I went and took unto me a wife, according to the command of God; for Paul well prophesies concerning this to Timothy: In the latter time it shall come to pass that men shall forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving. I Cor. 7:2; I Tim. 4:3.

Eighthly, If the Turks should come, we ought not to resist them; for it is written: Thou shalt not kill.

<sup>4</sup> As can be seen here, Michael appears to have seen his earlier error in swearing to never return to Zurich.

We must not defend ourselves against the Turks and others of our persecutors, but are to beseech God with earnest prayer to repel and resist them. But that I said, that if warring were right, I would rather take the field against the so-called Christians, who persecute, apprehend and kill pious Christians, than against the Turks, was for this reason: The Turk is a true Turk, knows nothing of the Christian faith; and is a Turk after the flesh; but you, who would be Christians, and who make your boast of Christ, persecute the pious witnesses of Christ, and are Turks after the spirit.



**The hangman shall  
dispute with you, I  
assure you!**

In conclusion: Ye ministers of God, I admonish you to consider the end for which God has appointed you: to punish the evil, and to defend and protect the pious. Whereas, then, we have not acted contrary to God and the Gospel, you will find that neither I nor my brethren and sisters have offended in word or deed against any authority. Therefore, ye ministers of God, if ye have not heard or read the Word of God, send for the most learned, and for the sacred books of the Bible, of whatsoever language they may be, and let them confer with us in the Word of God; and if they prove to us with the Holy Scriptures, that we err and are in the wrong, we will gladly desist and recant and also willingly suffer the sentence and punishment for that of which we have been accused. But if no error is proven to us, I hope to God, that you will be converted, and receive instruction.” Acts 25:8; Rom. 13:4; Acts 25:11.

Upon this speech the judges laughed and put their heads together, and the town clerk of Ensisheim said:

“O you infamous, desperate villain and monk, shall we dispute with you? The hangman shall dispute with you, I assure you!”

Michael said: “God’s will be done.”

The town clerk said: “It were well if you had never been born.”

Michael replied: “God knows what is good.”

Town Clerk: “You arch-heretic, you have seduced the pious; if they would only now forsake their error, and accept grace.”

Michael: “Grace is with God alone.”

One of the prisoners also said: “We must not depart from the truth.”

Town Clerk: "You desperate villain and arch-heretic, I tell you if there were no hangman here, I would hang you myself, and think that I had done God service."

Michael: "God will judge aright."

Thereupon the town clerk said a few words to him in Latin; what they were, we do not know.

Michael Sattler answered him, "Judica."<sup>5</sup>

The town clerk then admonished the judges and said: "He will not cease from this talk today; therefore my lord Judge, proceed with the sentence; I will commit it to the law."

The judge asked Michael Sattler whether he also committed it to the law.

He replied: "Ye ministers of God, I am not sent to judge the Word of God; we are sent to bear witness of it, and, hence, cannot consent to any law, since we have no command from God concerning it; but if we cannot be discharged from the law, we are ready to suffer for the Word of God whatever sufferings are or may be imposed upon us all for the sake of the faith in Christ Jesus our Savior, as long as we have breath within us; unless we be dissuaded from it by the Scriptures."

The town clerk said: "The hangman shall convince you; he shall dispute with you, arch-heretic."

Michael: "I appeal to the Scriptures."

Then the judges arose, and went into another room, where they remained for an hour and a half, and determined on the sentence.

In the meantime, some in the room treated Michael Sattler most unmercifully, heaping reproach upon him. One of them said: "What have you in expectation for yourself and the others, that you have so seduced them?" With this, he also drew forth a sword which lay upon the table, saying: "See, with this shall they dispute with you." But Michael did not answer upon a single word concerning his person, but willingly endured it all. One of the prisoners said: "We must not cast pearls before swine." Matt. 27:14; 7:6.



### Margaretha Sattler chose to be drowned in the peaceful Neckar River rather than compromise.

(Photo by Wikipedia User:Matt314)

Being also asked why he had not remained a lord in the convent, Michael answered: "According to the flesh I was a lord; but it is better so." He did not say more than what is recorded here, and this he spoke fearlessly.

The judges having returned to the room, the sentence was read. It was as follows: "In the case of the Governor of his Imperial Majesty versus Michael Sattler, judgment is passed, that Michael Sattler shall be delivered to the executioner, who shall lead him to the place of execution, and cut out his tongue; then throw him upon a wagon, and there tear his body twice with red hot tongs; and after he

has been brought outside the gate, he shall be pinched five times in the same manner."

After this had been done in the manner prescribed, he was burned to ashes as a heretic. His fellow brethren were executed with the sword, and the sisters drowned. His wife, also, after being subjected to many entreaties, admonitions, and threats, under which she remained very steadfast, was drowned a few days afterwards. Done the 21st day of May, A. D. 1527.

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Much more could be said of the execution of Michael Sattler. According to a

young soldier named Klaus von Graveneck, in spite of having his tongue cut out, Michael could still speak audibly. Klaus reports that "first at the square, and then at the place of execution, he prayed for his persecutors and also encouraged others to pray for them and finally spoke thus: 'Almighty Eternal God, You who are the way and the truth, since I have not been taught otherwise by anyone, so by Your help I will testify this day to the truth and seal it with my blood.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

Margaretha was a refined and comely lady. The authorities had no desire to carry out her sentence. The Count had received many letters pleading for mercy and compassion and was willing to release her if only she could be persuaded to abandon this foolishness. Even the Countess of Zollern undertook to save her life by urging her to recant.

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5 Latin verb for "judge."



Interrupting her prayer, Margaretha lifted her head when she heard footsteps. The heavy wooden doors made an eerie screeching as they opened and closed. A stately, well dressed young woman entered her cell. Her escorts, two soldiers, stood at attention at the door. Margaretha rose and greeted her with a warm smile. The Countess was stunned by her composure. After a curt introduction she stated the purpose for her visit.

“I’ve come to help you.”

“Well, thank you for coming!”

Margaretha’s gratitude was encouraging. “I have come to inform you that your life can be spared,” the Countess continued. “The Count takes no pleasure in seeing you drowned. He asks only that you renounce this foolishness. You can leave this dreadful place today if you cooperate.” Her voice took on a pleading tone. “You would not be alone. Some of the others have recanted and are free.” She hesitated, and then continued in almost a whisper, “Are you aware that your husband is dead?”

Margaretha’s eyes moistened. “Oh, but he isn’t dead! He is very much alive and with the God he loved. I only wish I could have been with him in the fire. But just think! In a few days I’ll be joining him in the presence of our Lord. Thank you for trying to help, but I cannot renounce my Lord. I only wish I could help you to know Jesus. He can be your Savior, too!”

The Countess paused. She almost envied this woman. It seemed the compassion and desire to liberate was flowing the wrong way. She was more determined than ever to save this unusual creature. “Margaretha,” her voice was soft, “I want to help you. I can see that you will not recant. But, if ...” She hesitated. “Maybe I could persuade my husband to free you if only you will promise not to speak to others about your beliefs. Would you be willing to do that? If you are dead, you obviously won’t be able to speak to others anyway.”

Margaretha smiled. “You don’t understand. As long as I have breath in my body, I must tell people about my Jesus.”

Just a few days after the execution of Michael, she courageously allowed herself to be taken to the Neckar River to be drowned. ~

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All the letters and articles in this story are factual as taken primarily from four books: *The Martyrs Mirror*, *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism*, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* and *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler*. The actions of Michael and Margaretha are factual, but I took liberties in personalizing their conversations. —*Dave Esh*

## *The Heritage of the Faithful*

Don’t forget your heritage,  
Ye Christians of today,  
For many others fought and wept,  
While traveling this Way;  
They feared and loved, they lived and died,  
For the Almighty’s love,  
They smoothed the paths we travel now,  
Leading us above.

In the Roman days of old,  
Apostles spread the news,  
Of endless love for everyone,  
Though they be Greek or Jews;  
They rallied ‘round the cross of Christ,  
And did not shrink or fear,  
They lit the torch we carry now,  
Burning bright and clear.

Through ‘Dark Ages’ they marched on,  
A remnant small and weak,  
The ‘Church’ fought hard against the ones  
Who sat at Jesus’ feet;  
They believed the love of Christ above,  
And trusted in His plan;  
The gates of Hell did not prevail—  
God kept them in His hand.

When Reformation fires burned,  
And many saw the Light,  
When turmoil raged in Europe’s plains,  
The wrong against the right,  
Then hundreds followed Christ their King,  
Through fire and the sword;  
They, even in the face of death,  
Would not deny the Lord.

The cross and banner of the Lamb  
Has triumphed through the years.  
The blessings we enjoy today  
Were sown in blood and tears.  
So don’t forget your heritage,  
O followers of the Way—  
Many others died for treasures  
That are ours today.

—*Claudia Esh*

(Claudia is the daughter of Dave Esh,  
author of the article on Michael Sattler.)



## Ulli Ammann, to Churches in Crisis

The following letter is perhaps one of the most unsung masterpieces of the early Anabaptists. I ran across this letter as I was studying some of the early source documents of the Amish/Mennonite division. Fortunately, historian John D. Roth has taken these letters out of obscurity and printed them in a book titled *Letters of the Amish Division: A Sourcebook*.

At first glance the letter doesn't seem all that earth shaking. It is mainly just some good, practical teaching from a seasoned bishop to a struggling congregation. On its own merits, the advice is powerful ... but what I believe makes the letter extraordinary are the life experiences of the writer, bishop Ulli Ammann.

It is believed that Ulli Ammann was the younger brother of the famous Jacob Ammann, from whom the Amish church received its name. Ulli was a young minister during the painful split of 1693 between the Amish and Mennonites. This was an ugly split.<sup>1</sup> The two most visible figures were Hans Reist from the "Mennonite" side and Jacob Ammann from the "Amish." When you dig into this split and look for the cause of the division and try to determine "whose fault was it" ... it becomes very difficult. When reading the letters, you find the older "Mennonite" group being aloof and somewhat slippery with the straight question that was being asked of them. On the other hand, the younger and more radical group of "Amish"—particularly Jacob Ammann—comes off as too demanding and harsh.

In the passionate mix of strong personalities, the voice that sparkles with gentleness, wisdom, and humility was Jacob's younger brother—Ulli Ammann.

Five years after the major meltdown, Ulli made several attempts to be a peacemaker. A letter from 1698 reveals his humble attitude, with words like these: "For without any question, mistakes were made on both sides, and therefore each person should carry his own burden, and it is proper

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that this was the first known major division in the Swiss Brethren since their beginnings 168 years earlier. 168 years without a major split!

for each person to reconcile himself again with God and with the aggrieved fellow human whom he has wronged."<sup>2</sup>

In the following years, we see Ulli along with Jacob and the other Amish bishops apologizing for their attitude during the division. They went so far as offering themselves to be excommunicated in order to once again have unity. Sadly, the Mennonites could not find it in themselves to forgive the Amish. Several requests were made for reconciliation, both verbally and by letter, but the Mennonites never accepted their offer.

Over 20 years later, Ulli Ammann, now an older, experienced bishop, was asked to help out a struggling congregation in current-day Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, France. In an attempt to help, he wrote the following letter. The letter is simple, yet profound. Ulli prescribes a humble relationship between a brotherhood and its ministers. He suggests first of all that the brotherhood should be able to work out their problems. While he strongly upholds biblical leadership, Ulli envisions a balance between the opinions of the elders and the opinion of the brotherhood. He feels that these problems should be worked out locally. However, if they cannot be worked out locally, then they should seek help from another congregation. Finally, he says they should accept the counsel of the visiting minister. Other things briefly touched on in the letter are the role of the minister in general, and even some thoughts on church standards. Coming from a seasoned bishop who witnessed damage caused by the zeal of his older brother, the unforgiveness of his opponents, and a lifetime of working through difficult church problems, this letter deserves a close inspection. The letter was used by permission of John D. Roth and the Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Indiana. The subtitles were added by me. —Dean Taylor, Editor

### Ulli Ammann to the ministers and elders of the congregation at Markirch.<sup>3</sup>

A sincere brotherly greeting with the wish for the very best for your soul and body in time and eternity to all the beloved fellow ministers who have helped with the work in the house of the Lord, also to the brothers and sisters who by God's grace are partakers with us in the same faith and worship. Think well of us in your prayers, of which we are in great need.

For the sake of peace and unity, and to ward off quarrels as much as possible, it has seemed good to us to make known by means of a letter the following points:

<sup>2</sup> "Letters" p. 85

<sup>3</sup> Today known as Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, France. This letter was written in 1720.

### **Take it to the brotherhood**

Namely, that a minister and overseer of a congregation—at whatever place he may be, an ordained man or fully confirmed man who is called an elder—can save himself from guilt and the accusations of others in no better way than to proceed with counsel in those matters of consequence that occur in the congregation. We think it is also his duty to do this when something controversial or other important matters arise in the congregation, that he should first of all take counsel with his fellow ministers and then also with the congregation.

### **A leader should lead**

It is our understanding that an elder or ordained minister does indeed have authority to make his presentation first about the things which happened, and may suggest a model of what he thinks to be best, and then he may present it to his fellow ministers and to the congregation to consider and turn it over to them to correct as much as they can from the Word of God.

### **However, a leader should not ‘lord over the flock’**

He should not think that his presentation must be the only valid one and that no one should have anything to say against it, or that even though ten or twenty brethren oppose it, the minister’s word must be king, as Hans Anken in Holland said.<sup>4</sup>

### **Differences with the ministry should be discussed by the brotherhood**

But if no one has a valid—we repeat, a valid—objection (and not something based on spite or ill will, as can easily happen) to the minister’s or elder’s initial presentation, then it should be confirmed by the consent of the congregation.

### **The brotherhood bears the responsibility of the decision**

But if it should happen, as it easily could, that the general counsel does not turn out for the best, then the minister who made the initial presentation does not bear the sole responsibility; the entire congregation helps to bear the blame with him and the congregation then has no authority or right to put the blame entirely on him.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Anken had just led a split in Holland after he purchased an old monastery to live in, and the brotherhood felt it was too ostentatious and worldly.

### **What to do if there are opposing views in the brotherhood:**

#### **Love is most important**

If it should happen that the minister’s or elder’s initial presentation on some important matter was not generally understood to be the best and dissension then followed, and some supported the elder and his initial presentation while the opposing party thought they could not support it, then we think they should not argue about it to the point where love is lost.

#### **The elders should not force their ideas**

Nor should the minister think that the opposing party must bend to his understanding and that he would gladly like to rule over them contrary to their conscience, as Hans Anken did in Holland, which resulted in such great harm.

#### **If the brotherhood can’t resolve the issue, get help**

The elder and those who support his initial presentation, and the opposing party which feels that they cannot accept it, should come to an agreement and let the matter come to other elders and ministers in other congregations to examine and to discuss according to their best understanding ...

#### **Accept the conclusion**

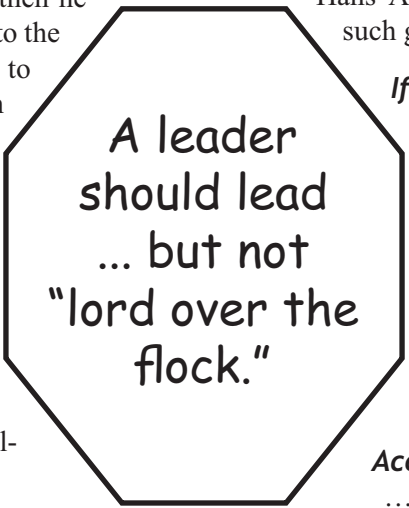
... and then both sides should be content to adapt themselves to it as far as possible so that it might promote the general peace from the elder’s side as well as on the other side.

#### **Ammann’s cry to the elders**

Oh, if only this could happen, which would be very necessary and good, that all elders and ministers would follow Christ’s example in all that is good, and especially in humble and scriptural obedience to God, and could give the people a good model, and that a domineering nature—which is very closely related to destructive pride—would be given no place.

As Peter says: Not as those who rule over the inheritance, rather become an example to the flock (1 Pe. 5). Also, if someone has made you a ruler, do not put on airs; but rather be as one among the people, says Sirach 32.

Also, the appointed kind of Israel should not lift his heart up above his brethren (De. 17:20). Also, the Savior said: You know that the worldly princes rule over the peoples, and the overlords act with authority. But it should



not be so among you. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for the multitude (Mt. 20). From these words one cannot draw the meaning that freedom is granted a minister in the Lord's church to dominate ...

### **Respect for Elders**

...but, on the other hand, neither should it be understood to mean that one has the freedom to treat an elder or minister poorly and unkindly, as can easily happen at times.

**But one who puffs himself up and speaks more out of hostility than with a just reason ... let him remember Korah!**

We are obligated and duty-bound to give help and support to faithful ministers and leaders of the church of the Lord, for they are a gift of God, and not allow them to be trampled on unjustly, accepting no complaint against them except from the mouths of two or three witnesses (1 Ti. 5).

We should love and respect them and give them appropriate honor and service, as the apostle Paul admonishes in this

regard: The elders who lead well are worthy of double honor and reward, especially those who labor among you and who lead you in the Lord, and who admonish you, that you hold them in even greater love because of their work, and are at peace with them (1 Th. 5).

Also, submit yourselves to them that rule over you, for they watch over your souls as one who must give account for them (He. 13).

But one who puffs himself up and speaks more out of hostility than with a just reason against a faithful minister of the Lord and leader of His congregation who speaks and acts in exemplary manner, and thinks that one may surely speak against [the minister] and not simply accept everything he says as valid—Korah with his mob indeed found out what kind of pleasure the Lord takes in such wrongful rebels and gainsayers (Nu. 16). Because disobedient Israel did not love the good prophets sent by God, but contradicted them and hated and persecuted them

unto death, God therefore punished Israel and allowed false prophets to come in great numbers.

Holy Scripture provides plenty of instruction on how leaders and followers are to conduct themselves toward each other. The Apostle says: The younger are subject to the older, and all are subject to one another in the fear of God, thereby showing humility (1 Pe. 5).

### **Keep to the "Old Paths" ...**

We also consider it necessary and good that a minister strive to keep order by maintaining the old, traditional practices of the church, not doing much that is new and out of the ordinary, or breaking with the old. It is better that he continue with the teachings of the divine Word and to break down the old, carnal, sinful life of humans and to implant a new godly life.

### **... but discard and renew outdated standards**

If, however, something that is useless and contrary to the Word of the Lord would be the practice in the congregation, it must of necessity be dropped, and in its place a better practice should be established in harmony with the Lord's Word. This we think should indeed be done, but no one should undertake to do it by himself without the knowledge and counsel of other ministers and elders. Tobit says: Always ask counsel of the wise (Tobit 4). Do nothing without counsel, and after the deed you will not regret it (Sirach 32).

### **Allow and respect differences between congregations**

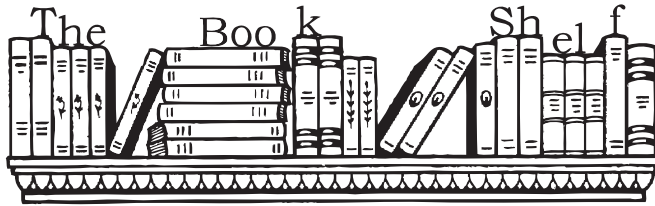
It is, of course, possible that one congregation has a practice not found in another, but only unimportant and minor things which are not in conflict with the Word of the Lord. Against such things one should not complain, but rather plead the cause of love and peace.

This is a small portion, presented in simplicity and brevity, of what we think is necessary and good for a minister and also for the congregation and which serves through Jesus Christ, Amen. Whoever also accepts this as good, and wants to help work to this end, may sign below if they so desire.

—Ulli Ammann

**It is better ...**

**... that he continue with the teachings of the divine Word and to break down the old, carnal, sinful life of humans and to implant a new godly life.**



# In God We Don't Trust

A book review by Mike Atnip

It's a good thing author David Bercot was not born in 1730. He could very well be sporting some chicken feathers by now. I mean, you don't tell American patriots that they are really rebellious rabble rousers who should quit their whining about paying a three cents tax on their cup of tea and get back to work. Like, you shouldn't expect to tell them that without getting tarred and feathered and driven out of town. Or, perhaps, even lynched.

But Bercot raises his voice and makes a bold statement in his latest book, *In God We Don't Trust*. He has the audacity to say that, even though our US coins state otherwise, the United States of America was not founded on trust in God.

So it is David Bercot against millions of pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters ... not to mention the millions of paper bills that make up our United States currency. Can so much money be wrong?

But more important than disproving a slogan pressed into every penny of our financial system, Bercot has a greater foe to face: Professing Christians in the United States of America are determined to prove that our nation was built upon trust in God. In fact, they are trying to teach your children that, by means of school history books.

So, the battle is not merely the correct historical facts. The battle is about how you and your children view the mixture between faith and politics. And David Bercot is asking to get himself tarred and feathered. He is adamant: The United States of America was *not* built on trust in God.

## What is "trust in God"?

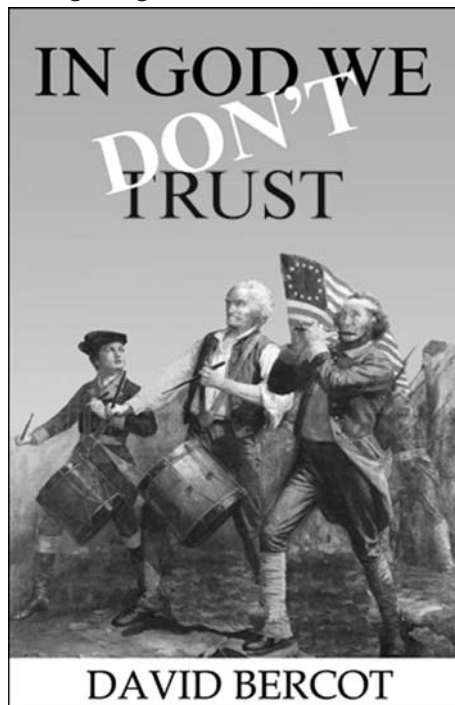
Bercot doesn't beat around the bush. "Trust means obedience." Notice those quote marks? That is because those words are pulled straight from the book. In fact, they are a chapter subheading. To trust God means to do what He says. Bercot says it this way:

Genuine faith leads people to obey God.

When we deliberately refuse to obey God, it shows we don't have faith in the first place.

So now Bercot has the challenge before him. Anyone can spout off statements that are contrary to popular belief. In fact, some folks seem to thrive on conspiracy theories. So can he back his proposition with some facts? He has a monumental task. I mean, everyone *knows* that the American colonies were being cruelly taxed to death, and that is the reason they finally had to rebel and throw off the galling yoke of British sovereignty.

Can David Bercot prove otherwise?



## Oops, some Indians are in our way

When Columbus finally discovered America many centuries after the Asian people had already been here, the Europeans ran into a huge problem. And the problem was, of course, they couldn't just move into this newly discovered land; others were already living here. Or could they just move in?

Bercot treats that situation in a chapter titled *The Wrong Way to Spread the Gospel*. He points out that although the first charters for English settlements in Amer-

ica listed the evangelization of the “savages” as one of their motives, the writing between the lines of the charters essentially said “we have a God-given right to live in America, whether the Indians like it or not.” Included in the chapter is a blood-curdling quote from US President Theodore Roosevelt. You will need to read it for the shock of it to fully hit you. But I will pull one sentence for a teaser:

The most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages ...

And “In God We Trust”? Hmmmm. Bercot sums up the horrible situation with some thoughtful words:

... it’s hard to teach someone else to obey commandments of Jesus when you aren’t practicing them yourself.

Ouch!

### In tobacco and guns we trust

Can you imagine your dollar bills printed with such a slogan? Delving into old historical documents, the author spends several chapters describing how that the first English colonies in America were really founded upon a trust in guns and money. The two worked together quite well. They made fortunes with tobacco, and used the guns to quell any problems the Indians might have because they took more of their land to raise more tobacco.

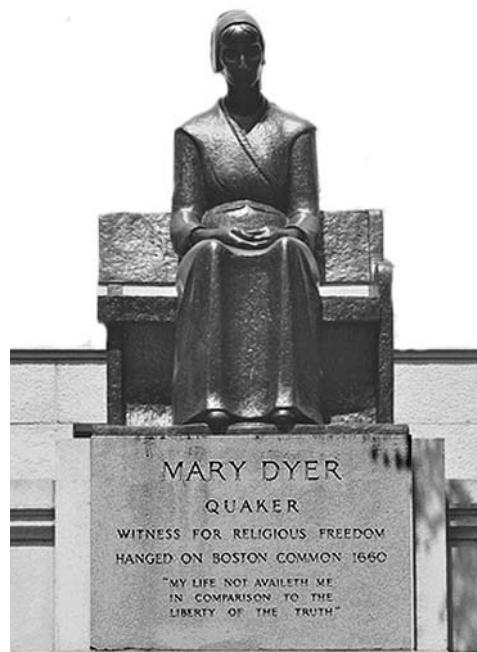
Next, we throw some rum into the equation. And to make the whole system work, add some African slaves. It was called “The Golden Triangle,” because those who knew how to operate the system could earn a lot of mammon. Take rum to Africa and trade it for slaves. Then load the slaves onto ships (giving them 39 inches of head room, and 13 inches of floor space per person) and trade them for molasses in the West Indies. From there, haul the molasses to distilleries in New England, where the molasses was turned into rum. Repeat the cycle and fill your bank account again. (And make sure that you print “In God We Trust” on your money in the bank after you rebel against paying taxes on your profit ...)

Did it matter that the whole system was full of disgusting evil? It didn’t seem to matter to those who were making the profits, most of whom would have been professing Christians. And what would happen if you founded a country on such a system? Good question.

### Yet, not everyone ...

There were some bright spots. Bercot spends a chapter detailing how one man built a colony on different principles. William Penn did things like Jesus would have, at least in many ways. Even though the king of

England gave him a huge chunk of America to pay off a debt, Penn realized that the Indians were the real owners. So he paid them for the land he used. And not only that, freedom of conscience was given to all the colonists who



The Massachusetts Puritans hanged Quakers like Mary Dyer, until the British forced them to stop.

settled there. In fact, Penn’s colony had more religious liberty than the current United States of America does.

### The Revolutionary Rebellion

Bercot then moves into the founding of the United States of America. He tells of the various acts of English Parliament and the American reaction. While American historians depict the English as heavy-handed despots who wanted to milk the colonies of their wealth, the author has looked at the original documents, weighed them, and found the proof to be wanting. For an example, the infamous Tea Tax—that caused some Boston “Sons of Liberty” to dump the equivalent of \$2-4 million of tea into the harbor—was the equivalent of about 2-3 cents *per cup* in today’s value. At the beginning of the war for independence, that was the only tax that England was actually still putting on the colonies.

Over-taxation?

### The Black Regiment

But grumping about taxes by the common man doesn’t seem to bother the author as much as those who growled from the pulpit. After all, Bercot says again and again,

Jesus told us to pay our taxes, even taxes that were unfair and even illegal. So what is a black-robed preacher doing, telling his listeners that they were not doing their Christian duty unless they stood up for their rights? Of course, that translated into picking up their long rifles and shooting a British soldier.

So we end up with this: “Christian” ministers are telling their flocks to rebel against the king because the king put a 3 cents per cup tax on their tea. When we are all finished, we then put “In God We Trust” on all our coins and paper money as a great reminder that this nation was built upon obeying Jesus.

Huh?

### To sum up the book

Author David Bercot has spent the last nine years researching the facts. Doubtless, the book has a few factual errors. Those of us who have read or written history (whether secular or church history) know that sometimes the sources are not clear, or even sometimes conflicting, in their details. But the factual details of, say, the Boston Massacre are not Bercot’s focus. His point is this ...

Some “Christian” school curriculums paint the American Revolution as a godly event. Historical facts are glossed over, conveniently forgotten, or simply changed. The bottom line is that the United States of America was not built upon trust in God. Rather, it was founded upon greed and rebellion.

The problem for us today is that many people are calling for Christians to “take back our country.” The cultural war is being lost. Heathen moral values—abortion, gay rights, divorce, etc—are replacing the former moral ethics that were indeed more biblical. Some Evangelicals are gearing up for a war. At this point, the war is political, but if push comes to shove, the guns barrels will warm up fast.

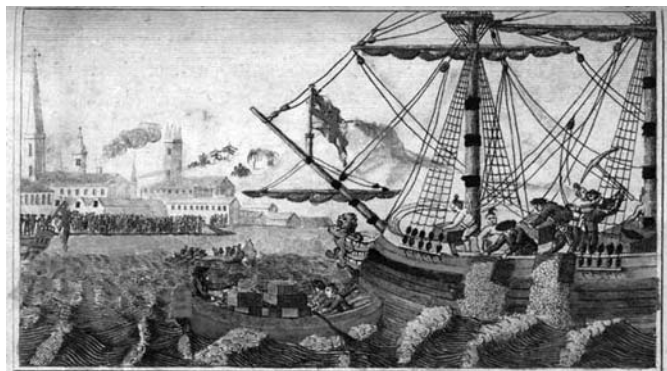
What are real Christians—those who actually obey Jesus—to do in such a case? Well, Bercot gives the details of how true Christians responded in the colonial days of America when some “Christian” preachers were calling for war. The true believers simply obeyed Jesus: paid

their taxes, submitted to the English king (unless his rules defied Jesus’ teachings), and lived in peace.

When the Rebels finally did gain control, guess what? Those who followed Jesus were persecuted. For example, Christopher Sauer, Jr., a Brethren minister, was arrested for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the State. His beard was cut off and he was forced into a tattered army uniform. His print shop was confiscated as well as the rest of his property. By whom, the English? No, by the revolutionaries.

After the Rebels gained their objective, guess what? Within a decade or two after the United States of America was formed, they were paying more taxes than when they were under the British crown.

Go figure!



*Americans throwing the Cargoes of the Tea Ships into the River, at Boston*

**The Boston Tea Party was in response to the British tax on tea ... which equalled a few cents per cup in today's money. Ironically, after the colonies gained independence, taxes became higher overall in the newly formed States!**

### Trust, or suffer?

David Bercot will likely not have to suffer a literal tar and feathering. But I suspect those “Christians” who are trying to call kingdom Christians into the political fray will not be happy with this book. A virtual tar and

feathering may occur. Protestant Christianity has never really learned that the kingdom of God is not to mix church and state.

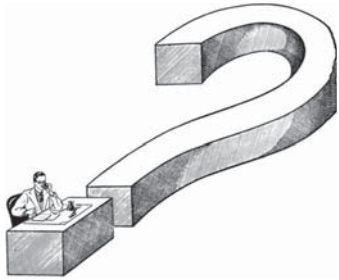
*The Heartbeat of the Remnant* recommends *In God We Don't Trust*. Author David Bercot has done his homework and went to the original documents to dig out the historical facts. He has also peppered the text with pertinent graphics so that it will appeal to younger readers, and it could even be used to supplement Christian schooling. Your high school student would benefit from the perspective this book presents.

But beyond the historical facts presented in the book is the underlying biblical message: the arm of flesh will fail us. As followers of the lowly Lamb of God, we are not called to rebel, but to trust God in suffering.

And that is the message of *In God We Don't Trust*. ~

This book is available through Scroll Publishing, P. O. Box 122, Amberson, PA 17210

[www.scrollpublishing.com](http://www.scrollpublishing.com)



# What Does Simple Living Have to Do with Christianity?

Bryce Geiser

The smells of love feast are indelibly stamped into my memory. As a young boy, I sat on an old wooden bench just outside the kitchen of the meetinghouse and watched my mother cut bread for soup and make coffee. The deacons were busy cooking the beef that would serve hundreds of hosts the next couple of days, and the steam from the cooker condensed on the window behind me and ran down in long streams. Love feast smelled good!

In my heritage, the love feast was a broad term that took in social meals, preaching, the Lord's Supper, and the communion. Now I know that for most of you, the Lord's Supper and the communion are one and the same—but originally the communion (Eucharist) was taken at an evening meal. This is evident from 1 Corinthians 11, and the Apostle Paul is clearly not happy about it. But what, exactly, was he unhappy with?

Many people assume that his objections have to do with making the communion into a social meal. History, however, does not bear that out. And besides, if we look closer, it is fairly obvious what made Paul so unhappy:

For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.  
1 Co. 11.21

The fact that one is hungry and another is drunk is what makes Paul so upset. The church seems to have become segregated. Those with fine biscuits and broiled fish gathered in one corner and ate it, hoping that none of the poor families would come begging. The poor families sat in another corner without anything to eat and wondered how it was that at the Lord's Table they could be so hungry. Of this gathering, Paul vehemently declares that it is *not* the Lord's Supper. Whoever heard of someone going away hungry from the Lord's Table?

The whole situation was a sham. They were, in Paul's words, despising the church of God and shaming those who had nothing. Their gathering was a damnation. In the first place, there should have been a greater effort to maintain equality, and in the second, by claiming that this was actually the Lord's Supper, they were blaspheming. When God sets a table, most assuredly no one goes away hungry.

Remember when God prepared a table in the wilderness, by sending manna? Which of the children of Israel were actually hungry? None. The Scriptures say that he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.

Remember when Jesus fed the 5000? Who left from that table hungry? No one, for it says there was a lot left over after all had eaten.

We can be sure of this, that when Jesus sets a table, there will be enough. When He eats, *all* shall eat. No one should go away hungry.

## Pass the liver, please

Have you ever had this problem at your house? It's clean-out-the-pantry night, and Mother sets on various small dishes of leftovers. Here comes the first dish, leftover corn. It is fairly easy to divide by eight and pass it on. But now there are two pieces of leftover pizza. Uh-oh! Those are high demand leftovers. What shall I do, cut them into eight pieces? The next dish has leftover liver. Perhaps I can take the pizza and leave the liver for the others. But is that fair? What is my share of the food, anyhow?

Yes, what is my share? How much shall I consume?

## Taking a fair share

Sometimes I feel I am seated at a table with seven billion other people, all inhabitants of the earth. As the dishes come around, I feel perplexed about the same question: What is my share of this? A truckload of corn, a barrel of propane, an electric pipeline ... but what is my share? I don't want to take too much, and leave the people on the other end with only an empty plate.

If I have enough money to buy it, does that make it right? If so, then I am very lucky to have been born in a place and time where this is available to me. Perhaps I need not worry. Maybe the people on the other end of the table have enough.

On the other end of the table are one billion people, one seventh of the world's population, who are called the world's poor. It is helpful to imagine what it would be like to trade places with them. Economist Robert Heilbrone describes it like this:



We begin by invading the house of (the) imaginary American family to strip it of its furniture. Everything goes: beds, chairs, tables, television set, lamps. We will leave the family with a few old blankets, a kitchen table, a wooden chair. Along with the bureaus go the clothes. Each member of the family may keep in his “wardrobe” his oldest suit or dress, a shirt or blouse. We will permit a pair of shoes for the head of the family, but none for the wife or children.

We move to the kitchen. The appliances have already been taken out, so we turn to the cupboards ... The box of matches may stay, a small bag of flour, some sugar and salt. A few moldy potatoes, already in the garbage can, must be hastily rescued, for they will provide much of tonight’s meal. We will leave a handful of onions, and a dish of dried beans. All the rest we take away: the meat, the fresh vegetables, the canned goods, the crackers, the candy.

Now we have stripped the house: the bathroom has been dismantled, the running water shut off, the electric wires taken out. Next we take away the house. The family can live in the tool shed ...

Those are the poorest people at this huge table, one billion of them. They typically earn less than \$75 per year. Think of that! Why, many of us can earn that much money by noon. Is it because we are Christians? No, it is because we were born in the right time and at the right place.

### Who is the rich man?

How about basic needs like cereal grains? Listed below are the amounts of cereal grains consumed per capita in various parts of the world

United States	1850
Europe	1000

Asia (developed)	600
Developing Countries	200-300
United States	11,485
Europe	5000
China	632
Most others	200-300

We might also look at energy consumed, measured in equivalent kilograms of coal per person.

These are the people sitting at the table with us. Truly, one is hungry and another drunken. And I am the one who is drunken.

I protest. I do not feel personally responsible for the fact that people in Sao Paulo or Nicaragua or Ethiopia do not have enough. And furthermore, it isn’t simple. I cannot make people pass things around this table. I believe I am telling the truth, that if I could, I would make sure everyone on earth had enough food.

Unfortunately, the world’s poor do not know that. They believe that somehow I *am* responsible, at least in a collective, passive sense, for their suffering. They do not understand, any more than I, why it is that way. Many people in the “third world” think of North America when they read James 5:5.

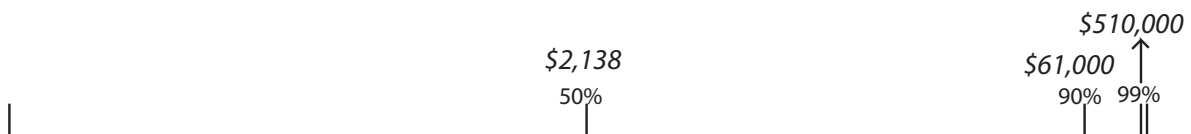
You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

It doesn’t help that North American businesses routinely exploit those people and keep their wages low. It doesn’t help either that we North Americans love buying those cheap goods from people who live in poverty.

And yet, those problems are too big for me to solve. Many people have spent their whole lives trying to help developing countries, and they do not make much progress. The problems of distribution and human greed are huge. What can I do about it?

## Just how rich are you, anyways?

The following graph can help us grasp our position in this world. Are we among the rich, or the poor? To attain the top 1% of this world’s wealthy elite, one needs to have \$510,000 in assets (minus debts). To hit the top ten percent of wealthy folks, \$61,000 is necessary. Want to make the world’s top half? \$2,138 puts you there! The bottom 50% of the world’s population only has 1% of the world’s wealth, altogether.



(The World Distribution of Household Wealth, World Institute for Development Economics Research-WIDER.)

[http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/discussion-papers/2008/en\\_GB/dp2008-03/\\_files/78918010772127840/default/dp2008-03.pdf](http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/discussion-papers/2008/en_GB/dp2008-03/_files/78918010772127840/default/dp2008-03.pdf)

I remember love feast and the Lord's Supper. Though I cannot be sure everyone has enough, I *can* do something. I can start taking less. I can stop being a wasteful consumer of goods. I can labor for equal sharing and fair distribution right here in my own fellowship.

I must live simply, lest my Lord come and see that I am drunken while another is hungry.

## The middle way

This would be a good time to reflect on a problem, unique to these last days, which makes it so hard to keep perspective. It has to do with the old teaching of simple Christians like the Quakers or the Moravians concerning "the middle way."

"The middle way" was the way of temperance. "Give me neither poverty nor riches" was its guiding principle. Many sincere believers of the simple life preached this "middle class" doctrine. It was not a bad teaching, until something extraordinary happened that no one ever expected. The "middle" shot upward at an astonishing rate. James Bennett describes it this way in a recent magazine article:

Since the beginning of civilization, a well ordered, generally peaceful culture not in the midst of some crisis has typically afforded its inhabitants the equivalent of about \$3 per day. This provides a basic diet, basic clothing, and basic shelter, and not much more. It was the income of an average person in ancient Rome, ancient China, and modern Haiti. Toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, something extraordinary began to happen. Throughout all England, this average began to rise rapidly and steadily, not just for a few people, or for some sectors of society, but broadly through almost all levels of society. Within a few decades, the small number of people still living on the equivalent of \$3 were no longer regarded as normal, but rather as particularly poor. As England grew richer, a few other nations—Belgium, the U.S., gradually all of Western Europe, then Japan—started to imitate the measures England had taken, and saw their wealth rise broadly as well.

This broad rising of wealth across all sectors of society meant that the middle went along with it. Today, a "middle way" North American is a long, long ways from an average person past or present.

We must recognize that an average North American, by almost any measurement, is very rich. The most conservative Plain churches in America, with the most stringent simple living ideals, are still quite rich and live very comfortably compared to the last 6000 years.

The doctrine of "the middle way," though it served well for thousands of years, has lost its meaning for us in today's rapidly shifting wealth. In addition, a lifestyle that depends on debt, even to the mortgaging of future generations, is artificial. With our own country so deeply in debt, the lifestyle of many people could plummet quickly in an economic crisis. If ours would also plummet, it might be an indication that it needed to.



**Having two legs doesn't  
make you human. Neither  
does simple living make  
you a Christian.**

**(But what does a human look like  
without two legs? And what does  
Christianity look like without  
holy simplicity?)**

## Losing simplicity

How did it happen that many Plain groups of the past lost their simple-living discipleship? There are many paths away from it, and it is instructive to look at some of them. In 1765, a group of workers in a Moravian colony remarked:

Our Savior observes that we have left our primitive simplicity and that much conformity to worldly values has gradually insinuated itself into the conduct of our congregation. Also, in the way of our trade and business, profit is made a main matter, and that in consideration

thereof the congregation principles are neglected. We study more now to get money and profit, than how to save our souls.

In other words, the principle of the Lord's Table was neglected. Profit and efficiency became the dominant values, and out went the simple life.

How did the Quakers lose their simplicity? By gradually making simplicity a matter of the heart rather than a way of life. And how do churches today, that once were very simple Brethren, Amish, or Mennonite communities, lose their simple living?

## Does having two legs make you human?

Again and again, we have people from those groups who visit here and make comments like this:

Well, simple living doesn't save us. A simple life doesn't make a Christian.

I suppose those are good reminders, and of course they are very true. The thing that bothers me is the frequency of these comments. Some people almost stumble over themselves to make sure they repeat these disclaimers often.

I scratch my head. I know that just because you have two arms and two legs, that does not make you a human being. But how often would I tell you that? How often do you need to be reminded that you could be a fake, or that you might die, or that even a mannequin has arms and legs?

I have a hunch that churches who insist on devaluing the simple life, often in Protestant terms, are on the road to losing it in their children. Those people have smelled the bad breath of some simple-living groups, and they have lost contact with how it relates to true, vital Christianity.

## In summary

It is *wiser* to live simply. Creation calls me back and begs me to remember my affinity to soil, plants, and animals. I hear the call to simple living in the life of my Savior. The apostles repeat the chorus and enjoin me to pass the time of my pilgrimage here in fear.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, at the Lord's Table, I see the principle and an economy that demands temperance; that calls me away from the life of the American consumer with all its waste and gluttony.

I think most of us, after pondering these various paths all leading to the same conclusion, will agree that there is a pretty compelling case for the teaching of simple living in Christianity. But what does this mean for us "upwardly mobile" middle-class Americans?

Please do not rush out and sell your van, pull the phone cord, or turn off the breaker panel. If you do, your life might become quite complex very quickly, which doesn't seem compatible with our goals of living simply. In the next newsletter, I want to address some very real difficulties we all face, and explore the topic of living simply in a context. ~

—Taken from *Caneyville Christian Community News*, July/August 2011

<sup>1</sup> In this paragraph, the author recaps some of his previous articles on the subject of simple living.

## 3rd Quarter 2011 Financial Report

***Thank you for your support!***



07/01/11 <b>Beginning Balance</b>	\$9,613.14
<b>Receipts</b>	
Tape Ministry Donations	\$28,650.03
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$14,639.26
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$43,289.29</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>	
UPS & Postage	\$1,969.49
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$3,386.57
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$310.90
Equipment Maintenance & Repairs	\$0.00
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$1,093.83
Rent	\$2,250.00
Telephone	\$597.80
Website Development & Maint.	\$571.79
Building Improvements	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$240.85
Payroll Expense	\$13,550.01
Books & Catalogs	\$137.50
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$14,589.11
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$38,697.85</b>
09/30/11 <b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$14,204.58</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>\$4,591.44</b>

*The Heartbeat of*

# The Remnant

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... he fought or pressed his way with such  
force through the strait gate, that he left  
his flesh on the posts.

--T. J. van Braght, in the Preface to *Martyrs Mirror*