

THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

SELECTED ARTICLES FROM THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION
OF
THE EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA MENNONITE CHURCH
DECEMBER 2013



The Eastern Mennonite Testimony is the official organ of the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church. That publication seeks to promote the historic Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and practice. The Testimony is published monthly by the Publication Board of the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church. Subscriptions are free. Forward subscriptions and contributions to Eastern Mennonite Publications, 40 Wood Corner Road, Ephrata, PA. 17522 U.S.A. Telephone (717) 733-7988 Fax: (717)733 2757.

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Editor: anabaptistmennonites.org.

A word is the tangible form of a thought. Jesus as "the Word" is the embodiment of the mind and heart of God. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). The incarnation of Christ is a revealed mystery that can be understood only by faith. Satan has attempted to counter, confuse, and obliterate this fact. But it stands as the cornerstone of true doctrine. "The Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). But what is flesh?

Is the flesh sinful? Not originally. Adam was created in the flesh as a perfect son of God with open communication with his Creator. But sin in the flesh separated man from God. Ever since, the flesh has been the source of temptation. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" (Galatians 5:17). Jesus, the second Adam, was also created in perfection without the taint of sin. The virgin Mary was informed, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Is the flesh subject to temptation? Although Jesus was fully God, He was also fully man. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). If the Scriptures had not stated it so clearly, one would tend to think, "Surely He was not tempted quite as I am." But this was part of Christ's work. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

Jesus' supernatural nature very likely intensified the temptation He faced as a human. He knew men's hearts. He could see their unbelief, contempt, and cynicism. He also had the option of escape (Matthew 26:53). But Jesus' victorious life made godliness practical and possible. His life as a human emphasized that life in the Spirit is holiness of the flesh. Any other doctrine is heresy.

Is the flesh subject to the curse? "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22). But again, Adam's bliss was terminated by sin. Jesus, sinless and perfect, did not need to suffer under the curse but chose of His own will to do so. "Je-

sus wept." He groaned with sorrow and pain. He was too weak to carry His own cross. And when He faced the climax of the curse—death—He voluntarily chose to submit to it: "No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18).

Jesus' human experience was not about justice: He came in mercy. His life, like His death, was a willing, sacrificial offering of Himself. By suffering unjustly, He redeemed those who were condemned justly. Every pain, sorrow, shame, and drop of sweat was unjustly borne sacrificially for man's sake.

God sent His Son in the flesh for a divine purpose. "The Word was made flesh" to be offered as a sacrifice to atone for men's souls. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

"The Word was made flesh" to redeem the creation. Job rejoiced, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26). Job believed that even his flesh would be redeemed from its corruptible state. Oh, the triumph of faith!

Through His resurrection, those who follow Christ are promised redeemed bodies as well. After His resurrection Jesus possessed a new immortal body, free from the curse, fit for eternity. To demonstrate how real He was, He asked for food to eat. He invited His disciples to handle Him and see: "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus is more than a Spirit. He is tangible. He intercedes for man as "the Son of man." But those who reject His redemption should shudder at their pending encounter with the Son of Man (Revelation 14:14). "[God] hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:27).

—BAS



"Good Tidings of Great Joy"

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
So is good news from a far country"
Proverbs 25:25

In all of history, did man ever have better news than this—tidings from heaven of a Savior, borne to men by these heavenly messengers? In the manger was the essence of heaven, the hope of all ages, and the Savior of all men.

Why do the good tidings of this message bring great joy?

First of all, the message is personal. The message was proclaimed to the shepherds. "For unto you is born this day ... a Saviour" (Luke 2:11).

The message not only is personal but also is to all people. Perhaps you know the mixed feelings of joy and also of sorrow when you receive a gift, only to think of others who do not have such. But not so with this Gift. Because the message excludes no one, it is a message of great joy. Jesus' work broke down all walls of division between men. Now all men stand alike before God.

The message is from God Himself. It is good news because God is in it. Joy without God is short-lived and leaves one feeling empty; but not so with these heavenly tidings. Although the gift was wrapped with humanity and swaddling clothes, it was a divine gift.

The angels brought a message of peace and goodwill to men. The shepherds' first response was that of fear and troubled thoughts. The Fall of Man has brought guilt and unrest. But the promise of a Saviour revealed the heart of God. The Savior is the expression of the love of God, who desires the peace and blessing of all men. This peace is a quietness and assurance in the heart that brings full and lasting joy that no man can take from us.

The message was the message of a Saviour, a Deliverer, who was anointed by God "to preach good tidings unto the meek; ... to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1). The message was a message of hope as the poet penned, "The hopes and fears of all the years / Are met in Thee tonight."

In Bethlehem that night "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," brought great joy because now God was with men. Many promises of a Saviour that would come were fulfilled that night. The joy of the angels was the joy of all heaven, but that joy had come down to men. No longer need men to walk the paths of life alone but the lowly One of Nazareth would walk with them. And when this earthly ministry was fulfilled, He left with us the Comforter to guide us day by day. Even now His eyes are turned toward His people as he sits at the Father's right hand to plead our cause to the Father.

The message brings a joy that grows as we share it with others. Angels shared it with the shepherds. Shepherds shared it with all they met in Bethlehem. And yet, even as they returned to their nightly vigils, the joy of the Saviour's coming remained with them. Today the joy of the message still grows as we share it with others. Peter and John reaffirmed this truth. When they were commanded not to speak or teach in Jesus' Name, they boldly responded, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

We can know the message within our hearts. The lame, deaf, and dumb—who walked the same sod that the Saviour walked—felt and knew the great joy. Today the Saviour is still doing the same for souls that are bound by the infirmities of sin. As men receive the joyful tidings by faith and walk with the Savior, He will change their hearts. Jeremiah testifies of this: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16).

The message is the joy of heaven forever. Angels still rejoice that the Savior was born in Bethlehem. Those who know the joy of salvation within their hearts still sing the song and will someday join the throng around the throne in songs of great joy. 'And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3).

Brother Jacob



Practices That Undermine the Conscience

Few people will read this article out of concern that their conscience is being undermined. We see others lose the way, surely, but we trust that we ourselves have a good conscience. However, undermining by its very definition is a subtle, often slow, and imperceptible wearing away of a foundation. Before we conclude that our conscience is free from danger, we do well to make a careful inspection.

In many ways undermining is more dangerous than obvious, direct attack. If we are forced in a moment of crisis to choose between doing right and wrong, we will know whether we have succeeded or failed. But an undermining force may go largely unnoticed until serious damage has taken place. Therefore, we must beware continually. What are some practices that could undermine our conscience?

Saying the Right Thing Without Doing It

To say the right thing convinces us that our conscience is sound. It shows that we appreciate truth and support the right. Yet Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees, "for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3). Believing themselves to be righteous leaders, they were wicked hypocrites. Many people today can talk right about church life and expound clearly on Bible truth while living in direct disobedience to the clear Word of God. Unknown to them, the underpinnings of the conscience are eroding.

This can happen to a church when leaders say the right thing but fail to enforce it. They may speak out against current worldly fads, materialism, and luxurious living. The strong declarations reassure their people. But if they tolerate short, short hair on young men, gown-like dresses on sisters, and lavishly furnished homes, the tolerated disobedience destroys the foundations of conscience.

Something similar occurs when a person—pricked by his conscience—confesses his failures but does not change. Having declared the truth, he concludes that he is no hypocrite, that he has responded to conviction. His words reassure him; his failure to act deceives him.

Partial Obedience

"I have performed the commandment of the LORD," declared King Saul. And so he had—partially. He had gone at God's direction. He had smitten the Amalekites. He had destroyed man and beast. Though Saul had not done everything commanded, he had done enough to convince himself that his disobedience was acceptable.

The same thing will happen to us if we yield to partial obedience. Father tells his son to show him all his CDs. The son dutifully shows him his CDs—the ones he purchases—but not the ones he borrows from his friends. The church directs our sisters to have three-quarter-length dress sleeves. In careful obedience a sister makes them that long, but wears them pushed up to a shorter length.

"I have performed the commandment," they say. Yes, but the lack of full obedience undermines, undermines, undermines.

Listening to the Wrong Things

We must train our conscience from God's Word and from His people. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20). Lot moved into Sodom, into close contact and interchange with the men of Sodom. Their views and values influenced him; they influenced his family even more. Do we allow ourselves too close contact with persons who are not part of a conservative fellowship?

How freely should we read the books of writers with whom we cannot have fellowship? Can we walk with them without learning their wrong values?

One of the spiritual hazards of e-mail is the close contact into which it puts people with diverse beliefs. The circle tends to broaden, and one's e-mail companions have a strong influence on his views and understandings. Our church position of restricting e-mail basically to business use is a necessary safeguard.

Furthermore, if my close circle of friends do not appreciate conservative church life, then my conscience will develop values that depreciate conservatism. It cannot be otherwise.

Failure to Act Promptly When We Know What to Do

Joseph understood the need for prompt action. Faced with the strongest of temptations, he fled. His conscience spoke and he obeyed.

When our conscience tells us that we must change our speech or our dress or our driving practices, delay is deadly. "I'm going to change" may reassure us that we really mean to do right, but it will also undermine our conscience.

Balaam knew what God wanted him to do, but he sought further word. "Stay," he said, "and I will see what God has more to say to me." We have seen this happen with groups that were not willing to act on difficult Bible teachings. How many churches have appointed groups to make a thorough study of the Bible teaching on the Headship Veiling or divorce and remar-

riage? We can fairly well predict the outcome of such studies when those entering them are not willing to obey clear Bible direction. Postponing obedience finally ends in disobedience-disobedience uncontested by conscience.

Failure to Deal With Sin

In loving forbearance and compassion, the Corinthians overlooked blatant moral sin. As a result, they could look at obvious evil and condone it. That which should have caused shame and consternation was rather cause for boasting.

Wrong is understood by what a church administrates. If leaders do not deal with known sin, their people will understand right and wrong on that basis. Leaders are accountable for the consciences of their people.

Bible school students know the standards of the Bible school. But if the administration fails to deal with disobedience to those standards, students conclude that these infringements do not matter, at least not very much. The conscience takes note, and its foundations wear away.

In conclusion, our consciences will stand solid and trustworthy only as we give them Scriptural teaching and scrupulous obedience. Otherwise, consciences that we consider "void of offence toward God, and toward men" will be resting on an eroded foundation, giving us directions that do not follow God's perfect standard.

Brother Ernest



Expressions of Parental Pride

"He hath sheaved thee, O man, what is good;
and what doth the LORD require of thee, but ...
to walk humbly with thy God?"

Micah 6:8

As God looks down on our families, what does He see? Does He see fathers and mothers that are seeking great things for themselves or a family that is walking in the humble footsteps of Jesus? Pride begins in our hearts and minds.

We may be tempted to pride by comparing ourselves with other families. Do we place others subconsciously on a social scale in relation to ourselves, critiquing their dress or criticizing their conduct and then priding ourselves? Even if we continually feel inferior to others, this may be a

form of pride. We think we are not noticed as we should be.

We should carefully examine the motivating force behind all our thoughts and actions. For example, during the time we dress or comb our children, are we hoping that others will take notice (or not notice) and think well of us?

Nebuchadnezzar was proud of his accomplishments. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" (Daniel 4:30). We too are tempted to praise ourselves. We may feel pretty good about our family—the business is prospering, our children have learned a good work ethic, the bank account is flush with cash, and our estate is attractive. While these things may not be inherently wrong, God warned Israel, "When thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:11-12). This threat is as real for us as it was for them.

Pride leads parents to defend their children in wrongdoing. Can we humbly allow our children to receive correction from others? Pride responds, "My child would never do that. Surely you must be mistaken." A proud parent will excuse his child because of others' influence or for other real or imaginary reasons. Can we humbly accept somebody else's evaluation of our children, or do we rise up in their defense? In the heart of every parent is a carnal filial bias that needs to be daily crucified.

Pride can also be expressed in child training. Our children will embarrass us in front of others at times. Do we reprove them later for their wrong or scold them for embarrassing us? If we are concerned more for our reputation than their integrity, we culture them to be hypocrites. Our children should act right even when no one is watching. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." We should impress upon their minds that other's approval is not as important as God's smile.

An obvious expression of pride may be in our children's personal appearance. Clothing is an index to the heart. We subtly reveal our heart by what we wear on our children. We should examine our spirit if our clothing needs to be purchased from expensive name-brand designers. Have our children learned to be content with patched or hand-me-down clothing? Neatness is important, but let us make sure that it is not a cover-up for pride. Our mission is to point men to Christ—not ourselves.

Pride may also express itself in the associates that we pressure our children to have. Our children's choice of friends is very important, but they should not exclude others whom they see as inferior. Do we relate to all the families in the congregation? Do we look down on some families as below our level? Do we avoid certain families when planning an activity? It is

good and right to have close friends, but we must guard against being exclusive.

Pride is a besetting sin. How do we gain victory over pride? "He that gloryeth, let him glory in the Lord." We should move the focus off ourselves and place it on the Lord. The more we focus on what the Lord has done, the smaller in our own sight we become. The smaller we become, the more we realize how much more we need the Lord. We cannot be free from pride without cultivating a God consciousness.

We must realize God's abhorrence of pride. To God it is an insult that puny man would lift himself up as god and also bow at his own feet. God has ways to bring man down and realize that he is no god at all. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

Let us as fathers and mothers be living examples of humility to our children in all aspects of our daily life. May we also help our children to draw close to God so that they may behold the glory of the Lord and be satisfied.

Brother Nevin

Church Committee Report

Publication Board Report

"The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Psalm 16:5-6).

The work of the Publication Board includes preserving the heritage we have been given. We benefit from understanding the past through literature. A new book entitled "Keeping the Trust" will inform the rising generation of the concerns that gave rise to our church group. This book is nearing completion and should be available by mid-winter.

The project the Board has published the longest is the Testimony. About five years ago we decided to work toward having a complete set of five-year bound volumes in stock. Volume 5 has been reprinted, and our supply of Volume 6 is depleted. Eight five-year volumes have been printed and another five-year period will be complete in June of next year if the Lord tarries.

The tract committee under Board direction aims to produce about six new tracts per year. "Passport: Are You Approved to Enter?" and "What Is Your Profit?" are two new titles to be written. Some tract manuscripts have been prepared and sent to Rod and Staff for publication.

The largest single work of the Publication Board is curriculum development. One of the current projects is a handwriting course. First grade has been published with the following grades in various stages of writing and editing. The fourth grade course is due to be tested in schools next year. The Board is concerned that our school curriculum be Bible-based and retain a conservative feel through Bible tone and by presenting a Biblical lifestyle.

Two new children's storybooks will be printed soon and should be in stock by the end of the year. The one entitled "A Bicycle for Kofi" is the story of a ten-year-old boy from Ghana who wishes for a bicycle. The other book, "Aunt Joy's Visit" is a story of Aunt Joy returning from Paraguay for furlough. In our world today many children's books entertain rather than teach morals or portray family ideals.

May we as a church continue to see the importance of separation in our reading material and rise to the challenge of writing to fill the need.

Brother Jason for the Publication Board.



"Glorify God in Your Body" (Part 6)

Moderate Eating

"Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it" (Proverbs 25:16). Moderate eating is within reasonable limits, not excessive or extreme.

Since our bodies belong to God, we are only stewards of them. This principle of stewardship must guide us in our God-given appetite for food. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

A Spirit-filled person will bear the fruit of temperance in eating. "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5). In contrast, one characteristic of the ungodly is that their "God is their belly" (Philippians 3:19). Can we say, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Corinthians 9:27)?

The abundance of food available to us poses a definite challenge to moderate eating. Are we thankful for the abundance we enjoy, or do we take it for granted? Roughly half a billion people in this world are seriously mal-

nourished, and many people suffer from a lack of food. Gluttony reveals an unthankful heart. Has the abundance of food unduly rounded our forms? Has it hardened our hearts to the accountability we have to the starving?

Body size, body metabolism, and the amount of manual work determines proper food intake. What may be a moderate portion for one would hardly be sufficient for another and vice versa. Parents should set good examples for their children to follow, but they also need to help their children know when enough is enough.

The abundance and variety of food at family and church gatherings may test our self-control. It may be a picnic supper or simply Mother's delicious cooking for which we must curb our appetite. Or do we face the biggest test when traveling? "Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite" (Proverbs 23:2). To develop temperance while young will greatly aid one in avoiding the middle-aged results of overeating.

Do sweet drinks tempt us as much as rich food? "On the average, people in the United States drink about fifty gallons of soft drinks per person annually." That is more than one pint per day. Temperance in drinking is just as important as discretion in eating.

A lack of moderation in eating may detract from glorifying God. One casual observer of a street meeting remarked, "It appears as though they are well-fed." Let us accept the responsibility of moderate eating.

Let us be thankful for plenty of good food and be ready to share it. Let us eat to live and not live to eat. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Brother Andrew (end of series)





PRAYER POINT

*“The effectual fervent prayer
of a righteous man availeth much”*

Thank God for manifesting His love toward us
by sending His only begotten Son into the world,
that we might live through Him
1 John 4:9

Pray that, as we are in the world,
we would be kept from the evil of the world.

Pray for those who have lost loved ones that they might trust the Lord
who promised to be with us and care for us

Pray for our youth that they would remain faithful
amidst the temptations made accessible by modern technology

