



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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### **The Ribband of Blue Principle In the New Testament**

The concepts that we are looking at have to do with our survival. Many of the concepts that we would like to look at are being hotly debated in our time, but I trust that we are rooted and grounded and know where we stand. Turn with me to Numbers 15:37–41. This, of course, is an Old Testament passage. We will be moving quickly into the New Testament but we want to see this

practice as found in Numbers 15. “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the command-

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

#### *Nonconformity and Separation*

#### **The Ribband of Blue Principle**

**In the New Testament**

**193**

#### *Book Reprint*

#### **One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study**

**209**

#### *Children's Book Reprint*

#### **The Folly of Procrastination**

**212**

ments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.”

I would like to look briefly at this ribband of blue in the Old Testament. It is a little hard to

determine exactly what this looked like. There may be varying differing opinions as to exactly how this looked, but it was to be a special mark. Someone made this observation, and I thought it was interesting that blue represents heaven. (I think we recognize that). Therefore, this mark was to be blue and it was to bring heaven to mind even as they were looking earthward. I think that was the whole purpose of it.

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We have this referred to in Matthew. Jesus wore this garb — this ribband of blue. Matthew 9:20 says a woman, “touched the hem of his garment.” It is referring to this. In Matthew 14:36 it says that they “besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.” Thus, Jesus wore this. Sometimes the question comes, “Did Jesus dress any differently from the people of his day?” The answer is a very quick, “Yes.” He wore the Jewish garb in the midst of a wicked generation.

The pharisees also wore this. We have this referred to, “all their works they do for to be seen of men.” In this case they “enlarge[d] the borders of their garments.” Thus, we see they definitely practiced this even as the New Testament era was coming to be.

There is nothing really mysterious about this. Sometimes people will tie a knot in their handkerchief so that they do not forget. God simply had them put this mark on their clothes so they would not forget. It was that simple.

However, what may seem to be a very trivial outward observance represented a very profound and deep spiritual truth and reality. This is what we want to be touch-

ing on. It was to be a mark of distinction — a separation between Israel and all other people. Israel was a peculiar people — they were a special people and God wanted them to remember that. Exodus 19:5, 6, says “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” That is what He wanted them to remember that they were. *The ribband of blue was to help them remember who they were, whose they were, and how they were to live in the midst of the nations.* I think that is what God is saying here in a summary.

Let us leave the Old Testament and go to the New Testament and see this principle there. Before turning to the New Testament Scripture that we want to look at, I would like to observe several things in somewhat of an introduction. 1) *The Old Testament has been done away with.* Let us establish that clearly. Second Corinthians 3:11 would even tell us that what was written on tables of stone has been done away with and that was what? — The Ten Commandments. Many Old Testament principles have been re-established in the New,

but as far as the actual Old Testament, it is no longer binding to us who are under the New Testament.

2) *Another concept, it is true that the Old Testament emphasized the outward form and ceremony.* Sometimes I wonder how Israel remembered all that they were to do. Have we ever wondered how they could keep track of everything that they were to do? It seemed that God had them going through outward motions in an effort to somehow impress the heart. It seemed that God started with the outside seeking to get to the inside in the Old Testament. In the New Testament He immediately takes care of the heart problem and then it moves to the outside. Therefore, we do have that difference in principle.

There are many who feel that the moment that we start talking about the external that we are immediately "Old Testament." I would raise the question, "Does the New Testament say anything about the outward?" Does it have anything to say about ceremonies? There is even a lot of this thinking around that the New Testament liberates, and the idea is that the moment we start speaking about the outward, we are somehow inhibiting the Spirit. Again, I would raise the

question, "Does the New Testament address at all the outward form in whatever area?"

There are some who feel that Numbers 15 is fulfilled in the giving of the Holy Spirit. This was to remind and help them to remember all the commandments of the Lord. Some would feel that is the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Therefore, the Holy Spirit helps us to remember, and that is true. We have something in the New Testament era that the Old Testament did not have. We have the Spirit living within that reminds us. Thus, in many regards, the Holy Spirit does answer this passage.

However, I propose that it does not answer it entirely. I would raise this question, "Does the Holy Spirit remind us to love each other without the holy kiss which is an outward form and ceremony?" It does not. I think the answer is obvious. Does the Holy Spirit remind us to help each other in our Christian walk without the feet washing service? Does the Holy Spirit help us to remember the headship principle without the headship veiling? Does the Holy Spirit help us to remember the death of Christ and its meaning to us without the communion service which is an outward ceremony and an out-

ward form? By the same token, does the Holy Spirit remind us who we are and whose we are and how we are to live without any outward help? The answer I think is too obvious. The New Testament does give us tangible helps and that is what we will be looking at.

I will quickly establish this again, *the ribband of blue principle (not the practice) is alive in the New Testament*. The practice passed with the Old Testament. I do not see any of us wearing what Numbers 15 speaks of. Therefore, the practice is not with us, but I do believe the principle is with us. Now, the burden rests to prove that.

Romans 12 is the counterpart of the New Testament where this principle (not the practice) is picked up. The principle as given here in the New Testament has a practice. We will see that. Romans 12:1, 2 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." In verse 2 especially, we have the Numbers 15 principle

re-established in the New Testament.

In order to understand this, we would like to look at some of the words that are found here in Romans 12 to help us to understand how we are making this conclusion. We see the term, "be not conformed." It is interesting that those scholars who understand the original language (the Greek) would say that the word "conform" refers to that which can be seen with the sight and the senses. It relates with fashion, dress, clothing and so forth. Thus, conform here means fashion as it relates to the outward appearance.

In 1 Peter 1:14, this same Greek word is translated "fashioning." "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:14–16). Therefore, the thought of conform here relates to outward appearance. It is interesting and surprising that J. B. Smith, Vines, and many others who have studied into the Greek language will agree that this word is referring to dress. "Be not conformed to the world in dress." That is exactly what is in focus here.

“Stop patterning your clothes after the world.” “Stop rallying around the world’s pattern that has its source in the unregenerate heart and mind — the spirit of this age.

Let us now look at the next word phrase, “be not conformed to this world:” then we have a colon. A colon in the English language often indicates that what follows further explains, clarifies, or is at least a parallel thought. Therefore, if the forepart of the verse is talking about dress, would it be wrong to suggest that the latter part also does? We will see shortly that it does. Let us notice the word transformed here. It also speaks of the outward. In fact, it was interesting for me to discover that the Greek word here has a common root with our word “metamorphosis.” When an ugly caterpillar turns into a beautiful butterfly what happens? Was it only his inner nature that changed? No, really it was his outward appearance, was it not? Therefore, this word in the Greek is again referring to outward appearance.

Let us turn to Matthew 17:2 to see how this word was translated in another setting. It will substantiate that it is used in reference to the outward appearance again. Jesus took Peter, James

and John and, “bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them.” His inner nature was changed and He became a new creature inside. Is that what the Scripture says there? He immediately, “was transfigured.” That word transfigured is the same word as was used for transformed. Therefore, when Jesus was transfigured, immediately “his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” Again, it was the outward expression and the outward appearance which comes into focus.

Returning to Romans 12:2 we have this thought, “Stop patterning your clothes after the world and your depraved nature, and start something.” We often (at least for me) look at this verse as telling us to stop patterning after the world. However, I failed to see that it was a call to start something. Thus, it says, “stop something,” but it is also saying, “start something.” “Stop patterning your clothes after the world and your depraved nature, and start patterning your clothes after the renewed mind — the spiritual nature.” This is what we have in this verse. As we had rallied around the world’s pattern, now we should start rallying around the pattern of truth. Again, we often saw the negative side of this

verse but there is a very clear, positive side to this as well. We are to start patterning ourselves the way the children of God do — the way a people with a renewed mind do.

There are other Scriptures which enlarge on this thought like Philippians 3:16. Interestingly, someone observed that we have John 3:16, 1 Timothy 3:16 and also another very key verse — Philippians 3:16. It is a key verse because it is so important for understanding this phase of our life. Philippians 3:16 says, “Let us walk by the same rule.” The word “rule” as used here means standard. “Let us walk by the same standard, let us mind the same thing.” In other words, this is exactly what we are taught in Romans 12:2. Stop going after the world’s pattern. Start going after the pattern of the people of God — the rule that the people of God are to follow.

We might say, “The Scriptures are not that clear cut.” This is true, *the Bible is written in principle form*. That is right. *We will look at six principles* a little bit later *which govern how one is to dress*. They are in principle form. If the Bible needed to address every issue that ever arose, it would have become an impractical book. For example, when I was a boy, it was fender

skirts, drag pipes, and the spinner on the wheels. That is what it was then. If the Bible would have needed to spell out, “Thou shalt not have fender skirts. Thou shalt not have drag pipes,” there would have been a large audience that has read the Bible in centuries past who would not have even known what they were talking about to start with. Secondly, if the Bible had to be that detailed, it would have become a very impractical book. Therefore, God put the Bible in principle form. There are some details but in principle form.

Who is to say what form the people of God are to follow, since Philippians 3:16 tells us that we are to do it the same way. I think the Bible has the answer to that. We see in Matthew 16, and 18, and Acts 15, that the Church is to do that. That is a subject in itself. However, the church is to take these great principles of the Scripture and apply it to the current issues of their generation. Brethren and sisters, we are not in the dark on that. We know how the people of God are to dress.

Romans 12:2 calls us to establish a stigma and a barrier between us and the world. Let us now go back to this verse and look at some more key words. “Stop patterning yourself after

Paris and Hollywood. Start patterning your dress after the Church and the direction she gives.” That is the bottom line teaching here. Now, let us look at the word “prove.” The text says directly, “That ye may prove.” The word prove here could be translated “discern.” “That ye may discern what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

This word prove is very interesting. Again, it is a word that is used primarily to address the outward. In fact, I think without exception it addresses the outward. We have Scriptures like, “whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” (2 Corinthians 13:5) How do we do that? It is by looking at what the outward is expressing, to know what the heart is about. “But let a man examine himself.” (1 Corinthians 11:28) “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” (Romans 14:22) The word “alloweth,” is the same Greek word. Again this speaks of the outward. It is interesting how the whole way through this verse, we have the outward coming into living. It is the thought of demonstrating by doing.

This principle and this thought is what comes into focus. We practice the holy kiss, sisters with

sisters, brethren to brethren. Let us raise this question, “Do we practice the holy kiss only for the purpose of expressing love?” That is part of it, but it is not all of it. It not only expresses love, but it stimulates love. That is exactly what is coming into focus here. Paul says, “Stop patterning yourselves after the world. Start patterning yourselves after the Church so that you not only give evidence of being separate from the world and separated unto God, but so that it will stimulate that separation.” There is the ribband of blue principle. This principle is to help us be what we should be in this world.

Prove, has the idea of proving by doing. That is the way Bible principles are. They perpetuate themselves. Separate, nonconformed dress helps us to discern what is “that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” I would hasten to say that we can take an unconverted person and put God’s people’s clothes on him and he will still be an unconverted person. It is not talking about that kind of discernment. We need the new birth to get that kind of discernment. This Scripture teaches us that a child of God who is already born again will be helped in their understanding of how to live a separate, and how to relate to the

world as they obey God in this area of life. That is what is in focus. That is the ribband of blue principle in the New Testament.

As the Church takes her place in establishing a uniform pattern and practice, this fulfills the Bible principles in the New Testament. It is that pattern of application that serves as the ribband of blue. It is not of a given cut, or of a given stitch, but it as the Church makes total application to all six of the principles that we will look at. It is that total picture of application that becomes the ribband of blue in the New Testament.

How many times have we been helped to discern what is right, and to not go a whoring, to not follow our evil heart, and to remember the commandments of God because we were dressed like a Christian in a given situation? One brother put it this way: he said that he had a bumper sticker on his car, and that helped him many times, in a moment of impatience, to not pass or cut someone off because he knew that when he passed the individual, they would read his bumper sticker. That same principle is what this is teaching in relation to dress. As we dress, rally around the principles of Scripture, and follow the pattern of God's people — the Church,

that will help us to behave right in the circumstances of life as we face the world.

Some might say, "Spiritual people have deeper resources than that. They do not need such tangible helps." I would raise these questions, "Do they need communion? Do spiritual people need the holy kiss? Do they need the headship veiling? Do they need the feet washing service? Do spiritual people need that kind of help?" The answer is an emphatic, "Yes," if we will be Biblical and sound to the truth. Therefore, when we seek to be fair with the doctrine of distinctive, separated attire, one will need to recognize that there is a tangible expression that God is calling us to. It is true that this kind of teaching causes a fuss. In fact, there are many people that squirm over this kind of teaching. I am sometimes startled at how many of our own people squirm sometimes. It seems to be where the cross hits and hurts the hardest. For some reason that is the way it seems to be, but that is typical.

What follows Numbers 15? Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Let us look at Numbers 16:1 and notice what the first word is. Moses had given teaching in relation to how to dress. Then it says, "three years later?" What

does it say? “Now.” Immediately after that teaching. “Now,” and there was the rebellion. Thus we see, “Stop patterning your clothes after the world, but pattern them after the renewed mind, that you may stimulate your ability and that you may be able to discern the will of God. Establish the stigma and the barriers that help keep the people of God apart from the people of the world.

Joseph understood that. When his brethren came down from Canaan into Egypt, he understood that principle perfectly. He said to his brethren, “The first thing we will do is go to Pharaoh. We will tell him that we are shepherds, and will tell him that at the beginning because shepherds are an abomination to Egyptians.” His brethren could have said, “Now, Joseph let us put our best foot forward. Let us save that for last.” No, Joseph understood that if they would survive in Egypt there needed to be an immediate barrier between his family and Egypt. He understood that, and that is exactly what God understands, and wants us to understand.

Some years ago while holding meetings in a distant congregation I heard the story of a brother that went a little like this. He had grown up himself in a Protestant,

Fundamentalist Protestant church. Many of us are familiar with this denomination, and in many ways they believe like we do as far as their teaching, but to his disappointment, he was losing his children, one after another. One day, it dawned on him what the trouble was. He said, “I am losing my children to the world because I am too close to the world.” Therefore, he found the Mennonites and he found that this was the answer.

He used to chide his former church friends in the Protestant setting by saying this, “We both know that the New Testament teaches that there is the world and there is the Church and they are two distinct entities. If where you go to church, if that is the Church, tell me where is the world?” He understood, and had come to grasp that there must be a difference, a barrier, and a stigma. There must be something that keeps it clear. This is what is being taught here in Romans 12. Now we will leave this line of thought.

We will look next at some observations. First of all, I would like to touch a little history. There is a little of this kind of teaching around that the Anabaptists were not distinctive and they did not dress differently. If they did, their enemies would

have been able to notice them, one right after another. We know that is exactly what happened. They did dress differently. Let me quote just some things from history. One hardly knows where to start or stop here in this, but a lot of their enemies recorded things about them. One opponent wrote, "They insist on modest apparel, and condemn outward adornment." Another writer, "Their daily walk and deportment appears to be pious, holy and blameless. They shun costly clothing. They despise expensive food and drink, clothe themselves with coarse cloth, cover their heads with broad felt hats." Another one said, "There is a certain people called Anabaptists. They want nothing to do with the world because it is written, 'Ye shall not be conformed to the world.' Therefore, like a new order of monks they make rules about clothing whereof, of what form and shape, how long, wide or big they shall be. Herewith they reject all costly clothing and ornamentation. They call all of those "heathen" who make use of these worldly things."

There was an Anabaptist brother in prison. The records state that in 1544 a man decided he would go in and try to deceive this brother. The man going in

was not an Anabaptist. The records say that, "He disguised himself and was said to be dressed like a brother." Let me ask this, if they were not distinctive in their dress how did they know he was a brother? This helps prove they had their patterns. One could go on and on with that. There was a young man who came home to his parents who were not Anabaptists, and it says "He came home in Anabaptist's clothes." Another person was reported as still an Anabaptist, because he still wore Anabaptist clothes. More could be said.

I would like to make some more observations, bringing it a little closer to our time. We not only have the testimony of history, but we also have the testimony of that which comes from following the Scriptures in relation to this. We have some observations. The Scriptures tell us we are to do some observing, "prove all things:" and then "hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21) Those Conferences that held the best to Mennonite distinctives in dress, maintained nonresistance the best in Word War II. Statistics prove that. It is not guess work. The Church grew the fastest and enjoyed the most rapid growth during the periods when she was

the most separated.

I remember vividly, more than forty years ago when the churches in our Conference area in the valley were talking like this, "If we will win the world, we will need to relax all of this difference. We will need to get a little more like them to win them." I am sure some of you remember that echo going up and down the communities. They also said that if we will be able to keep our young people, then we, somehow, need to relax this whole thing and not be quite as stringent.

I would raise this question, "After forty years what do we see?" Recently I was in one those churches for a funeral and I noticed that their membership must have been down a half or less, from what it used to be when I used to get there as a visitor. I have come to learn that they are not keeping their young people. They are joining the Baptists. And why not, because it is all the same. Did it work? No, it did not work.

A liberal Mennonite minister was at one of our congregations several years ago. He had been very active in mission work. He visited on a night that the preacher brought a message on something in relation to dress. Afterwards, one of our brethren

who knew this man, asked him, "How did you feel about that kind of teaching?" He replied, "Well, it is what I believe." (Incidentally that man was still plain himself) but he said, "You cannot do mission work and follow that." It happened to be that one of our brethren who had talked to him had recently returned from the mission field and he said, "Oh, I do not understand that." This man enquired further and said, "You mean you are doing mission work and the people whom you bring into the church on the mission field look like the people here tonight?" Our brother said, "Why, yes." Then, this man asked, "You mean you have members?" Our brother said, "Yes." The man then asked, "You mean your churches are growing?" Our brother said, "Yes, faster than we can keep up." This principle of separation and following the Scriptures in this regard, will help us to grow not hinder.

We also have the testimony of those who lost separation and nonconformity. Those who weaken in this area and drop it, suffer a tremendous loss. It is not very far from losing this principle until we accept divorce and remarriage and a whole list of things. It is very startling how rapid that goes. Someone made

this observation, “The Mennonites who have had this practice and drop it, go further than those who never had it.” I think of a certain field man who used to come to my place. He was so disgusted with one of the church papers that the Mennonite church publishes. (He was not a Mennonite) but they had gone further than he had ever gone and he never had it.

However, the most sobering aspect is that all of this begins in the appreciations. How do we feel about this kind of teaching? That determines where we will be twenty, or twenty-five years from now. I am always concerned how our young people feel. Do they feel good about Bible teaching in regard to dress? Do they appreciate it? Are they embracing it because they know it is right, or is there a bit of disgust about it underneath? It all begins in the appreciations. Are we somewhat ashamed of it? Do we tend to hide it and would we simply wish somehow that we would not have to be quite so practical about all of this? Once the breakdown starts, it is very difficult to turn it around. It is like the old saying, “It is better to hold the wagon at the top of the hill than to try to stop it half way down the hill.” One can observe that as well.

We have the testimony of those who come to us. I can think of some brethren who are with us today, who came from the world. They came from drugs, drinking, smoking and all the immorality. Today they see and understand the value in this kind of teaching and understanding to keep free from the world sometimes more than our own do. They understand that as they are approached by evil that clear distinctive attire helps them to remain firm. They see the benefits.

We also have the testimony of the Church. When one thinks of the tremendous effort that the Church has put forth over the centuries to maintain what we are talking about, it stands as a loud cry to this generation. There have been a lot of voices that have come and gone over the years. I am not very old, but I did live during a time when one was hearing strange voices. Some of the voices that come say that distinctive attire closes the doors for witness. Is that true? I always think of one of our brethren who said he was sitting in an airport and a man walked up to him and said, “Every time I see you people God talks to me.” Our brother very wisely asked, “What does He say?” The man replied, “Well, this is the way, walk in it.” That opened the door, did it not?

It did not close the door. It opened the door.

It used to be said that hypocrites wear it. It is possibly true that there are some people who wear distinctive attire who do not represent it, but we do not stop getting married simply because there is divorce and remarriage. Furthermore, hypocrites usually go for the best cover. Maybe hypocrites using plain clothes as cover actually validates and establishes its value.

Someone might say (this used to be a cry), “I do not have conviction for it.” I would immediately raise this question, “Do you have conviction for anything else?” Often a person’s conviction in relation to distinctiveness in attire and other convictions go hand in hand. If we see a weakness in this area, we will see a weakness in a broad spectrum. Another cry used to be, “The other denominations do not hold to it.” That is true for a lot of things, including nonresistance. Some would say, “It is such a little thing.” If it is such a little thing then let us simply do it. That is the simple answer. Again, those voices have come to the Church over the years.

The price that has been paid over the years by the church stands as a loud testimony to this generation. I have access at

home to the minutes of Virginia Conference and also of another Conference — the Washington-Franklin County Conference. I enjoy paging that and seeing some of the things the church has grappled with. Apparently, people had hair back then, because they were taking issue with the hair fads of that day. When one sees what the church was grappling with, in those days, it is the same thing, maybe in a little different form, but the same thing we are facing today. Young people, what we are attempting to do as a church is not some strange far out idea that a few men in this generation decided to try to push. We are continuing something that men stood and fought for, for centuries. We ought to rise to that kind of challenge.

*A few concluding considerations for how we ought to practice in relation to the practical side of this ribband of blue and distinctive attire.* We are not in the dark. The Bible teaches six principles. 1) *Modesty.* This means that clothes are intended to cover the form of the body, rather than to expose and to accent. 2) *Simplicity.* We are not to draw attention to ourselves, have ornamentation, frills and extra buttons and stitches. Our clothes need to be simple so that men can see past the clothes and

into the inner character of the man. That is what God desires.

3) *Nonconformity*. We are not to follow the fashions of the world. Brethren when the sideburns go down, ours should not go down. When they go up and completely off, ours should not go off. We are not to be influenced by the fads and fashions.

4) *Stewardship*. We do not have clothing which represents the rich. This does not mean we must always buy the cheapest, because sometimes the cheapest is not the best stewardship. One brother said, "One sister has so many dresses he wonders how many closets they must have in their house." In that case, somewhere the concept of stewardship is not quite understood.

5) *The distinction between men and women*. They are not to wear that which pertains to each other [Deuteronomy 22:5]. 6) *Uniformity*. The people of God are to dress alike (Philippians 3:16).

When it comes to how we should dress, we are not in the dark. The Church has given a voice, not only in this generation, but in generations. Further, we know how Mennonites should look. For the men we have the plain hat, the plain suit, black footwear, long sleeve shirts for dress, and buttoned up. I was

amazed how that was spoken to in the church in the past. For women there is the plain bonnet, the plain cape dress, black hose and footwear, the veiling, and subdued darker colours rather than the loud, light, fancy type of things.

There are a few considerations in the face of this. We should basically have two categories of clothes, what we wear for Sunday and what we might wear for every day. We might have some things that are in between, but why cannot the "in between" be simply clothing that is a little too worn to wear to church? Therefore, we only have the two basic categories. That will protect us.

We must avoid the casual. Our sisters cannot go down into the streets of our towns unnoticed. The challenge of this really comes to our brethren. We can dress in a way that somehow we can kind of fit anywhere. If we meet a brother he cannot say we are worldly, and if we meet a worldly person they cannot say that we are a brother. We ought to wear our plain clothes when the occasion puts us in a normal dress up situation such as going to the doctor's office, hospital visits and travel. I appreciate one of the older brethren whom I travel a lot with, insists that we

wear our plain suits. It can be the warmest day in July, but when we are travelling, in the airports, on the airplane, we are dressed like plain people. I believe it is in honour of this principle.

Of course, when the farmer goes to the tractor dealer and has a greasy part, he will not wear his suit. We know that, but even there I believe there are some of our everyday clothes where there is more distinction today between the plain man and the worldly man than there was a generation ago. Let us be sure to maintain a mark of distinction when we are in public. We need the protection that having a stigma between us and the world provides. We need to have sufficient separation and marks of

distinction such that the stigma and barrier remain with the world. We must do that.

Sometime ago I was walking through Chambersburg. Across the street a young man saw me and hollered at me, “Hi smoke-stack.” He was referring to my hat. I felt “Oh, where could I disappear.” We need that. That is exactly what we need. We need to be reminded that the we and the world are headed on two different roads, serving two different kingdoms, serving two different kings and headed for two different destinies. May the Lord help us to bear that cross. Sometimes this is where the “rubber hits the road.” May we be faithful in demonstrating what God is teaching in Romans 12.

### Scripture References

<b>Exodus</b>		<b>Acts</b>		<b>Philippians</b>	
19:5, 6	195	15	199	3:16	199, 207
<b>Numbers</b>		<b>Romans</b>		<b>1 Thessalonians</b>	
15:37–41	193	12:1, 2	197	5:21	203
16:1	201	12:2	198, 199		
		14:22	200	<b>1 Peter</b>	
<b>Deuteronomy</b>		<b>1 Corinthians</b>		1:14–16	197
22:5	207	11:28	200		
<b>Matthew</b>		<b>2 Corinthians</b>			
9:20	195	3:11	195		
14:36	195	13:5	200		
17:2	198				
16, 18	199				

## **From the Previous Issue:**

### **Sanctified Music Interests**

From a message by Charles Kessler  
Sunday, November 20, 2005  
Goodwill Mennonite Church

## **Book Reprint (Continued)** **One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study**

### **LESSON 29.**

## **Levitical Ceremonies. — Feasts.**

I. The observance of three great feasts commanded. — Exodus 23:14–17; Deuteronomy 16:16.

II. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, or Passover.

1. The time. — Exodus 12:2, 18, 19; Leviticus 23:5–8; Numbers 28:16, 17.

2. Record of events during the time of the feast.

a. Nisan. 14. — Leaven put out of houses, and men appeared before the Lord. — Exodus 12:15; 13:7; 34:25; Deuteronomy 16:4. Lamb slain at the going down of the sun. — Exodus 12; Leviticus 15.

b. — Lamb roasted and eaten after sunset. Fat burned and blood sprinkled upon the altar by the priests, Nothing to remain till morning. — Exodus 12: 9, 10; 23:18; 30:16. The first day of the feast. — Leviticus 23:6; Numbers 28:17. The holy convocation.

c. Nisan 15–21. — Additional offerings. — Numbers 28:19–25.

3. The Passover, (1) as a memorial (Exodus 12:26, 27); (2) as a type (1 Corinthians 5:7).

III. The Feast of Harvest, or Feast of Weeks.

NOTE. — Also known as the “Feast of Pentecost,” and “first fruits.” Considered in preceding chapter. Is to the weekly Sabbath what the year of Jubilee was to the Sabbatical year.

IV. The Feast of Ingathering, or Feast of Tabernacles.

Deuteronomy 16:13–17.

NOTE. — Considered in preceding chapter.

1. Time and duration of the feast (13–15)
2. A time for rejoicing (14) Deuteronomy 16:14.
3. How the people were to appear before the Lord (16, 17).

Three things are noticeable in the celebration of these feasts: joy, worship, sacrifice. With the heart filled with the praise of God and the spirit of sacrifice, the more rejoicing the better.

There seems to be as much difference between ancient and modern festivals as there is between ancient and modern dancing.

The joy of the Christian is always connected with gratitude towards an all-wise and ever-loving Creator. The joy of the worldling is purely a selfish gratification of carnal lusts.

The Lord commanded the children of Israel to observe three great feasts every year. Every Christian may, by living near to God, have a continual feast.

1. To what has the name Passover been applied?
2. What provisions were made for keeping the Passover, out of the regular time?
3. Is there anything specified in the Levitical law as to where the Passover should be observed?
4. What was to be gained by keeping these feasts?
5. Discuss the Passover as a Christian

## **LESSON 30.**

### **The Tabernacle.**

- I. Purpose for which the Tabernacle was erected. — Exodus 25:8.
- II. How the means were furnished. — Exodus 25:2; 35:4–29; 36:5–7.

NOTE. — Two things are noticeable in the collection of materials: (1) God calling for a freewill offering; (2) The liberality of the people. The first represents God's plan of supporting His cause. It is doubtful if God ever blesses anything donated otherwise than as a free-will offering. Our time, our services, our money, — all should be freely dedicated to the service of God. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians

9:7)

III. Materials used. — Exodus 25:3–7.

IV. Apartments, furnishings, etc., of the Tabernacle.

1. The Ark of the Covenant. — Exodus 25:10–16; 37:1–5.
2. The Mercy-Seat. — Exodus 25:17–22; 37:6–9.
3. The table for the Shewbread. — Exodus 25:23–30; 37:10–16.
4. The Golden Candlestick. — Exodus 25:31–40; 37:17–24.
5. The Altar of Incense. — Exodus 37:25–28.
6. Curtains. — Exodus 26:1–14; 36:8–19.
7. Boards. — Exodus 26:15–30; 36:20–34.
8. The Vail. — Exodus 26:31–35; 36:35, 36.
9. Hanging for the door. — Exodus 26:36, 37; 36:37, 38.
10. The Altar of Burnt Offering. — Exodus 27:1–8; 38:1–7.
11. The Laver of Brass. — Exodus 38:8.
12. The Court. — Exodus 27:9–19; 38:9–20.

V. Cost of the Tabernacle. — Exodus 38:21–31.

VI. The architects. — Exodus 31:2; 38:22, 23.

VII. Tabernacle covered with a cloud. — Exodus 40:34–38; Numbers 9:15.

VIII. History of the Tabernacle.

1. Consecrated by Moses. — Leviticus 8:10.
2. In charge of the Levites. — Numbers 1:50–53; 3:7,8; 1 Chronicles 6:48.
3. Remained with the Israelites during the Wilderness journey. — Numbers 9:15–22.
4. Set up at Shiloh. — Joshua 18:1.
5. Set up at Gibeon. — 1 Chronicles 21:29; 2 Chronicles 1:3.

IX. History of the Ark of the Covenant.

1. Built according to Exodus 25:10–16; Exodus 37:1–5.
2. Was carried across the Jordan. — Joshua 3:15; 4:11.
3. Encompassed Jericho. — Joshua 6:11–16.

4. Captured by the Philistines. — 1 Samuel 4:3–11.
5. Brings plagues upon the Philistines. — 1 Samuel 5.
6. Penalty upon the men at Bethshemeth. — 1 Samuel 6:19.
7. Is restored to Israel. — 1 Samuel 6:10–18, 21; 7:1.
8. Proves a blessing to the Israelites. — 2 Samuel 6:8–12.
9. Removed to Jerusalem. — 2 Samuel 6:1–17.
10. Taken into the Temple. — 1 Kings 8:3–11; 2 Chronicles 5:2–14.

1. Give in feet and inches the dimensions of the Tabernacle; of the Ark of the Covenant; of the Court.

2. What was the entire cost of the Tabernacle as expressed in U.S. money?

3. What time elapsed from the building of the Ark of the Covenant to the time it was taken into Solomon's Temple? Was it restored to the Temple after the captivity?

4. What law did Uzzah violate?

5. How was the Ark removed from one place to another?

### **Children's Book Reprint (Continued)**

#### **THE FOLLY OF PROCRASTINATION;**

OR, THE STORY OF CHARLES AND EDWARD MARTIN.

Revised and Reprinted © 2003

#### **A TIMELY REPROOF AND THE CURE**

THE next day was Sunday; it looked cloudy, yet the whole family went to Sunday school, and attended public worship. The day passed quietly and orderly as usual. In the afternoon it began to rain; and when the boys awoke on Monday morning the rain was falling in torrents! Charles came down to breakfast in a very bad humour.

"Really," exclaimed he, "this is too bad. I begin to think I am one of the most unlucky fellows in

the world! Edward has his garden all planted, but what will become of mine? If I was to work it in this rain, the ground would bake so, that the seeds could not come up. Everything goes wrong with me, and nothing goes wrong with Edward. All the good luck comes to him."

"Luck! luck!" exclaimed Mr. Martin, "Is it possible that a child of mine is so silly as to talk about luck? Now *think*, Charles—think. One boy plants his garden

in time, and his brother, can do so too, only he chooses to go on a picnic; then rain comes, it makes the seeds sown spring up and thrive, while it unfits, for a time, the unsown ground for working. Who can the procrastinating boy blame, except himself, for what he calls his 'ill luck?'"

Charles hung down his head and was silent; his father continued.

"And as to the '*ill luck*' which you say is your share, while all the good luck is Neddy's, let us suppose you change places. If you had stayed at home and planted your garden, and he had gone to the picnic, do you think the rain would not have fallen?"

"I suppose it would, father."

"And would you then have said that all the '*good luck*' was Edward's, and all the bad was your's?"

"If you had stayed at home on Saturday, do you think you would have had any reason to complain?"

"No, father." "Then, my child, I hope you see that what you call your 'ill luck,' is only the necessary consequence of your procrastination. If you see a person idle and neglecting his business, will you ascribe it to his bad luck if he becomes poor? What silly people call '*luck*' is but the result of good or bad management. You

do not believe in fairies that are said to take a fancy to some people, and help them to do every thing, do you?"

Charles burst into a laugh.

"Oh, no, father! to be sure I don't!" "What is it that governs the world, Charles?"

"God's providence, father. I suppose."

"Then, when you speak of luck, you mean that providence is unjust and partial, do you? It would be very sinful to think so you know—do you not?"

"Yes, father."

In truth, Charles felt sadly ashamed! Into how much vexation does a single foolish step lead!

Mr. Martin continued. "This rain is greatly needed throughout the country. If you had planted your garden you would no doubt have welcomed it as much as I do. Recollect, my son, that you can blame no one except yourself. I left you free to choose in the matter, for I expected it would turn out just as it has, and I wished you to learn a lesson from experience, which will teach you to judge better in future. If it cure you of your procrastinating habit, it is worth ten times as much as the produce of your garden would have been."

"Do not now waste time with useless regret; attend well to your

business, and pray earnestly and constantly for GRACE to strengthen your good resolutions, and to enable you to resist temptation.”

Mr. Martin spoke impressively, yet so kindly and mildly that Charles was much affected. The thought that he had grieved so good a parent was more painful to him than his own disappointment.

After their father had left the

room, Edward sought to comfort his brother, and to encourage his good resolution, The books were taken from the shelves, for our young friends resolved to make the best of the wet day; and I have reason to believe they passed their time profitably. Charles would now and then exclaim, “Oh my garden, my poor garden! I wonder if the sky will ever be clear again!”

## FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

### 1. **There is a God.**

Look in whatever direction you will — in the heavens above, in the earth beneath; in the Bible, or in God’s other great book, the book of Nature; in realms scientific or unscientific — and you meet up with multitudes of questions which can be answered only upon the ground that there is an Infinite Being, a Superhuman Intelligence, a Mighty God, an Allwise Designer of all things visible and invisible, who is responsible for all these things. The origin of matter, the origin of life, the origin of species, and a number of other things equally mysterious by any other hypothesis, can be accounted for only in this way. They who lengthen the six days of Genesis into that many ages and account for all these things by “the laws of

Nature” forget that there can be no laws without a lawmaker or lawgiver. The longer we meditate upon these things the more fully we are convinced that only “the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1) “Many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3) of the existence and overruling power of God are to be found in the Bible, in the Book of Nature, and in any well written book on Christian evidences.

### 2. **There is but One God — the Holy Trinity.**

Our first proof is the testimony of God Himself. In His invitation to the lost world He pleads: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and **there is none else**” (Isaiah 45:22). This assertion that He is the One and only God is repeated in a number of scrip-

tures. All the inspired men who wrote the Bible wrote from the assumption that the God of the Bible is the only Supreme Being in existence. From the idolater's standpoint there are "gods many and lords many;" but from the standpoint of the doctrine of a Supreme Being having "all power . . . in heaven and in earth," there can be but one.

Another fact equally important is that this one God manifests Himself to man in the divine persons of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost — the three in one. As an illustration let us cite the occasion of the baptism of Jesus. Matthew 3:13-17. Jesus Himself was baptized in Jordan. At the same time the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father called down from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

These two facts, therefore, we should believe without question: (1) there is one God, and only one God. (2) There are three manifestations of this one God which appeal to people as being three distinct personalities. Nor is it obligatory upon us to attempt to reconcile these two facts — as some have tried to do and become either extreme Unitarians or extreme Trinitarians. We must first believe, before we attempt to

reconcile. "With God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27) Upon the foundation of the Triune God is based the entire structure of the Christian faith.

### 3. **God is the Creator of all things visible and invisible.**

Skeptics scoff at the idea of God creating all things "out of nothing." Suppose we accept this logic, and put it up to them to establish a more plausible, reasonable theory. Denying the power of God to call matter into existence, it puts us up against the proposition of matter being self-creative — a miracle harder to believe than to believe that all things were called into being by an all-wise, all-powerful, everywhere-present Being who is without beginning or ending, without any other limitations. The miracle, of the creation cannot be argued away. To deny the power of God to perform it means to create the necessity of a still greater and more unbelievable miracle — the creation without a Creator. The most logical and reasonable solution to our problem is that found in Genesis 1:1 ("In the beginning God created the heavens and, the earth"); and in John 1:3 ("All things were, made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.")



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