

J. A. S 2

M. M. Beachey,
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Kalona, Iowa. Thursday Morning. 4-19-23

Dear Brother:-- May the Grace of the Lord, the Peace of God, and the Community of the holy Spirit be with you, now and forever, Amen

Your kind Letter, Mailed last Monday came to hand with Yesterdays Mail. I was indeed glad to receive a letter from you once more. Yet I would much rather heard that Peace and Harmony prevailed in the Church which is entrusted to your care.

The trouble seems to be about enforcing the strict avoidance Plan against those that leave your Church and go over to the Marynand Church. I am not so very much surprised at this. As it is only a fulfillment of the Predictions of Bishop Joe Widmer. When he was told of the Movement, he used the english phrase: "Now look out

I heard him say in private and Public, that he helped that church on its Feet by ordaining a Bishop by which they became independent or selfsustaining, but they have now taken steps in establishing the strict Avoidance if any should go over to the other church, of which he is not in favor. "Ich bin nit einig damit. And they are going to have trouble sooner or later.

Similar Troubles began in the life of Menno Simon, who died in About 1564. His last years were spent in trying to alleviate such troubles, but was unable to accomplish what he aimed at, and died with a heavy heart. After his death, these conditions grew worse, untill they were so bad that they could well be split after split took place, and the most factions aimed to avoid the others.

Finally in 1632 the 18 Articles of Faith were drawn up with an aim of healing these old sores. which it did to a large extend, but not all the Factions adopted them, Yet it was the dawn of the day of greater harmony and Peace.

If you read carefully the last stanza of the 16. Article, where it is said: The Church must put away from her those that are corrupt, be it in doctrine or life, and no others. Then you have the foundation of this peacetreaty. tho it dont say it so definitely, yet it is plain to me that this was to do away with the Avoidance of those of which the only offence was, of going to another Faction.

The Mennonites avoid mentioning this in their History, probably because it is rather a disgrace on the history of the Church, to admit that they were at one time so desperately split up. Yet I find it in Histories written by well informed Historians of the State churches of that day.

The above goes to prove that this Avoidance Plan, for going from one Faction to another is not new, but so far as I have studied History it proved a failure and plaid havoc whereevr tried.

But now this Plan was adopted by the Church over which you are to preside with an unanimous Voice, so I am told. This says to me: Hands Off! Yet to a limited extend only.

You ask me for an advise in your letter. I think you asked me the same thing once before, and I think I dodged your request that time, as that unanimon Voice kept saying to me: Hands Off. I think I shal come a little nearer fulfilling your request this time.

I shal do this on another Sheet, will say here: I woke up soon after 12 oclock, and have not slept since, I studied and prayed over this titeous matter quite a bit, and by the urging of my wife I came to the conclusion to give you better satisfaction *this time*

True Christian love, charity and forbearance demands of us that we respect and regard our neighbors rights conscience and convictions as much as our own. yet our conscience is not infallible, it is much as we are taught or educated. if this teaching is infallible then our conscience is,--and only then is a safe Dictator to follow. but every body beleaves himself to be right, and will sometimes change theories and convictions.

Now this being the case. I think a safe and sane way would be to give the Liberty and let each one follow the dictates if his or her own Conscience. letting those that think they would do wrong if they did not avoid them, avoid them; and on the otherhand, those that feel that they did wrong if they did avoid them; do not insist that they should.

Be patient and Bear one with another, come together and commune together. and give the holy Spirit a chance to educate and work in our hearts bring us closer together, as we grow in Grace and Knowledge in the Will of the lord.

If I understand that unanimous voice of the Church, this would not interfere with it at all, Since they all agreed to it, but there was no provisions made whatever, if any should change their convictions. which is likely to occur with the best of us.

Now Dear Brother: You may not be able to hold the church together by follow the above method. but if you take this stand, you can feel that you did your Duty, in trying to compromise. Compromising is not always best, but in this case it would be, and is the only thing that will hold the church together.

I well know, you are in close Quarters, and to do this you must take a firm stand. Be easy, mild and loving. By all means do not use harsh words and expressions, trying with the help of God to be an ensample of mildness, forbearance Meekness and humility. and induce the Members to the same.

Matters may look dark to you, and I take from your Letter that you fear you would not accomplish much. It is right that this feeling should come. but I think with the above plan, you can feel yourself on safe ground and on the Lords side and if the Church has not drifted away from God too far through selfishness, the Lord will be with you, bless your efforts, and may work wonders which will surprise you. Let the Lord do it. and only see you as an instrument in his hand.

We are having a few nice warm days now, had a cold backward spring so far a good warm rain would be appreciated. we are improving in health. the lord be praised for his kindness toward us.

We expect to hold council meeting sunday. and if all goes well communion two weeks later. and probably ordain a Minister. Help us to pray that the Good lord may bless and guide us in this important undertaking. We mean to pray for you also in our humble and weak way.

J. F. Swartzendruber and wife.

I would be pleased to hear from you occatiojly.

P. S. I forgot to mention in the above. Neither side has a strict and definite "THUS SAYS THE LORD" to base itself upon. hence I consider it safe to compromise.