

1 Corinthians 11 (2-19-12)

THE LEGALISM OF THE MENNONITES

The Head-Covering Series

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that **ye remember me in all things**, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

Mark 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Isaiah 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and **that cover with a covering**, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

Ezekiel 13:18 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and **make kerchiefs upon the head** of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye **save the souls** alive that come unto you?

21 **Your kerchiefs also will I tear**, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

The Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545-1563):

CANON 1: "If anyone shall say that man can be justified before God by his own works which are done either by his own natural powers, or through the teaching of the Law, and without divine grace through Christ Jesus: let him be anathema."

CANON 9: "If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema."

CANON 12: "If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that confidence alone by which we are justified...let him be accursed."

CANON 24: "If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema."

2ND VATICAN COUNCIL:

"From the most ancient times in the Church **good works** were also offered to God **for the salvation of sinners**, particularly the works which human weakness finds hard..."

(Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences, chap. 3, 6, pp. 78,79)

THE MENNONITES:

The Mennonites are named after Menno Simons (1496-1561). He was a Roman Catholic priest that left the Catholic Church, but kept some Roman Catholic views. He stood againsy infant baptism and the mass. His denomination has preserved the garment-covering view.

It is clear that Mennonites, in general, do not understand the Gospel. They are under the law - with salvation by works - which is heresy:

"...the repentance we teach, is to die unto sin, and all ungodly works....such repentance we teach...and no other, namely, that no one can glory in the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, the merits of Christ...unless he has truly repented...without it, no one can receive grace...He that receives this repentance in sincerity, and abides therein, unto the end, may rejoice and thank God, for the end thereof is eternal life...leave off sinning...then you will become heirs..."

(Menno Simons, *A Foundation of Plain Instruction*)

"The Lutherans teach and believe that we are saved by faith alone, without any regard to works. They maintain this doctrine as firmly as though works were not at all necessary...while the smell of beer and wine issues from their mouths and noses...and should some one come, who would admonish or reprove them...he must hear that he is a legalist..."

(Menno Simons, *The True Christian Faith*, 1556)

"We believe that man is saved **alone** by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ...but that the obedience of faith is **essential** to the **maintenance** of one's salvation..."

(Articles of Faith, Adopted by the Mennonite General Conference, August 25, 1921; Quoted in L. J. Heatwolfe, *Mennonite Handbook of Information*, Mennonite Publishing House, 1925)

"If believers do not fulfill the baptismal pledge of obedience, they are removed from the body of believers, and thus from the sphere of salvation..."

(*The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Volume 84, 2010)

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Now notice a popular home-school book by the Mennonites:

Building Christian English (Grade 5), Rod and Staff (1971):

"If we are faithful to the end of life, we will be **forever happy** and at rest with Christ." (p. 27).

"'Obey...for this is right.' God is speaking. **If** you walk in the right path, it will lead you to the right place, which is **heaven**. This is **the reward** you can always look forward to and be sure of as long as you **persevere** in the right way. Diligently remind yourself of these important things...**If** you persevere in doing right, you will stay in the right way **to heaven**. **If at any time** you give up, no matter how long you have persevered, you will still **lose** your right to enter heaven. We could not afford that, for no **reward** could be greater than **heaven**." (p.31).

The legalism of the Mennonites (traditions of men) is also seen in their Christian living:

- Morgan Edwards (Baptist historian) in 1770, said that the Mennonites expelled members for wearing outside coat pockets. or shoe buckles.
- When most Christian churches adopted modern coverings, such as *the hat* - the Mennonites retained the older, European veil:

"...the Mennonites clung to the traditional European veil after the rest of Christendom had dropped it...[It is] better fitted to serve as a Christian sign veiling than the Western hat..."



England (1800s)

"To one brought up 'within the fold' it is no light matter to approach so awful a subject as the Quaker bonnet. There was a solemnity about it that was born of terror..."

(A.S. Grummere, *The Evolution of Quaker Dress*; quoted by Hannah Whitall Smith)

Hannah speaks of the contentions among the Quakers over straw bonnets, or other kinds.

Some Mennonites argued over white or black veils. Actually, for long period, the Mennonites actually used the "prayer cap" - and then switched to a veil on the head. The more conservative "Old Mennonites" thought that you were liberal without the cap with the string under the chin!

The "New Mennonites" discontinued this custom of the cap! (late 1880s).