

Fundamentalism And the Descendants of Menno

An Exposé of the Impact

By Chester Weaver

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My name is Chester Weaver. I teach in the Hebron Christian School about 30 to 35 miles east of here. I live in the town of LaGrange IN. I have been associated with the Anabaptist Identity Conference for a number of years.

My wife's name is Barbara. I'm not sure if she is here yet. My daughter is Lily, and I am going to direct you to a table back there where she has some booklets for free, later. The time is limited so I just need to begin.

Fundamentalism and the Followers of Menno

First of all: a caveat. This topic will not trace the story of the Dutch Mennonites, who I would call the followers of Menno. Rather this topic will deal with the descendants of the Swiss Brethren who have come to be called Mennonite. The audience before me tonight I think is mostly Swiss Brethren in heritage.

Secondly, the Old Mennonites from which the Old Order Mennonites originate, I am going to be referring to as Old Mennonites. That is the focus of the people I talking about tonight. Now the change minded Amish, which became known as Amish Mennonites, joined the Old Mennonites during the first decades of the 1900s. And they were very much impacted by what I am going to be sharing this evening.

Thirdly, not nearly everything will be said tonight with my first topic. Nor will I be able to finish it tomorrow. I can't say everything that should be said. And I do have some resources with me and that is what this stack of books is about. And I would invite you to look at these.

I know there are a lot of people here tonight, but I think maybe one of the authors of one of these books is here tonight. Theron Schlabach, are you here? There he is. He is more an authority on this than I am. So if you don't believe what I am saying check this book out called *Gospel Versus Gospel*. We need to be studying this book.

Secondly, There is a more recent book called *Joy In Submission* by Donald Martin. That will help flesh out the story further.

The book *Edward, Pilgrimage of the Mind: The Journal of Edward Yoder*. It's a journal of a man who watched the unfolding of Mennonite Fundamentalism. I will be quoting some from this book tonight. In the book his name was John. He gets into some of this in a story form.

You are all familiar with *Doctrines of the Bible*. I will be referring to this book tonight. Most of you are familiar with the *Sword and Trumpet*. And it is very much part of the story we have tonight.

I am indebted to a book called *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* by George Marsden. These books are all available that I know of. You are welcome to look at them afterward.

Fourthly, I would like to make it clear from the beginning that I regard the Holy Scriptures as the Divinely Inspired Word of God. I believe in the virgin birth. I believe in the miracles of Christ. I believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. I believe in the one book of Isaiah. And many other watershed considerations.

As brother Nathan already indicated, I am very much aware that this topic is very easily misunderstood by Old Mennonites. On one hand this topic may tend to jerk the rug out from some feet. To these I plead carefulness and further research of the facts. On the other hand, some may feel threatened; to these I plead the evidence of Anabaptist history. One pithy statement says "If something can be misunderstood, it will be misunderstood." I recognize the truth in that statement. I enter into this topic willing to be misunderstood, criticized and labeled; somebody must be willing to this dangerous work. And it might as well be me. But I do plead with you, try to understand. Ask questions if you don't understand. I really wish Jesus Christ Himself was here to give this topic tonight.

Ideas Have Consequences:

When modern religious liberalism, born in Germany in the 1800s and often associated with Julius Wellhausen, began to impact the old Mennonite church around 1900, responsible leadership needed to combat the attending unbelief in some way. And these old Mennonite leaders noted that the Princeton Theological Seminary had already paved a way. It was providing answers for its students. And the answers seemed sound. At least they seemed loyal to the Scriptures. Thus the Old Mennonite leaders picked up many of these ideas and began to promote them in the Old Mennonite world in the battle against encroaching religious liberalism. And many of answers were adequate, but some were inadequate, and some were downright wrong.

A serious problem developed as many of the old Mennonite leaders adopted a non-Anabaptist worldview, out of which they thought and worked. This new Fundamentalist worldview deviated significantly from the historical Anabaptist worldview.

And I would like to bless Brother Ernest Strubhar for very ably introducing this. What he concluded with is the Anabaptist heart. And may I humbly say, humbly say that is far too often not our heart anymore.

If you look on the overhead slide, at the very top, in 2000, it says Anabaptist foes. Now if you look down at the very bottom at 1500, for 200 years our biggest foe, we could say, was persecution. In the next 200 years from 1700 to 1900, again this is in generalities, our biggest foe was materialism. But beginning in 1900, you'll notice, we faced something we did not face before. And the Mennonite world divided into Liberalism on one side and Fundamentalism on the other side. Now you notice there is a little line that goes straight up through. And we will get to that as we move along.

So what is Fundamentalism? To understand Fundamentalism, we are going to have to understand why it came into existence. Well, Fundamentalism developed in response to the liberalism of the late 1800s. In fact, Fundamentalism as a word entered the English language only in 1920. I am going to be reading now from Marsden's *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* here:

Perhaps the most important point for understanding theological liberalism... is that it was movement to save Protestantism. ...The generations of Protestants that came of age between 1865 and 1917 were faced with the most profound challenges to their faith. Darwinism and higher criticism were challenging the authority of the Bible and the new Freudian psychological ways of thinking were revolutionizing thought at almost every level. Immense social changes plus rapid secularization, especially in science and higher education, were eroding Protestantism's practical dominance.

In personal terms this meant that many people brought up to accept unquestioning the complete authority of the Bible and the sure truths of evangelical teaching found themselves living in a world where such beliefs were no longer considered intellectually acceptable. Such was typical of the personal histories of the leaders of the liberal movement... When they reached the universities... they were confronted with a most difficult choice. They could hang on to evangelicalism at the cost of sacrificing the current standards for intellectual respectability. If they were going to retain such intellectual respectability, it seemed that they must either abandon Christianity or modify it to meet the standards of the day. For many the latter choice seemed the only live option. Many church-going people must have shared these liberal sentiments. By the first decades of the century, liberalism, or modernism, as it was beginning to be called, was well entrenched in almost all the leading theological seminaries. Probably more than half of Protestant publications leaned toward modernism, and liberals occupied perhaps one third of the nation's pulpits.

In summary; liberalism was trying to save the faith by several things.

1. First of all, deifying the historical process. What they mean by that is that God was incarnate in the development of humanity, versus God invading history to do particular work.
2. Secondly, stressing the ethical, meaning Christianity was doing good, not doctrine, versus being a child of God.
3. And thirdly, it was dealing with the centrality of Christian feelings versus routine faithfulness to Christ.

Now do you notice? This problem is not the problem of people of the two kingdom concept. But because of encroaching worldliness and the increasing loss of the two kingdom concept, the problem became a Mennonite problem. It was foreign problem to us. But we were into materialism, into making money and we were not into thinking. And we were not into teaching and training our children. We were losing many of our children to the world. The world had come into our churches. And we were superficial and we tried to grasp at some straws for answers. And so we got into a remedy that was not good.

The conservative Protestants saw the religious liberalism as a sell out to simple unbelief. So they launched a counter attack which included the following.

1. Rejection of Darwinism because it questioned the accuracy of the Bible and reversed the relationship of science to the Christian faith.
2. They introduced several Conservative Protestant innovations.
 - a. First of all, dispensational premillennialism whereby literary literalism became the new order of thinking, especially of Biblical prophecy.
 - b. And secondly, another Protestant innovation was the holiness movement with its second work of grace whereby the recipient was understood to be freed from sins power.
 - c. And thirdly, Pentecostalism, whereby the actual possession of the Holy Spirit was proven by faith healing and speaking in tongues.

Furthermore, the American society changed profoundly as a consequence of World War I. Wars precipitate and accelerate trends already present in a culture. And thus World War I

1. Unleashed the secular forces that brought many new things into our cultural mainstream, such as jazz.
2. It sparked an era of bitterness and reaction with the loss of the American Christian ideal. The loss of the Christian America mystique was starting to happen.
3. And thirdly, World War I created a hatred for anything German.

But when the war was over, the remaining energy for attaining the ideal issued into several areas,

1. Prohibition: the energy put into prohibition was so strong that it actually created a Constitutional Amendment.
2. It created zeal to oppose Marxism as it was unfolding in Russia. We read the newspapers and watched what was happening across the world.
3. It created a fear of Communist uprising in the United States.
4. It created a revival of the Klu Klux Klan movements in order to deal with blacks.

But the foes were many and formidable.

1. Secularism had come to stay here in America and it is still with us today.
2. A revolution in morals illustrated in newspaper tabloids and movies that created sex stars and violence.
3. Freudianism and the freedom of expression.
4. Modern advertising which encouraged consumerism.
5. The collapse of communal standards for enforcing proper behavior.
6. Women began smoking in public, did not always cover their knees, cut their hair short and stepped outside the home.
7. Dancing became socially acceptable.
8. Evolution was viewed as scientific, and Creationism was caricatured as ignorance in religious clothes.

Now, the liberals were optimistic about the changes because they saw a new Christian consensus forming. But on the other hand, the conservatives reacted strongly. In a major effort to deal with the new issues the Protestant conservatives did several things. I am going to list four.

1. First of all they created the world's Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919.
2. They organized a fundamentals conference to battle liberalism in the Northern Baptist convention.

3. They distributed for free three million sets of twelve slim volumes of “The Fundamentals” containing 90 different articles written by 64 different American and British Authors. And I have a copy of those if you are interested in looking at them.

Volume 1 has these various articles, I just read a few. Volume 1 deals with the Virgin Birth of Christ the Deity of Christ, the history of Higher Criticism, plus four more topics.

Volume 2, I won't bother.

Volume 3 the inspiration of the Bible.

Volume 4: Just picking 1 out of many, science and the Christian faith.

Volume 5: The certainty of the importance of the Bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Volume 6: The God-Man.

Volume 7: One Isaiah, and on and on and on. There is 12 of them.

Okay. Take a look at them if you are interested. Some people were so concerned about this that they underwrote the cost to give these out free. They were desperate because liberalism was taking over the country.

4. The Protestant Conservatives found the leading spokesman for their cause in J. Gresham Machen of Princeton Theological Seminary.

The optimistic American mood at the end of the 1800s was not lost on the Old Mennonites. Remember, we are into materialism. To catch up to society they created new institutions of higher learning of their own. Such as Goshen College close by here. Other Mennonite Groups also created institutions of higher learning such as Bethel College in Kansas and Bluffton College in Ohio. Please note this: the Old Order Amish and the Old Order Mennonites came into existence during this period, partly because of how the Amish and Old Mennonites were dealing and not dealing with all the destabilizing religious changes.

Conservative Old Mennonites became alarmed with the encroaching liberalism in their ranks. Goshen College in particular became battleground between the Mennonite Liberals and the Mennonite Fundamentalists. The battle became so intense that for the year of 1923 Goshen College closed down when Fundamentalist Daniel Kauffman was president. It reopened the next year 1924 with Amish Mennonite Sanford C. Yoder as president.

However the Fundamentalists in their battle with the liberals used the weapons of Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism was out of character with the Anabaptist Story and Harold Bender of Goshen knew it. He refused to fight for either side. Instead he and his associates plunged into the Anabaptist history producing a wealth of information that was neither liberal nor fundamentalist.

But alas, only a few on either side of the fight seemed to really understand the bedrock issues. Let me pause to say: somehow Harold Bender understood some of what Ernest Strubhar just got done telling us. But he refused to become a champion of either side. He said, "Look at your own history. Find your own story." And to him we are indebted for digging all that out and it is available for us today. And you will notice on the overhead, he represents that line. It went straight ahead. Now Harold Bender, I understand, has been criticized for not having a sufficient two kingdom concept. But I am not going to go there right now.

Now the heart of what I have to say comes next. The handouts that you'll have tomorrow has on it what I am going to share with you next. I realize I am throwing an awful lot at you to try to handle all at one time. So your handout will have some things on it you can meditate in your private time. So how exactly does the Anabaptist story address the liberalism/fundamentalism scenario? I would like to mention 10 items, and there could be more.

1. There was no such thing as liberalism/fundamentalism controversy among the old Mennonites for 350 years. Why? Because old Mennonites always understood the Word of God as Jesus Christ, the living Word. He was to be believed and obeyed to the best of one's ability; no alternatives existed.
2. Jesus Christ stood at the center of the Holy Scriptures. He was Immanuel, God with Us. The Holy Scriptures were to be interpreted Christo-centrally. Christ himself was to be incarnated in each individual Christian, as well as in each congregation, in their everyday experience. This was standard Anabaptist theology since its origin.
3. The Schleithem Confession of 1527, first known as "The Brotherly Union," states in its cover letter, *"Dear Brothers and Sisters, we who have been assembled in the Lord at Schleithem... make known, in points and articles, unto to all that love God, that as far as we are concerned, we have been united to stand fast in the Lord as obedient children of God, sons and daughters who have been and shall be separated from the world in all that we do and leave undone, and (praise and glory be to God alone) it was uncontradicted by all the Brothers, completely at peace!"*
4. Anabaptism has always held a theology of a "living story" based on a relationship with the living Christ, with His disciples "walking in the Resurrection." Christianity was about a relationship with a person, the person of Jesus Christ. Daniel Kauffman used strange language in his introduction to his book *Doctrines of the Bible* (1928). You can open your book and read it for yourself. Here is what he said: "The right keeping of the teachings of the Word of God necessarily depends on the right understand of the truth. Christian Doctrine involves commandments, teachings, standards, and principles essential to saving faith and victorious life." The entire book breathed a different spirit than traditional Anabaptist understanding. Kauffman's two earlier volumes on doctrine in 1898 and 1914 also breathed this same different spirit, so much out of harmony with our traditional Anabaptist understandings.

5. Movement forward on issues happens with strong group consensus. The Schleithem confession was statement of the Christian way of life in the context of brotherhood. Thus a simple majority vote is invalid on major issues because not all the brothers have come to agreement.
6. An obedient love/faith relationship between Christ and the believer is prerequisite for church membership. Anabaptism understood the locus of authority to be the local congregation. Old Mennonites borrowed from other traditions the idea of institutions and conferences to manage spiritual life inter-congregationally.
7. The Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and the first article of the Dortrecht Confession of 1632 all begin with God. Subsequent articles in the Dortrecht Confession define living as discipleship to Jesus Christ. However, the Garden City Fundamentals in 1921 begins with the Holy Scriptures, being careful to include the language of inerrancy, while being less careful to define Christianity as discipleship to Jesus Christ. Some Mennonite groups use the Garden City Fundamentals as their basic confession yet today in 2015.
8. Historian Robert Freidman noted that Gelassenheit had largely been lost among old Mennonites by 1930. Gelassenheit is the key element required for individuals and churches to work together. Gelassenheit or lack thereof is evidence for Christ's presence or absence in working relationships. However, the use of the lot during times of ordination as a working congregational expression of Gelassenheit had not been lost.
9. In the first half of the 1900s the old Mennonite General Conference (founded in 1898) had become a legislative/enforcement agency in its effort to preclude encroachment by the world, including liberalism. When local leaders failed to win the loyalty of their congregations to Christ in the perennial struggle against general worldliness then Mennonite General Conference was expected to do the job. This institutional expectation was a departure from traditional Anabaptist understanding.
10. The 1943-1944 meetings of Mennonite General Conference illustrate the clash and impasse between progressive and fundamentalist leaders among the old Mennonites. And by the way, the 1944 meeting was held not very far from here. The suspicions, stubbornness, and Gelassenheit failure on both sides of the clash had troubled the Mennonite General Conference for years. 1944 is considered the watershed year. To this day the old Mennonites of both sides have not recovered from the innovations introduced during the liberalism /fundamentalism clash of the early 1900s. And if you look on the overhead I am illustrating that with a diagram.

Now the booklet, *The Antithesis of Job*, that I told you is back in that corner, with my daughter. And these are for free, the burden that we have is so strong that we need to get a hold of this that we are offering them for free, with the condition that you read it. It's a brilliant treatise written by Martin Lehman in 1949. It's just been reprinted recently. They are free for the taking, help yourself, if you know that some other people can benefit I hope we have enough for everybody.

Guy Hershberger wrote the following in the introduction of *Edward, Pilgrimage of the Mind* the book that I referred to earlier. Quote:

Considering its available resources, the Herald of Truth during the 1870s and 80s had done reasonably well in keeping the Mennonite church in tune with its Anabaptist heritage. It was the next generation of leaders, however, enamored by progressivism to the point of absorbing an alien theology inherited within the work of the American Protestant Sunday School movement, which eventually was led to the acceptance and teaching of a doctrine of salvation which unwittingly excluded Christian discipleship and the peace teaching on the Sermon on the Mount as residing integrally at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Not only did this step bring the Mennonite church to a point on the theological scale further out of tune with its Anabaptist Heritage than had been the case in the 1870s and 80s. It was now also at the point where the door was open to errors of Fundamentalism. While there was no wholesale entering into the this door, there was some such. And there was far too much appropriation of the spirit of fundamentalism, making for a doctrinaire type of authoritarian leadership.

In Anabaptism, 'the church against the world' is of the essence. But when the understanding of that essence is watered down, or even lost, the outward forms become its all-important substitute. And it was with the employment of this substitute, too much as its major theme, that the authoritarian leadership, though out of tune with its own heritage, continued to direct the ecclesiastical music, now so seriously lacking in harmony. It was this situation which had set the stage for the confusion, disharmony, and distrust against which the younger generation of the twenties and thirties had been laboring, bringing their effort to a climax in the watershed year of 1944.

What have become the hallmarks of fundamentalism through the years?

What I am going to share with you next is also on the handout that you got; this is in a general way wherever it's applied. Now, as Brother Ernest said, we are hybrids. We are Anabaptist/Fundamentalist hybrids, so not all of this applies to us.

Hallmarks of Fundamentalism

1. Arguments and controversies, is a hallmark of fundamentalism.

There is a kind of militancy that is associated with Fundamentalism, I am right and you are wrong. And I have got to prove to you that I am right. And you are just as convinced that you are right. And so you are going to heatedly defend your stand against me.

Well, how edifying is that? How much of the living Christ is present with that? Christ is not present. This is a foreign spirit that came into our midst. And I know that Mennonites are great arguers today. I'm sorry, that is not our heritage. When we are entering into militancy, we are into something foreign to our heritage.

The letter kills, the Scripture says, but the spirit gives life.

2. Doctrines in pigeonholes and boxes
3. Doctrinaire and inflexible in our attitudes, a polemic spirit
4. Proof-texting
5. Schisms and name-calling
6. Propositional Orthodoxy
7. Exclusiveness, arrogance, and airs of superiority
8. Authoritarianism - behavior should be controlled and managed by those in authority
9. Prescriptions and detailed regulations
10. Emphasis on leadership and leadership positions
11. Premillennialism
12. Calvinistic theology
13. Political involvement
14. Patriotism
15. Military involvement

In summary, the Fundamentalism introduced into the Mennonite church, 100 years ago, has impacted us in several ways. And I am indebted to Rodney Mast for this. If you want another message on the very same subject; listen to his sermon entitled "What Fundamentalism Has Done to Us" on the website anabaptistfaith.com. I realize I am throwing so much at you that there is no way you can absorb all this. Listen to it the second time via Rodney Mast.

He summarizes it this way.

1. Conservative Mennonites have shifted their focus from Jesus Christ to the Holy Scriptures.
2. Related closely, we have shifted our terminology to freely refer to the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, rather than referring to Jesus Christ as the living Word of God.
3. Conservative Mennonites have moved toward Sacramentalism. This is an emphasis on the power of sacred objects. We defend a book at the expense of defending a person. We defend words at the expense of a message.

For example, if I believe in Sacramentalism, there is a problem right here. Do you see that? I have a book on top of the Bible. With this kind of thought, that should never be. The Bible is always on top. That's called Christian Sacramentalism. That is a strange idea to us, historically.

4. Conservative Mennonites have tried to drag the White Horse of Judgment from the future into the present instead of following a meek and lowly Christ. In other words, it has gathered an aura of militancy about itself. And we must repent of that, Brothers and Sisters.

Now, Fundamentalism eventually morphed into Evangelicalism. It didn't last long in the Protestant world because it wasn't sound. It has lasted, unfortunately, for 100 years among some Conservative Mennonites.

And I am sorry, but I think we are getting up against the wall. I mean, God allows us to run with something, if we think it is right, until we get up against the wall. And then maybe we can see our problem. I think we are getting there. We will let God take care of that.

No longer today are we being presently impacted by so much by Fundamentalism as now we are borrowing Evangelicalism. And we are being impacted by that.

Let me just give you three items here.

1. Systematic Theologies, which are rationalized belief systems, in the tradition of neo-platonism (belief trumps behavior). And Brother Ernest just talked to us about that. Adolf Harnack noted, "Anabaptists added nothing to systematic theology. That is the reason why they are not included in its development. However that does not mean that they were insignificant. Actually their theology of discipleship was preferable to the Heroic Luther or the Iron Clad Calvin."
2. Fundamentalism attempts to define salvation by saying the right words and believing those words. For example, child evangelism or early conversions, dramatic conversion stories, sensational religious experiences, speaking in tongues and all those kinds of things.
3. Parsing the story, pulling the grand story apart into parts that can be analyzed and studied. Likewise, independent verses could be memorized as answers to specific problems. However, the sum of the independent parts can never equal the power and strength of the whole. The Sunday school tends to parse the story, to pull it apart. That does not necessarily mean that Sunday school does not have its place. But if we do use the Sunday school we need ways to pull the parts of the story together, into one central whole.

Okay, I guess I'll just stop.

Question and Answer time:

John D. Martin: Brother Chester, you held up Christ as the Living Word. I think there needs to be a clarification as to what the relationship of the written word is to the Living Word lest there be a misunderstanding.

Chester Weaver: Thank you. The Living Word is Jesus Christ; he expresses part of his living self in the written word. You cannot separate the two. He is from there. Is that adequate? I am sure there is much more that could be said. Do you want to add something to that?

John D. Martin: I think for the Anabaptists historically the Bible was seen as a means to the end of revealing Christ, not as an end in itself, to be manipulated and systematized with proof texts. And so we need to get back to an understanding that every aspect of the Bible is a revelation of Christ. And our direct focus then is on him.

Chester Weaver: Thank you so much; that clarifies it very well.

Andrew Ste. Marie from Manchester Michigan: I have two questions. The first question is: How do we balance humility like you were talking about with earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints? And second is: Are we seeing the same thing happening, that you described happening in those years. Are we seeing the same thing happening again today with the creationist movement?

Chester Weaver: Thank you, there needs to be a clarification here. The apostle Paul went into the synagogues and debated. Anabaptists debated in their day. So there is a place for debate. In fact, David Bercot was just recently in a debate. And Dean Taylor was in a debate, maybe they will talk to us more about that. There is a Christian way, a Jesus way, to do a debate. And there is a humanistic way to do a debate. And it's okay in a debate to just simply say "I'm sorry, I don't know what to say. You got me in a corner." If you don't know, just be upfront and honest. There is nothing wrong with that. But it might be better to say "Well I need to find out."

Okay, your second question: Are we into some of this fundamentalism today? Okay, I'm just going to open my heart a little bit. I very much appreciate Answers in Genesis and what they are doing as far as defending creationism. Institute for Creation Research, I very much respect those people. But if you notice, there is an awful lot of militancy that goes with that. And we may not buy into that. We benefit from some of their research and from the things that they are doing. They make a lot of people mad that are out there. And part of that is okay because Jesus Christ does arouse the forces of unbelief. But we may not join arms with them in what's happening there, as much as we appreciate what they are doing.

Joel from British Columbia, Canada. I have a question about the militancy that you are describing. I think the previous question touched on a point of that. But I'm kind of coming as an outsider; I haven't grown up in an Anabaptist background. I have limited exposure to some groups and I am curious where you see, practically speaking, today, this militancy expressing itself?

Chester Weaver: I am afraid you don't want to hear my answer.

Joel: I don't necessarily mean names and places. I just mean practical examples.

Chester Weaver: I tremble to say what I think.

Some in the crowd: Go ahead and say it. You only get one chance in life.

Chester Weaver: I lived and worked in Texas for over 20 years. And we were very much involved in the homeschool movement. We went to homeschool conventions with Rod and Staff material and represented that material, and were very much a part of the homeschool story, in Texas, although we never homeschooled ourselves. But I have been around the homeschool movement enough to know that it is a militant movement. And if you don't believe me, go check it out for yourself. And through some of that, people wake up to some truths that we have to offer. And they love it. But they find it very difficult to lose their independent spirit, in order to become a part of us. It's like they had to fight for every inch of what they pick up. They have to fight their churches, just to wear head coverings. They have to fight their churches just to take a stand on what Jesus says. And suddenly when they come to us, they still have to fight. And I am sorry, that's not the spirit of Jesus.

The spirit of Jesus is: Teach me to know more of your heart Lord Jesus. And one of the things he teaches us is humility and Gelassenheit. And that is so diametrically opposed to our human natures. There is something in every single one of us that is unconverted, it wants to fight. And that has to be broken. That has to be sanctified. We must meet Christ at the cross, right there. His truth will endure whether I am able to defend it or not. I don't have to fight for it. I can give a simple statement of it. And if somebody wants to argue with me, go ahead. You may win. I don't have to win. I'm sorry, is that okay?

Elias Martin from Goshen Indiana: Would you explain a little more on Gelassenheit, for some people that would like to know it?

Chester Weaver: That is a very worthy question, but unfortunately there is an awful lot to be said. I am going to try to address that tomorrow. I have a whole topic on Gelassenheit tomorrow.

Dwight Gingerich from Iowa: I have a question about what you think would have been a better response to modernism than fundamentalism? And just a bit of preface to that: I am thinking how difficult it was to know who Christ was apart from Scripture, when trust in Scripture was being eroded. It was a time when people were saying "Does the Jesus of history match the Christ of faith?" And some were saying "Well that doesn't matter, we can just hang onto the Christ of faith even if there is no Jesus of history we can hang onto because Scripture is not trustworthy." And so I'm wondering how authentic Christ followers could have held onto a true Jesus Christ, without slipping into some of the errors that you see in fundamentalism?

Chester Weaver: Dwight, that is an excellent question. I wish I knew that answer to that. The only thing that I can say is that faith is transferred from one generation to another when my children watch me and my wife and the people who live around us. That is where they catch faith. And if they see me hypocritical, if they see me being argumentative, if they see me being superficial, then faith isn't transferred. And I think this is what the problem was back in the two centuries prior to 1800s. The young people were not finding a living faith that was born out of contact with the living Christ fed by a living word to their elders.

But what does it take to transfer that faith solidly from generation to generation? I wish I knew more of that. And the sad thing is, each of us have one chance to do it. And I think... this is so sad; we have 500 years of experience now. We ought to have a handle on this thing. But sadly we don't. Dwight, I would be very interested if you have some comment to make on that.

Dwight: Do I have any insight to my own question? Not much other than to say that I do think retaining a trust in Scripture as a witness to Christ was very crucial. And I don't think we want to lose that, in our desire to follow the living Christ.

Chester Weaver: Thank you for that. May I put another overhead up that would help clarify this? You probably can't see that very well. But what is at the bottom of this whole thing is a Gnostic heresy. When salvation is separated from ethics and beliefs and church and so on, that's not what God has intended. But if you look at the New Testament oneness we have salvation that is just a part of a general package which includes reverence and respect for Scripture. Look at this:

Scripture believed leads to repentance and amendment of life. It teaches faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and of his sovereignty in our lives. It is a disciplined brotherhood. It is ethics. It is love. It is voluntarism. It is Christian living. It is brotherhood. It is grace. It is all that, including the Living Word, the Holy Scriptures. You can't have that second circle where salvation is without the Holy Scriptures. And I realize this is part of what I am going to probably be misunderstood with. Thank you for understanding Dwight. Thank you for clarifying.

Kenny Hollinger from New Castle Indiana: I guess I might have more of a comment than a question. First of all on the issue of debate, I appreciate your comments on that. A question I have had for myself was, can I ever, if I am really desiring to know the truth, will I ever be intimidated by somebody else's opinion? Because they just might have one little piece of the truth that I am missing. And on the homeschool issue, I would like to introduce maybe another thought, this would be based on our experience as we left the public school environment and our interest was turned towards homeschooling, and we went to a couple of the homeschool conventions. I would like to verify that we were very disappointed at the militant atmosphere there. But I would like to clarify that it is possible to homeschool without being part of the homeschool movement.

Chester Weaver: Thank you for the clarification. For some poor folks that is the only option they have. And I don't want to discredit that at all.

For those of you who are listening, what's on the overhead right now is the fundamentalist lies. These are just several fundamentalist lies. This is not all of them. That Christianity is perfectionism based. There is pride, fear, shame and despair that characterize normal Christian experience. Others who do not do it our way are threats to us. Being argumentative, critical and judgmental of others is okay. These are some of the lies of Fundamentalism.