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The Literature of the Amish People

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THE LITERATURE OF THE AMISH PEOPLE

by

WERNER WILL

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of German in the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa

June, 1962

Chairman: Professor Fred L. Fehling
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INTRODUCTION

If one walks the streets of Iowa City, one will often encounter men and women who look quite different from the average American. The men wear long hair and their coats have hooks and eyes instead of buttons. They wear beards after they are married. The women wear long plain dresses of solid color with an apron and a kerchief that is crossed in front and comes to a point in the back. Their hair is covered with a white cap when they are at home. When they go out their head is covered with a black bonnet. Shawls and sweaters take the place of coats.

In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, these people are well known for their famous "Pennsylvania Dutch" food. The Amish Mennonites or, in short, the Amish people, are a branch of the Anabaptist movement which originated in the sixteenth century. It was only later that the adherents of this movement were called Mennonites. The Amish people are content to be left alone. Since they have been farmers for the last three centuries, and were a very conservative, religious group, they have not contributed much to the intellectual and cultural life of the state. As farmers, however, they have made some significant agricultural contributions.
This paper concerns itself primarily with the literary aspect of these people. But it is impossible to speak about one aspect of their cultural life without going into other areas as well. Their literary diet is of a peculiar nature since they still read and write in the German language. If this language pattern changes, it will have a tremendous effect upon the isolated life of these people. They have kept the traditions of their forefathers for nearly four centuries. Once these traditions crumble and the language barrier is gone, there is nothing to prevent an assimilation with the surrounding communities.
II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Anabaptist movement originated in the early part of the sixteenth century in Zürich, Switzerland. The name "Anabaptist" is a misnomer and was given to this group by their opponents. The meaning of this word is expressed in the German word "Wiedertaüfer", i.e. someone who is baptized again. The name "Mennonite" was not used until Menno Simons, a native of Friesland, had gathered around him a group of people of similar persuasion to that in Zürich. These followers of Menno Simons were called "Menisten" from which is derived the term "Mennonite". It is rather unfortunate that a movement is called after one man; for, while it is true that he did much to consolidate the splinter groups, it is also true that he had some views which are incongruent with the Mennonite church by and large.

The early followers of the Swiss movement referred to each other in biblical terms. They did not regard adult baptism as a second baptism because infant baptism was to them unscriptural and was therefore no baptism at all.

The early leaders of this movement were Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Simon Stumpf, and George Blaurock. Conrad Grebel is considered the founder of the Anabaptist movement. Prior to
1523, Grebel was absorbed in Christian Humanism and had been a follower of Erasmus. Although he was not a sceptic, he was but slightly interested in religion. His religious awakening must have been in 1522, for Melchior Macrinus, of Solothurn, wrote to Zwingli on October 5, 1522, expressing his joy because Conrad Grebel had become "a distinguished patron of the Gospel". From now on, he became a regular co-worker of Zwingli's.

Felix Manz was educated in the higher schools of Zürich. He studied in Vienna. He was a good student of Greek and Latin and had made Hebrew his speciality. Both Grebel and Manz were prospective teachers at the higher schools in Zürich.

Simon Stumpf and George Blaurock were connected with the Catholic Church. Stumpf was a priest and Blaurock was a monk.

All four men were dissatisfied with the prevailing Catholic religion and joined Zwingli in a program of reform. Zwingli was in favor of abolishing certain Catholic practices, e.g., the Mass, the worship of images, etc. Zwingli, however, did not want to do this without the consent of the Council (city authority). This idea was

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¹Horsch John, Mennonites in Europe. Scottdale, Pa. 1950, pp. 32
opposed by Grebel and Manz on the ground that the Scriptures need no verification from worldly authorities. If the Mass was wrong, it must be discarded regardless of worldly opinion. There were a number of disputation. The matter came to a climax in the second disputation in October 1523, when the "Brethren" demanded the abolition of the Mass. Zwingli was reluctant to comply; for the council was (for political reasons) not yet ready to permit the abolition of the Mass. Grebel and Manz parted company with Zwingli and met in the homes of fellow believers.

The main issue which led to a break with the Zwinglian party was the Anabaptists' conception of the church.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Anabaptists wanted a:</th>
<th>The Zwinglians wanted a:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Believers' Church</td>
<td>State Church</td>
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<td>Pneumatic Church</td>
<td>Organized Church</td>
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<td>Group of Believers' (Gemeinde) Church</td>
<td>People's (Volks) Church</td>
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<td>Covenantal Church</td>
<td>Confessional Church</td>
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<td>Visible Church</td>
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The movement, which was above all a revival of religion, spread rapidly into neighboring Cantons and was suppressed by the state church and civil authority. Many leaders of the first generation
were killed. The movement, which had begun under the leadership of learned men, spread more and more to the country where leaders often had very little education.

The opponents commonly referred to the Anabaptists as "Schwärmer". They charged the Anabaptists with siding with Thomas Münzer, who led the uprising of the peasants. Although there was an exchange of letters between Münzer and Grebel, the supposition that this was the same movement is not correct. The mainstream of the Anabaptists rejected the use of arms on the ground that it was against the teachings of the New Testament, a position which they have held for a little over four centuries. Thomas Münzer never subscribed to this view but thought himself instrumental in ushering in a new age.¹

At about the same time as these things happened in Switzerland and South Germany, a similar movement was on foot in the Netherlands. Melchior Hoffmann, a tanner by trade, heard of the doctrine of Luther. He preached in Sweden, Denmark and Holstein. His peculiar type of preaching brought him in constant conflict with the Roman Catholic priests and with the evangelical preachers. In 1529, he came to Strassburg, a center of Anabaptist activity, and made

The Anabaptist opposition to the state churches led him to develop an original form of apocalypticism. This he expounded in connection with the Book of Revelation. He proclaimed himself "apostle of the end". He was ordered from the city and went to the Netherlands where he succeeded in gathering some followers of the Reformation. He inspired them with a new hope. They were to triumph while the other Christians would perish by violence. Sure of himself, he returned to Strassburg, daring the authorities to lay hands on him. This they promptly did. He was incarcerated until the end of his life. He died in jail some years later, disillusioned, and ready to admit that the whole thing was but an idle dream.

Melchior Hoffmann is important to the Anabaptist movement because he baptized Obbe and Dirk Philips, two devout Friesian Catholics from Leeuwarden. These two brothers, although ordained as elders in the Melchior group, soon found themselves at variance with the Melchiorite teaching on the early approach of the millennium; and as some of the Melchiorites showed an affinity toward the Münster

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group, the followers of Philips launched a vigorous protest against the whole Münster movement. ¹

It is necessary to say a few words concerning another movement. This began in the city of Münster. Religious and social reforms were here closely intertwined. In 1533, the city, under the leadership of a liberal preacher, Bernhard Rothmann, had accepted a radical Lutheran religion. With the coming of an Anabaptist of the Melchiorite party, the Münster agitation entered a new phase. Rothmann was persuaded to accept baptism. Many followed his example. While the Lutheran forces in the city opposed this new development, the labor guilds were attracted by the social message of the Anabaptist gospel and supported Rothmann in his efforts.

With the exception of the millennarian germ, the movement would probably have remained a peaceful one had not another Melchiorite, Jan Matthys, arrived.² Jan Matthys preached a more militant type of millennarianism than his teacher Hoffmann. It was now the duty of the faithful to take up the sword in behalf of the new kingdom which was to be established in Münster. The act of baptism was now a political rather than a religious symbol. Apostles were

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¹Smith, op. cit., pp. 78
²Smith, op. cit., pp. 70
sent out by Matthys into the Low countries inviting all the faithful to gather in Münster.

The Catholic bishop who had been driven from his charge was determined to crush the revolt. He gathered a small army and laid siege to the city. Jan Matthys was killed in 1534 when he tried to break through the lines. The command went to Jan van Leiden under whose rule all the horrible excesses and bloody orgies, which have given the whole Anabaptist movement such unsavory reputation, took place. This episode has been widely publicized and is probably the best, and in many cases the only commonly known fact about the whole movement. It is needless to say that this far-left movement had nothing to do with the Anabaptists proper. The mere fact that Leiden can trace his lineage to the non-resistant Anabaptists at Strassburg does not commit the whole body of the peaceful group to the evil practices that found their way into the fertile though diseased brain of a revolutionist. ¹

It is necessary to mention the Melchiorites and also the Münsterites, for it is through the former that Anabaptism was introduced into the Netherlands. Obbe Philips had been baptized by Melchior Hoffmann. But he soon withdrew from them when it became apparent

¹Ibid. pp. 76-78
that they joined with the Münsterites.

The most important figure of the Dutch Anabaptist movement is Menno Simons, the man after whom the Anabaptists were to be called. Menno Simons was a priest in the Catholic church in Witmarsum, Friesland. Through various contacts with the Münsterites and other groups he was led to re-study the Bible concerning baptism, and the Mass. He became convinced that these were unscriptual. In 1536, Simons left the Catholic church and was baptized by Obbe Philips. He was soon ordained to the office of a bishop and labored extensively in the Netherlands and in Northern Germany. His writings were instrumental in unifying the body of believers.

By the time Menno Simons joined this movement, the essentials of their faith had been formulated. The most important ones are:

1. An independent, voluntary church composed of adult members, sin-conscious and admitted into membership by baptism upon confession of faith.

2. Religion was a personal matter. The movement was thoroughly evangelistic and characterized by a strong missionary zeal.

3. The Bible was not regarded as a perfect book, but adequate to ascertain the will of God for His People. They relied exclusively upon the Bible as a guide in their search for God. They insisted that
each individual must interpret the Bible message for himself. The
greatest degree of liberty must be granted to the individual conscience
in spiritual matters. This does not mean that everybody could do
now as he pleased. They soon accumulated a well-defined body of
beliefs and practices agreed upon by congregations and conferences.
To these all members of the group must subscribe or remove them-
selves from the fellowship of the group.

4. The Anabaptists did not favor a specially trained and
supported ministry. They were to live by the labor of their own
hands. After the first generation of leaders, who had been university-
trained men, were killed, the leadership passed into the hands of the
untrained. Their theology tended to become, from now on, more
Bible-centered.

5. The doctrine of non-resistance was one which led to
much trouble with the authorities. Love was the basis of all social
relations. This principle they all tried to follow in their individual
lives as well as in their group activities. They refused to sanction
war and rejected military service. They were thus a truly inter-
national brotherhood honoring no particular country or state. But
they were not hostile toward the civil authorities in any given country.
According to their belief, no Christian could hold a political office;
but he must obey the New Testament injunction to pray for his govern-
ment and pay his taxes. With this all obligation ends. Government

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1Smith, op. cit., pp 22
is necessary; but it is not for the Christian. The worldly kingdom, like that of Caesar, is essentially evil. But it is necessary to protect the good and punish the evil. Force is not necessary in the kingdom of God.

These few examples point out that the whole movement was an attempt to reproduce the primitive apostolic church in its original purity and simplicity and restore Christianity to a basis of individual responsibility.

The Anabaptists had always tried to maintain the principle of unity. It is, however, unfortunate that some strong spirits of individualism engaged in hair-splitting arguments over unimportant questions of policies and practices. The Amish group is the result of such a quarrel. It took place between the years 1670 and 1690, in Alsace (France) and in Switzerland. Jacob Amman was a young minister in Alsace. It is possible that he had been one of the Swiss exiles during a migration a few years earlier. He was a man of decided opinions and an aggressive personality with conservative leanings. He had probably read the Dordrecht Confession which was adopted by the Alsatians in 1660. It will be remembered that this doctrine was taught by Dirk Philips, who had excommunicated some members of his group because they had joined the Münsterites.

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1Smith, op. cit., pp. 130
It was, however, never enforced in the Netherlands.

Jacob Amman, who had found fault with certain social customs of the church, now demanded the strict observance of "shunning" (i.e., not to have fellowship with members who were excommunicated) not only in Alsace but in Switzerland as well. Most congregations went over to his camp. But a certain Hans Reist, and his group from Emmental, opposed Amman's severity. Amman lost patience with these men and placed them under the ban (i.e., excommunicated them). Hans Reist and others of his party returned the compliment and the schism was complete. There was a lively correspondence between the two factions in an effort to reach a satisfactory conclusion. But it was in vain.

The followers of Amman came to be known as the "Amish". They regarded every innovation as drawing men away from the true faith. That which once had been a dynamic life became now a stale, static observance of rules and regulations. Old styles of dress were kept as a sign of non-conformity to the world.

These people have resisted any kind of change. They must maintain the seventeenth century cultural pattern because their culture and religion are so interwoven that it is impossible to give up the one without losing the other. Their way of life depends upon these traditions. This is the primary reason why they are very suspicious of
things coming from the outside. The outside influences, if not checked, will ultimately destroy any cultural island.

A large number of the Amish came to the United States in the eighteenth century. They settled throughout Pennsylvania and the states of the Mississippi Valley. Those who remained in Europe have lost their peculiarities and are no longer distinguishable from the surrounding population.
III. AMISH LIFE AND CUSTOMS

If one attempts to discuss any phase of Amish life, one must invariably consider their beliefs and practices. This religious emphasis was the dominating factor which caused them to flee from country to country. They fled from Switzerland to Germany and from Germany to the United States. Some writers suggest that the choice of the United States was chiefly economic, but actually, the reasons for immigration to this country were dominantly religious. They were invited by William Penn and the previous experience of the Quakers assured the Amish that this was indeed a land of religious freedom.

The Amish faith calls for a distinct separation from the world. This separation has been maintained. Other groups of the Mennonite faith lost some of these peculiar characteristics very early. The Dutch Mennonites, for example, mixed more freely with the world and influenced the intellectual as well as the cultural life of the Netherlands in the eighteenth century. A number of educational institutions were founded by them. ¹ While this was true of some liberal groups, the mainstream of the Amish Mennonites kept essentially

¹Smith, op. cit., pp. 217
the same customs which their forefathers had practiced in the days of Luther.

Having been persecuted for such a long time, they regarded themselves as a peculiar people. They did not expect anything from the world and labeled those following the fashions of this world as carnally minded. They had very little in common with the state. Although they were obedient to the state, when it did not interfere with their religious life, they felt that the state was only instituted for the non-Christian and that a Christian was to take no part in secular affairs. To keep their distinct identity in the face of today's fast changing world, they cling tenaciously to the old customs and practices. Needless to say, these customs are not retained without a struggle. There are always some younger people who find the practices outdated and who are enticed by the glittering city life.

The church serves in more than one capacity. It is first of all a place of fellowship and of preaching the Gospel. It is also an institution which enforces these rules and regulations. The church has the responsibility of teaching its members and of taking disciplinary action against them when necessary. The latter takes the form of excommunication and shunning. (Only members of the church who observe its practices are admitted to communion.) Shunning involves
the use of the ban against the excommunicated member. The ban is applied to persons who are "set back", that is, excluded from communion. No one is to associate with an individual who has been "set back" or is under ban. Whether this ban was ever applied between husband and wife in marital relations, the writer is unable to say. However, it is known that this was one of the topics of an Amish conference. The ban, when applied to social and business relations is called avoidance. The application of this ban varies, of course, within each district or state. The Amish in Pennsylvania are much more conservative than those in Johnson and Washington counties, Iowa. But even when liberally applied, it is an effective means to keep members in the church.

Their faith is childlike in its simplicity. Their experiences through years of persecution made it difficult for them to break away and become reconciled to the world. Because of their insistence on speaking the truth they have always condemned the judicial oath. "But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matt. 5:37, has been taken literally.

Mention had been made of their opposition to all warfare.

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1 Gingerich, Melvin, *The Amish Mennonites of Iowa*. Iowa City, 1930 pp. 58
They were often accused of shirking responsibilities in time of war. It was charged that they wanted to enjoy the protection of the state without defending it. This is hardly fair. They paid their taxes and performed other types of service. The opposition to any form of government dated back to the days of persecution. Politics was a synonym for corruption. It was impossible, as they saw it, for a Christian to take part in it.

The fact that they wear a peculiar type of dress has been noted. There remains a host of other forbidden things such as bright window curtains, checkered dress material, modern appliances, e.g., central heating systems, electricity, cameras etc. A quotation from an epistle addressed to the Amish Conference in 1865 illustrates this:

*Dear brethren and sisters let us earnestly consider what we have promised before God and the church. We have joined ourselves to the true Christian church and renounced the devil and the world and our own flesh and blood. We accepted Christ to live and to die unto Him. Should we not then seek with all diligence to avoid everything whereby we might break this promise before the all-knowing, all-seeing Father? We should gladly flee all vices such as pride and display of clothing (Kleiderpracht) with everything pertaining thereto in the bodily or spiritual sense. This is done in such a way that it cannot be noticed for a long time; but it has come all too clearly to my knowledge that even some ministers are a little weak in this respect. The greatest care should be exercised before God and the church and no distress or offence should be caused among the weak members who are unable to distinguish between right and wrong. It is said that this makes no difference if one does not let the heart cling to it. A miserable comfort is this whereby the poor soul is only led*
deeper into perdition. Many things need to be corrected among parents and their children. Too little care is observed according to the teaching of Paul, 'Bring them up in discipline!'.

The following statement inveighs against excesses in weddings:

I must refer to something more. What type of witness are we? We are unwilling to participate in a war where thousands of men are slaughtered dying for our freedom. But we want to stay at home and live well and engage in outrageous weddings. I am not against holding weddings when they are conducted in the fear of God; but I am against the abuse. When young people want to get married, they should begin in the fear of God. They should counsel with their ministers and make no promises in advance whereby young people act hypocritically. The church must reprove such persons. But if it is begun in the fear of God and they are married according to the divine order by a minister, then we rejoice with them. The meal which is given after the ceremony must be moderate. We should remember that we also entered into a spiritual marriage with the heavenly bridegroom Jesus. We have promised Him on our knees to live and to die unto Him. These young people have in like manner promised to be true to each other. But sometimes they act very indecent. The songs which are so spiritual are abused by laughing and jesting and by loud and unnecessary conversations. They are sung with indecent tunes. Let us take this abuse to heart.\(^1\)

However, one must not think that these people do not enjoy life. Church services, which last all day, provide ample opportunity to visit. They do not have any church buildings. Each family takes

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\(^1\) In Amish practices, a deacon goes to ask the girl whether she is willing to marry the man. She is not supposed to know anything about the offer, but in actual practice her intended knows whether she is favorably inclined.

its turn as host for the service. After the service (about 2 p.m.) a meal is served for the whole congregation. After the meal they sit around and talk about raising horses, cattle and hogs. Great pride is taken in a well-kept farm and in a healthy livestock.

The young people have a group-singing, usually at the same place, in the evening. The singing does not last longer than ten o’clock. But they rarely leave before midnight because some boys are timid in securing partners for the way home and need assistance.

Barn-raisings and house-raisings are other important occasions. Here the young men can display feats of strength.

The most important social event is the wedding. The whole neighborhood is invited. Weddings usually take place in the fall when the farmwork is done. These affairs last well into the night and display the finest Amish cuisine. To be sure, they invite display as the above mentioned quotation indicates. This is common to groups with limited social outlet. The main object of all these events is to provide some type of recreation under the auspices of the church. They serve to keep the young people away from the influences of the world.

In order to insure a separation from the world, the Amish move as far from the cities as is feasible. Being farmers, this
separation is not too difficult, since by profession they are close to the soil and city life holds little attraction for them.

In other important matters they differ from the surrounding population. They rarely come in conflict with the authorities and it is rare to find an Amish in jail, unless it be for civil disobedience. They never resort to the courts to settle a grievance; divorce in unknown. The only ground for divorce is adultery and the divorced are not permitted to remarry.

This somewhat lengthy account of Amish life indicates that these people are very plain indeed. But they are also in constant danger of losing their distinctiveness. It is today well-nigh impossible to shut oneself off from outside influences. This is especially true in view of the media of communication. Although the Amish do not use radios or television sets since they have no electricity, newspapers and magazines are a constant threat to their cultural life. The following pages point out in detail the mental diet of the Amish. These data are based upon findings in Lancaster co., Pennsylvania, Holmes co., Ohio, and Johnson and Washington co., Iowa.

A short explanation of the Amish educational system should be given. Mention was made that they preferred a community not too close to a city. And as they shun the refinements of the city, they
also shun elaborate education. Knowledge of the "three R's" is sufficient. In Iowa they need to attend school until they have completed the eighth grade or until they are sixteen years old. But in Ohio and Pennsylvania there were, within the last years, a few legal cases involving fathers who rather went to jail than send their youngsters beyond the eighth grade. Since they live in compact communities, they have their own schools with a teacher of their own group having not more than an eighth grade education himself. Most of the children speak only the "Pennsylvania Dutch," a Low-German dialect from the Palatinate. The children learn English in school. German is officially taught in Sunday School; it is by no means standard German. One also finds quite a number of English words and German prefixes with English words, e.g., "ge-used, ge-rested". The older generation is still able to read German, while the younger generation seems to rely upon English, a fact much bewailed among the older group. They see in it a breakdown of their cultural pattern.
IV. LITERARY DIET OF THE AMISH PEOPLE

A group as distinct as the Amish can maintain its identity only if the reading material is carefully guarded. Since no secular literature is allowed, their literary diet is restricted to devotional and religiously oriented books. The material read in German can be divided into four parts:

A. Doctrinal
B. Edificational
C. Historical
D. Miscellaneous (tracts, children's books, etc.)

A. Doctrinal Literature

This includes a number of books written for the purpose of teaching and explaining difficult Bible passages. These works contain a statement of belief and conduct and are the final word on disputed passages.

Portions of the Complete Works of Menno Simons are of primary importance. Especially important is one of his earlier books, The Foundation, a treatise on the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and life. The chief goal of this book is to communicate to the people essentials of Mennonite doctrine. It was written in a Dutch dialect. The author uses a simple form of expression. He treats among other things: The faith of a true Christian, i.e., a literal belief in the Scriptures interspersed with many quotations; a plea
to the government to accord the Anabaptists at least the rights it accords murderers and thieves, i.e. to give them a fair trial before any punishment is to be inflicted. (History verifies that members of the Anabaptist movement were killed without any trial.)

The significance of baptism is discussed at great length. Why is it unscriptural to baptize infants? Various reasons are advanced, all backed by scripture verses. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward cleansing. A thorough change of an individual (repentance and confession of sin, renouncing Satan and this world) precedes baptism. Communion (Eucharist) is thought of as a feast of remembrance. The wine and the bread symbolize Christ's death and atonement. One must not understand communion as the literal partaking of the body of Christ. It has to be understood in its spiritual sense.

Preachers are exhorted to be faithful stewards of God's gifts. The word of God is to be preached in its purity without striving after material possessions.

Learned men are advised to treasure divine wisdom above worldly wisdom. Too much knowledge causes a man to become independent and self-reliant. He does not look to God for help. God will resist the proud but gives grace to the poor.
ENCHIRIDION,
oder
Handbüchlein,
von der
Christlichen Lehre und Religion.
Zum Dienst von allen Liebhabern der Wahrheit (durch die Gnade Gottes) aus der Heiligen Schrift ermacht.
Mit einem schönen und taufflichen Register.
von
Dietrich Philip.

1 Thess. 5. 19.
Den Geist dämpfen nicht die Weissagung verschmerzt nicht; preiset aber alles, und das Gute bedachtet. Meurer allen heiren Schein.

untergetaucht in Berlin; in Richard Reiske über und auf das herausgelegt in die heutliche Sprache, durch den Verleger der Nürnberger freize, von Philip 1854.

Neu-Berlin Gedruckt bei Christian Moser.
1851.
The whole book is, in short, a guide to the Christian life.

The second book of importance, originally written in Dutch by Dirk Philips, a co-laborer of Menno Simons, is called A Handbook of Christian Doctrine and Religion. The preface states the reason for translating the book from the Dutch and affirming that there is too much literature on the market today and that many souls are led astray. "This book does not seek any personal gain or vanity, but it is the sincere desire of the translator to make known to his fellow-men God's plan of salvation."

Everybody is urged to read this book and compare it with Holy Writ. He who does, will find nothing but the doctrine of Christ and His apostles. The table of contents shows a variety of subjects:

- The Apostle's Creed
- The Baptism of Christ
- How baptism of children is used wrongfully.
- Many false arguments and twisted Scriptures are answered.
- An explanation of the Last Supper (Eucharist).
- About the Incarnation of Christ.
- How one confesses Christ.
- The unmovable foundation of the teaching of Christ.
- Difference between right and wrong church services and why a pious Christian has to flee from the false services.
- A few examples of how pious Israelites shunned earnestly the worship of false gods.
- About the mission of preachers and teachers.
- Who are the right teachers? Those who are called by God and chosen by the congregation.
- How false prophets are recognized.
- Why are we persecuted and despised?
Das
Friedensreich Christi
— oder —
Auslegung

von
Peter J. Twist

Dritte amerikanische Auflage

Früher gedruckt in Obessa, Südrußland, in 1875.

L. A. Miller
Religious Books and Publications
Arthur, Illinois
1948
The third important book is called The True Christendom. (Das Wahre Christentum). It treats at great length, with many Scriptural references, baptism; marriage; non-resistance; judicial oath; explanation of Matthew 18. The latter deals with Christ's injunctions to his disciples to remain humble and childlike. Differences between members of the church are to be settled within the church. John ch. 3, deals with the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus concerning the new birth and conversion. The condition of the soul after death is a paraphrase of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; Matthew ch. 24, 25 speaks about the second coming of Christ.

B. Edificational

Edification comprises the largest number of books. The underlying motive is to warn people about the temptations which Christians encounter in the world. The positive aspect deals with the bliss and the joy of the righteous in the life hereafter.

The Peaceable Kingdom of Christ. (Das Friedensreich Christi). This little pamphlet (31 pages) gives a vivid account of the reign of the righteous in the millennium. The millennium had been a favorite topic of the early Anabaptist writers. It seems that in times of persecutions and hardship, there is a general interest in eschatology. The increase of earthly joy brings fewer thoughts of heaven.
Das
Wahre Christenthum.
— Eine —
Christliche Betrachtung
— nach den —
Lehren der Heiligen Schrift.

Verfaßt von
David Weiler,
Lancaster County, Pa.

Gedruckt von
Mennonitischen Verlagshaus
Scottdale, Pennsylvania
1951

Hoffart und Demut,
einander gegenüber gestellt:
nebst einer
Wortstimme an die stolzen
Frauen.

Von
Johannes M. Vreeman

J. A. Raber
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This type of literature has to a large extent vanished today because modern men enjoy religious freedom.

Pleasure Garden of Pious Souls. (Lustgärtlein Frommer Seelen). It includes eighteen rules for daily life and conduct; meditate often on the four last things: of death, since there is nothing more certain; of the final judgement, since there is nothing more terrible; of hell, since there is nothing more unbarable; and of heaven, since there is nothing more joyful. He who contemplates these things will flee from many a sin. If other people praise you, humble yourself. Do not be concerned about the opinions of others.

This book also includes a group of prayers for all occasions and an admonition to use of the Lord’s supper properly. The conclusion is a prayer of a penitent believer who feels himself unworthy to appear before God, but is certain that God’s grace will pardon him.

The Earnest Duty of a Christian. (Die Ernsthafte Christenpflicht). This book includes 144 pages of prayers for all possible occasions. These prayers follow a certain pattern. First there is praise to God with thanksgiving and adoration. This is followed by asking forgiveness of sins in general. Then follows the prayer of specific request. Below is the translation of such a prayer.

Prayer of a Traveller.
Rein vermehrtes geistliches
Lust-Gärtlein
Fremmer Zeiten.
Das ist:
Heilsame Anweisungen und Regeln
zu einer seligen Zeit.
Und
Schöne Gebete und Gesänge,
Festliche und alle Zeiten im Jahre in allen
erlichen Anlässen zu gebrauchen.
Ebenfalls Nachrichten von gewissen
Gebrauch des Heiligen Abendmahl.
Anmerkung und Anweisungen, wie sie
mit dem Gesangbuch in Zusammenhang
stehen und geschehen.

Lancaster. 1874:
Druck von Johann Garbe Jungen.
Heavenly father, merciful, faithful God! I thank you sincerely that you have kept me so mercifully until now and that you have shown me your favor. I beseech you O God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and pardon all my iniquities for Christ's sake. Sanctify and renew me by the power of your Holy Spirit, so that I may daily amend my ways and walk in your presence and serve you in holiness and righteousness which is pleasing to you. Holy Father, guide and lead me onward on this voyage by the protection of our dear angels, that I may be secure from robbers and murderers, from poisoned air and vicious pestilence, from assault and accidents. Give me, O God, food and raiment; lead me on the right way which I should walk, and grant your blessing to my intention so that everything may be to your honor, the common good, as also to my own and to my relatives' well being. In the meantime keep and protect my household and that which you have entrusted unto me, and grant that we may see each other again. Especially I pray, my God, protect me from all snares and cunnings of the evil enemy and his tools. Keep me and strengthen me in the true blessed faith, repentence, patience and hope; grant that I may complete the pilgrimage of this miserable life with good courage and with a clear conscience that I may have a blessed end and may enter happily the heavenly home. To you, O Lord, I commit my going out and my coming in from now until eternity, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

The second part of this book consists of the articles of faith and a justification of non-resistance. This is an historical account of faithful believers who gave up their lives rather than bear arms.

Christian Dialogue of the Soul. (Christliches Gemütsgespräch). This book (300 pages) is written in question and answer form designed to teach young people and give them a basic understanding of essentials in Amish teachings. It deals with a variety of questions, e.g., creation of the universe; organic and inorganic matter; origin of evil;
the duty and destiny of mankind; God's plan of salvation. It includes, in short, all information with which a young man or woman of the Amish faith should be acquainted. Since these questions and answers are on the eighth grade level they are of course very simple. Mention was made that the group in general looks down on worldly wisdom. Common sense and a childlike faith in God seem to help them over many a Scripture passage where a modern theologian would become involved in hairsplitting arguments.

Here is a sample question on the attributes of God:

Question: Is God equally Lord of earth and heaven?
Answer: Certainly God is to the same degree Lord of the earth as He is the Lord of heaven. We are as much in His presence here as are the angels in heaven; for He speaks through Jeremiah 23:23-24, 'Am I not a God who is near and not also a God who is far? Am I not He who fills heaven and earth?' And through Isaiah 57:15, 'For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' This the King and Prophet David also confesses in Psalm 139:7-8, 'Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.'

Pride and Humbleness. This 90-page pamphlet is a warning to the women. Women of all ages have sought to entice men by means of costly apparel, rings, bracelets, etc. The pamphlet puts a strong emphasis upon clothing. Women must not dress in clothing which
attracts or arouses the passion of the opposite sex.

But now, how untactful, unbecoming, indecent, and horrible the women who profess to be Christians dress. Everyone who has enlightened eyes can see how plainly the Scripture forbids women to adorn themselves, not only with hair braids but also with gold, flowers and feathers besides many other detestable things that are very horrible to behold.

But the pamphlet speaks not only to the women. Men are admonished to remain humble:

I will not despise a simple and well-mannered beard if it is worn to the honor of God, for we find that it was the custom to wear a beard among the Jews. I have also read a poem by Menno Simons in which he accuses the antichrist that he, among other things, shaves off his beard. If we let our beards grow out of pride in order to become more like the world, then it will be sin to us without doubt. But if we do it out of humbleness and to the honor of God, then it will be pleasant to Him. But if the beard is to be a sign of humbleness, then also our hair (type of haircut) and our clothing must be according to the standard of humbleness: otherwise it is hypocrisy. I do not say that one earns God's favor by wearing a simple type of attire, but I maintain that a humble heart does not desire unnecessary and worldly things; and that one can recognize the humble Christians by their apparel.

The Heart of Men. (Das Herz des Menschen). This 48-page pamphlet describes the heart as a temple of God or a shop of the devil. It presents in ten symbols the conditions of the heart. There is first of all the unregenerated man who serves the devil and sin. This is followed by a picture of a repentant sinner. Sins are represented by the following animals: the peacock, pride; the goat, lewdness; the pig, gluttony; the frog, greediness; the serpent, envy; the leopard,
Für und Tor wieder öffnet und nicht wache und betet, mit der Gnade nicht treu mitwirkt, bringt die Sünde und durch die Sünde der Satan wieder in das Herz ein.

Hier gilt es also, was Christus sagte: „Wacht und betet, daß ihr nicht in Anschlag fallet“ (Mt 25, 41), und Paulus: „Betet ohne Unterlacht“ (Rö 12, 7). Das Gebet ist die Seele des geistlichen Lebens; wo das Gebet nachläßt, läßt alles Gute nach — das Gebet ist das geistliche Atemholen. Wo das ausbliebt oder schwächt wird, da stirbt alles Gute. So auch, wenn wir nicht wachen und schlafen werden, so kommt der Feind und läßt Untraut unter den Welt.

anger and vengeance; the tortoise, laziness and the devil, deceit. The third picture shows the condition of a sinner who has repented and has been filled with the Holy Spirit. The fourth picture shows a heart reconciled to God. The fifth picture shows the Trinity living in the heart of man. In the sixth picture the heart of man has grown cold and the wild beasts are ready to return. They have returned in the eighth picture and his condition is worse than it had been. (Luke 11). The ninth and tenth pictures show the deaths of a sinner and a saint. Each picture is accompanied with a lengthy explanation and an admonition to keep oneself clean and unharmed from the animals.

Directions unto Salvation. (Anweisungen Zur Seligkeit). (784 pages). This book of devotional character with its short chapters (a page and half) is designed to be read in daily family worship. It is more or less an expository of certain Bible verses.

The last two books in this category are of a slightly different nature. They are the only ones which could be classified as fiction. They are well liked among the Amish people.

The Wandering Soul by Johann Philipp Schabalie, pp. 418. (Die Wandelnde Seele). The wandering soul comes to this earth at the time of Adam who explains to it the story of creation, the fall of man and the paradise from which Adam and Eve were expelled. It goes into great detail on the subject of man's free will and the moral
Die Wandlende Seele,
was ist:
Gespräche der Wandlenden Seele
mit
Adam, Noah und Simon Elephas:
enthalten
die Geschichte von Erbschaft der Welt an,
das zu und nach der Vernichtung Jerusalems.
Daraus ergeben sich ersichtlich,
wie eine Heimath und Königreich auf die andere gesunken
wie auch anschauen, jene aber vergessen, und nach der anderen
ähnliche Ernährung der Erde, zu Jerusalem.

Durch
Johann Philipp Schadalle
in niedersächscher Sprache ausgeschrieben, einges aber in die
beiddeutsche Sprache übersetzt.

Teile 13te Auflage.

Philadelphia:
Verlag von Schäfer und Korabi,
Zehn-Zehn-Acht der Bessons und Ross Erhofe.
implications which follow.

After a thousand years the soul returns and converses with Noah concerning the things which have happened since Adam. Noah gives a picture of the prevailing conditions of his time. The world with its people have degenerated and God is almost ready to destroy the present world by water.

The soul returns after two thousand years to Jerusalem and a certain Simon Cleophas gives to it the history from the time of Noah to the Babylonian Captivity and then to the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70.

The Wandering Soul and Adam converse in the following translation about the fall of man.

Wandering Soul, I want to be informed, honorable father, how to conduct my pilgrimage. I am anxious to speak first of all to you; for I understand that you have lived many years. You have also walked and talked with God. This experience must have rendered you very wise.

Adam, Oh, son, that I am quite old is true; for I have lived now almost 930 years (Genesis 5. 5). I feel that I will not live too much longer. But could I have remained, in my former state, in the beautiful, lovely paradise, I would have enjoyed it throughout eternity. But I do not enjoy living in this world because it is corrupted.

W.S., That is exactly why I am coming to you. I would like to know the causes of the fall.

Adam, Oh, son, do not mention that. I cannot think without tears about it.

W.S., Father, take courage. You seem to be sad.

Adam, Do not grieve me in my old age with such questions.
W.S., Father, I pray you, do not be discouraged to teach me, your disciple. You must have seen a majestic grandeur that the thought about it makes you sad already.

Adam, No mouth can utter the lovely, sweet and pleasant manner in which God addressed me while I was still in his favor. (Genesis 2. 16).

W.S., Did you see God in person?

Adam, He was most graciously inclined to my weakness. And this is all the more painful since I see that his love is not as great and as sweet anymore. Therefore, Oh, son, be careful in matters on disobedience, however small the affair may be, that you remain in His favor.

W.S., Tell me something about the paradise. I would like to hear more about it.

Adam, It is impossible to explain how beautiful and pleasant it was. The trees yielded many kinds of fruits. I went from tree to tree eating what I desired. The birds flew around the trees and sang very lovely because their master was still in God's favor. But now they seem to sigh with me. All the beasts came to me as to their master and I gave them their names, to each one according to its qualities and nature. God had given me wisdom that I had a certain knowledge of all things which were below me. The soil yielded as much food as I desired. There was no hardship, anxiety and care. Above all, God had given me, to make my joy complete, a helpmeet. I loved her above measure; for she had been created from my own flesh and bone. I recognized that as soon as I saw her. We were very happy in our pleasure garden. There was never a bad word. We lived like lambs: sweetly, simply and humbly. No care burdened us. Whatever we desired from a tree we took. We drank water from the crystal stream. We burned with love toward God when He approached us. The implanted love was our life among ourselves. We knew nothing about sin and corruption. No weakness surrounded our heart. We knew not that something evil existed in the world or in any other place. We lived from the good which God had instilled in us; because we had communion with Him.

It is really nothing more than a condensed history of the Old Testament. But the book is significant because it has a different approach from that of the others. While all of the other books aim
at the apparent need of the individual—either to comfort or rebuke, to teach or to console, this book is neutral in this respect. It does neither. It simply tells, in a chatty style, the history of the world according to the Bible. The dialogue form in which it is presented is that of question and answer. But there is enough variety in the style to keep it from becoming boring. It uses a very simple vocabulary. Characters are presented as grandfather and grandson. The grandfather, who is wise and full of the experience which his long years have furnished him with, is able to teach his young friend who is grateful for the explanation. It is also interesting to note that the book praises the wisdom of old age from which the young and inexperienced are able to learn. This respect for age and experience is highly esteemed among the Amish people, and sets them off from the rest of the population.

The Prince from the House of David (Der Fürst aus Davids Haus). 328 pages. It is composed of 39 letters written by the daughter of an Israelite whose progenitors had moved to Alexandria in the year 227 B.C. to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. For five generations, they had lived in Alexandria. It was their custom to send their young men and women once a year to Jerusalem to acquaint them with their faith. This was usually around the time of the
Passover, a Jewish holiday celebrating their Exodus from Egypt under Moses. The arrival of this daughter occurred the year 32 or 33 A.D., the alleged time of the crucifixion of Christ. The letters relate in a very emotional and sentimental way the life and ministry of Christ in His last year on earth. They are written to her father and give a fictional account of what happened during her stay in Jerusalem. The miracles and the sayings of Christ which are recorded in the four Gospels are transformed into a narrative in which the author himself is an observer. A romantic description of the landscape furnishes the melodramatic background. The German word "rührend" (moving) best describes the mood of this book. The writer follows Christ through His last days on earth. The last passover and the last week are especially vividly portrayed, culminating in the capture, trial and crucifixion of Christ. Then follow two days of mourning. But the climax comes with the reported resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Below is the translation of a letter:

Twentieth Letter.
My dear father:
Many months have passed since you have received my last letter. I am glad that my health has been restored allowing me to continue my letters.
Words fail to express my gratitude towards Uncle Amos and Aunt Mary who have cared for me during my sickness. Since the doctor had recommended the pure mountain air, they travelled with me to the charming little village of Nain. It is located on the foot of Mount Tabor. I have spent many weeks here and I soon felt that my strength returned. We live with a widow, Sara.
She lost her husband, who had been a sailor in the merchant marine on the high seas. The house of the widow is enclosed by a garden. One has from here a beautiful view of Mount Tabor. As I walked one day in the garden, two dust-covered travellers stopped at the half-opened gate. They greeted us and said, 'peace be with this house.' 'Come in,' said the widow, 'I will give you water for your feet and bread to eat!' The two men agreed readily. They stepped into the house and sat down. After they had refreshed themselves one of them arose and said, 'Today salvation has come to this house. We are messengers of Jesus of Nazareth. We travel from city to city preaching the coming of God's kingdom.'

Upon hearing these words, Mary and I told them that we had heard Jesus and had become his followers. The men were very pleased to hear this. They also satisfied our inquiry concerning the whereabouts of the prophet. He was in Samaria, performing miracles and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. This news made us very happy; for we had not heard from Him for quite some time. We also heard that He had chosen twelve apostles who accompanied Him wherever He went. He had added lately to these twelve apostles seventy others. These He had sent, two by two, into every city to prepare his coming.

'Is He going to visit Nain also?', asked the widow. 'I am willing to die if my eyes saw such a great saint.'

'Yes, He will come to this village', answered the men. 'If we tell Him about your hospitality, He will visit you; for He does not forget those who give a cup of water to His disciples.'

The men took their leave asking once again the peace of God upon our house. They had not gone very far when we heard a loud noise from the nearby market place. Upon climbing the roof, we saw the two men standing on a hill and preaching the gospel. They challenged the listeners to repent of their bad deeds and live a godly life; for Christ will recompense each one according to his works. Upon this a few men in the audience began to mock Christ. Others threw stones at the two men. When we had reached the roof we saw that one of the messengers loosened his sandals and shook the dust from them saying, 'Your sins shall remain upon you because you have despised the words of life.'
The Levites together with the rabble drove the messengers literally out of the city. Later we heard that this enmity was caused by an order from the great Sanhedrin. The order prohibited the spreading of this new gospel.

The book is bound to please a group whose meager reading list contains only admonition and edification. It enjoys a great popularity among the younger people because of its vivid descriptions of the customs and culture of a land whose hallowed ground is so important to their religion.

C. Historical Literature.

This aspect is rather limited in scope. There are only four books which can be classified as historical. The first of this category is really a combination of history and edification. The Martyr's Mirror is a compilation of records of people who were killed and tortured for religious reasons by government and church officials. The literal interpretation of some Bible passages brought the Anabaptists in conflict with the authorities and severe persecutions followed. Thielman van Braght, a 17th century Dutch historian, collected these eyewitness reports and published them in the Martyr's Mirror. It contains a large number of vivid pictures to illustrate the text. The book ranks second to the Bible among the Amish. It is a history of men and women who were willing to give up their life for their faith. It might well be that the Amish have persevered in their
Der Klutige Schau-Mahl
oder
Martirer Spiegel
der
Tausch-Befruiten
oder
Mehrlosen Christen,
die um das Zeugung Jeß in ihres Seligmacher's willen ge
rotsen haben, und spred getrobe worden, von Christi Zeit an
die um das Jahr 1665.
Sammelt aus unterschiedlichen glaubwürdigen Chronikern, Nachrichten
und Zeugnissen gebildet und im getreuften Sprach herausgegeben
von
T. J. v. BRAGHT.
Nachmals
von der Brüderschaft zu Ebrata in Pensolvanchin
e im Deutschen gehandt und bestiit erneut worden, anno 1766.
Nunmehr
von der vereinigten Brüderschaft
in Europa
nach sttich Verbeigung und Druck aufs neue zum Druck beüdet.

Am Verlag der vereinigten Brüderschaft, 1786.
mern vor welche er fährte, und welches Leute von Ansehen waren, was er thun solte. Diese Leute, als welche der Obrigste als gut zu trauten, haben vor ratsam befinden, dass er solte dahin gehen und hören, was sie thun zu sagen hätten.

Als er nun dahin kam, feind die Herren (da sie ihn saken) erschrocken, und hätten lieber gewollt, dass er ihr Entbieten vor eine Warming hätte angenommen, um sich heimlich davon zu machen, dann sie waren nicht sehr durstig nach unschuldigem Blut: weil er aber daselbst erschienen war, so hat der Schultheiss, als er wieder wolte ans der Kirche gehen, Hand an ihn gelegt, als an einen, der (nach des Kansfers Befehl) Leib und Güter verschuldet hätte, dieses ist geschehen den 23. April 1588.

Als er nun gefangen war, haben die Herren allen Hieff angewendet, um ihn vom Tod zu errettet, er wurde nach Grafenhaag gebracht (aller der Hof von Holland ist) und daselbst verhört: weil er aber zu Nordrecht hatte gewohnet und war gefangen worden, so ist er

ihn rücklings ins Wasser stoss, also hat er dem Herren sein Leben aufgesperrt, den ersten Oktober, als er ein und vierzig Jahr alt war, und wurde des andern Tages auf dem Hoheitsrecht den Leuten zum Gesichte mit den Beinen an den Galgen aufgehangen, und ist alfo wie auch sein Mässer, unter die Nebeltäler getretern worden. Des folgenden Tages wurde einige Nebeltäler ausgesetzt und des Landes verweisent: darüber der Schriftsteller nachdem er dieses Amt verrichtet hatte, hatte sie haben Christum gereuzeugt, und Bartab das lob gelassen, worin er dieses Joris Wipps Tod noch beschlagn hat.

Er hat einige Briefe aus seiner Gefangenschaft geschrieben, davon sind uns dem zu Handen kommen, und hätte er wohl in die geschrieben, wann nicht wäre so scharte Amtst über ihn gehalten worden, dass man ihm auch keine Dichten hat zugelassen, dabe er die letzten Briefe (an seine Kinder mit Maulbeerzest) getretern haben.

Nachdem vor in der Schreiberer das e
faith and traditions for so long a time because they felt it was worth
dying for.

Below is the translation of two reports.

Joris Wippe, Joosten's son, is drowned in a barrel in 1558.

Jorris Wippe lived in the darkness of the Popedom. He was a
mayor in Meene, Flanders, where he was born. After he had found
the light of the Gospel, he had to flee. He went to Dordrecht,
Holland. He took up the profession of a cloth dyer. After he had
lived here a while and had become known, the enemies of the
truth ordered him before the ecclesiastical authorities. This
disturbed Joris very much. He counseled with some of his pro-
fessional friends who were people of distinction. The men, who
trusted the authorities, thought it wise to obey the order. The
authorities were disturbed by his appearance. They were un-
willing to slay innocent people. The mayor, however, arrested
Joris as he left the church. This happened on April 28, 1558.
The ecclesiastical authorities tried to save his life, while he
was in prison. He was sent to Grafenhaag where the court of
Holland resided and was questioned there. Because he had lived
in Dordrecht, he was sent back and there he was sentenced to
death. The executioner said, with tears in his eyes, that it
was impossible to kill this man who had often fed his wife and
children. He would rather quit his job than kill this man who
had done no harm to anyone.

Joris Wippe was finally drowned during the night in a wine-bar-
rel filled with water. One of the jailors, upon the command of
his superior, pushed him backwards into the water.

The next day, he was hung head down on the gallows. Thus he
sacrificed his life for his Master at the age of forty years.
Like his Master, he was counted among the evil doers. The next
day, the executioner, who had to whip a few culprits, said that
they had crucified Christ and released Barrabas. He had Joris
in mind. Joris wrote a few letters from the prison, three of which
have reached us. He would probably have written more if he had
had more freedom. He wrote the last letter with mulberry
juice because they had taken the ink away.

Augustin the baker in Bøvenswich was tied to a ladder and thrown into
the fire and burned, 1556.

It happened in the year 1556, or around this time that there lived in Beverwich a brother by the name of Augustin, a baker by trade. He forsook the world and was baptized upon confession of faith. A fact which the papists did not like.

A mayor, a very zealous Catholic, said that he would supply wood and coal to burn Augustin. The local village mayor had said that he would not seize Augustin without warning him. But he did not keep his word. He came at a time when Augustin was in the process of kneading the dough. He fled upon seeing his tormentors but was caught and incarcerated. Since Augustin was an amiable person, the wife of the mayor was very sad about this affair. She said to her husband, 'You murderer, why have you done that?' But it was in vain. Augustin had to follow his Lord Jesus like a sheep that is led to be slaughtered. They sentenced him to a horrible death because he remained firm in his faith. He was tied to a ladder and thrown into the fire where he was burned alive.

The Church History of Eusebius of Caesarea. (Die Kirchengeschichte des Eusebius von Caesarea). The preface says:

With the Bible in the right hand and the Church History of Eusebius in the left, one can face the enemies of Christianity without fear.

The book treats the incarnation of Christ in a historical setting. It contains among other things: the earthly life of Christ, his natural relatives, early schisms in the church, an exhortation to endure persecutions. There is also a short account of the following church fathers: Origin, Ambrose, Ireneaus and Symmachus.

India--the Much Afflicted Empire. (Indien, Das Schwer-Heimgesuchte Reich).
It describes the famine which resulted from the earthquake of 1896-97 in India. A plea for contributions and missionary assistance to evangelize the heathen people is voiced.

_Historical Report How the Mennonites of North America Have Helped Now and Formerly Their Fellow Believers in Russia._

Mennonite representatives from the United States went to Russia during the revolution in 1917 and assisted in evacuating many Russian Mennonites to the United States and Canada. This short book is a report of their activities.

_D. Miscellaneous._

This consists of a number of small pamphlets and church papers in English and German.

_a. German._

_Is Smoking a Virtue? (Ist das Rauchen eine Tugend?)_  
This is an exhortation to abstain from the use of tobacco.

_Honor the Truth. (Gebt der Wahrheit die Ehre)_  
This is a short story of a German prisoner of war. He obtained an early release because he insisted on speaking the truth. It is a description of life in a Russian prison camp.

_Herald of Truth. (Herold der Wahrheit)_  
This semi-monthly publication of eighteen pages is "De-
Mit Gott

Mit Gott! — das ist ein schönes Wort, da wandert man so fröhlich fort und fragt nach Prüde nicht und Steig. Mit Gott! — man findet seinen Weg.

Dies Wort ist wie ein Wanderstab; man geht den Weg hinauf, hindurch, das Feld hindurch, den Wald entlang, und graut die Nacht, man wird nicht bang.

Im Grün der Nacht, im Windgebräus, man weicht sich doch im Rasterkasten, sorgt nicht am Kreuzen allzuviel, man geht mit Gott und kommt aus Ziel.

Mit Gott! das ist so wunderleicht! Und doch, so weitr der Himmel reicht, so weitr hinwandelb Tag und Nacht, dies Wort hat wunderschöne Nacht.

Jährlich, das ist ein jünger Mann, der's recht von Herzen sagen kann. Er wird so stark, daß selbst der Tod demütig nacht und immer droht.

Selau, so sprich zur Abendruh, zum Morgengleich sag es du: Mit Gott! Mit Gott! So sang es an dein Tagewerk, so schlicht es dann!

Editorielles

„Ich kann nicht so gehn, denn ich bin's nicht gewohnt.“ Diese Worte sprach David da er einem mal hinaus ging zu streiten mit dem Philister Röhe Goliath. Er war nicht gewohnt zu einem Panzer und einem Helm, deshalb fühlte er sich nicht „glaubt“ mit solche menschliche Schutzmittel. Auch wollte er hin Vertrauen nicht auf solche taube Sache legen, denn sein Vertrauen war selbst auf sein Gott und Schwert. Doch ging er nicht aus ohne natürliche Waffen, nein er ging aus mit was er gewohnt war zu gebräuchen; nämlich sein Schleuder und fünf Steine aus dem Sack. Die Geschichte ist uns allen bekannt und wir wissen das David der Sieg hatte, nicht das Gott auf seine Seite war aber diese! Er auf Gottes Seite war und sein Vertrauen auf Gott sagte.


Die Räuber sollen gestiftet sein mit Pervisdaat das Wort Gotteses, aber wie es sagt das Evangelium des strebend ausbreiten und verbreitenden. Dieses Evangelium bringt Frieden zwischen Gott und
signed to awaken and maintain a greater spiritual activity, for disseminating and maintaining the full Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is very didactic in nature and is the only outside source from which Amish preachers can draw examples and illustrations for their Sunday morning service.

There is a children's section in the Herald of Truth consisting of Bible questions, "printer's pie" (jumbled Bible verses) and memory selections. If the child learns the lesson in German, he receives the double amount of points or cents. This is of course an incentive to learn German.

Among these miscellaneous books is a German primer. It is used in Sunday schools, where children receive their only formal training in German.

b. English

Youth's Christian Companion

This is a Mennonite weekly publication for young people and has a readership among some sections of the Amish but by no means among all. The publication is quite worldly by their standards; for Mennonites have lost to a great extent their peculiar distinctiveness in matters of dress and association.
20. Die grüne Stadt.

Ich weiß euch eine schöne Stadt, die lauter grüne Häuser hat. Die Häuser, die sind groß und klein, und wer nur will, der darf hinein.

Die Straßen, die sind freilich breit, sie führen hier und dort herum: Doch stets gerade fort zu geb'n, wer findet das wehli allznicht?

Die Wege, die sind weit und breit mit bunten Blumen überstreut. Das Pflaster, das ist saftig und weich und seine Farb' den Häusern gleich.

Es wohnen viele Leute dort, und alle lieben ihren Ort. Ganz deutlich sieht man dies daraus, daß jeder singt in seinem Haus.

Die Leute, die sind alle klein, denn es sind lauter Bögelein, und meine schöne grüne Stadt ist, was den Namen „Walz“ heisst hat.
Below follows an editorial from this publication:

**The Boy and the Walnuts**

A writer tells the story of a mountain lad who left his log cabin to seek his fortune in a great city. After being away for thirty-five years, he decided to go back and visit the old home place again.

As once again he walked past the old milk house down by the spring, he recalled that when but a small boy he had gathered a bag of walnuts. Twenty-five of these walnuts he had planted along the little creek bed. Now he looked up to a row of large, beautiful walnut trees.

He then remembered that on the same day he had taken the remainder of the bag of walnuts into the house and climbing up the ladder that led to the attic, he had left them there. He wondered now whether those walnuts were still there. So he entered the cabin, climbed the ladder... and sure enough, back in the corner, covered with dust and cobwebs, were the walnuts. Eagerly he cracked them only to find that they had long ago become useless. Those which had been planted had grown into beautiful trees. They were given an opportunity to 'become' something greater than a mere walnut. The result was marvelous. But the walnuts which had been 'stored' away for safekeeping lost what potential capacity they had within them. They were now but so many empty shells.

Here is a parable for our life. One observes that those who are always busy helping meet the needs of others, willing to do more than their share, and doing all this gladly, are the truly happy people. In this process of 'losing' themselves for the sake of others, they really 'find' a greater joy, happiness, and fulfillment of life. They are the ones who do not have time to nurse their own little hurts, to succumb to their own feelings of insecurity. They become genuinely anchored by losing sight of their own little wants while their energies are invested in service for the one who may be needing help at that time.

Such service is not professional. It operates rather as an extra
'sense' within such a person. In the case of the twenty-five walnuts, they lost their identity as walnuts, but in the process of 'losing themselves' they became an investment which produced trees with a tremendous potential for production not only of more walnuts, but also the by-products of beauty and comfort of shade. One is here reminded of the Scripture passage found in John 12:24, 25: 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it.

If we work selfishly, we lose the very thing we attempt to preserve. But when one seeks to serve God, and is willing to serve Him through service to 'one of the least of His', the efforts can be valid and worthwhile. Look for work to do rather than rewards to be received.

The Budget

This is an unusual weekly newspaper. Since the Amish do not engage in literary activity, scientific inquiry, or in any aspects of the humanities, they satisfy their intellectual needs by talking about people. In order to understand this, one must go back into their past. As a peculiar people they are attracted to those of "like precious faith". They are not interested in the stockmarket or in national affairs but in the welfare of their fellow believers. As such they take a keen interest in the well-being of their brothers. To fulfill this need is the task of The Budget. Below is a quotation from a March 1962 Issue:

March 11-- We had our biggest blizzard on Tuesday, March 6, for this winter. It snowed and blew so hard that the secondary roads were almost closed to horse and buggy traffic.
Dan S. Kurtz had a touch of pneumonia last Sunday and the family had the flu, all but Mrs. Kurtz.

Valentine Y. Bylers started with the flu the past week so church services were at Eli E. Bylers today instead. Northwest district was held at Eli J. Bylers (John E's Eli's). South district at Cris J. Kurtz's.

Joe S's Eli's spent this afternoon in the Gid B. Wengerd home. We spent this afternoon today at Pre. Dan J. Mast's.

Mose R. Byler, son of Rudy R. Byler, had again started to work for Pre. Dan J. Mast on March 1st for the summer.

Bishop Andy D. Byler was kicked by a horse on Saturday. Results are a broken leg. The small bone is broken and the large bone a chip, so he is wearing a cast again.

Simon D. Lee and wife came to this community on Friday on a visit. Mrs. Lee was a dinner guest yesterday in the Eli E. Byler home, also John D. Lee's and two sons and the writer. (sic)

Except for a short editorial, the eight-page paper consists of such personals. The Budget represents one vital side of Amish life—that of relatives and friends or as they call it "Freindschaft".

One can hear them talking for hours about this subject. It is needless to say the newspaper, being nationwide, gives them a greater sense of unity, a belonging together. It also provides ample opportunities for conversations; for it is an old established fact that people furnish excellent subject matter.

"Capper's Weekly" is another magazine commonly met with among them. This weekly magazine is issued by the Capper's Foundation, Topeka, Kansas. The front page usually carries condensed
world news. There is a column "What Readers Say", recipes, and a continued fictional story. This is the only type of "secular" fiction which the young people are permitted to read.

Then there are a number of Christian fiction books, e.g., those by Agnes Scott Kent. She wrote Judith, Rachel, and David. These are stories about Jews who had left the Jewish faith and joined the Christian religion and, about the subsequent hardship they had to suffer.

Another author of this type is a Mennonite woman, Christmas Carol Kauffman. Of the books she wrote, two have been read very extensively among the Amish people.

But Not Forsaken is the story of a Yugoslavian peasant couple who, in spite of Catholic opposition, joined the local Protestant church. Under difficult circumstances, they finally came to the United States.

For One Moment is a supposedly true-to-life story. Only the names have been changed. The story is about a boy who came from a broken home and was forced to enter a school for priests. Dissatisfied with this life, he joined the German Hitler Youth movement. He participated in the war and saw all the horrors of war. Disillusioned with life, he finally embraced the Christian faith and became an ardent follower of Christ.
V. CONCLUSION

The Amish consider themselves a peculiar people. And they have all reasons to do so; for they have worn a peculiar garb for more than three centuries. The men wear beards and long hair. Hooks and eyes take the place of buttons. The dresses of women are of a solid color and are not subject to modern fashions. A woman never leaves the house without covering her head.

The reasons for their peculiarity lie in the past. The Amish people were a branch of a larger movement which originated in the sixteenth century in Switzerland. This movement became known as the Anabaptists (Wiedertäufer) because they practiced adult baptism. They also emphasized separation of church and state. The Bible was regarded as the final authority on disputed matters. The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount were taken verbatim. This meant that they loved friend and foe alike. They tried to live a simple life. It was, in short, an attempt to restore primitive Christianity.

The followers of this movement came to be known as the Anabaptists. The parted company with Zwingli, a Swiss reformer, when it became apparent that he relied upon the state in matters of reform. The Anabaptists were severely persecuted after the break with Zwingli. They fled into neighboring countries proclaiming this
Some of the Swiss Brethren (they referred to themselves in biblical terms) fled to Moravia, and facing dire poverty, established there a common household (Bruderhof). Jacob Hutter, who was the leader of this group, introduced the principles of Christian communism. They have been known since that as the Hutterian Brethren. Their communities flourished until the Thirty Year's War reduced their numbers to a few families. They went to Hungary and from there to southern Russia and finally to the Dakotas.

While the movement of the Swiss Brethren was spreading in southern Germany, a similar movement developed in the Netherlands. Menno Simons became the leader of this group. He taught a practical Christianity, based upon peace, love, purity and holiness. He taught that the church must be a faithful witness to Christ, keeping itself holy and pure in life and doctrine. The followers of Menno Simons came to be known as Mennonites. This term was eventually applied to those in southern Germany and Switzerland who taught and practiced the same doctrines.

In order to proclaim a unified belief, the leaders from southern Germany, Moravia, Switzerland, northern Germany and the Netherlands met together at a conference in Wismar, Germany, in 1554.
They adopted a number of rules dealing with marriage, application of the ban, use of the courts of justice, the bearing and use of arms and the necessity of a commission from the bishop in order to preach.

There immediately arose a conflict as to the application of the ban. Some believed that the one committing sin should be excommunicated at once. Others believed that, except in a case of gross sin, the guilty one should be warned three times before action was taken.

But what attitude should one take toward the excommunicated member? Should one associate with him or should one "shun", that is, avoid him? Some interpreted this shunning as not allowing the guilty one to partake of communion, while others included social, business and domestic relations as well.

Among those who believed in a strict interpretation was Jacob Amman of Alsace, France. He was a young bishop with an aggressive personality. He heard about the laxity of discipline in the Swiss churches. He went to Switzerland in 1693 to learn the attitude of the Swiss leaders on this issue. Amman accused the leaders of the Swiss group of not believing in the practice of shunning. They were unable to reach an agreement. Amman excommunicated the Swiss leaders and the schism was complete.
The year 1693 marks the beginning of the Amish wing. The term "Amish" was applied to those who followed Jacob Amman and believed in the doctrine of having no social or business relation with those who, having fallen into sin, and having been expelled from church membership, would not repent and become reconciled to the church.

A large number of the Amish came to the United States. They have retained their identity whereas those who remained in Europe have lost their peculiarity and are no longer distinguishable from other Mennonites.

What is it that sets the Amish people apart? Years of persecution and the constant opposition of civil authorities made it difficult for them to become reconciled to the world. They were looked upon as a peculiar people because they refused to take part in politics; they did not bear arms in case of war; they had kept the sixteenth century pattern of dress; they shunned all forms of amusements; they were not interested in cultural or intellectual activities. They were among the "Stillen im Lande", quiet ones in the land.

When they arrived in the United States, where they were granted religious freedom, the Amish settled in compact communities to maintain their identity. But there appeared a new problem.
What language should they speak? The official language in the United States was English. But it was impossible for them to abandon German. It was the language in which their forefathers had spoken, the language in which they defended their religious belief. The language stood for everything that was firm, unchanging and true. They had to keep this language if they wanted to survive as a peculiar people.

One finds the same pattern still existing. They have retained German, but it has been interspersed since with many English words.

The result of this language barrier is a literary diet quite different from that of their contemporaries. The literature is largely devotional. Even the pamphlets and magazines, intended to vary this diet, are closely related to the religious community life.

One would find the following books in a typical Amish home in Johnson County, Iowa: The Bible, songbooks, some parts of the works of Menno Simons, commentaries on the Bible, a few books under the general topic of edification and Family Records. These are all in German. Weekly publications in English consist of The Budget and Kalona News.

The Budget is a nation-wide paper which carries personal
and church news. Although it is not wholly religiously oriented, it is instrumental in cementing the communities of believers. The Kalona News is a weekly paper similar to the Budget without a religious emphasis. It carries local and personal news. The Reader's Digest is appearing in some Amish homes. It indicates the breakdown of the cultural pattern.

One can see that the majority of their reading matter is in German. This is quite in line with the Amish idea of separation. They want to remain a peculiar people. The language is another barrier to prevent assimilation. They do not want to read any other books because these books present a constant threat of losing the simple life of the fathers. Secular reading means secular thinking and secular thinking weakens the faith.

It is hard for anyone not acquainted with an Amish community to realize how isolated the people are in their intellectual life. There being no electricity, the usual sources of information and entertainment are absent. There is no radio or television newscast. Magazines like Life and Times are also absent.

Striking too is the absence of state and local newspapers. The Kalona News is not a newspaper in the ordinary sense of the word. There is no international or political news and it would be difficult to form a picture of typical American life from it.
The Amish do not frequent the local libraries either, believing that a knowledge of "worldly" literature is at the least unnecessary and is even harmful.

The literary diet of the Amish is one aspect of their struggle to keep the old traditions. The Amish know that a change in the language pattern would invite a change in their mental diet as well. But the Amish resist any kind of change because their salvation depends to a certain extent upon preserving their character as a people apart.
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