

General Topics :: THE TRIAL AND INCARCERATION OF JOHN BUNYAN

THE TRIAL AND INCARCERATION OF JOHN BUNYAN - posted by savannah, on: 2011/6/10 0:25

Judge Wingate: "Mr. Bunyan, you stand before this Court accused of persistent and willful transgression of the Conventicle Act, which prohibits all British subjects from absenting themselves from worship in the Church of England, and from conducting worship services apart from our Church. You come, presumably, with no legal training, and yet without counsel. I must warn you, sir, of the gravity of the charge, the harshness of the penalty, in the event of your conviction, and the foolhardiness of acting as your own counsel in so serious a matter. I hold in my hand the depositions of the witnesses against you. In each case, they have testified that, to their knowledge, you have never, in your adult life, attended services in the Church of this parish. Each further testifies that he has observed you, on numerous occasions, conducting religious exercises in and near Bedford."

John Bunyan: "The depositions speak the truth. I have never attended services in the Church of England, nor do I intend ever to do so. Secondly, it is no secret that I preach the Word of God whenever, wherever, and to whomever He pleases to grant me opportunity to do so. I have no choice but to acknowledge my awareness of the law which I am accused of transgressing. Likewise, I have no choice but to confess my guilt in my transgression of it. As true as these things are, I must affirm that I neither regret breaking the law, nor repent of having broken it. Further, I must warn you that I have no intention in the future of conforming to it."

Judge Wingate: "It is obvious, sir, that you are a victim of deranged thinking. If my ears deceive me not, I must infer from your words that you believe the State to have no interest in the religious life of its subjects."

John Bunyan: "The State, M lord, may have an interest in anything in which it wishes to have an interest. But the State has no right whatever to interfere in the religious life of its citizens."

Judge Wingate: "The evidence I hold in my hand, even apart from your own admission of guilt, is sufficient to convict you, and the Court is within its rights to have you committed to prison for a considerably long time. I do not wish to send you to prison, Mr. Bunyan. I am aware of the poverty of your family, and I believe you have a little daughter who, unfortunately, was born blind. Is this not so?"

John Bunyan: "It is, MÂ'lord."

Judge Wingate: "Very well. The decision of the Court is this: In as much as the accused has confessed his guilt, we shall follow a merciful and compassionate course of action. We shall release him on the condition that he swear solemnly to discontinue the convening of religious meetings, and that he affix his signature to such an oath prior to quitting the Courtroom. That will be all, Mr. Bunyan. I hope not to see you here again. May we hear the next case?"

John Bunyan: "MÂ'lord, if I may have another moment of the Court's time?"

Judge Wingate: "Yes, but you must be quick about it. We have other matters to attend to. What is it?"

John Bunyan: "I cannot do what you ask of me, MÂ'lord. I cannot place my signature upon any document in which I promise henceforth not to preach. My calling to preach the Gospel is from God, and He alone can make me discontinue what He has appointed me to do. As I have had no word from Him to that effect, I must continue to preach, and I shall continue to preach."

Judge Wingate: "I warn you, sir, the Court has gone the second mile to be lenient with you, out of concern for your family's difficult straits. Truth to tell, it would appear that the Court's concern for your family far exceeds your own. Do you wish to go to prison?"

John Bunyan: "No, MÂ'lord. Few things there are that I would wish less."

Judge Wingate: "Very well, then, Mr. Bunyan. This Court will make one further attempt in good faith to accommodate w

hat appears to be strongly held convictions on your part. In his compassion and beneficence, our Sovereign, Charles II, has made provision for dissenting preachers to hold some limited meetings. All that is required is that such ministers procure licenses authorizing them to convene these gatherings. "You will not find the procedure burdensome, and even you, Mr. Bunyan, must surely grant the legitimacy of the State's interest in ensuring that any fool with a Bible does not simply gather a group of people together and begin to preach to them. Imagine the implications were that to happen! Can you comply with this condition, Mr. Bunyan?"

"Before you answer, mark you this: should you refuse, the Court will have no alternative but to sentence you to a prison term. Think, sir, of your poor wife. Think of your children, and particularly of your pitiful, sightless little girl. Think of your flock, who can hear you to their hearts' content when you have secured your licenses. Think on these things, and give us your answer, sir!"

John Bunyan: "M'lord, I appreciate the Court's efforts to be as you have put it - accommodating. But again, I must refuse your terms. I must repeat that it is God who constrains me to preach, and no man or company of men may grant or deny me leave to preach. These licenses of which you speak, M'lord, are symbols not of a right, but of a privilege. Implied therein is the principle that a mere man can extend or withhold them according to his whim. I speak not of privileges, but of rights. Privileges (licenses) granted by men may be denied by men. Rights are granted by God, and can be legitimately denied by no man. I must therefore, refuse to comply."

Judge Wingate: "Very well, Mr. Bunyan. Since you persist in your intractability, and since you reject this Court's honest effort at compromise, you leave us no choice but to commit you to Bedford jail for a period of six years (Editor's Note: This six ultimately became 12 1/2 for his repeated refusal to sign the license). "If you manage to survive, I should think that your experience will correct your thinking. If you fail to survive, that will be unfortunate. In any event, I strongly suspect that we have heard the last we shall ever hear from Mr. John Bunyan. Now, may we hear the next case?" (transcript of the trial on October 3, 1660).

Of course, neither Judge Wingate nor the world had heard the last of John Bunyan, for during his lengthy incarceration in the old Bedford jail, with his Bible as his constant companion and guide, Bunyan gave to the world the epic Pilgrim's Progress. Bunyan was denied pen and paper, and Pilgrim's Progress was written with pieces of charcoal from the fire that kept his body warm on the paper wads used as stoppers in the milk bottles from which he drank.

Re: THE TRIAL AND INCARCERATION OF JOHN BUNYAN, on: 2011/6/10 21:47

Thanks for posting this!

Re: THE TRIAL AND INCARCERATION OF JOHN BUNYAN - posted by Koheleth, on: 2011/6/14 18:44

Polite but refusing to compromise. He was very committed to Christ. It is difficult to think of leaving wife and children.

Re: No Compromise - posted by savannah, on: 2011/6/22 9:43

"These licenses of which you speak, M'lord, are symbols not of a right, but of a privilege. Implied therein is the principle that a mere man can extend or withhold them according to his whim. I speak not of privileges, but of rights. Privileges (licenses) granted by men may be denied by men. Rights are granted by God, and can be legitimately denied by no man. I must therefore, refuse to comply."

Committed to Christ and an uncompromising character was commonly known among Christians at one time. Many professors of our day are willing to be sold for a piece of bread or a bowl of soup.

All Bunyan had to do was sign, but conscience toward God prevented him.

How many who profess Christ in America willingly sign and swear by an oath to the following:

ENLISTMENT/REENLISTMENT DOCUMENT
ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

C. PARTIAL STATEMENT OF EXISTING UNITED STATES LAWS

9. FOR ALL ENLISTEES OR REENLISTEES:

I understand that many laws, regulations, and military customs will govern my conduct and require me to do things under this agreement that a civilian does not have to do. I also understand that various laws, some of which are listed in this agreement, directly affect this enlistment/reenlistment agreement. Some examples of how existing laws may affect this agreement are explained in paragraphs 10 and 11. I understand that I cannot change these laws but that Congress may change these laws, or

pass new laws, at any time that may affect this agreement, and that I will be subject to those laws and any changes they make to this agreement. I further understand that:

a. My enlistment/reenlistment agreement is more than an employment agreement. It effects a change in status from civilian to military member of the Armed Forces. As a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, I will be:

(1) Required to obey all lawful orders and perform all assigned duties.

(4) Required upon order to serve in combat or other hazardous situations.

Laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice to me. Such changes may affect my status, pay, allowances, benefits, and responsibilities as a member of the Armed Forces REGARDLESS of the provisions of this enlistment/reenlistment document.

D. CERTIFICATION AND ACCEPTANCE

I certify that I have carefully read this document, including the partial statement of existing United States laws in Section C and how they may affect this agreement. Any questions I had were explained to my satisfaction. I fully understand that only those agreements in Section B and Section C of this document or recorded on the attached annex(es) will be honored. I also understand that any other promises or guarantees made to me by anyone that are not set forth in Section B or the attached annex(es) are not effective and will not be honored.

E. CONFIRMATION OF ENLISTMENT OR REENLISTMENT

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.

18.a. SIGNATURE OF ENLISTEE/REENLISTEE _____

b. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)

19. ENLISTMENT/REENLISTMENT OFFICER CERTIFICATION

a. The above oath was administered, subscribed, and duly sworn to (or affirmed) before me this date.

May we His people cry out with a loud voice, "We have no King but Jesus."

Jesus is LORD. Amen.

Re: Christian State? - posted by savannah, on: 2011/6/30 9:33

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

I am not a U.S. Patriot nor do I believe the U.S. is a christian state/country but...

Hey Christian state
Why do we perpetuate the hate
With all our tools of death
Stopping another man's breath

What about what we heard
About people being murdered
From the one you represent
With a celebration of Advent

How can we follow him
Yet kill on the whim
Of powerful men who
Tell us what to do

It is clear that your peacemaker
Came to world to be a changer
Of the hearts of evil men
To warn them of their sin

Yet we kill and kill
Never thinking of his will
That you pray be done
In the name of the one

That you claim to worship
While refusing the courtship
Of those who want peace
Bringing to earth a new lease

On life by allowing love to flourish
Instead we are seen to brandish
Other wordly weapons of destruction
Contributing to man's dysfunction

In his relationship with a higher power
That has so clearly tried to shower
Us with a message of love and peace
Yet our militaristic actions never cease

We want to go to heaven
But our actions serve to unleaven
Our rise to a higher level of being
Blinded by lies the truth we are not seeing

I don't blame your patriotic thought
You don't know what your country has wrought
Over the years in a quest for power
We want our enemies to cower

In the face of our national interest
Which conflicts with reality's firmest
Wish for mankind to come together
And shed our fears of one another

Do you think God is only on our side
Someone is taking us for a ride
This supposed God is there for all
Even the man you desire to fall

I know it is confusing
But there is no excusing

That the horror of it all is suppressed
As we believe our cause is blessed

But the word was for all men
Re-read the book you defend
It is clear what was meant
Don't try to circumvent

The Sermon on the Mount
Jesus brings the world to account
For actions that harms others
Don't kill them, they are your brothers

You don't even have to believe in him
Or any other legend
To know the message is true
Yet so many speak but cannot do

It's time for a new day
Where our needs are not in the way
Of others who also want love
From your supposed Lord above

You believe he knows everything we think and do
Then it is not too late to start anew
Regardless of belief we must work with each other
And not force them to run for cover

From bombs raining down
From a nation wearing a crown
Of belief in the almighty
Causing Christianity to be unsightly

To others who wonder about us
And how we can ignore Jesus
And his message of love and peace
It is time for hostilities to cease

The Suburban Poet

Re: THE TRIAL AND INCARCERATION OF JOHN BUNYAN - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/6/30 11:21

Thanks for posting this inspiring account of Bunyan before the court. This testimony is almost as powerful as the "Pilgrim's Progress". I love this book plus part two which deals with Christiana (Christian's wife) and the children.

Re: THE TRIAL AND INCARCERATION OF JOHN BUNYAN, on: 2011/6/30 14:39

One of my all time favorite biographies. Here is a very well done... historical account of Bunyan over at Wikipedia. I thought it worth noting.

Abounding grace... is a strongly anointed work. Bunyan's blind daughter, the apple of his eye, and sunshine of his life, died in one of his jailings. He adamantly refused release from prison, with the payment being freedom in Christ. Freedom to meet, and Freedom to preach....much the same way as our Chinese brothers and sisters today..

Bunyan, of all men of his time, paved the way for a free Church, Free meetings, and Free preaching. I don't count weeping as anything spiritual, necessarily, but I did upon reading this work, Chief of Sinners. Bunyan paid the price...and I wondered how a man could love Jesus as much as he.....

In 1628, John Bunyan was born to Thomas Bunyan and Margaret Bentley at Bunyan's End, in the parish of Elstow, Bedfordshire, England. Bunyan's End was located approximately halfway between the hamlet of Harrowden (one mile southeast of Bedford) and Elstow's High Street.

He is recorded in the Elstow parish register as having been baptised John Bunyan, on 30 November 1628.

In 1623, Thomas had married his first wife and, like his father before him, would marry two more times within months of being widowed. On May 23, 1627, Thomas married Margaret Bentley. Like Thomas, Margaret was from Elstow and she was also born in 1603. In 1628, Margaret's sister, Rose Bentley, married Thomas' half-brother Edward Bunyan. They were working-class people, with Thomas earning a living as a chapman but he may also have been a brazier - one who makes and/or mends kettles and pots. Bunyan wrote of his modest origins, "My descent was of a low and inconsiderable generation, my father's house being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families of the land".

John was probably educated at his father's house, possibly with other poor country boys, but in his writings he refers to his days in school. So he must also have spent some time at a school, possibly the one in Houghton Conquest. Some think that Bunyan may have attended Bedford Grammar School but some records show that only pupils living in the Borough of Bedford were eligible for a place there. Either way, his later writings demonstrate a high degree of English literacy.

Like his father, John chose a job 'on the road', by adopting the trade of tinker. This was a fairly skilled but lowly occupation. As few people could afford to purchase new pots when old ones became holed, they were mended time and time again. Therefore the arrival of a tinker was often be a welcome sight but the semi-nomadic nature of their life led to tinkers being regarded (by some) in the same poor light as gypsies.

1644 was an eventful year for the Bunyan family - in June, John lost his mother and, in July, his sister Margaret died. Following this, his father married (for the third time) to Anne Pinney (or Purney) and a stepbrother, Charles, was born. It may have been the arrival of his stepmother which, following his 16th birthday led John to leave the family home and enlist in the Parliamentary army.

From 1644–1647, John served at Newport Pagnell garrison. The English Civil War was then nearing the end of the first stage. John was probably saved from death one day when a fellow soldier volunteered to go into battle in his place and was killed while walking sentry duty. After the civil war was won by the Parliamentarians, Bunyan returned to his former trade.

In his autobiographical book, *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan wrote that he led an abandoned life in his youth and was morally reprehensible as a result. However, there appears to be no outward evidence that he was any worse than his neighbours. Examples of sins to which he confesses to are profanity, dancing, and bell-ringing. The increasing awareness of his (in his view) un-Biblical life led him to contemplate acts of impiety and profanity; in particular, he was harassed by a curiosity in regard to the "unpardonable sin", and a prepossession that he had already committed it. He was known as an adept linguist as far as profanity was concerned, even the most proficient swearers were known to remark that Bunyan was "the ungodliest fellow for swearing they ever heard".

He continually heard voices urging him to "sell Christ," and was tortured by fearful visions. While playing a game of Tip-cat, on Elstow village green, Bunyan claimed to have heard a voice which asked: "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven or have thy sins and go to hell?" Because Puritans held sacred the Sabbath day and permitted no sport, John believed it this had been the voice of God, chastising his indulgent ways. John's spirituality was born from this experience and he began to struggle with his sense of guilt, self-doubt and his belief in the Bible's promise of damnation and salvation. In 1649, when he was about 21, he moved into a cottage on the western side of the northern end of Elstow's High Street.

In 1650, he married a young woman, an orphan whose father had left her only two books as her inheritance. (Her name is not recorded but, as the Bunyan's first, blind, daughter, (born in 1650) was called Mary, it is possible that she was named after John's wife.) The two books were; Arthur Dent's *Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and Lewis Bayly's *Practice of Piety*. The content of these two books appear to have strongly influenced John towards a religious life.

The Bunyans' life was modest to say the least. Bunyan writes that they were "as poor as poor might be", not even "a dish or spoon between them".

As John struggled with his newfound Christian faith, he became increasingly despondent and fell into mental turmoil. Du

ring this time of conflict, Bunyan began a four year long discussion and spiritual journey with a few poor women of Bedford, who belonged to a nonconformist sect which worshipped in St. John's Church. He also increasingly identified himself with St. Paul, who had characterised himself as "the chief of sinners", and believed he was one of the spiritual elite, chosen by God.

As a result of these experiences, John Bunyan was baptised and received into St John's church and he began to follow the teachings of its pastor, John Gifford.

A second daughter, Elizabeth was born in 1654.

In 1655 Bunyan moved his family to St Cuthberts Street Bedford. That same year, John Gifford died and John started preaching.

John's son Thomas was born in 1656, his first book "Some Gospel Truths" was published and John Burton was appointed minister at St Johns church. In 1657, Bunyan became a deacon of St. John's Church, Bedford. His son John was born and his second book "Vindication" was published.

Imprisonments:

Bedford Old Bridge, with the jail in which Bunyan was imprisoned. As his popularity and notoriety grew, Bunyan increasingly became a target for slander and libel; he was described as "a witch, a Jesuit, a highwayman" and was said to have mistresses and multiple wives. In 1658, aged 30, he was arrested for preaching at Eaton Socon and indicted for preaching without a licence. He continued preaching, however, and did not suffer imprisonment until November 1660, when he was taken to the county gaol in Silver Street, Bedford. In that same year, Bunyan married his second wife, Elizabeth, by whom he had two more children, Sarah and Joseph. The Restoration of the monarchy by Charles II of England began Bunyan's persecution as England returned to Anglicanism.

Meeting-houses were quickly closed and all citizens were required to attend their Anglican parish church. It became punishable by law to "conduct divine service except in accordance with the ritual of the church, or for one not in Episcopal orders to address a congregation." Thus, John Bunyan no longer had that freedom to preach which he had enjoyed under the Puritan Commonwealth. He was arrested on 12 November 1660, whilst preaching privately in Lower Samsell by Harlington, Bedfordshire, 10 miles south of Bedford.

John was brought before the magistrate John Wingate at Harlington House and refused to desist from preaching. Wingate sent him to the county gaol in Bedford to consider his situation. After a month, Bunyan reports (in his own account of his imprisonment) that Wingate's clerk visited him, seeking to get Bunyan to change his mind. The clerk said that all the authorities wanted was for Bunyan to undertake not to preach at private gatherings. John argued that God's law obliged him to preach at any and every opportunity. In January 1661, Bunyan was brought before the quarter sessions in the Chapel of Herne, Bedford. His prosecutor, Mr. Justice Wingate, despite Bunyan's clear breaches of the Religion Act of 1592, was not inclined to incarcerate Bunyan. But John's stark statement "If you release me today, I will preach tomorrow" left the magistrates - Sir John Kelynge of Southill, Sir Henry Chester of Liddington, Sir George Blundell of Cardington, Sir Wllm Beecher of Howbury and Thomas Snagg of Milbrook - with no choice but to imprison him. So Bunyan was incarcerated for 3 months for the crimes of "pertinaciously abstaining" from attending mandatory Anglican church services and preaching at "unlawful meetings".

Strenuous efforts were made by Bunyan's wife to get his case re-heard at the spring assizes but Bunyan's continued assertions that he would, if freed, preach to his awaiting congregation meant that the magistrates would not consider any new hearing. Similar efforts were made in the following year but, again, to no avail. In 1664, an Act of Parliament the Conventicles Act made it illegal to hold religious meetings of five or more people outside of the auspices of the Church of England.

It was during his time in Bedford Gaol that John Bunyan conceived his allegorical novel: The Pilgrim's Progress. (Many scholars however believe that he commenced this work during the second and shorter imprisonment of 1675, referred to below.) Bunyan's incarceration was punctuated with periods of relative freedom - lax gaolers allowing him out to attend church meetings and to minister to his congregation.

In 1666, John was briefly released for a few weeks before being re-arrested for preaching and sent back to Bedford gaol, where he remained for a further six years. During that time, he wove shoelaces to support his family and preached to his fellow prisoners - a congregation of about sixty.

In his possession were two books, John Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the Bible, a violin he had made out of tin, a flute he'd made from a chair leg and a supply of pen and paper. Both music and writing were integral to John's Puritan faith.

John Bunyan was released in January 1672, when Charles II issued the Declaration of Religious Indulgence.

1672 to 1688: In the same month as his release, John Bunyan became pastor of St John's Church. On 9 May, Bunyan was the recipient of one of the first licences to preach under the new law. He formed a nonconformist sect from his surviving parishioners and established a church in a barn in Mill Street, Bedford - the present day site of the Bunyan Meeting Free Church.

By his preaching, Bunyan became popular in Bedfordshire and several surrounding counties, such as Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire, to name a few. His own congregation at the independent church in Bedford grew strongly at this time and many village chapels, for miles around Bedford, owed their roots to John Bunyan's influence. He would even speak to large crowds and congregations as far away as London and, as his fame and popularity as a preacher increased, he became affectionately known as 'Bishop Bunyan'.

In March 1675, following Charles II's withdrawal of the Declaration of Religious Indulgence, John was again imprisoned for preaching - not, as formerly thought, in the Bedford town jail on the stone river bridge but once again in the county gaol. (The original warrant, discovered in 1887, is published in facsimile by Rush and Warwick, London.)

It was the Quakers which helped secure Bunyan's release. When the King asked for a list of names to pardon, the Society gave Bunyan's name along with those of their own members.

Within six months, John was free and, as a result of his popularity, was never arrested again although, for a time, Bunyan was said to have dressed like a waggoner, whip in hand, when he visited his various parishes - so as to avoid another arrest.

When, in 1687, the King James II of England asked Bunyan to oversee the royal interest in Bedford, John declined this influential post because James refused to lift the tests and laws which served to persecute nonconformists.

In 1688, John served as chaplain to the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Shorter.

As John Bunyan was riding from Reading, Berkshire to London, to resolve a disagreement between a father and son, he caught a cold and developed a fever. He died at the house of his friend John Strudwick, a Grocer and chandler on Snow Hill in Holborn, on 31 August 1688.

John Bunyan's grave lies in the cemetery at Bunhill Fields in London. Many Puritans, to whom worship of tombs or relics was considered most sinful, made it their dying wish that their coffins be placed as close to Bunyan's as possible.

In 1862 a recumbent statue was created to adorn his grave. He lies among other historic nonconformists, George Fox, William Blake and Daniel Defoe.

In 1874, a bronze statue of John Bunyan, sculpted by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, was erected in Bedford. This stands at the south-western corner of St Peter's Green, facing down Bedford's High Street. The site was chosen by Boehm for its significance as a crossroads. Bunyan is depicted expounding the Bible, to an invisible congregation, with a broken fetter - representing his imprisonment - by his left foot. There are three scenes from "The Pilgrim's Progress" on the stone plinth: Christian at the wicket gate; his fight with Apollyon; and losing his burden at the foot of the cross of Jesus. The statue was unveiled by Lady Augusta Stanley, wife of the Dean of Westminster, on Wednesday 10 June 1874.

The Pilgrim's Progress:

Bunyan in prison-Bunyan wrote The Pilgrim's Progress in two parts, the first of which was published in London in 1678 and the second in 1684. He began the work in his first period of imprisonment, and probably finished it during the second. The earliest edition in which the two parts combined in one volume came in 1728.

Re: Military Defense? - posted by savannah, on: 2011/7/1 9:12

Are there any here who profess to be a christian who'd care to reply in defense of being pro-military? By that I mean joining the military and encouraging not only sons, but also daughters to join as though it is an honorable thing to do. I ask that you'd please give a biblical apologetic rather than your experience or pragmatic opinion, as your reasoning in defense of it.

Please read the excerpts from the enlistment document I posted on this thread and tell me why you believe it is acceptable to God to swear by an oath to such document invoking the name of God and signing your name to it.

John Bunyan's testimony is inspiring to say the least.

FYI 1 - In my youth before I was a christian I joined the military. At present I'm not a G.I.

FYI 2 - I have no affiliation with the Charity Churches or movement(for those familiar with them),nor am I Amish or Mennonite,nor do I hold to the doctrine known to some as non-resistance,to others as non-retaliation,and to others as pacifism.

Thanks for considering all of the above with maturity and with a renewed mind.

One of His elect sons, predestined to be conformed to the image of His Only Begotten Son.

Re: Military Defense 2? - posted by savannah, on: 2011/7/1 19:42

I know what those of an Anabaptist persuasion believe and why regarding this subject,but I'd like to know what those who'd consider themselves reformed might have to say to the question in my previous post,as well as to the below question and answer from the Catechism below used in many reformed churches.

From: The Heidelberg Catechism

Question 105. What is God's will for us in the sixth commandment?

Answer. I am not to belittle, insult, hate, or kill my neighbor not by my thoughts, my words, my look, or gesture and certainly not by actual deeds and I am not to be party to this in others; rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge. I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either. Prevention of murder is also why government is armed with the sword.

Question 106. Does this commandment refer only to murder?

Answer. God's prohibition of murder teaches us that God hates the root of murder: envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness. In God's sight all such are hidden murder.

Question 107. Is it enough then that we not murder our neighbor in any such way?

Answer. No. By condemning envy, hatred, and anger God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves, to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness towards them, to protect them from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.

Thanks for your consideration.

Re: The Sixth Commandment - posted by savannah, on: 2011/7/3 7:43

The purpose of this commandment is: the Lord has bound mankind together by a certain unity; hence each man ought to concern himself with the safety of all. To sum up, then, all violence, injury, and any harmful thing at all that may injure our neighbor's body are forbidden to us. We are accordingly commanded, if we find anything of use to us in saving our neighbor's lives, faithfully to employ it; if there is anything that makes for their peace, to see to it; if anything harmful, to ward it off; if they are in any danger, to lend a helping hand. If you recall that God is so speaking as Lawgiver, ponder at

the same time that by this rule he wills to guide your soul. For it would be ridiculous that he who looks upon the thoughts of the heart and dwells especially upon them, should instruct only the body in true righteousness. Therefore this law also forbids murder of the heart, and enjoins the inner intent to save a brother's life. The hand, indeed, gives birth to murder, but the mind when infected with anger and hatred conceives it. See whether you can be angry against your brother without burning with desire to hurt him. If you cannot be angry with him, then you cannot hate him, for hatred is nothing but sustained anger. Although you dissimulate, and try to escape by vain shifts — where there is either anger or hatred, there is the intent to do harm. If you keep trying to evade the issue, the Spirit has already declared that "he who hates a brother in his heart is a murderer"; the Lord Christ has declared that "whoever is angry with his brother is liable to judgment; whoever says 'Raca' is liable to the council; whoever says 'You fool!' is liable to the hell of fire".

—John Calvin "Institutes of Christian Religion"

"Pride is the fruitful mother of many vices, but it nurseth none with more care and tenderness than it does anger. The proud man is the greatest self-lover in the world; he loves himself without a rival." Ezekiel Hopkins