

## Local Gems

### Nicholas Stoltzfus, a Lutheran Convert

At Zweibrucken, about 40 miles east of Essingen, a marriage took place on November 10, 1717, in the local Lutheran church. The husband was Christoph Gottlieb Stoltzfus and the bride was Katharina Bermann. They soon moved to Saxony where their son Nicholas was born about 1720. Sometime later the family moved back to Zweibrucken.

Nicholas was put into an Amish home and with time joined the Amish church. Why this went unnoticed by the government is not known, perhaps because he was not Catholic, it was not important to them, or perhaps the government was more lenient at that time.

In 1744, Nicholas wished to marry an Amish girl. He asked permission from the government. A translation of his letter to them states: Relative to the application for permission from the excellent high office to proceed with the planned marriage to the daughter of the Rinckweyler farmer, an anabaptist girl, I have been referred to the office of the first prince's government, and this is because my parents have not been of this faith, but from Saxony, where I was born, my deceased father Christoffel Stoltzfus and my mother of the Evangelical Lutherland, after my father's death had to go to strangers for a time for employment. From the first time of my employment, I was, during my stay among strangers, on the farms of Cron Weisemburg, where I had the opportunity to stay with Anabaptists, because the area was farmed by them and no others. I came to like their quiet manner of conduct and was converted to it, and while I stayed there for some time and came to be employed by people of this group around Rinckweyler, I decided upon marriage now that I am 25 yrs. of age and have no inheritance from them, and through such a marriage I could come to the means of a livelihood. I am now living in the hope that my desire will be assisted, rather than hindered. In this purpose I request most humbly, of the princely ruler, that my request be considered and that marriage may be most graciously permitted. Most respectful and obedient to your royal majesty.

Nicholaus Stoltzfus

Zweibrucken, January 14, 1744

Submitted by Gideon Fisher

### A Timely Letter

*A letter from a man who returned to the Amish after 20 years.*

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? Ps. 119:9

To my dear Unknown Friends,

Greeting you in that Precious Name of Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer. To Him be all praise, honor, glory now and forever, Amen.

*Diary* *Repentant* *AMISH* *Return to Amish*

The reason I am writing to you is my wife and I were with the Beachy Mennonite Church for about twenty years, and it was also very hard on my dear Father and Mother when we left the Amish Gma. They came to visit us soon after, and admonished us out of love, and asked us to come back. But we hardened our hearts against Parental instruction and against conviction. We stopped our ears against the truth and shut our eyes against Light. In other words we were fighting against God and against our own souls. We were grieving the Holy Spirit. It is a wonder God had not removed His Holy Spirit from us, but after about a year we were with the Beachy Church I was ordained a minister and preached the Gospel of Christ, and in my Bible Study I soon saw I was but a HYPOCRITE. I would stand up in front of the church and tell parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4) and I would tell the children to obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord (Col. 3:20). Honor thy Father and Mother which is the first commandment with promise (Eph. 6:2). And all the time I knew I was not obeying and honoring my Father and Mother. I was telling others how to do and live, but I was not living up to God's command myself. (A HYPOCRITE) And in my Bible Study I saw what the end of the hypocrite will be. See Matt. 23:13-33. Also in my Bible Study I would read: To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17) And in 2 John 1:9 I would read; Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. I could see I have gone far off the right course. I cried out with St. Paul, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of death?" see Rom. 7:24. Again the Lord would speak to my conscience in a still small voice saying: Children obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord (Col. 3:20). Honor thy Father and thy Mother which is the first commandment with promise (Eph. 6:2). Yet I knew I was living in sin by not obeying my parents. I knew I was breaking God's command; and I know I was condemned. What shall I do? I can turn or burn! The devil kept telling me you can do this and you can do that and you can still be a Christian. Others are doing it, so can you. But in my Bible Study I read: For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, ARE NOT WISE. (see 2 Cor. 10:12) That is just what I was doing: I was measuring myself with others and not with Christ Who died for us. After several years my dear Mother became sick and died, went down in her grave broken-hearted. Some years later my dear Father also died and went in his grave broken-hearted. Before he died I promised my Father we want to repent and come back to the Amish Church. That gave him some consolation. But a few years elapsed and time went on, on. Our Beachy Church was dangerously drifting into the world, and again in my Bible Study I would read: Love

not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15). And again I read: Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2). And in Jer. 10:2; Learn not the way of the heathen, and in Ecc. 7:29; Lo! This only have I found that God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. One of the worst enemies dangerously lying at the door of the Beachy Church was the cursed green eyed dragen of MODERNISM. Modernism is one of the biggest idols in the world today. In my Bible Study I read: For that which is highly esteemed among man is an abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:15). All this did I find in God's mighty looking glass. I could see the abomination of desolation as a thick cloud moving in over the Church.

What were we to do? For some time we were in the Valley of Decision. (Joel 3:14). For we could see the day of the Lord approaching. Finally the Dear Lord gave us grace to come back and live our VOWS. I can say with Ruth - When I left the Amish Church I was full, but when we came back, we came back empty. (Ruth 1:21) Don't think, dear friends, this was easy. NO! NO! This was very hard on our pride, to come back to the Amish Church and give up our nice cars, tractors, our electricity and confess we had went the wrong direction. It cost many a tear, but it brought exceedingly great joy and peace into our hearts and lives. We give God all honor and glory for bringing us back. It's now 20 years that we have come back. My dear Father and Mother are in their grave and we cannot go back and confess to them, but we can still honor them by doing their will. I believe their prayers are now answered.

Now I would like to admonish you, dear Brother and Sister, out of love for Christ's sake. How vast important the command is to honor father and mother. We first find it in Exo. 20:12 in the Old Testament and again we find it in Eph. 6:1-3 where it reads: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." In Matt. 15:3-9 Jesus preached a brief sermon on this text, repeating and elaborating on the duty of honoring father and mother, and again in Mark 7:6-13. Just take a look in the book of Prov. In 6:20-23 we read: My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life;" The authority of parental instruction is commanded over and over again throughout God's mighty looking glass. God never intended young people to be independent of their parents. The right kind of instruction from anyone is valuable but from parents - always supposing them to be Godly parents is as though it is from God

Himself. They will give you God's Word and not their own. Therefore bind it continually on you (Prov. 3:3; 4:21) as your rule and let God's Word be your friend for all times.

The child who does not reverence his father and mother will not reverence the Great Creator. One who has a proper reverence and Godly respect for his parents will naturally respect the Creator. A man's inherent duty toward his parents is very much like the duty toward God. In fact we are taught to call God "Our Father which art in Heaven". It is intended that a human father should be the image and reminder of our Heavenly Father of the Christians. There are some people who will not like the teaching of this article, that children are to obey parents. There are some people who strenuously object to parents whipping children and who are these objectors? Why, they are the same people who do not believe the Bible and do not surrender and bow to the authority of the Almighty. Those who object to God's authority also object to the authority of father and mother. Every sensible person knows that those who rebel against father and mother are also rebels against God. No wonder that in Russia ruled by atheistic communist, parents were forbidden to teach their own children about God.

Rebellion of children against parents goes with rebellion against God. That is the history of the human race. In 2 Tim. 3:1-7 is a terrible catalog of the sins of man and women in the last days, Verses 2 to 4 says: For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce makers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Right in the middle of this catalog we learn that some will be blasphemers; and disobedient to parents. Unthankful, unholy, blasphemers and disobedient to parents go together. Disobedient to parents is naturally a deed of the ungrateful. Dear brother and sister just think, the scripture says that disobedience to parents is part and parcel of those terrible sins of the last days. So those who do not obey parents do not honor God.

Let us look again in God's looking glass. In Rom. 1:29-31 St. Paul points out some more of those terrible sins, and in verse 30 he says: Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, verse 31: Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful;. Please notice again nearly in the middle of these gruesome sins He names "disobedient to parents".

I am pained continually, and feel sorry for young folks who rise up against their parents in disobedience, and join a more liberal church. For I know in my heart they will reap just what they sow. Nine times out of ten if the Lord carries they will get married, if they are not already married and have children, and you will reap in your children just what you sowed. They will be disobedient to you and not listen to what you say. They will take their own way. Oh! Dear children take warning, deal faithfully with your own soul,

do it now. Today is the day of grace.

I doubt not you was prayed into this world. Your mother carried you nine months under her arms and in great pain you were born, and after you were born she wrapped you in swaddling clothes and nursed and took good care of your little body and soul. Just think what a great debt we owe to our Christian parents. Be warned - remember, children the way to heaven is paved with obedience, and the way to Hell is paved with disobedience. Have you ever given it a thought that there is a day coming when you will stand before the Judgement Bar of Christ and the books will be opened. First the book of conscience. I believe many people's conscience is now slumbering, but Oh! dear children when that day comes conscience will slumber no more. Return now with the Prodigal Son to your father's home and make the same confession the Prodigal Son did. (Luke 15:18-23) There will be great joy in heaven and also in your father and mother's house. There are many young folks who set out in life with a fair outward appearance of success just like the prodigal son did. They may contend for the faith once delivered unto the Saints (Jude 3) for awhile, but by degrees their zeal and faith are blighted by false doctrine and wax cold. They begin by entertaining doubts and by throwing off respect for precepts and obedience, but I hasten to remark, that decision is all important in this act of obedience to the divine call. There must be no hesitating about the matter. There must be no looking back with a lingering, longing look upon Sodom. "Get thee out hence". See Gen. 19:25-17. Delaying is very dangerous, decision is very important. I know it's a lot easier to go drifting with the tide of this world, than to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. (Heb. 11:24, 25)

I must now leave off and leave it to your conscience and to your God. For GOD'S WORD WILL BE THE FINAL AUTHORITY IN THE GREAT JUDGMENT DAY. May God bless this message to your soul, is my prayer. I will now close with Jude 24, 25: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

— Samuel J. Beachy, July 1992

Hoping to meet you on the Golden Shore of Everlasting Eternity!

## Migration of the Palatines From Schoharie

*By Heber G. Gearhart*

This second installment will introduce Conrad Weiser, the noted Indian interpreter. His coming to America from Germany is part of the wonderful story of the migration of thousands of German Protestants from the Valley of the Rhine, due to oppression and religious persecution.

The home of these people in Europe was a principality

known as the Palatinate, and they were known as Palatines. They were principally farmers, vine dressers or tradesmen, who at the time of the Reformation embraced the Protestant faith. Thousands of them located in Pennsylvania beginning in 1683 and for more than a century after. They were an industrious, steady group, who were classed among the best early residents of the Commonwealth.

Their homeland in the Valley of the Rhine, one of the garden spots of Europe, had been fought over for a thousand years and devastated again and again by contending armies. In 1685, upon the death of the Elector Palatine, Louis XIV of France determined to secure the principality for his brother who had married a sister of the deceased Elector. In the war which ensued the beautiful country was once again laid waste by French armies. The cruel devastation brought pestilence and famine, fields were destroyed and cattle carried off. What could not be carried away was destroyed. Churches were ransacked and the organs and bells carried away. At one time seven cities and nineteen villages were burning. Heidelberg, the capital, was destroyed. Added to this devastation by France, the new Catholic Elector attempted by cruel methods to compel the people to change their faith.

The Palatines, hearing of a haven in America, left their homes by the thousands, going down the Rhine to Holland, and from thence onward to the promised land. One of these early groups which finally settled in Pennsylvania is the subject of this discourse. Queen Anne of England, upon hearing of the distress of her German neighbors, offered them a haven in America, and promised them land in New York. It was with this group that Conrad Weiser, an important factor in the history of Pennsylvania, came to America.

In the spring of 1709, 32,000 Germans, among them the Weiser family, abandoned their native land, and fared forth in search of the promised land. The migration of these years was the greatest single migration the world has known, and has been called a landslide of humanity. They went down the Rhine river into Holland, which took several months. From thence they went on to London, where Queen Anne had promised to care for them and send them on to America. They came by the thousands, and were encamped in tents on Blackmoor on the outskirts of London, where they were located from June to December of that year, enduring the greatest hardships. Many were sent back to their homes, some were sent to Ireland, and some to North Carolina. While they were thus encamped in London, Queen Anne fed and clothed them, upon which the English people made complaint as they were also poorly nourished.

Upon their arrival, they were encamped, in tents they brought with them from England, on Governor's Island, then known as Nutting Island, where they remained for several months. Here they were placed under the care of Governor Robert Hunter for Queen Anne. This host of emigrants had as one of its leaders, Conrad Weiser, the Elder, father of the famous interpreter.