

## Faith and Conscience

**Dear Brothers,**

**To follow up on my last letter to Martin concerning Andreas' faith and conscience**, I want to help clear up just what I mean, so there would be no confusion.

Let each man be “fully” convinced in his own mind. Here, “fully” simply means that his conscience won't reprove him for what he does or approves of. The *mind* here is fully persuaded by the *heart*. Both are in agreement. This is faith only when one's mind is fully convinced. Man's *emotional* part of his mind is far greater than his will and intellect. Fallen man lives merely by the emotions, for within man they are over-developed and the will is under-developed. We must be able to be fully persuaded by our *heart* or *spirit*. Many know something is an accusation in their mind, but in their heart they believe it. Here the mind rules over the heart. This is the one that Rom 8:13 speaks of — the one who will die. We only live if we live by faith — faith is that our heart is in communion with the Spirit of God; and that by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the mind or soul, flesh, our own life — which must die to follow the Spirit.

It is true that Andreas, as anyone, should be able to be at perfect peace in taking on the conscience and faith of the Body —*but* where does the whole Body get their *true* faith and good conscience to do a certain thing? Is everyone fully convinced, or are just a few convinced in reality but the rest just say, “Amen,” in rote obedience? Thus Andreas, for example, somehow takes on *this “amen”*, which wasn't a true “amen”, and brings judgment on the whole church. The government now is mentioned in Mt 18:18-20. This government of elders is in entire agreement — heart and mind. *This is faith*. The governmental meetings are made up of those who are keenly interested in the affairs of the whole church and are sitting on the edge of their seats in ready anticipation, minds engaged, spirits attached in communion with the Holy Spirit and the spirits of their brothers. This is the only “two or three” or more where He is in their *midst*. One person in this meeting can keep this promise from being fulfilled. One *sleepy elder*, one unbelieving elder, one elder who is not filled with *holy anticipation* for the Kingdom of God to come and for Satan to be driven out of the church, one elder who did not come in fear and trembling to this “gathering” in ready anticipation to make judgments for the living God, which determines the whole course and direction of the Body of Messiah — that one will keep the promise from being fulfilled. The *Head* of the Body speaks in this meeting through the *whole assembled* governmental brethren and it takes only one to get the Head's directions diverted and the Body will veer off the course. Each brother has come to this holy meeting filled with the Spirit and grace, or else they cast themselves down at the beginning of the meeting, confessing their sins — then it would be proper to pray for him after he cries out for help or deliverance, fearing that he could be the cause of the quenching of the Spirit in that meeting. This is the government of God. May the increase of *this* government never end, until all *fit* into the Kingdom of God and the Holy City with twelve gates.

A man of the church, then, must come to his own faith and not “feel” himself being forced by the “amen” of the church, or the governmental decision. But let it be his own faith that he has before the Lord.

On a matter in which there has been no judgment, but is still a matter of individual conscience, where there is no law against it, no decree made or nothing mentioned in the epistles or the Bible concerning it, we must let it be the faith of the individual. There has been no such decision for instance, concerning alternative service — going or not going — but there has been about war or training for war, and about boot camp, where murder is instilled into the person and his conscience made to be silenced by man-made laws governing the nation — and about circumcision, the wearing of hear, washings, etc. No man-made decree can make the conscience of another be excused before God. Your conscience is the judgment seat within yourself. The person, elder, nation's president, who enforces these laws or restrictions, will not stand in your place at the judgment. Each man will answer for what he did according to his own conscience (Rom 2:13-16). Even a policeman is not excused before God when duty calls him to do something which goes against his own conscience. Those who told him to do this action will stand before God but also the one who carried it out in obedience will also be

condemned. In the armed forces, the one doing the killing, pulling the trigger, is not excused before God just because he was under authority of the nation. Even in the church, our covering to do such and such does not excuse us before God, unless we did it in faith.

A man must come to his own faith and not “feel” forced by the Body. If he “feels forced”, it is because he is not hearing from the Lord himself, or the whole Body is wrong. The elders are wrong; the whole Body is hardly greater than the one out of fellowship, since all are all one, and a little leaven leavens the whole lump. One person keeps the sacrifice from being accepted by our Father at our thanksgiving meals. Every thanks offering must be real, and it is only as real as the forgiveness he is experiencing in his own heart. Who can *feel* gratitude, when he is not experiencing forgiveness? Heb 13:15 — Whatever one does in the Body must be his own *faith* from a *mind* fully *persuaded* by the overflow of his heart in communion with the Father.

It would be best and most wonderful that when one comes to Messiah and His Body in baptism, that he would receive everything in faith and would have no “doubtful disputations”, and he would receive the Body’s “amen” or governmental decision as *truth* in the Spirit as his very own faith and conscience in *trustful* appreciation of its safety in many counselors, and would not doubt its decisions, knowing that even if it was wrong, the Lord will correct it, and that it’s a million times better than being alone in this evil world order. *But if he cannot*, we must honor him and work with him patiently, until this one sees from his own faith. But if we “insist” that he obey when he is lacking in faith and a good conscience, he will obey only with his flesh and not with his heart.

Then, if a man follows a certain course of action by his own faith in agreement with the faith and conscience of the Body, and this choice brings persecution upon himself and the whole church, then we will be suffering in the will of God, a result of obeying the Lord in faith and a good conscience — persecution for righteousness’ sake — and with grace from the Father for both himself and the church to endure this persecution. But if it is not an action of faith, there will be no grace to endure the “troubles” (not persecution for righteousness’ sake, Mt 5:11) which might accompany the action.

We must also be very patient with those who come to us with different attitudes concerning the church, who have “no true knowledge”, who still have independence, “Jesus and me”, etc. There is no way they could be convinced otherwise. But patiently bear with them in waiting for them to come to the “more excellent way.” *But when the elders decide*, they must move on.

And another “for instance”: just as *we know* that war is not justified and that the promoters of war will not stand at the judgment in the place of those they forced to fight and kill or have a part in it, but each man will have to stand for his own deeds — in going against his own conscience, or just plain cold murder. *But we know* Rom 1:32, and verses 20, 25, 28-31, and Rom 2:12-16. In the same way, we *know* that there is no way to justify sending our children to public schools (after one comes to the knowledge of the truth), and sending the seed of Abraham to public schools is deliberate and willful sin. 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Rom 12:1-2; and many other scriptures bear this out, and not only scripture verses themselves, but the whole effect of the Bible from start to finish. But not only this, but being in Messiah bears this truth upon our very hearts and minds.

So, in these cases it is not simply a matter of the conscience. If a parent persists in not disciplining their own children, and persists in sending their children to public schools, it is a matter of treating them like Gentiles. A quarantine of their entire family and an excommunication must result because their sin has developed into a social problem which will bring defilement to the whole loaf. These are matters which are not up to the individual conscience. “Waiting for them to come to this mind” does not apply here, any more than allowing one to break the law of God.

Any breaking of the commandments represents a lack of love for God and one’s neighbor. How is it that one can murder, covet, bear false witness — without affecting adversely, even hating, one’s neighbor? This is obvious and there is a law against such things (Gal 5:14-21). But there is not a law against the fruit of the Spirit (verse 23). If the whole law is fulfilled by love, the breaking of the commandments is an act of hating your brother (Rom 13:10; 1 Jn 3:15; Jms 2:1-13; Gal 5:18; Mt 5:18-19, 21-24, 29). Verses 21-22 is murder in the New Covenant, because those in the New Covenant have a stricter judgment, because it is a better covenant, where

the inner and outer must be the same. Heb 8:10-11 — The New Covenant is so much greater (Heb 9:11-17; 8:6). His very life-giving Spirit has entered into those who drink the *cup of blessing* and the bread and the wine of the New Covenant (and no one *else*).

May you brothers and sisters there continue in the love of the New Covenant, and thrive in the grace which accompanies that covenant. May this letter bring clarity to your minds and peace to your hearts.

With much love in Messiah,