

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the warning from Jesus about false prophets (see Matthew 7:15-20). Jesus said **"By their fruit you will recognize them"**. You will not recognize them by how they "look" for sometimes wolves appear in sheep's clothing. You will not recognize them by what they "say" for false prophets invariably lie. You will, however, recognize them by their "fruit", that is, by what they produce. A thorn bush does not produce grapes and a thistle does not produce figs. So a false prophet is recognized by the fruit he produces. **"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit" (Matt. 7:18)**. False prophets invariably produce bad fruit!

Global Trees Campaign spent two years consulting with 500 published sources and botanical experts from all over the world. In 2017 they published what they claim is the first list of its kind documenting all of the world's know species of trees. They list 60,065 different species of trees. An expert can identify these trees by their leaves but it is much easier to identify them by their fruit. We might be confused about leaves, but anyone can tell the difference between an apple and a pecan! Jesus used this simple illustration to teach us how to recognize false prophets

To illustrate this point let me refer again to the late George H. Walser and Liberal, Missouri. Liberal is the city which he founded. Walser was an atheist who was totally disillusioned with the Bible and Christianity. He believed that liberal thinking and atheism would produce a utopia and spent his fortune trying to prove his point. He started his own town, his own school, his own college, and his own newspaper. To insure the success of his "liberal" ideas he forbade any church within the city limits. He bragged that Liberal was the *"only town of its size in the world without a priest, preacher, church, saloon, God or hell and they are the happiest and purest people on earth"*. Walser even named streets in Liberal after his heroes like Ingersoll, Darwin, and Paine. Predictably, Walser's great experiment was a failure. Among other problems, advertising "no God" and "no churches" brought people to Liberal who were both lawless and irreligious.

A Christian preacher by the name of Clark Braden wrote an expose of Liberal entitled *"The Fulfillment of a Dream"*. What Walser "said" about Liberal was not true. It did not represent reality. The town was a failure and here are some of the facts Braden put in his booklet:

- "Hundreds have been duped into making the pilgrimage to this infidel utopia, only to waste time and money in the journey, or worse, to be swindled and losing all they invested".
- "Liberal is famous for its lawsuits. If an infidel got mad at another, he rushed before a magistrate or to Lamar and charged his enemy with some crime or misdemeanor . . . there was no trouble to get men and women to swear what was wanted . . . perjury was gross and infamous . . . profanity has ever been the commonest form of speech in Liberal".
- "The town was famous for its rows and scrapes". For example, Walser's son Mark knocked a man down and two other ruffians stomped and kicked the helpless victim. Old Walser himself was a witness to the crime and shouted "#%@# you, why don't you lie still".
- Prostitutes flocked to the dancing jamborees on Sunday night and charged a dollar for their services.
- Braden charged: "Foeticide (abortion) is the prevailing practice in Liberal . . . Mrs. Rosenkrantz, wife of the hotel keeper in Liberal, told Dr. Bouton when dying of foeticide, that it had been performed for her in Liberal sixteen times".

- “The bonds of the town and its warrants are offered at 15 cents on the dollar without purchasers”. Braden further charged that the coal mines were closing, the newspaper was being suspended, the public school had no building, and businesses were moving out of town.
- His liberal university also failed. It had 7 professors, but never more than 15 students.
- Walser’s third wife, Alice, committed suicide, a disastrous fire on Nov. 4, 1897 destroyed nine businesses on the west side of Main Street, and Walser was going broke.
- Braden was interviewed by Sam Keller of the St. Louis Globe Democrat. When the article was published Braden was arrested for criminal libel and tried before Judge Hall in Lamar on May 18, 1885. Since Braden had only told the truth he was acquitted by the jury.
- When Walser threatened to bring a civil suit against Braden for \$25,000, Braden welcomed the suit and promised to prove that Liberal was a den of infamy, and its hotels were brothels. Walser wisely decided to drop the suit.
- Walser’s “ideas” sounded good, but the “fruit” they produced proved that his ideas were bad!

In 1909, the year before his death, Walser wrote a 442 page hard back book titled “The Life and Teachings of Jesus”. In this book he said he had patiently investigated without bias all sides of mental and spiritual philosophies and described himself as a converted infidel. On page 265 he indicates that he had considered the ideas of such famous leaders as Huxley, Hume, Guizot, Macaulay, and Voltaire, but now rejected them. Then, on the following two pages he pens this remarkable tribute to Jesus:

“But there is one conqueror who stands alone, above them all; who has conquered riches with poverty, pride with humility, ostentation with meekness, hate with love. He succored the weak and suppressed the strong, reprovved the tyrant and sympathized with the oppressed. The wails of woe found pity in his heart. He was the personification of goodness, kindness. He was by nature as tender of heart as a pure woman. He was a hero in fortitude and a great warrior in the battles of right against wrong. He was a conqueror of the passions of the body and a director of the intellect to the highest stand of men’s duties one to another. The sick of body, soul, and mind were of his charge. He had a deep concern for the afflictions of the world, and in ministering to them forgot himself. And finally he transformed the dreaded king of death into a white-winged angel of peace which kisses the eyelids down upon this world that they may open again on a better and brighter one, and made the soul sing the immortal song of joy, ‘Oh, Death, where is thy sting? Oh Grave, where is thy victory?’ This was the conqueror Jesus whose words of truth pierced the hearts of men with the barbs of love and led them from the trammels of sin to the glories of righteousness, in mercy, charity, and good will toward men. Jesus, with boundless love and forgiving spirit, carried his own cross to the place of crucifixion and with calmness he met the frowns of scorn, with love he answered the shafts of hate, and as the cruel spear entered his blessed side and they could do no more, he uttered the grandest prayer that ever ascended to the throne of God: ‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do’: What a triumph! What a victory! What a conqueror!”

Walser died at his home on May 1, 1919. He was 76 years old. Court records indicate that his vast wealth was gone and his total estate was valued at only \$1,661.60. Fortunately he now has treasures in heaven for he was humble enough to admit his errors and confess Christ as his Lord.

I love you,
Grandpa Boyce

P.S. - For a book I have written about George H. Walser and Liberal, Missouri please click on:
https://boycemouton.com/downloads/george_walser_liberal_mo.pdf