

“...And he said unto me...worship God: for...

THE TESTIMONY

...of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10

— VERSE OF THE MONTH —

“...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:31–32

Vol. XIV

July 2023

No. 7

I LAY MY SINS ON JESUS

I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursed load:
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in His blood most precious,
Till not a stain remains.

I lay my wants on Jesus;
All fullness dwells in Him;
He healeth my diseases,
He doth my soul redeem:
I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases,
He all my sorrows shares.

I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father’s holy Child:
I long to be with Jesus
Amid the heavenly throng,
I sing with saints His praises,
And learn the angels’ song.

Horatius Bonar

THE TESTIMONY

CONTENTS

FRONT COVER	1
I LAY MY SINS ON JESUS.....	1
EDITORIAL	3
THE PASSING OF TIME	3
GENERAL	4
ENCOURAGEMENT TO MINISTERS	4
REMEMBER LOT	10
THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND.....	16
MEDITATIONS	20
QUESTIONS TO PONDER	20
GENERAL ITEMS	21
POEMS	1, 23
OBITUARIES	26



“And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.”

Rev. 10:6

EDITORIAL

THE PASSING OF TIME

Where has the time gone? It seems to fly by, and seems hardly possible that 2023 is half gone. As children, we felt like time moved rather slowly, but the older we get the faster it goes. My grandfather used to say that Christmas came every 30 days at his house.

The speed of time actually never changes, but the way we view it makes the difference. That speed seems to vary depending upon our focus. This was brought to my attention when I read the following quote by Henry Van Dyke: *Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but for those who love, time is eternity.*

When we're busy and want to accomplish a lot in a short time, the time seems to fly. When we're idle or waiting on something, time seems to move too slow for us. When we are enjoying what we are doing, time moves by very quickly. When we are enduring trials, temptations, pain, suffering, etc., time seems to drag on and on. Therefore, it seems evident that what we are focused on determines how we view the speed of time.

This can be a sort of self-examination for us. I stated in the beginning that time seems to fly by. Maybe I need to sit up and take notice. Why is time going so fast for me? Am I fearful of something, as the quote says? Am I too busy? Where is my focus? And how fast should the time really go for believers in the Lord Jesus? If we're truly longing for Christ's

return for His bride, the time ought to move rather slowly. In reality, I believe that time moves both fast and slow for us at any given moment because we're involved in multiple things. Time can seem to move very slowly while we're waiting on one thing, and at the same time it can also seem to move very quickly while we're enjoying something else.

This is man's view of time. How does God consider time? The several thousand years that we know as "time" is so insignificant when compared to eternity. To an eternal God, the speed of time may mean nothing to Him because He can do anything instantly, whereas time is required for us to do anything. For us, time moves slowly when we are waiting for something, and it may require much patience. God also experiences times of waiting. We are very thankful for His patience and longsuffering! God waited patiently many times for the children of Israel to be obedient, and even considered destroying them. He has also waited many times for us to be obedient to His Word, to accept His call for salvation, and yield ourselves to His service. Second Peter 3:8 tells us to "...be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And Psalm 90:4 tells us "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

I suspect that our view of the speed of time is based on the length of time that we think we

have left here—slow for children who believe they have much time left, and fast for us older ones who know that our time is short. What will it be like when we pass from time to eternity? We don't know much about that time, but according to Revelation 6:9–10, time must move slowly for the martyrs. “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

We are responsible for the time

the Lord has given to us, for we know it is short. As James records, “...For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” And as Paul writes in I Corinthians 7:29, “But this I say, brethren, the time is short...” There are lots of things we can do with our time—we can lose time or gain time, waste time or save time, stall for time, make time, or take time. It behooves us to make the best use of our time, because we'll give an account of it at judgement day. “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15–16).

Darryl Filbrun

GENERAL

ENCOURAGEMENT TO MINISTERS

This is a response to several requests over the years to share some guidelines to assist the minister.

As I went back to my file, I found a 58-year-old letter from Brother Herman Shuman, which was sincerely appreciated then and still serves today. First, I will share a few thoughts that I have been counseled in and learned over the years, and then the letter.

First—regarding opening a meeting—we were taught that 15 to 20 minutes should be sufficient. I have a note that reminds me not to have over two points. Prayer should be concluded around 10:30. (I Tim. 2:1–2).

Second—it is commonly understood that when someone has been speaking over 50 to 60 minutes, people begin to lose interest. If we leave some points out, the people are not aware of it. And a little time left for someone to close the meeting is always expedient.

Third—in closing the meeting—we expect the service to begin on time, and it is good to try to close on time.

Fourth—the Communion Sunday. When the congregation knows that there are three or four brethren to speak, many automatically divide the time by that many (if there are four, they expect about 30 minutes from each brother). Of course, it is always good to share as the Spirit directs.

Fifth—at the graveside. The primary service was at the meeting

house. We should be considerate of the weather and the fact that most of the people are standing, and many are elderly. A few thoughts from I Corinthians 15:51–58 or I Thessalonians 4:13–18 are always suitable—the hope of the resurrection.

We have always appreciated the counsel that has been shared with us through the years. May we each yield to the Holy Spirit to guide and direct as we preach the Gospel of Salvation to a dying world.

On the following pages is a loving letter sent to counsel a young minister.

Glen R. Landes

Dear Brother Glen and Sister Marlene,

Greetings in the peace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We feel prompted to write a few lines to encourage you in the new field of labor to which you have been called a short time ago. While we feel timid in approaching you in this way, seeing you have not applied to us for any advice, yet we hope you will be able to receive any good that you may find here, in the Spirit of love, even as it is sent.

Undoubtedly you have received much advice already, maybe more than you can use. So, if this is not beneficial, it can be ignored.

The Lord has need of ministers who are wholly sanctified, conse-

crated, dedicated (all similar terms) to Him, who are so yielded to Him that He may use them however He wills. Probably you have already been so dedicated to the Lord is why you have received this call. But this is a basic need of the true servant, so it is something we need to return to frequently (in fact daily) in a new self-giving to the Lord and His work. In practice, it means that when a decision must be made as to whether you will let material things suffer, when necessary, to fulfill the Lord's will for you in spiritual things, or whether you will let spiritual things and the Lord's work suffer to attain your material goals, that the Lord will know He can count on you for you are so dedicated to His will. There are few indeed who can fully succeed in both fields at once. And many of God's servants have found that to carry out His work faithfully, they had to be willing to become poorer in this world (than otherwise would have been the case) that they could become rich in faith and spiritual power.

It will do no good to waste time and energy feeling sorry for yourself or feeling others might have been more qualified. The choice fell upon you and it will be your responsibility. There certainly were not very many who felt well qualified in the start, but success crowns the efforts of those who never release their grasp of the attitude which Paul expressed in the Philippian letter (ch. 4, v. 13) "I can do all things through Christ

which strengtheneth me.” Also, II Corinthians 12:9–10. Keeping these Scriptures in mind will help us to keep on an “even keel.” They should give strength when we need it and also keep us humble as we ever remember it is “through Christ,” not of ourselves, if our labors are crowned with “success.” We will remember we are always the junior partner in the work. Therefore, all glory belongs to Him. Just to be conscious of a perfect surrender by which we become an effective instrument of the Holy Spirit will bring joy and satisfaction that increases our zeal.

As far as I have found, there is no easy way to effective preaching. It’s a little on the order of the way Winston Churchill addressed the British Nation as he assumed the powers of Prime Minister in the dark days of World War II, when he said that victory would be theirs through “blood, sweat, and tears.” To succeed in the Gospel Ministry requires entire dedication, prayer, hard work, and trust in the Lord to guide, through His Spirit.

I believe you have sufficient natural ability, understanding, and wisdom for your task, and so I encourage you to apply yourself to diligent Bible study. I know there are some among us who think all the preachers need to do is trust in the Spirit and go to church and open their mouth and the Spirit will put words in it. Now frankly, I do not understand the Bible to advocate this procedure. The Apostle Paul admonishes Timothy,

a young minister, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15). And it certainly takes study to be able to rightly divide the Word.

Personally, I find it a great asset to receive some personal “inspiration” on a text or subject, that makes it “come to life,” and sometimes when unable to get very much studying done, as I would like to do, a genuine inspiration that excited us was enough to bring forth an edifying sermon. However, I am never content to follow a lazy-man’s way to skip earnest study and effort if it can be done otherwise.

Inspirations come in various ways. I have received them while listening to another brother’s sermon, from something caught in our family Bible reading, from suggestions or questions by members, etc., sometimes from private discussions and from letters from friends. Sometimes when reading some portion of the Bible, it will suddenly offer a great deal you never caught before.

As for me personally, I keep a “sermon seed plot” developing. Some inspirations that have suggested certain themes, etc., I keep together and write down briefly the idea, and in continued Bible reading other Scriptures naturally link up with these and other thoughts come. I like to keep thoughts on each individual subject together, sometimes articles in newspapers or magazine, also po-

etry, etc., that fits the subjects are kept together until opportunity or need demands that we actually study on the subject. Then there are already a number of helps we have collected in the "seed plot."

You have probably been told this story, but I think it is basically sound advice, so I will relate it in case you have not heard it.

An old black preacher was asked for his secret of being able to preach such powerful sermons. To this query, he replied, "Well, the first thing I do, I studies myself full. Then I thinks myself clear. Next I prays myself hot, and then I just lets go."

I believe this is the real secret and a winning combination. 1) Bible study. 2) Meditation. 3) Prayer. 4) Trust in the Spirit.

I have preached a good many sermons which I realized were not near what they might have been, and always I had failed at one or more of these points. When we have been able to follow in full the advice of the old black preacher, I think without exception our efforts were edifying.

I know we are made differently and maybe what works for one might not be the best for someone else. Do not try to copy or imitate the ways, mannerisms, movements of any other minister only in so far as what would always be in harmony with the rules of good public speaking. Seek to develop "naturally" under the guidance of the Spirit, as you yield more and more to His control. Strive to be

"original" within sacred limits. We need less formality and more reality in both our preaching and public prayers.

Avoid time-worn phrases. Try to avoid falling into habits in preaching which cause people to lose interest. Do not start out making apologies. If you have good enough excuses, remain seated; otherwise "preach the Word." Try to use the best grammar possible. Talk in simple language that children can understand. Try to avoid distracting repetition of words, phrases, or gestures. Your companion and members of the family should be your helpers in calling your attention to these things when necessary, and before it gets to be bad enough as to be impossible to overcome. (The longer one goes in some such habit, the more difficult they become to break.)

The main purpose of your public speaking is to edify, etc. (I Cor. 14:3). Try your best to talk loud enough and distinct enough that all present can hear. Sometimes you must compete with crying children and commotion for people's attention. In time, you can probably train yourself to respond subconsciously to such situations, with more volume.

Face your congregation. Study them and their needs. Pray about them.

Do not attempt to uphold the doctrines of the Bible and the church with flimsy reasons. Learn the sound reasons for them and give them to your audience.

Test the reasoning of other ministers, even if they are regarded as able, before attempting to use it yourself.

Never harbor any feelings of jealousy toward any other minister. This will be a great hindrance to your own progress, peace of mind, and poise, as well as producing great harm otherwise if persisted in. Never make any unkind remarks to or about anyone.

Corresponding with a few other ministers over the brotherhood occasionally will prove beneficial to your ministry. The occasional reading of some other religious papers offers food for thought, sometimes because we agree and sometimes because we disagree with the article. The Mennonites have a paper called *The Gospel Herald*. I take it and *Moody Monthly*, *Christianity Today*, and *Eternity*. I don't find time to read very much in them especially from Spring until Fall. But they often do stimulate our thinking. Naturally one must discern as they read, for we cannot agree with near everything. Ideas we think good must be brought to the Bible to see if it will support them.

Back to sermon preparation. I find an outline a great benefit in preaching a sermon. The simpler the better. It may be suggested by our text itself or by various Scriptures bearing on our subject. The outline, generally, is never mentioned to our audience, as an outline. They may never be consciously aware of it at all! It is like the skeleton—the bones of the body—

they are a very important part but a part we are seldom conscious of. But I like an outline, because it will generally enable us to cover our subject in an orderly way, and also it will leave a structure in the mind of the listener, at once more easily comprehended and more easily remembered. Then too, when the minister has finished the course of his mental outline, he knows he is finished, and that is an ideal time to quit!

I do not recommend preaching from notes. While I make notes in the course of study and preparation, I think it is a mistake to use them visibly to preach from. The advantage to me of making an outline and notes is to fix these things in our mind. This is part of no. 1—studying myself full; also partly the fruit of no. 2—meditation and thinking myself clear. Sometimes they even come during no. 3—prayer.

After we have worked hard and faithfully followed steps 1, 2, and 3, we do not have the feeling that “we” (“me”) are going to preach a real sermon now. But having tried with the Spirit's help to do our part in preparation, we are now humbly ready as the occasion demands (step 4)—to let go—not knowing just exactly what we are going to say, but having confidence that out of this reading, study, meditation and prayer, our mind has been employed and developed, and now with our willingness to be used as an instrument, the Spirit will bring forth that which pleases Him, to edification, exhortation, comfort.

The ultimate goal is to fit ourselves in every way so that we may become only an instrument of the Spirit in delivering a message. Occasionally we succeed in this to the extent that we are no longer conscious of any effort of thought. The words come as a message fully dictated by the Spirit and we have become only a mouthpiece. We cannot nearly always reach quite the point of ecstasy. Perhaps we are not supposed to, always. Perhaps we could not retain our humility if it were always that way. Certainly, we could not appreciate the power of God working in us if it became too commonplace. But it is a great blessing to experience such as this in being "laborers together with God."

I think it is good to have some special thought or sentence to begin our discourse which will draw people's attention to the subject or text. It is good to have some concluding thought, poem, verse, or Scripture in mind that would be appropriate. In between, we may try to follow our outline as the Spirit gives utterance.

Try to live your daily life above reproach, "an example of the believers," as Paul admonished Timothy. If you fail here, you will never be able to speak loud enough to make many people hear.

As we seek to improve the gift God gives to us through experience, we continue to try to overcome faults and handicaps. Someone said of a certain one that they would have made a good minister but for two faults. One was they

had a poor delivery and secondly, they had nothing to deliver. As you know, this would be enough to prevent anyone becoming a useful servant of the Lord, and most of us find we have to be working on one or both of these faults constantly—largely through the methods I have already outlined. We have known some brethren who knew the Scriptures and could give us good reasons for the church's position, but they could not seem to talk and preach in a way to interest an audience. Others have a good voice and understand the principle elements of good delivery but seem to lack something to deliver that is worthy of their eloquence. But it takes both together to bring about edification of our hearers. So, in trying to improve our ministry, we must bring our thoughts to the Word to see if they are true; and bring them to the lives of our congregation to see how relevant they are to the needs. Then we must consider the manner of delivery to see if there is any hindrance here which can be corrected.

One of the most useful tools for a Christian minister is a sanctified imagination. There is not much really new that can be said but with this kind of an imagination there can be new ways found to express the old, old story in what will seem to the listeners to be a new and living way. Instruction and edification and comfort can be found for all kinds of listeners from the Word when a sanctified imagination is employed. But we

must visualize their problems and then find the scriptural helps to meet them.

You will possibly meet with criticism somewhere along the line. Often it is good and constructive. We must try to benefit from all such and thank our critic. Even if we should meet with what seems like destructive or unkind criticism, we should receive it with humility and hold no grudges, and even thank our critic.

We have rambled on at length. We had intended to write to you and had neglected it. Then yesterday in a letter from a beloved brother (Willard Yoder), he asked us to write to you and said he would count it a personal favor to him. So we could delay no longer.

I have been writing for four hours. The others have gone to bed a good while ago. I wanted to finish this before I quit.

Our desire is that you may be found faithful in your new calling and may become an effective instrument for communicating the Gospel of Christ.

We have never had the privilege of close fellowship with you folks, but we hope we shall enjoy that in the future.

May the blessings of the Lord abound unto you through His grace and Spirit.

In Christian love,

Herman and Ruby Shuman

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (II Tim. 4:2).

REMEMBER LOT

The man Lot is described in II Peter 2:7–8 as “just Lot.” Peter described Lot as “...that righteous man...” who “...vexed his righteous soul...” Peter presented Lot as a man of righteousness, holiness, and equity! Yet in Genesis chapter 13, Lot’s life was depicted as a warning to sinners and backsliders, a man of weakness, betrayal, deceitfulness, and treachery. He was a man whom Uncle Abram coddled, and whom God delivered out of a skirmish with kings, a man who caved to the evils of Sodom. Jesus, however, held Lot and his wife up as examples (Luke 17:28–32). We wondered, who is this man called Lot? And does God, in His righteous judgment see something in a man which we, as we judge, fail to see?

God can use both the righteous and the wicked for good. In Ecclesiastes 3:17 we read, “I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.” So, I wondered, can God see value in the life of the wicked? Paul, in Romans 14:4 writes, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s [or God’s] servant? to his own master [God] he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.” We must remember, when we judge, that every man is God’s servant.

We do not excuse sin in the life of Lot. Nor do we minimize God’s

judgment. But we are intrigued by a man living in wicked Sodom who was later called “just” and “righteous.”

LOT, THE HEBREW

There were eleven generations from Noah to Lot, including Noah’s son Shem. After the flood came Shem’s grandson Eber from whom may come the word “Hebrew.” It is said that Eber refused to participate in the building of the Tower of Babel. He and his son Peleg lived at the time of the confusion of tongues. After Peleg came six generations to Lot during which the land of Babylon deteriorated into idolatry. Daniel wrote of human sacrifice to idols in Babylon (Dan. 3). Human sacrifice was not unfamiliar to Abram when God tested him in the sacrificing of his son. It was into this culture that Lot was born.

The history of Babylon appears on clay tablets dated 2334–2279 B.C. This archeologic evidence compares well with the biblical history as recorded in Genesis. According to Genesis, the world was divided by the confusion of tongues in about 2247 B.C. History says Babylon became the capital city of the Kingdom of Ur by 2100 B.C. soon becoming the earth’s largest city. Abram was born in Ur in or about 2013 B.C. and died in Hebron in 1838 B.C. (Sources differ somewhat.) Abram, after travelling with his father from Ur, lived for a while in Haran, now Turkey. He left there

for the Land of Canaan at seventy-five years of age. Like nomadic Bedouins, Abram and Lot as nomadic sheep herders travelled from Padan-aram to Egypt and back. The family of Abram was close-knit. Years later, back in Padan-aram, Abram’s steward found a wife for Abram’s son Isaac. Rebekah was a first cousin once removed to Isaac. Lot, nephew to Abram, had a goodly heritage being a descendant of Noah, Shem, Peleg, and Eber—all good men. This was Lot, the Hebrew.

LOT, THE NOMADIC SHEEP HERDER

We read in Genesis 12:1, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.” We see here four directives. 1.) Get out of this country (Padan-aram). 2.) Leave all your kindred behind. 3.) Leave your Father’s (Terah’s) house or clan. 4.) I will show you where to go. But three verses later we read, “So Abram departed...and Lot went with him.”

We do not know if Abram chose to take Lot with him when he left Padan-aram or if Lot insisted on tagging along. If it was by Abram’s choice, perhaps it was because by this time Abram was seventy-five years old and had no heir. Perhaps he feared the patrimony of his father Terah would not be continued through his own line. Perhaps Abram thought the legacy of Te-

rah might, of necessity, pass through the line of Lot the son of his deceased brother Haran. On the other hand, if Lot was the one to make the choice to accompany his Uncle Abram, it might reflect a self-serving nature in Lot. In either case, it was a bad choice since God had specifically told Abram to leave all his kindred. Human sacrifice was a test in Abram's call to offer up Isaac, and life in Babylon had rubbed off on Lot.

In time, famine caused Abram to go down to Egypt. Lot went with him to Egypt, for in Genesis chapter 13 we read that, "Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south." Abram returned to Beth-el [the house of God] through which he had passed on the way to Egypt. We think these nomadic Hebrews were like Bedouins today, looking for oases where they could find water and grass for their sheep. In time, both Abram and Lot became wealthy. "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents." In time the land could no longer support them both so large was their wealth and flocks. We are familiar with the choice between the well-watered plains versus the hill country. Having been born in the flatlands of Ur about the great city of Babylon, it was not strange that Lot should choose the lowlands about the Dead Sea and the plain about the city of Sodom. He thought he might feel

more at home there than living as a nomad following the flocks and living in tents. Genesis 13:6 says the combined wealth of Abram and Lot "...was great, so that they could not dwell together." I wonder if Lot said, "Uncle Abram, you just take the flocks. I won't be able to care for them down near Sodom." I wonder if he even longed a little for the idol worship of Sodom which was more like that which he had experienced growing up in Ur. Abram had already pitched his tent "...between Beth-el and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there [as he had passed through] at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD." Maybe Lot even felt a little uncomfortable in the presence of the One God which Abram worshipped.

Lot dwelt in tents from Padan-aram to Egypt and back to Beth-el living in the shadow of his uncle. This was Lot, the nomadic sheep herder.

LOT, ON CITY COUNCIL

Growing up as a Hebrew near an evil city in Chaldea, Lot was accustomed to idol worship where human life was cheap, and wives and children were of little or no value, Lot felt more at home near Sodom. It seemed self-serving, arrogant, and disrespectful of Lot to say, "I'll just take the city life, Uncle Abram. You can have the sheep." This shows the nature of Lot. But with Lot out of his life, Abram could now obey the Lord

who said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." But there remained one more step in the liberation of Abram. God demanded of Abram an unwavering faith. God would not tolerate the human sacrifice of Ur. Hence, the familiar test of Abram on Moriah as recorded in Genesis 22.

Lot moved to the plain but was soon found in the city of Sodom and even in city government. In Genesis 19:1 we read, "...and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom." To sit in the gate was a position of honor. The older, more wealthy, worthy men of wisdom sat in the gate. When a dispute arose in those days men went to the gate of the city to present their case and to find judgment. "The Gate" was the courthouse. Lot even served as "Chamber of Commerce" welcoming strangers at the gate and sometimes even into his own house.

Lot had come far from his Hebrew lineage back in the land of the Chaldeans. This was Lot, sitting in the gate of the city.

LOT, THE DEGENERATE

Lot tried to accommodate everyone, from visiting messengers to local hooligans. Sin was rampant in Sodom, "the sin of Sodom" being famous even to our day. The men of the city, old and young from every quarter sought to "know" the strangers who lodged at Lot's house. "To know" is a euphemistic and less offensive term used by

the translators of the King James Authorized Version. This activity is known even today as "sodomy." It leaves the reader today free to imagine the most scandalous, wicked behavior. Lot "vexed his righteous soul" over these evil men. But he even called them "brethren"! An example to us today that we must not become tainted with the wickedness of our current society. As an example of Lot's degeneration, he offered his own two daughters to his brutal "brethren" to do with them what they would. God had rescued Lot before. In Genesis 14 we read where certain kings attack Lot's city and carried him away. Abram raised an army to rescue his nephew. Now God was about to destroy Sodom and again Abram intervened. The number of ten righteous in Sodom was not a random number. Abram was positive there were more than ten. In Genesis 19:12-14 we read, "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place...And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law." Abram had reason to believe there were at least ten righteous in Sodom. Sadly, some of Lot's own fami-

ly were as wicked as the rest.

How could Lot stoop so low! But this was Lot, the degenerate. It got worse.

LOT, THE DEPRAVED

That Lot was a righteous man is shown by the fact that God could not destroy the righteous with the evilness of Sodom. God could not destroy the wicked so long as there was any “righteousness” there. God destroyed Sodom and all the cities of the plains, but He removed the righteous first—only four souls. But Lot didn’t take God seriously. He left Sodom arguing with God about where he would go for safety. He argued for a way better than God’s. God said, “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.” But Lot whined, “Oh, not so, my Lord...I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.” He feared death by some wild beast more than to be consumed by the judgment of Sodom! His heart was still in Sodom. Lot’s wife—who was never even named—still had a heart for home. Certain Jewish writers say Lot’s wife was a native of Sodom. Perhaps she enjoyed a nice house there, and the social life, and the status. Her husband had been an elder in the gate. Perhaps she thought of her sons, her daughters, and her sons-in-law there. Perhaps she had grandchildren there—grandchildren who would

grow up in a city of sodomites. We have no indication in Genesis 19 that Lot cared at all for his wife and daughters. He just wanted to go over to a little village called Zoar, which among other things, means “contemptable.” But God destroyed all the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah and all “that which grew upon the ground”—a scorched earth strategy, “... turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes.” “And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain...for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave.” A cave was a long way from his father’s house. But it got even worse.

I have a feeling that the abuse of alcohol and the practice of incest didn’t begin that day in that cave. Lot may have lived a life of debauchery of Sodom, where all manner of lust and licentious behavior existed. Now Lot reached the depth of human depravity. At this low point Lot fathered the Moabites and the Ammonites—tribes and peoples who continued to harass the people of God throughout the periods of the Judges, the Kings, and the Prophets.

LOT, THE AGED

We do not know Lot’s last days nor how he died. God, in His mercy, was able to get Lot out of Sodom. We do not know if He was ever able to get Sodom out of Lot. We do know that Jesus used the example of Noah and of Lot in Luke 17:26–33, concluding His dis-

course, “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed...Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.” Lot lived most of his life for self. He clave to his Uncle Abram when God told Abram to get away from his kinsfolk. Lot chose what he thought to be the best of the land and idolatrous city life, leaving the less desirable to Abram. He reveled in a position of

That Lot was a righteous man was shown by the fact that God could not destroy the wicked so long as there was any “righteous” there. God destroyed Sodom but He removed the righteous first...

esteem and honor in Sodom—a place in the gate of the city. He was willing to compromise his wife and daughters for wealth and position—even to the point of sacrificing the virginity of his daughters to appease the wickedness of the sodomites. Finally, he even quarreled with God over leaving Sodom. I think he still hoped to return to the life of self-indulgence which he enjoyed there. Old habits continued in a mountain cave. This was Lot’s later life. We don’t know how he died.

SUMMARY

Why God had mercy on Lot we do not understand. Why He does not scorch the earth with fire and brimstone today we do not know. Except that it isn’t time yet. The life of Lot, as told in Genesis, shows a very weak, sometimes ungodly man. In the New Testament he is shown in a somewhat different light. Jesus said that in the days of Lot, life went on about as usual until destruction came. “Likewise, also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that [righteous] Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.” Judgment will come but not until the righteous are removed to safety.

In II Peter 2:5–9 the Apostle recalls those words of the Lord recounting the days of Noah and the days of Lot. Even though living amidst the filthy conversation and wickedness of Sodom, there must have been something worth saving yet deep in the soul of Lot. By all human standards, Lot was not an example of integrity and uprightness. Yet Peter wrote of God’s judgment of the destruction of the wicked and the preservation of the righteous. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preach-

er of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished..." Peter used the descriptors "just" and "righteous" to describe Lot. Abram, referring to Lot and his family, pled with God for ten righteous souls left in Sodom. Finally, Jesus in Luke 17 compared Lot with Noah in that He would not destroy the righteous from off the earth along with the wicked. In Luke 15 our Lord gave the familiar example of the reckless, extravagant, prodigal son who wasted his substance on unconstrained rebellion and debauchery—but in the end was welcomed into the arms of a loving Father.

All of us have been guilty of offending our God—some more than others. All of us, by human nature if nothing else, have been guilty of both overt and secret sins. We have not lived up to the standard of righteousness which we should—or that God has a right to expect of His children. Yet God

saw in Lot something worth saving. We are reminded of the words in Romans 9:21–24 where Paul suggests that the potter (God) has the right to make of the clay anything He wishes—whether a vessel to sanctification or a vessel for common use. And what if He is willing to bear patiently with the rough, crude, and common vessels in order to show, by His mercy, His power to the more special vessels? God judges not after the seeing of the eye nor the hearing of the ear. Rather, He judges righteous judgment.

Remember Lot.

And remember Lot's wife. She must have suffered much, living with a husband like that!

Marcus Miller

THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND

Christ's words in Matthew 6:24 states: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [or whatever you trust in]." This affirms the principle that two opposite ways of thinking cannot occupy our minds at the same time. God is calling us as His redeemed children to let go, mortify, and put off sinful thoughts, attitudes, values, perceptions, emotions, and actions, so

that we might be filled with righteous thoughts, attitudes, values, perceptions, emotions, and actions which are an imitation of God Himself.

Unfortunately, this is much easier said than accomplished because our flesh resists this change of occupancy. Because of our inherited sinful nature, deceptive and unrighteous thoughts are natural and satisfying to our flesh. We feel justified in our own opinions and become stuck in torturous ruts of wrong negative thinking, reacting to perceived offenses, real hurts, and circumstances beyond our control. We try to muddle through our cares and concerns on our own strength convinced we can handle them without God's intervention. We become defeated and despondent; feel isolated, frightened, and empty. Yet, God is calling us as His dear children to have a transformed renewed mind based on His Truth and He clearly outlines the method in His Word! (Reading these Scriptures with prayerful meditation on your own will benefit you greatly in understanding God's design as what follows is but a brief outline. I suggest using an amplified version to find an expanded meaning of word usage.)

The Apostle Paul in Romans 12 pleads with us as believers in Christ on the foundation of God's great mercy toward us, that we voluntarily decide to dedicate our body and faculties (thoughts, emotions, actions etc.) as a living sac-

rifice to Him. Sacrifice means death; a living sacrifice means we are giving up (killing) our self-focused life and allowing the resurrected Christ to create a new transformed life within us by the renewal of our mind. We begin to think in an entirely new way, have a new purpose, and express new attitudes as we begin to comprehend the good, acceptable, and perfect desires God has planned for us. As a "living sacrifice" this becomes a daily action of deliberately laying down our fleshly thoughts and impulsive attitudes as an offering to be slain on God's altar. We then are made alive by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and He begins to teach us how to live in God's expressed will.

In Ephesians 4:22-24 Paul describes this daily process as stripping and discarding the former lusts and desires that spring from delusions (believing lies). Just casting away the old nature without putting on the new spiritual nature leaves us vulnerable. Jesus relates this in His story of the unclean spirit who was cast out of an individual but found no rest for himself. This evil spirit observed that his former home had been cleaned but remained unfurnished. He decided to bring seven stronger evil spirits with him, and they forcefully entered his previous residence causing the end result to be disastrous for that individual. (Matt. 12:43-45) The devil, Paul says (Eph. 4:25-27) will use lies and anger in us to gain a foot-

hold in foiling the putting on of our new nature. He pleads with us in verse 30 to consider deeply how our unholy thoughts, emotions, and actions grieve and vex the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will help us banish all wrong thinking and acting, and He gives us the power to put on the new God-like nature of true righteousness and holiness. Walk in the light shunning the darkness, Paul continues, learning more and more about what is pleasing to God. He urges us to put on God's armor each morning as surely as we clothe our bodies for the day so that we are able to resist the devil and stand firm in our new calling, praying always (listening, interceding, and asking), keeping watch over our thoughts, emotions, and actions with strong purpose and perseverance. (Chapters 5–6)

Colossians 3 tells us to have an eternal perspective by aiming at and seeking the things that are above, setting our mind on a straight course for our heavenly home, and keeping it set there. To do this, Paul says, we must kill, deaden, and derive of power our evil desires. Toss on the rubbish heap those old filthy thoughts, emotions, speech, and actions and be clothed in a new spiritual self which is modeled after Christ's life. Let God's Holy Word have its home in your heart, and God's peace will act as an umpire deciding every controversy or question which arises in our hearts according to His will.

Apostle Peter in II Peter 1:3–13 reminds us to exercise consistently in our new life in Christ. He outlines a spiritual work-out plan with God providing everything we need to be spiritually fit to live a victorious life dedicated to His service. He gives us the power to flee and escape all the rottenness and corruption that is in the world. We are then called to exercise with diligence on a daily basis continually adding to our spiritual regimen of faith in Christ; virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. This ensures that our continued spiritual growth is healthy and strong and prevents us from becoming weak, idle, and unfruitful.

Paul speaking in II Timothy 1:6–7, calls us to stir up, rekindle the embers, fan the flame, and keep burning the Holy Spirit that lives within us. This flame of God's eternal presence given to each believer when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior can be quenched by our neglect and disuse. When we choose to listen to His voice and actively follow His leading, fear will disappear and we will be filled with power, love, and a calm well-balanced mind ruled with discipline and self-control.

In conclusion, Philippians 4 gives us the daily reality of putting on our new nature in Christ. We must first throw away our fretfulness, worries, and anxieties about things we cannot control,

and imagined fears, and instead, rejoice in the Lord and pray with thanksgiving. God's peace will then guard and protect our mind (be our umpire) by helping us choose to think on those things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. We will be content with our situation in life relying on God's all sufficiency, confident that He will provide for and help in our every need.

Notice that all these Scriptures speak of a deliberate choice followed by vigorous activity in a specific direction. First we kill, deaden, discard, toss away, put off, and flee anything that feeds our fleshly nature, and then we decide to dedicate, walk in the light, aim at, set our mind at, keep watch, have a strong purpose, persevere, discipline, exert self-control, exercise, put on, and stir up. There are certain principles of spiritual vitality from which there is no escape; you cannot have victory without engaging in battle; you cannot grow in strength without exercising, and you learn the most valuable lessons through suffering. I fear that in our culture of instant satisfaction, comfort, and self-focus, we are forfeiting the overcoming power Christ spoke of to the seven churches in the Revelation. To be an overcomer is to vanquish or surmount difficulties. To be a conqueror through Him who loves us, we must practice the Word of God daily and fully engage in utilizing the power of the Holy Spirit within us. (Romans 8)

"O LORD, YOU and YOU alone will guard and keep us in perfect and constant peace when our mind, both its inclination and its character is stayed on YOU, because we commit our self to YOU, we lean on YOU and have confident hope in YOU. We will trust in YOU forever; for YOU alone are an everlasting ROCK of AGES."

Amen!

(Isaiah 26:3-4 paraphrased)

Psalm 68:19 says, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits..."

Following is a short list of some of the abundant benefits we experience with a transformed renewed mind. Continue to add others as you experience the reality of being a new creature in Christ Jesus.

In place of fear...courage

(Joshua 1:9)

In place of doubt...faith

(Galatians 2:20)

In place of worry...peace

(John 14:27)

In place of anxiety...trusting calmness

(Luke 10:38-42)

In place of discouragement...hope

(Hebrews 6:18-20)

In place of depression...joy

(John 15:11)

In place of insecurity...security

(Ephesians 1:3-6)

In place of covetousness...contentment

(Hebrews 13:5-6)

In place of loneliness...His presence

(Exodus 33:14)

In place of hurts...healing

(Psalm 147:3)

In place of sorrow...comfort

(II Corinthians 1:3-5)

In place of resentment...forgiveness

(Ephesians 4:32)

In place of anger...self control
(Proverbs 16:3)

In place of lustful thoughts...pure
thinking (Philippians 4:8)

In place of criticism...encouragement
(Romans 14:19)

In place of pride...humility
(Philippians 2:3–8)

In place of hatred...charity
(I Corinthians 13)

In place of selfishness...self-
sacrifice (Romans 12:1–3)

In place of evil speech...blessing
(I Peter 3:9)

*“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and
forget not all his benefits” (Ps.
103:2).*

Sherda Garber

MEDITATIONS

It is possible to live a “goodly” life—yet not be conformed to a “godly” life.

When you are down to nothing, God is probably up to something.

Something too small to pray about is too small to worry about.

Don’t interfere with anything that doesn’t concern you.

Faith makes it possible to see invisible things.

Deception doesn’t just happen overnight.

End life well—don’t just fade out.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

This section offers some questions to think about, or for Sunday afternoon discussions, or to prompt future articles from our readers, etc. Readers are encouraged to offer questions.

On page 25 of this issue, a poem can be found entitled, **“How Big Was Alexander?”** Here a son engages his father with questions regarding the famed conqueror, who has been called **Alexander the Great**.

This Alexander, a Macedonian king, conquered the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, the Middle East, and parts of Asia in a remarkably short period of time.

The lad in the poem hears the name of this man in history, and has some simple questions for his father.

Questions:

1. Is there anything wrong with this lad’s simple questions?
2. Can I think of any reasons why these questions could be confusing to men and women of society today?
3. Are these questions confusing to **us** in any way?
4. How do I feel about his father’s answers? Do they seem complete?
5. Do these answers satisfy the lad?
6. How could this conversation make a difference in our world today?
7. What would happen if everyone had the understanding of this boy?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

May 13, 2023; Kidron Valley, KS
Mike Porter

COMMISSIONS

May 22, 2023; Olive Branch, OH
Sheldon Bowman (with wife Rebecca)
Ordained to the Eldership

COMMUNION NOTICES

Sept. 23, 2023 Pleasant View, OH
Sept. 30, 2023 Providence, IN
Oct. 14, 2023 Maple Grove, OH
Oct. 14, 2023 Clearwater, IN
Oct. 14, 2023 Zillah, WA
Oct. 14, 2023 Western Kansas, KS
Oct. 21, 2023 Stillwater, OH
Nov. 4, 2023 Columbia River, WA
Nov. 4, 2023 Kidron Valley, KS
Nov. 11, 2023 Covington, OH
Nov. 11, 2023 Shenandoah, VA
Jan. 27, 2024 Pine Grove, FL

HARVEST MEETINGS

July 2, 2023 Lower Twin, OH
July 23, 2023 Shiloh, OH
July 30, 2023 Bethel, OH
Aug. 6, 2023 Maple Grove, OH
Aug. 13, 2023... Covington/Sugar Grove, OH
Aug. 20, 2023 Salem, OH
Aug. 27, 2023 Stillwater, OH
Sept. 10, 2023 Bear Creek, OH

2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This year we gathered at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana, to hold our Annual Conference. The weather was very favorable as we assembled, and it was a joy again to see old acquaintances and renew friendships. The Central Congregations of our extended brotherhood (New

Mexico and Kansas) were wonderful hosts for this Conference, and graciously labored to accommodate our many needs during the days that we were assembled.

Most of the members gathered in on Friday, June 2, and in the evening, many assembled in the main sanctuary to hear several brethren speak concerning the work they are engaged in, in various places around the world. It was a very meaningful time of reflection and resolve.

Saturday morning we gathered in the sanctuary and lifted our voices in song and prayer, and heard a message exhorting us to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1). We were encouraged, just like the young man Timothy was instructed, “keep that which is committed to thy trust” (I Tim. 6:20).

In the Saturday afternoon session, various brethren spoke, teaching us all to trust in God and the working of His Spirit, and that God has a plan, and we each should be content to let Him freely work. The need for the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit was explained and illustrated, and the clear teaching was given that nothing can be done without Him.

Those who gathered for worship on Sunday morning heard a stirring message that lifted our hearts to proclaim, like the Psalmist, “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the

LORD'S name is to be praised" (Ps. 113:3). Many illustrations were given to emphasize the greatness of our God and that He is worthy of all praise in earth and heaven.

Sunday afternoon brought an exposition of Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 with special focus on 53:4-6, which exalts the substitutionary nature of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. ("...surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.")

Approximately 185 brethren and sisters gathered for communion Sunday evening, where a very sweet memorial service was held around the table of the Lord, in memory of the Savior, and His atoning work on the cross of Calvary. The evening was very upbuilding and inspirational, with outstanding singing and preaching by our brethren. Such delightful meditation as we experienced the "Love feast," and our minds were taken both back to the cross, and forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Profitable teaching on how we are made worthy, how our sins have been taken away, how we can express and live out our love for one another, and what awaits the saints soon in the future.

Monday morning, we heard about the power of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of the early church as well as the church today. We were encouraged to continue in the faith and exhorted that we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.

In the Monday afternoon service,

we heard much about the coming of the Lord, and the Light and Life that Jesus is to us! Some thoughts were taken from John 14:1-6. We were drawn to the thought of Jesus being the Light and Life of our lives, and what abundant life really is. Also from John 10:9, we were comforted with the thought that there is salvation, safety, and provision in the fold of our Shepherd.

Monday evening brought a message to the young people and to all regarding "living in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and not being a spiritual "runt." Exhortation was given to all to answer the call to "Come," and to be mindful of what we feed upon, so that we will grow and be strong in the Life of God.

Following the evening service, the young people lifted up their voices in song together, and concluded the evening with meaningful and fervent praise to God.

The Brotherhood Council brought us together on Tuesday morning. Devotional thoughts were taken from Psalm 27, and also from Psalm 8:1, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens." What is the purpose of the church in the world? To bring glory to God (I Cor. 10:31).

The business session brought discussion and a pleasant exchange that we have been accustomed to over the years. Through our brief discussion and papers, elders were encouraged to give a little more focus to engaging their congregations in discussion regarding values and vision locally.

We parted with song and prayer and gave thanks to God for the blessing of another meeting with each other and with our Lord.

The staff at IWU was thanked for their wonderful assistance while we were on campus. They worked hard to make our stay pleasant and were very cordial while supplying our needs.

The young people also labored in profitable ways during the meeting, assembling approximately 1715 hygiene kits for those in Ukraine who have been impacted by the devastating war there. Many are

suffering around the world. May we keep them in our prayers, and continue to do what we can to bless them as we have opportunity.

Another meeting is past. We believe it has been a blessing to our people, and hopefully to others.

We give God praise for the rich provisions of His grace, and the mercy that He has shown, both to us and to all men.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, may His name be praised!

LM

POEMS

THE STRIFE IS O'ER, THE BATTLE DONE!

The strife is o'er, the battle done;
The victory of life is won;
The song of triumph has begun.
ALLELUIA!

The powers of death have done their worst,
But Christ their legions has dispersed;
Let shouts of holy joy outburst.
ALLELUIA!

The three sad days are quickly sped;
He rises glorious from the dead,
All glory to our risen Head.
ALLELUIA!

He closed the yawning gates of hell;
The bars from heaven's high portals fell;
Let hymns of praise His triumph tell.

ALLELUIA!
Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee;
From death's dread sting thy servants free,
That we may live and sing to Thee.

ALLELUIA!

—Francis Pott

"It is finished!..." John 19:30

“FREEDOM”*Jim Thomas*

I stand amazed at what God does,
To set each captive free;
The Egypts of this present world,
That's binding you and me.

The occult still is rampant here,
New agers one and all;
Before Christ came we all were bound,
From shortest to the tall.

How natural the sinfulness,
Of those who have not heard;
They do not know what God requires,
Not open to His Word.

Their eyes they've closed, their ears are stopped,
Unwilling to be led;
And do not know which way to go,
Till most of them are dead.

A heart that's touched by what they see,
Knows God is still around;
The heavens declare His greatness there,
On earth where it is found.

Where is the soul that gives its best?
To Him deserving most:
The earnest praise throughout our days,
Unto the Lord of host.

Without which we have not yet seen,
The Glory of His Face;
But what we do on earth we do,
Most of it all disgrace.

Our God's a Holy God you see,
And He knows all our sin;
But He will never bring it up,
The moment you come in.

Selected by
Ron and Caroline Holsinger

HOW BIG WAS ALEXANDER?

SON—

How BIG was Alexander, Pa,
That people call him great?
Was he like old Goliath tall,
His spear a hundredweight?
Was he so large that he could stand
Like some tall steeple high,
And while his feet were on the ground,
His hands could touch the sky?

FATHER—

Oh, no, my child, about as large
As I or uncle James.
'Twas not his stature made him great,
But greatness of his name.

SON—

His name so great? I know 'tis long,
But easy quite to spell;
And more than half a year ago
I knew it very well.

FATHER—

I mean, my child, his actions were
So great he got a name
That everybody speaks with praise,
That tells about his fame.

SON—

Well, what great actions did he do?
I want to know it all.

FATHER—

Why, he it was that conquered Tyre,
And leveled down her wall
And thousands of her people slew,
And then to Persia went,
And fire and sword on every side
Through many a region sent.
A hundred conquered cities shone
With midnight burnings red;
And strewed o'er many a battleground
A thousand soldiers bled.

SON—

Did killing people make him great?
Then why was Abdel Young,
Who killed his neighbor training day,
Put into jail and hung?
I never heard them call him great.

FATHER—

Why, no, 'twas not in war;
And him that kills a single man
His neighbors all abhor.

SON—

Well, then, if I should kill a man,
I'd kill a hundred more;
I should be great and not get hung,
Like Abdel Young, before.

FATHER—

Not so, my child, 'twill never do;
The Gospel bids be kind.

SON—

Then they that kill and they that praise,
The Gospel do not mind.

FATHER—

You know, my child, the Bible says
That you must always do
To other people as you wish
To have them do to you.

SON—

But, Pa, did Alexander wish
That some strong man would come
And burn his house and kill him too,
And do as he had done?
Did everybody call him great,
For killing people so?
Well, now, what right had he to kill,
I should be glad to know.
If one should burn the buildings here,
And kill the folks within,
Would anybody call him great
For such a wicked thing?

—Edward Jones

OBITUARIES

BRUBAKER — Joel Andrew, 91, died Monday, April 17, 2023, at South Wind Home in Pratt, Kansas. He was born September 27, 1931, near Sawyer, Kansas, to Everett James and Hazel Frances (Montgomery) Brubaker. On August 15, 1953, he married Lois Lorraine Eller in Rossville, Indiana. They made their home near Sawyer, where they were engaged in farming together for over 60 years.

Joel accepted Christ as his Savior, and on September 24, 1950, he was baptized. Since that time, he has been a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, Sawyer, Kansas.

Besides farming, he also deeply enjoyed traveling, ten years of transporting children many miles for foster care and family visits, spending time with his family and his South Wind Home family and socializing with people, including neighbors, community, business and “fellow post-polio” acquaintances.

He was loved by two sons and their families, Kent and Ann Brubaker (Sawyer, Kansas), and Michael and Renee Brubaker (Ft. Worth, Texas); 4 grandchildren and their families, Kara Brubaker (Lapel, Indiana), Kami and Trevor, Clay, Alli, and Kit Metzger (Lapel, Indiana), Kai, Kelsie and Olivia Brubaker (Ft. Worth, Texas), Lexi and Cameron Epperson (Ft. Worth, Texas); one brother-in-law, Sylvan Eller (Clayton, Ohio); and sister-in-law, Phyllis (Austin, Bower, Denlinger) Brubaker (Roanoke, Virginia); and numerous nephews and nieces, as well as many great-nephews and nieces.

Joel was preceded in death by his parents; his parents-in-law, Ralph and Verna Eller; his wife Lorraine; his only brother, Donald Oscar Brubaker; brothers-in-law, Maurice Eller, Lowell Eller, and Dale Burkhalter; sisters-in-law, Arthana Brubaker, Lucille Burkhalter, Gladys Eller, Cora Eller, Mary Jo Eller, and Jane Burkhalter; nephews Sheldon Brubaker, Larry Burkhalter, Randy Burkhalter; and one niece, Joann Wray.

Funeral services were held Saturday, April 22, 2023, at the Sand Creek meeting house, conducted by the home brethren. The family was encouraged with verses from Ecclesiastes 3, John 14, Matthew 11, 23, and 34. The burial and graveside service was at Pleasant View Cemetery near Sawyer, Kansas.

“Know ye that the LORD he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations” (Ps. 100:3–5).

The Family

CRUMPACKER — Alberta Lucille (Miller), daughter of Jesse and Rosa (Wagoner) Miller was born October 28, 1927, at home, near Pymont Indiana. She peacefully departed this life May 29, 2023, making her stay on earth 95 years, 7 months, and 1 day.

On January 5, 1947, she married Everett Crumpacker at her parent’s home, by Elder Jakie Skiles. They

enjoyed 68 years together before Daddy passed away on August 2, 2015. To this union was born one son and two daughters: Laverne and wife Navella, Rose Anna and husband Byron Haney, and Renita and husband Roger Miller.

Mother answered the call, and was baptized by elder Morris Waggoner, into the Old German Baptist Church along with five others. She faithfully served the Lord till her death. Daddy and Mother were called to the deacon's office in 1967 at the North Fork district.

Daddy and Mother started their married life at Flora, Indiana. They lived there for three years giving half of everything that they earned. They then moved to Colburn, Indiana for three years before they moved to the farm near Pymont, Indiana. In 1988 they moved off the farm into Rossville. In 2020 Mother fell and broke her hip, choosing to move to Milner Health Care where she passed into eternity.

In addition to her children, Mother is survived by nine grandchildren

and 21 great-grandchildren. Mother was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Everett; brother, Lloyd Miller; sister, Gladys (Jesse) Endress; her in-laws, Albert and Anna Crumpacker; a sister-in-law, Vera (Lloyd) Beeghley; and a granddaughter, Stephanie Miller.

Mother was known by her loving disposition, always caring about others and never complaining. She enjoyed singing, even up till the last. A very special thank you to the loving staff at Milner Health Care for their compassionate care.

Funeral services were held at 10:00 A.M., June 2, at the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, North Fork meeting house, with the Home Brethren officiating. Mother chose Jude verse 21 as her text, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Burial followed at the North Fork Cemetery. We will greatly miss Mother, but our loss is her eternal gain.

The Family

Terms

Subscriptions should be made through the congregational contact or through *The Testimony* office. Subscription price is \$20.00 per year. New subscriptions should be paid (prorated) through the remainder of the current year. All renewals begin at the first of the calendar year. Newly married and those unable to pay for a subscription may receive a free subscription through the agent of their local congregation.

Contributors

Authors of essays, devotionals, poems, etc. are asked to review the Statement of Purpose on the back page of this periodical. Articles should

be based on Scripture. References are appreciated. Shorter focused articles are more desirable than articles that move from one topic to another. Selected material will be considered. Original writings are preferred. It is recommended that writers submit themselves to the Spirit, which reveals the will of God to the Church in every age, according to the varied needs and circumstances.

Written articles should be legible. Typed material is preferred and should be double-spaced. Electronic transmission or CD will be accepted. The author's name and address must be included on all material. An attempt will be made to contact the author of articles that are not accepted.

Old German Baptist Brethren
Church—New Conference

THE TESTIMONY

353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102

The Testimony is a Christian publication intended for those who desire nourishment in their spiritual walk, and for writers who wish to express witness to the Truth of the Gospel as experienced in their own lives. It holds the Holy Scriptures to be its only Creed. Its purpose is to bear witness to the Truth of God's Word as it is applied in the daily life of committed Christians. It supports the anabaptist and pietist foundations of the Brethren of Schwarzenau, Germany (1708) including the biblical principle of the community of believers bound by a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus confirmed by adult immersion baptism (Mark 16:16). It strives to promote a life of true living piety among all who confess Jesus as their Lord. It seeks to restore and

maintain a fellowship of true primitive Christianity through the communication of all good things.

Send all communication to:

The Testimony
353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102
Phone: (937) 604-9464
thetestimony@emypeople.net

The Testimony Committee

Lowell Miller, Editor
Dean Kinsley
Phil King
Tim Deaton

Associate Editors

Marcus Miller
Darryl Filbrun