

"Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep..."

THE TESTIMONY

...of thy mouth." Psalm 119:88

VERSE OF THE MONTH

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34

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A SONG OF PRAISE TO CHRIST

Samuel Stennett (1727-1795)

Come, every pious heart
That loves the Savior's Name,
Your noblest power exert
To celebrate his fame.

Tell all above
And all below
The debt of love
To him you owe.

He left his starry crown,
And laid his robes aside,
On wings of love came down,
And wept, and bled, and died.

What he endured,
Oh, who can tell?
To save our souls
From death and hell.

From the dark grave he rose,
The mansion of the dead;
And thence his mighty foes
In glorious triumph led.

Up through the sky
The conqueror rode
And reigns on high
The Savior God.

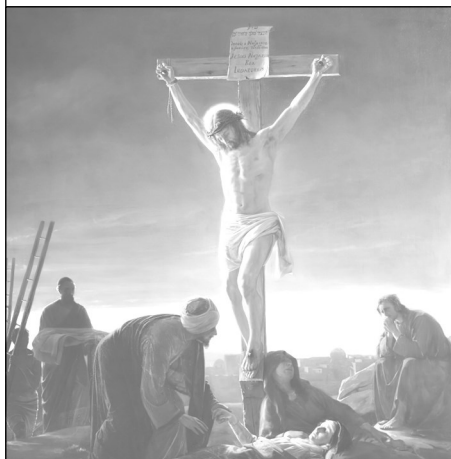
Jesus, we ne'er can pay
The debt we owe thy love,
Yet tell us how we may
Our gratitude approve.

Our hearts—our all
To thee we give,
The gift, though small,
Do thou receive.

THE TESTIMONY

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“Herein is love, not that we
loved God, but that he loved us,
and sent his Son to be the
propitiation for our sins.
Beloved, if God so loved us, we
ought also to love one another.”

I John 4:10-11

EDITORIAL

EXTREME LOVE

Radical, excessive, and extravagant are some defining expressions of extreme. We, at times observe this, in some degree, in love of self or whatever satisfies carnality in people.

In John 13:34–35 Jesus offers a new love commandment, "...that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Jesus had already taught the First and Great Commandment was to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength and the second was like unto it, love thy neighbor as thyself.

We see the introduction of love early in the Scriptures when God made man in His image and after His likeness. Also, when God put man in the garden of Eden, gave him an occupation, a help meet to love, and talked and walked with them in the cool of the day. Love is threaded throughout the Old Testament but reintroduced as a new, extreme love in the New Testament.

When Jesus offered a new commandment, "As I have loved you," the thought is illustrated when John wrote "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:16–17)

From these verses we glean at least three truths. First, HIS love is extensive, meaning it is extended to all with no limit, with no boundaries, and nothing in return. He just

very simply loves the whole world—all people, regardless. (See John 3:16.) Secondly, we see HIS love was expensive. He gave all with the knowledge of the great cost at Calvary. Thirdly, HIS love was expressive in the simple fact that without HIS crucifixion at Calvary HIS love wouldn't have been extreme. The lesson is that we also love extensively, with no boundaries and nothing in return. We love regardless of expense or cost. Love may be expensive. It may cost our resources, and/or our life. We love with expressive love: action, reactions, conversation, and willingness to lay down our lives, our opinions, and ourselves for HIM and others.

Luke 7:36–50 gives us a real time account of a woman, a sinner, who came into a Pharisee's house and washed Jesus's feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed HIS feet with a box, or jar, of expensive ointment. Considering the setting, this seems extreme, extravagant, and somewhat bold, but a very intense love and worship of Jesus was expressed by a woman who was described as a sinner. Jesus expression was, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

The Greek translation for this love is *agape* or sacrificing love. We would do well to emulate the same love to HIM and, of course to express and practice it to each other.

As we love each other with a pure heart fervently, we would encourage us with Galatians 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

We live in a world that is in serious need of the extreme love of Jesus. Is this our witness?

Blessings, Dean Kinsley

GENERAL

TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

We live in an unprecedented age (II Tim. 3:1). I find myself praying now more than ever before for mercy for the children of men, and for guidance for our church and our families. I know that the youth among us are desiring truth and wanting to find the right way to walk in this age, and yet there are such strong forces of influence and deceit that are flooding their lives. This can make the way very unclear, as the natural desire that we all have, to be accepted, enters the picture as well.

So I write to the youth.

Young people, you have a great opportunity to learn the truth and take a stand for truth. You have been placed by God into this age, and into a church setting that is a great blessing to you, but one that may be difficult sometimes to appreciate, with the pressures you feel. Questions may arise that are legitimate questions. Questions that need to be answered. Some of the questions may be these:

1. *Why are we a people who practice so much differently from many other Christians in the Western world?*
2. *Why do we have an agreed-upon style of dress? Doesn't the Bible say somewhere that man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart?*

3. *Does it hinder our witness to hold to such strict standards of life and conduct?*

4. *Does it bring too much attention or glory to ourselves to live as we do?*

These questions do not include many others that could be asked. People sometimes inquire concerning our position on not being involved in politics, war, and other areas of non-resistance, etc. But let us just think about our appearance as Christian people in this age for a moment.

If a question comes from a sincere and seeking heart, then it should receive an answer.

To appreciate an answer to these questions, one must come away for a little from all that we have been accustomed to seeing as "Christianity."

It is not just Christians around us who are a part of "professed Christianity." We are as well. We are professing to be Christians, followers of Christ. And we have not been faultless at all in our walk. We have not always understood the need to walk separate from the world as the Bible teaches. We have sometimes leaned too heavily on our separate appearance and have in many respects walked hand in hand with the unbelieving world in our ambitions and desires. We share in the guilt that we sometimes accuse others of.

But let us step aside from today's world for a moment and explore God's will for His people. His will is clearly stated in the Scriptures that we claim to love. We may need to come away from some of the popular "Christian books" and authors that heavily influence our perception of what Christianity was intended to be.

While the Lord is surely drawing many to Himself that are not living exactly as we are, let us look still at a couple of things that express God's heart for His people.

Let us come back to the Scriptures, if we are indeed honest seekers. Let's come to the Bible with a sincere resolve to believe that the words we find there are true, and that they are from God to us.

PART OF GOD'S PURPOSE IN THE GOSPEL

The Gospel that Jesus brought does indeed carry a message of salvation for individuals. This is our hope and rejoicing at a personal level. But it is much broader than a personal and individual message. It is also the establishment of a kingdom. Jesus called His Gospel "the gospel of the kingdom" repeatedly. It is the forming of a "holy nation" and a "special and treasured people." Peter said, when the church was assembled to consider certain matters, that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And

to this agree the words of the prophets..." (Acts 15:14-15).

Notice here the intent that God had in sending Jesus. It was not just to save you and take you to heaven. But it was ***"to take out of them a people for his name."*** To establish a people who by their renewed life and holy focus would declare His name among the heathen. It would be a kingdom of people that reveal what the whole world would look like if everyone, with a renewed heart, obeyed the King. And though its boundaries are unseen because it resides in the hearts of men, yet its presence can be sensed as the people of God do His will. This is not the Kingdom of God in its fulness. But it is the kingdom of God in its early representation of that fulness. It points men to God, and directs their hearts toward that bright and glorious Kingdom which is to come.

One of the accusations against the early Christians was that they were saying ***"that there is another king, one Jesus"*** (Acts 17:7). As each of us decides how to live, and to walk, and even how to adorn ourselves, are we being sure that we are following the direction of this King?

THE FORGOTTEN INSTRUCTION

When Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost, his impassioned message moved the people. Peter's message was from God. It was spoken by ***a man who was filled with the Holy Spirit of God*** that

day for the purpose of declaring God's will, and convicting the hearts of men, which it surely did! They were pricked in their hearts! They all said, "What shall we do?" Peter spoke of Jesus and His suffering. He spoke of the glorious resurrection. He declared that He was indeed the Christ. And at the close of His message, He gave a final piece of instructions. Have these instructions been forgotten? Have these instructions been set aside by Christianity? Have they been forgotten by us?

As Peter concluded his great sermon to these dear people, he gave them a final word that God intends should be very important counsel for every child of God. His words were these:

"SAVE YOURSELVES FROM THIS UNTOWARD GENERATION."

- *Save yourselves from the influences of the age!*
- *Save yourselves from the world's downward path!*
- *Save yourselves from the direction the generation around you is traveling!*
- *Save yourselves from its worldly fashions and trendy adornment!*
- *Save yourselves from the carnal thrills and entertainment this generation is pursuing!*

Are we following this apostolic counsel? Or can it be easily forgotten?

This piece of (forgotten?) instruction is a very important part of the Gospel of the Lord and Sav-

ior. If we are going to "say 'Yes' to Jesus," we must say "No" to the ways of the generation around us. There was punishment meted out to God's people whenever they gave in to the temptation to adorn themselves like the world (Isaiah 3:15-24).

THE MISUNDERSTOOD EXPLANATION

I Samuel 16 gives the well known account of the Prophet Samuel going to the home of Jesse to find a new king and anoint him. As Jesse's sons passed before Samuel, the prophet was tempted to think very highly of some of these young men. "Surely this is he," Samuel thought when Eliab passed by, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him." Then we read these words: **"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart"** (I Sam. 16:7).

Many have reduced the words of the Lord to this simple statement: **"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."** This has become the oft-quoted explanation for Christianity's movement away from modest apparel and simple appearance.

Now pause and think clearly about the words of the Lord. He

was not saying that the Lord has no particular feelings about fashion and immodesty because He just looks on the heart. He was simply saying that it is the inclination of men to think that if a man is tall and has broad shoulders and a goodly appearance, he may be good material for Kingship or other leadership roles. But the heart of a man is what God looks at. ***Let us rescue this Scripture from its frequent misapplication.***

Do not be ashamed to take a stand for God, and to let it be known that you are a part of a community of believers who are agreeing together to walk in the way of the Lord, being obedient to His Word. The covering of the body and avoiding the trappings of fashion are **things that the Lord is very interested in.** There are many Scriptures that reveal this to us. Search together as young people and see if you can find the teachings in the writings of the apostles that speak of **“outward adornment”** and of **“modest apparel.”** Your studies will be a blessing to you, and will help to guide you closer to the will of God regarding the way we should live and present ourselves.

THANK YOU!

A few months ago some of our people were travelling across this country. As they stopped for a bite to eat, they entered a fast food facility. There was only one customer there eating his meal. When he

saw them enter, he looked over at them and exclaimed, “Thank you! Thank you for taking a stand for good and right!”

What was it that brought from his lips that sudden expression of appreciation? He is living in America and no doubt can sense the rapid departure of this generation from the ways of God. Something got his attention and filled his heart with delight! Would you also like to fill the hearts of seekers with delight?

Young people, do not be ashamed of walking in a way that clearly identifies you with God’s people. Do not be embarrassed to take a stand for God. Rejoice in every opportunity you may have to explain that you want to please God in every way. Rejoice to be known as His Servants and His People.

In the generation that is around us, what is there that will take the minds and hearts of the people to thoughts of God? They are busy and they are burdened with the many cares of life. We have a great opportunity to bring their thoughts heavenward as we are obedient to His will. This is (in part) what being a “witness” is. In the New Testament the word “witness” is used almost exclusively as a noun. God’s people are His witnesses. The word “witness” means “martyr.” The people of God stand for God in every way and give themselves up to His cause

and for the glory of His Name, even when it means giving up their own life.

Revelation 12:11 says, “*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*”

Christianity is not just an academic study, as the present-day trend seems often to declare. It is rather a life of believing and following. It is following Jesus. This will include the study of His Word, of course. Yet many Christians over the centuries have walked in that simple faith, even in times of limited access to the Scriptures.

Young people, we do not condemn you for the confusion you may sometimes feel. We have only scratched the surface here, and there are many more thoughts you may have. If you have further questions about the ways of the Lord, and the ways of His People, please search out someone you can trust to give you more thoughts and explanation, that can help you keep solid footing in this age. Be found taking a stand for the High King of Heaven as you inquire further. And **“Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”**

You will find it a blessed and happy walk of discipleship! Jesus will walk with you.

Lowell Miller

BIBLICAL BEHAVIOR

(Part 8)

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15).

This is a continuation of a previous article. The purpose of this continued article is to provoke thoughts as to how we, as born-again believers, should behave. In doing so, it is not our intent to lose sight of the basis of behavior, which is belief. Belief dictates behavior. I offer the following axioms:

1. All behavior is based on a belief.
2. Lasting behavioral change always starts in the mind.
3. When people genuinely change, it's because their beliefs changed first.
4. Changing your behavior without changing your belief is not true change at all. This is why Paul says, “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

As we mentioned before, the apostles used the word “conversation” to describe behavior. In the Greek it is the word *anastrophe* which means “behavior.” *Anastrophe* is rooted in *anastrepho* which means to turn, or to turn oneself about. This implies the idea that godly behavior is a turning away from a direction you were once going, and going in a different direction. This is the essence of repentance—a change of your mind and direction of your life. Turning away from sin, self, and the world, and turning toward Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and heaven.

Because the Word of God is quick (living), we will, no doubt, only touch a fraction of the depth and meaning of the verses calling us to a godly behavior. The next verse we will consider is found in James 3, verse 13.

“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (Jas. 3:13).

James is a no-nonsense writer. He repeatedly sets forth teaching that is very clear. In true straightforward fashion he goes to the practical outcomes of theology. Somehow I picture James tiring of lofty speeches, and see him watching for proof of the authenticity of statements and claims made by those with great oratory. In this verse he cuts through the fluff asking, who is a wise man and filled with intelligence? Perhaps he was dealing with those who were presenting wise men as proud, articulate, eloquent—and as those who could win a debate handily. He proceeds to answer his own question with a counter-cultural response. James says a truly wise and intelligent person will behave with mildness and wisdom. In the following verses, James unpacks this issue further by showing what it does and does not look like. Wisdom doesn’t look like bitterness, envying, and debating. It does look like purity, peaceable-ness, gentleness, approachableness, compassion, good fruits, fairness, and genuineness.

As we dig a little deeper into this behavior, I’d like to encourage

a posture that avoids two extremes. One extreme is that if I am to behave wisely, I should never speak—silence is my goal. After all Mark Twain did say, “It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.” And Proverbs 17:28 says something similar, *“Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.”* Earlier in James’ epistle, he tells us we should be “swift to hear and slow to speak.” Clearly there is wisdom in giving careful consideration to our speech.

The other extreme is the attitude likely displayed in James’ day, which he was addressing. A view of wisdom that is quick to speak, confident, eloquent, and perhaps ostentatious. The balance I would like to strike is that our behavior is not to be loud, nor is it to be completely silent. Rather it is to be behavior that is meek and wise. This doesn’t mean silence. It means behavior that is humble. We probably all know what it’s like to remain silent because of pride. It’s easy to stay aloof to protect our image. I challenge us to stay in the heart of this teaching and not fall into either ditch.

May God bless us to behave in accordance with this verse. Until next time, may your behavior be meek and wise.

Grant Fullmer

“BUT I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE...”

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31–32).

Some days ago this Scripture with the thought of the Lord praying for Peter came to my mind. I don’t remember what I was thinking about at the time or what would have prompted this Scripture to come to memory, except it was the Holy Spirit, and no doubt it was.

I got to thinking about how amazingly powerful Jesus praying for Peter was. I thought how blessed Peter was that the Lord cared enough to pray for him. Especially, I thought of the great foreknowledge Jesus had and what He knew about Peter and what Peter would soon do, and what, eventually, Peter would become.

I thought about Satan desiring to have Peter. I thought about what the Lord meant by Satan sifting Peter as wheat. I thought about the three things Jesus prayed for Peter.

But it seemed like the Spirit was saying, “You’re missing some context.” So I scanned up the page. Here is what it says:

“And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise au-

thority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:24–30).

This account is found in the setting of the upper room. Jesus had just told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. They were talking among themselves, inquiring who that would be to do such a thing.

Verse 28 starts out with this phrase: “And there was also...” In the midst of everything else going on there was a strife (a rivalry) among them. The writer of Proverbs has a significant amount of content on strife. Strive is like contention. It is not peaceful. Proverbs says pride causes strife and contention. Pride is a result of focusing on self, promoting self. Strife in this verse means rivalry, so there was a posturing for position. The verse says “accounted” (considered) the greatest! Even though it was going on, I wonder if they knew it. Often we’re deceived. But Jesus knows. So He pointed it out. Truly God resists the proud and resists pride! And

He knows if we have it.

Self is like a bad weed. It needs to be pulled out by the roots. Self is like a cancer. It destroys not only self but others, too. Self is ambitious; it wants preeminence; it wants power, authority, and control. Self even likes to be worshipped, and for sure to be noticed. Self becomes bitter if these things don't happen.

Jesus taught in this context. Lordship and authority are not healthy things unless Jesus imparts it to someone by a calling or an anointing. And if He does, it's in the form of servanthood and service. Not lordship but humility. And He says if we follow Him, we'll feel the same temptations He did. But the reward someday will be fellowship in His coming kingdom.

So now back to verses 31–32. If Satan wanted Peter, is it possible he wants me, and you? He wanted Job, He even tempted Jesus. Peter said later in his writings that "Satan the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour"!

He encouraged us to be vigilant and sober, to resist steadfast in the faith (1 Pet. 5:8–9).

So what about this sifting? Grain is separated from the stalk and head by being threshed. Beaten with a flail, then tossed in the air by a winnowing fork, then scooped in a sieve and continued to be shaken until the chaff and debris is separated from the grain. The modern combine harvester does all this mechanically. Sifting

is a good thing in harvest but in the sense used here it means "shaken apart or broken up." Satan would like to shake us and toss us to the point we're disoriented, broken down, and submissive to him.

Even though Satan does want that, Jesus intervened and continues to intervene. Jesus who loved the world (people) and saves the souls of people who believe on Him, prays for each one of us. I can think of several places in the Gospels where Jesus prays for His people, His believers.

That word "but" that starts verse 32 is a conjunction. A change of direction of thought is coming! The change from Satan wanting Peter and shaking him up and breaking him apart is Jesus praying for Peter! The One who spoke the universes and world into existence and has all power/authority given unto Him from the Ancient of Days, God the Father, is praying! Think of it! Let it soak in.

He prayed for three things.

First, He prayed that Peter's faith wouldn't fail. That is sustaining Grace!! There's unmerited grace, there's saving grace, there's grace that influences us. But this is Grace that keeps us, even when we're not asking for it!

Second, He prayed that Peter would be converted. ("When" indicated that it would happen.) "Converted" here means "turned again" (back to Jesus). How often are we deceived and go astray? We get our eyes off Jesus, the Truth. We allow this weed of self to re-

root, we forget to yield and listen to the Holy Spirit, and before we know it, we're turning aside and straying from Jesus our shepherd. He prayed Peter would turn back to Him again. After Peter denied the Lord Jesus, Jesus helped Peter turn back. Jesus didn't embarrass Peter or mistreat him. He simply asked "Peter do you love me?" It is amazing how Jesus works with us to convert us.

Third, He prayed Peter wouldn't think of himself anymore, or be a part of any more rivalry or strife. But instead he would think of others. That Peter would serve others as he served Jesus his Master. Strengthening your brother or sister means you put them equally with you or even promote them before you. Love them, help them, serve them, encourage them, and forgive them.

Jesus said in John 13 that we'd be happy when we were converted and knew these things and understood service. Not happy? Does there seem to be strife? Maybe service isn't understood. Maybe we're not fully turned toward Jesus.

Jesus is praying! Aren't we thankful He is? Even if He's pointing out pride in our lives—that's Grace! And the fact that He's resisting it means He loves us and is helping us to change. Change into His image!

Jesus, have your way with us! Thank you for praying for us!

Aaron Garber

THE ROSE OF SHARON

(Hymn #242)

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love..." (Song 2:1-2)

A Master Gardener had a prized flower garden at his dwelling place high on a plateau. Many beautiful flowers dotted the landscape giving off a fragrance that filled the air with a celestial aroma. His garden was immaculate, spotless, pestilence free, and superabundant with living color.

The Master Gardener also owned a plot down the hill crossing a great gulf with potential for another garden. This plot was visible from the Master's Home Garden. He yearned to extend His colorful possession beyond the Home Garden to an additional location. The Master Gardener also made this garden immaculate, spotless, and pestilence free. He placed two special flowers originating from Himself in this garden to care for it, and fill this barren plot with His splendor.

An enemy found his way into this garden, sowed seeds of doubt, and overcame the two unblemished plants the Master Gardener had placed there. A growth of thorns, wild flowers, weeds sprung up overtaking the garden. This invasive growth overran the once perfect garden.

The Master Gardener had a plan for this once perfect possession, down the hill and across the gulf that had become a desolate wilderness. His personal Garden

on the plateau had an assortment of colorful flowers. He also had one personal ROSE by His side that was a part of Himself. The Master Gardener took up His ROSE beside Him and transplanted its roots in this overrun waste land at the foot of the hill. It took root and began to grow, sharing its fragrance and seeds among the thorns and wild flowers. Its roots reached the roots of the adjacent wild flowers producing a significant change in the landscape. The current stench was becoming a celestial aroma by transforming some of the wild growth.

Soon the wild flowers, briars, and thorns grew envious and overcame the Master Gardener's one special Rose. They plucked it up and hung it on a trellis to die. When confirmed dead, they took it down and placed it in a cave amid the overrun waste land, to be rid of, and decompose. They sealed it with a stone and set a guard. Within 3 days the cave is found opened. The dead Rose had emerged from the same cave, pushing the stone aside.

The dead disposed Rose is alive, and for the next 40 days shares markings that prove it to be the Master Gardener's one special Rose.

It again offers its fragrant beauty and scent to overcome the stench of the undergrowth in His lower garden at the foot of the hill. When 40 days had passed the Master Gardener takes up His special Rose and transplants it back in its native soil by Himself

in the Home Garden.

Though envied and evil treated, the Rose of Sharon turned its blossom toward the overrun waste land down the hill where it was cut down and disposed of. The Master Gardener's personal Rose shares its seeds to germinate among the thorns and briars. The new growth from the Master's Home Garden shares an overcoming scent of beauty and fragrance, even among undergrowth of unfavorable circumstances.

*Love is the sweetest bud that blows;
Its beauty never dies;
On earth among the saints it grows,
And ripens in the skies.*

*Pure glowing red and spotless white,
Its perfect colors are;
In Jesus all its sweets unite,
And look divinely fair.*

*The finest flower that ever blow'd,
Opened on Calvary's tree;
When Jesus' blood so freely flow'd,
For love of worthless me.*

*Its deepest hue, its richest smell,
No mortal sense can bear;
Nor can the tongues of angels tell
How bright its colors are.*

*Earth could not hold so rich a flow'r,
Nor half its beauty show;
Nor could the world and Satan's pow'r,
Confine its sweets below.*

*On Canaan's banks supremely fair,
This flower of wonders blooms;
Transplanted to its native air,
And all the shores perfumes.*

*But not to Canaan's shores confin'd
The seeds that from it blow,
Take root within the human mind,
And scent the church below.*

*And soon on yonder banks above,
Shall every blossom here,
Appear a full ripe flow'r of love,
Like him transplanted there.*

Poem by Joseph Swain (1792)

Kenneth Hopkins

MENNONITES, MISUNDERSTANDINGS, AND HERBAL MEDICINES

*Mennonite Life in the Conestoga
Valley of Colonial Pennsylvania*

Rick Hess

This story starts in Switzerland, in the 1500s. A group of Christian believers, desiring to obey Jesus and return to the teachings of the Apostles and the early Church, separated from both the Catholic and Protestant state-run Churches in several Cantons of Switzerland. They were referred to as the Swiss Brethren and were deemed as enemies of the state, by the Catholics and Protestants alike. Their enemies called them “Anabaptists” because they rejected infant baptism. They also refused military service, obeying Christ’s commands to “bless them that persecute you” and “love your enemies.” Many were arrested, imprisoned, tortured mercilessly and finally, many were martyred for not recanting their faith. In the early 1600s, when the authorities could not stop the movement in this manner, they began confiscating

the believers’ homes, farms, and belongings, then exiled them from Switzerland.

Europe had just gone through the devastations of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648). In some places, like the Palatinate (Pfaltzland) in Germany, as many as 70% of the inhabitants had died of either war or disease. Many of the Hoffes (house/barn fort enclosures) were burned out and the fields were left uncultivated for years. In the mid-1600s, the local Prince, Elector Ludwig, invited the exiled Swiss Brethren into the Palatinate to help rebuild the farms because of their reputation as excellent husbandmen and tillers of the soil.

There were three official Churches recognized by the Germans: Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed. Although the Swiss Brethren were needed economically, and their faith was tolerated, their churches were not recognized. There were limits on how many of them could meet together at one time, and many times they were not allowed to purchase the farms that they were improving because they were considered foreigners.

The Swiss-operated farms did indeed prosper in time, partly due to their use of a superior crop rotation system, which helped them feed more dairy cattle, and, in turn, allowed them to produce milk through the winters. Another major improvement was the introduction of the legume, clover.

This came from seed which the Dutch Mennonites gifted to them. After about 50 years, the difference the Swiss had made in agriculture was noticeable enough that some frustrated German neighbors accused them of “Ferhexing” (the Pennsylvania Dutch term for witchcraft) the ground (which of course was not true). So, life in the Pfaltzland wasn’t getting better for the Swiss Brethren.

In the year 1708, they experienced a bitterly cold, long winter. So cold that some of their stored root crops froze in the cold cellars. Sometime after this, William Penn and the Quakers heard of the plight of these Swiss Anabaptists. In 1682, William Penn had been granted the colony of Pennsylvania and wanted to conduct what he called the “Holy Experiment.” He envisioned a land where all races and religions could dwell together in peace. He had special interest in those groups persecuted by the European State Churches. As a Quaker, he too had suffered persecution by the state church of England. He welcomed Quakers from England, Huguenots from France, Mennonites from Holland, German Baptist, Schwenkfelders, and Pietists from Germany, as well as Swiss Brethren and Jews from wherever they were sojourning and/or suffering.

That is the background for our account of Hans Graeff (Groff) who lived from c.1661–1746.

Hans had been converted to the faith of the Swiss Brethren, but his wife, Anna (Bare) Graeff had stayed with the Protestant State Church. When the door opened to pioneers in Pennsylvania, Hans was interested in going, but Anna was not. Possibly they planned to have him get settled in over there and then come back for her. Hans first came to Pennsylvania in 1696. Later, Hans ended up leading a small group of the Swiss Brethren (Hans and Christian Herr, Martin Meylin, Jacob Müller, Martin Kendig, Martin Oberholtzer, Wendell Bowman and the Funks to name a few) to Germantown, about seven miles north of Philadelphia in that day, which was the first permanent settlement of the Anabaptists in the New World. Many of those first settlers were from Holland and Switzerland and were part of the Mennonite Church of the Netherlands. The Swiss immigrants spent the winter of 1709 in Germantown, the women doing the spinning for the many weavers of Germantown and the men traveling to a new Anabaptist settlement at Skippack, where they were learning many of the skills needed to go to the frontier.

In 1710, the group moved up to the Conestoga Valley where Hans Groff had previously identified some very rich and well-watered lands, 60 miles west of Germantown and civilization. Life would indeed be difficult. Wolves, bears, panthers, bobcats and other pred-

ators abounded. There were also elk, timber bison, and whitetail deer in abundance (which were glad to eat whatever the settlers planted). Huge walnut, hickory, chestnuts, maples, white pines, and oaks, some six feet in diameter and over 100 feet tall, covered much of their new lands (except for some open meadows, left by the native Americans and wetlands). These huge trees would need to be cut down by hand with axes and two-man saws. The closest doctor, apothecary, hardware, or general store was 60 miles away. It would be challenging and dangerous work, but they were free! Free to obey their conscience. Free to practice their religion. Free to own land in this beautiful wilderness. Free to love and witness to their neighbors, the Conestoga tribe and French traders. They received a land patent for 10,000 acres for their families and others that might come later.

Partly due to severe persecution in 1710, a group of Swiss Brethren moved to the Mannheim area of Germany. Seven years later, in 1717, they made the trip across the Atlantic. There were more than 60 families that came to the Conestoga Valley in the fall of that year, including my ancestors, Hans and Magdalena Hess and their three children. They were eventually blessed with a total of 11. You could say that from then on, the floodgates opened, and masses of Anabaptists fled Europe

to “Penn’s Promised Land.” From 1730 and later, as this wilderness became tamed, there were also many Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic people who came over from Germany to find better financial opportunities, filling this part of Pennsylvania with many German-dialect speakers.

I greatly enjoyed speaking with the noted Lancaster County Anabaptist historian, Amos Hoover, while writing this article. He gave many insights and details, but we both agreed, it is challenging to put together all the facts and details from so long ago. Gleaning from a couple authors’ accounts, the story goes something like this:

MISUNDERSTANDING

Sometime, after being in Penn’s woods for a number of years, Hans Groff received word that his wife, Anna (Bare) Groff, back in Europe, had passed away. He was very grieved and mourned, as he didn’t know it and wasn’t there to bury her. In a few years, he married Susanna Kendig. They lived first in the Strasburg area, then built a substantial homestead in the area now called Groffdale. This union was blessed with nine children.

Years later, a woman showed up in the community and introduced herself as Mrs. Hans Groff. She had become an Anabaptist in Europe and had made the perilous trip across the Atlantic to find her husband. According to her, a person with the same name as herself had died, and the word given to Hans was not true about his first

wife's death. Hans was mortified, although he was innocent regarding his second marriage. He had no desire to be a polygamist or to commit adultery. The frontier church leaders held council and gave a recommendation that the younger, pioneer wife with so many young children needed the husband to provide for them. It is said that Hans didn't feel clear to stay with either of them but did support both of his wives and their children financially. He was noted as a tireless traveler, riding to Philadelphia with furs then back out into the vast frontier with blankets, brass kettles, and other trade goods for the Native Americans. If you have heard or read this account with different details, so have I. Only eternity will reveal all these details exactly.

MEDICINE

Hans's first wife chose to live as a single sister in that church community. Instead of becoming bitter with her husband, her God, and her circumstances, she chose a life of service to her neighbors. She lived in a little house, with a small barn (possibly built by Hans for her) on top of a steep hill overlooking Farmersville, called "Cat's Back Hill." The ruins of this early 1700s house and barn were still evident less than 50 years ago. Apparently, she was a midwife, before coming to this country and continued in this profession once she was here. She had a lot of experience with growing herbs and making herbal remedies. She was

possibly the closest one to being a doctor for many miles around. From what I can find out, she spent her time being a blessing to the local community with her medical knowledge and wisdom, her homemade herbal medicines, and her midwifery. Many of our Lancaster County forefathers may not have survived the rigorous pioneer life if it had not been for this dear Sister's servanthood and medical knowledge. Interestingly, years later, one of Hans's sons from the second wife, David Groff, went away to study medicine. Once his studies were completed, he came back as a doctor and helped his father's first wife minister to the many settlers in fast growing Lancaster County.

This story provides a glimpse into some of the interesting details surrounding the life of conservative Anabaptists just before and during the establishing of Colonial America. There were difficulties involving freedom of religion and worship in their homelands of Europe, but their travels to, and eventual day-to-day living in, a new, free country was acquainted with challenges as well. One encouragement that we can see in this story was the willingness of these individuals to allow God's principles to guide them each step of the way.

Selected from the Summer 2023
The Remnant by

Philip Hess,

BEGINNINGS AND THE BIG BANG

To many, “In the beginning God...” (Gen. 1:1) and the Genesis account of how things came to be, seems too simplistic to defend against the claims of science. To those of us who believe the Bible to be the standard of all truth, it is important to “...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope this is in you with meekness and fear” (I Pet. 3:15).

School children are taught that our universe started with a “big bang.” An astronomer, Fred Hoyle, coined the term “Big Bang” in 1949 to describe his view of how the universe came to be. The idea is that everything started in a space of nothingness when all of mass and energy was concentrated at a tiny point smaller than the size of an atom. Something triggered this nucleus of matter and energy to explode and hurl its contents at the speed of light while rapidly clumping matter together and forming stars, planets and galaxies. Since this theory was postulated, Hoyle and other scientists have found support by measuring the current rate of expansion of solar bodies and by other tests and observations. As this theory evolved, adherents feel they have described the beginning of our universe.

Should additional studies add credence to this theory, would it shake your faith? Paul warned

Timothy about “...science falsely so called” (I Tim. 6:20). False science may begin with an end in mind, but studies can be designed to arrive at a desired outcome. False science may also happen when the scientist reaches a conclusion with wrong information. For this reason, everything touted as “scientific” should be taken with a grain of salt when it contradicts biblical truth. True science will not contradict Scripture. When there is an apparent contradiction, we have either encountered false science or failed to rightly divide the Word of truth.

Paul apparently understood that true science was simply a search for truth without a preconceived notion. True science is confirmed by unbiased experimentation and observation. Perhaps that is why we regard the Bible in such high esteem as the resource against which we can know truth. If so, we may have come to this conclusion by the scientific method. That is to “Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21). The Bible declares in many ways that God is good. Perhaps our experiences have led us to “...taste and see that the LORD is good...” (Ps. 34:8). Maybe, when illuminated by the Holy Spirit, we have witnessed the types and shadows of the old Law given life in the New Testament. Perhaps we have pondered the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. As we saw their precise fulfillment

in Christ hundreds of years later, our faith is affirmed. We have likely felt the presence of the Comforter in times of loss. We have experienced His guidance into all truth as we have studied the Word. We have sensed His presence as we have partaken of His body and blood in communion.

So, should we discount the “big bang theory” as a contradiction of Scripture? Science can test the expansion of heavenly bodies, but it can neither test nor observe what happened in the beginning of all things. All things began with our eternal God. He is the Word that was God. He is the One who made all things. He is the Word that was made flesh that dwelt among us (See John 1). We do not have the capacity to understand how “Word” could become flesh and have form. Is it possible that “Word” is the pre-creation term for elements and energy with an eternal mind? Another theory that is a basis of some scientific discovery is derived from Einstein’s theory of relativity. This suggests that mass (elements) and energy are the same thing.

The Bible simply tells us that the infinite One created our finite universe when He spoke, and it was done. It doesn’t say how this occurred except by God’s Word. The Bible does say that “...the earth was without form, and void” (unformed elements clump-

ing together as imagined by the Big Bang?) and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen 1:2). “And then God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:3–5).

The big bang narrative speculates the darkness was replaced with light long after the dust of this explosion settled. How the first three days of creation are numbered is not disclosed in Scripture since the sun, moon and stars were not put in their places until the fourth day. Perhaps the light radiating from God, who is Light, luminated the universe prior to this? Then God ordered the seas and land masses. He created in the new earth seed-bearing plants to feed His creation that was to follow. Then on the sixth day, God made man in His image to have dominion over His earth and for fellowship with Him and one another.

Moses only recorded that God was the Creator of the universe and its inhabitants. What is revealed is that God was the Creator using elements of His design that pre-existed. So far, we have no means of confirming or denying that He used a big bang. We can only agree with God and the musings of science that our universe had a beginning.

Man cannot test the beginning of all things. As the Alpha and Omega, God is without beginning or ending. He is the Eternal One. He is the initiator of any big bang or other undisclosed means that may have formed our universe. "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). This writing does not pretend to answer the deep questions of how God created all things. We do believe that the Word of God is the only reliable source of how all things came to be. If there is something further man needs to know about this, it may be revealed in the Word by the Spirit or in eternity. Theories come and go. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure..." (II Tim. 2:19). We can rest our search for beginnings in our eternal LORD.

Stanley Boyd

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE DON'T JUST HAPPEN

I think one of the most important things you can do as a believer in Jesus Christ is to pray for a teachable spirit. I have been doing alot of self examination recently and it's amazing how much God has molded me and changed me into someone that looks more like Him since then. I think often times when we go through valleys and storms of our lives, those are the times when God shapes our character. We tend to feel like we don't need Him as much when we go through our hills

and mountain tops. I heard a sermon recently that was entitled ***"Beautiful people don't just happen."*** People are beautiful because of the trials that they face in life. God uses these trials so that it shapes our character for His glory. James 1:2-4 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

God desires for us to be close to Him, but He can't work with prideful hearts so we have to be willing to walk in humility so He can teach us what He wants to show us. I Peter 5:6-7 says, *"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."*

He promises to never leave us or forsake us, and He will be with us wherever we go. He is a never changing God despite what we might feel at times. Isaiah 43:2 says, *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."*

He turns ashes into beauty. Walk in His love, grace and mercy everyday. He loves us so much.

Preston Landes

PROPHECY

A MARK OF LOYALTY

Several years ago, I read a fascinating book called *Rescue The Captors*, by Russell Stendal. The author had been captured by Communist guerillas in Colombia in 1983, and was held for ransom for several months. While he lived in the guerilla camp he began writing the story of his life, and included many topics he considered while meditating on the Bible. The captors enjoyed hearing his Spanish translation of those things so much that they eventually provided him with a typewriter and desk so he could do his writing!

One of the topics that he wrote about was from this verse: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man, and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (Rev. 13:18). How many theories have been suggested to interpret that number? What are we actually looking for? One friend of mine refused a library card because she was concerned that it might have some connection with the "mark." I have heard of others who were convinced that Social Security numbers were implicated, or ISBN numbers, or perhaps a chip implanted into our foreheads or hands. I recently heard a theory in a sermon that had to do with some sort of "verification number" connected with internet access.

Here, then, is the suggestion put forth by Mr. Stendal at the end of Chapter 11:

"Numbers are very symbolic in the Bible, especially in the book of Revelation. I was intrigued with the number 666, which is the 'mark of the beast.' Six, of course,

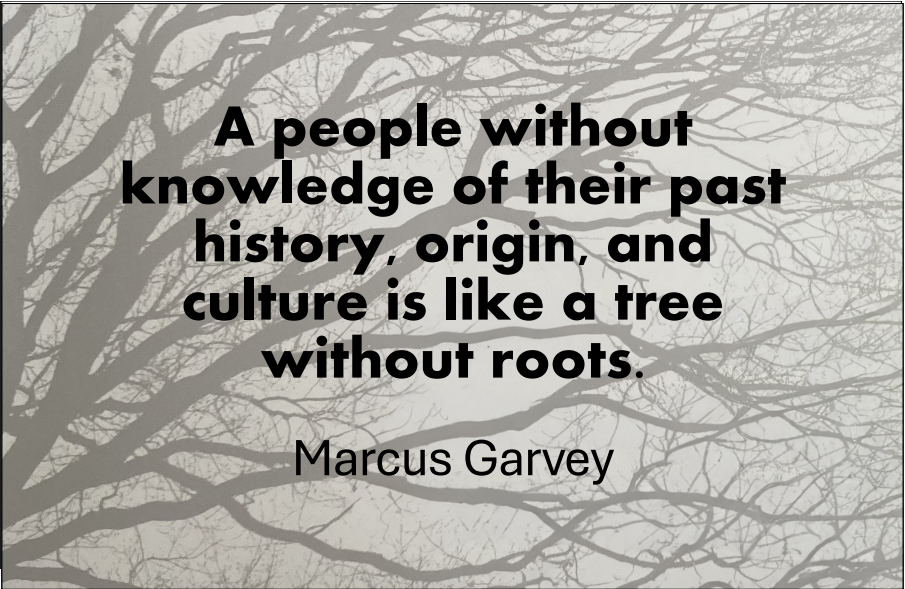
is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day of creation. In the Bible, 100 is symbolic of God's plan. Noah spent 100 years building the ark to God's plans and specifications. Abraham had Isaac when he was 100 years old, and so on. Therefore, 600 would be symbolic of man's plans. Ten is symbolic of justice (the Ten Commandments) or mercy (Jesus says that the Golden Rule equals the law of Moses). Therefore, 60 would be man's justice or man's mercy. On the first day of creation God said, 'let there be light!' One is symbolic of light. Therefore, 666 in the Bible's spiritual symbolism, would be man's plans according to man's law, illuminated by man's light. This is the 'mark of the beast' or the mark of rebellion against God.

"It is interesting to note that both the 'secular humanism' so prevalent in Western democracies, and the Marxist atheism, found in communist countries include the fundamental belief that mankind is capable of solving his own problems without God's help or direction."

Jesus says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). The evidence of our loyalty is in our behavior. Can we say that the "mark" of our love for our Savior, the proof that we are His, is in how we act? If so, then, would the "mark" of our belonging to the enemy be our devotion to ourselves?

If we keep looking for some external or physical "mark," might we completely miss the point?

Diane Vandezande



Selected by Kevin Jacobs

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.

Note the statement above regarding people groups forgetting their past.	3. Can it become true of us?
Questions:	4. Do we need a revival of interest in our past, and the blessings of our heritage?
1. Could this be true of religious groups also, and churches?	5. Is it possible for us to unthinkingly exchange one culture for another?
2. Could it be true of individuals?	

MEDITATIONS

If we are not of the worldly kingdoms, we shouldn't cheer their armies.
"A lamp unto my feet" is just enough light for the next few steps.
Peace will come to Jerusalem only when Jesus is Lord of all.
If I refuse someone's gift, I've denied them their blessing.
God will calm my troubled sea, O! me of little faith!
Life is a journey. It is not a destination.
What are you doing here?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Feb. 15, 2024; Living Epistle, NM
 Vanessa Flory
 June 2, 2024; Living Epistle, NM
 Miles Flory, Ian Flory
 June 9, 2024; Shenandoah, VA
 Cassie Jamison
 June 10, 2024; Western Kansas, KS
 Elle Wolf
 June 23, 2024; Cascade Valley, WA
 (Alaska)
 Cassie Long, Evelyn Long
 June 23, 2024; Caldwell, ID
 Jeremiah Hess
 June 30, 2024; Stillwater, OH
 Elsa Balsbaugh
 July 2, 2024; Shiloh, OH
 Carter Eikenberry, Jade Eikenberry

NEW MEMBERS

June 18, 2024; Lower Twin, OH
 Mike and Sue Ann Brubaker

COMMUNIONS

Sept. 14, 2024..... Providence, IN
 Sept. 28, 2024..... Pleasant View, OH
 Oct. 12, 2024..... Lower Twin, OH
 Oct. 12, 2024..... Zillah, WA
 Oct. 19, 2024..... Clearwater, IN
 Oct. 19, 2024..... Western Kansas, KS

Oct. 26, 2024 Maple Grove, OH
 Oct. 26, 2024 Stillwater, OH
 Nov. 2, 2024..... Bethel, OH
 Nov. 2, 2024..... Columbia River, WA
 Nov. 2, 2024..... Kidron Valley, KS
 Nov. 9, 2024..... West Modesto, CA
 Nov. 9, 2024..... Covington, OH
 Nov. 9, 2024..... Shenandoah, VA
 Feb. 1, 2025 Living Epistle, NM
 Feb. 1, 2025 Pinegrove, FL

HARVEST MEETINGS

Aug. 4, 2024..... Maple Grove, OH
 Aug. 11, 2024..... Covington/Sugar Grove, OH
 Aug. 18, 2024..... Salem, OH
 Aug. 25, 2024..... Stillwater, OH
 Sept. 22, 2024..... Bear Creek, OH
 Nov. 28, 2024..... Pleasant View, OH

THE TESTIMONY

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023–2024

Balance 6/30/2023\$7,186.12
 Income\$48,888.44
 Expenses.....\$41,768.66
 Balance 6/30/2024\$14,305.90

POEMS

JUDGE NOT

In men, whom men condemn as ill, I find so much of goodness still,
 In men, whom men pronounce divine, I find so much of sin and blot,
 I hardly dare to draw the line, between the two, where God hath not.

Joaquin Miller

Sel by Alice Mae Haney

FAITH AND TRUST

Back in the Garden when things just seemed good,
They were told not to eat one, but Satan said they could,
Eve tried to explain what would happen to her,
But Satan worked hard to make it a blur.
So she took of the tree and proceeded to eat.
Do you think it was good fruit? Bitter or sweet?
Just have to think, what would I've done?
Listen to Satan, or the Heavenly One?

When building the Ark day after day,
People were mocking and wouldn't go away,
When it was done, God gathered the animals,
Two by two came, the tigers and camels.
Then God shut the door when He said it was time.
Then for 40 straight days, it rained the whole time.
While the onlookers were waving and began to shout.
Where would I be, inside or out?

When Abraham offered up Isaac that day,
He trusted in God and had faith the whole way.
With his arm raised up, with knife in hand,
God held him right there; he obeyed His command.
The ram in the thicket took Isaac's place.
Would I have trusted God at that time and place?
What if Abraham said, "I'm not offering my son!"
Then told Isaac the lad to jump down and run?

The three Hebrew children did not bow down
To the golden image when they heard the sound.
They were thrown in the furnace that was hotter then ever.
Soldiers were told to heat it seven times better,
The king was amazed with what he saw.
Not only were there three, but four men in all.
Could I have had faith enough when they threw me in,
That my God would deliver me with the state I was in?

When Joseph and Mary gave birth in the stable,
Would it have been clean, and would I have been able?
The news was told to the shepherds that night,
And guided the wise men by a star that was bright.

They came to the babe, our Savior and Lord,
The One who we worship, love, and adore!
While Joseph and Mary were sitting there that night,
They trusted God more; He brought forth the Light!

When several people met, too many to count,
Jesus then spoke up, and gave the Sermon on the Mount,
He taught wonderful things, gave godly advice
On how to treat others and indeed follow Christ.
He said, "Let your light shine up on a high hill,
Thou shalt not steal, and thou shalt not kill."
Would I have sat listening or got up and left?
I trust that we all would have listened our best.

The women Jesus said, "Thy faith made thee whole."
The woman at the well, He said, "Drink and be full."
The blind man Jesus healed near Jericho,
Jesus told him, "Thy faith hath saved thee, now go."
Paul and Silas trusted God and sang through the night.
By faith Moses when born, was hid out of sight.
If we truly trust God in the Heavens above,
According to His will, answers prayers in love.

There comes a time in our life, we realize we're lost,
And God whispers, "Come, it's free, there's no cost!"
We start the heavenward journey to that land far away.
We can't go very far along, without taking time to pray.
For those that are sick, those raising a child,
Perhaps mourning a death, disease, serious or mild.
Has our faith increased or decreased in size?
Because heaven is awaiting to claim our grand prize.

Just a few thoughts to ponder about faith and trust
Of our Heavenly Father, they both are a must!
Farewell, my dear brethren, as we firmly stand,
Have faith and trust in God's salvation plan!

Landon Jamison

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus..." (Heb. 12:1-2)

OBITUARIES

BOWMAN — Myron Franklin, age 98, of New Carlisle, Ohio, passed away peacefully at his residence on Thursday, June 13, 2024. Dad was born on August 16, 1925, to Ivan and Ethel Bowman. He grew up near Covington, Ohio, and was the fourth of nine children. Dad's family experienced the Great Depression and WW II. It was during these times that Dad developed a strong work ethic, and as a result, he often worked two jobs to assure his children a comfortable lifestyle.

He farmed in the early years of his marriage and later was employed by Process Equipment Company as quality control inspector for over 30 years until his retirement.

Dad and Mom were married on August 14, 1949. To this union were born four children. During this time, Dad felt his need for redemption and a desire for salvation. Making a public confession of faith, Dad was baptized on September 26, 1953. He was the last one to be baptized in the Honey Creek at the Maple Grove church district where he held membership for many years. More recently he was part of the Old German Baptist Brethren, New Conference. Dad was no stranger to tragedy, having lost his wife, Naomi, in an automobile accident on October 1, 1991. He also endured the sudden deaths of his son, Jerry on October 6, 2011, and his grandson, Ashley on October 11, 2022. Despite Dad's bereavement, he would graciously surrender his will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Desiring companionship

once again, Dad married Ann Flora Denlinger Frantz on May 16, 1992. Ann passed suddenly on December 4, 2012, and again Dad was left with many lonely hours to fill. Yet he did so courageously and without complaint.

Dad was a man of integrity, teaching us by example. His consistent character and uncomplaining spirit yielded his children's utmost respect. Patience and contentment were evident in his daily dealings and spoke loudly of Whose he was. Dad loved people and was always looking to brighten someone's day with his cordial demeanor.

Dad is survived by his son: Dean (Beverly) Bowman, daughters: Carolyn (Wayne) Denlinger, Marilyn (Robert) Denlinger; daughter-in-law, Janelle Bowman; 12 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; a sister, Clara (Lawrence) Crist; sisters-in-law, Betty (Jim) Avery and Sue (Robert) Flora; brother- and sister-in-law, Richard and Linda Flora; and brother-in-law, Paul Riffe; stepchildren, Loren and Sue Flory, and Mike and Dixie Denlinger; step-grandchildren, numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends, along with his special friend Bonnie Shoup, who was a blessing to Dad in his later years.

He was preceded in death by his first wife: Naomi Catherine (Flora) Bowman; second wife, Anna (Flora) Bowman; parents, Ivan and Ethel Bowman; stepmother, Dessie Bowman; a son, Jerry Bowman; and grandson, Ashley Denlinger. Seven brothers and sisters, Ralph (Ellen) Bowman,

Elmer (Lova) Bowman, Edith (Cephas) Brubaker, Frances (Donald) Boyd, Ruth (Paul) Riffey, Reva (Fred) Benedict and Virginia Bowman. Brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Gene and Dorothy Flora; brothers-in-law, Jim Avery and Robert Flora; and sister-in-law, Janet (Paul) Riffey.

Dad's viewing and funeral were fitly held on Fathers Day, Sunday, June 16, 2024 at the Maple Grove meeting house. Tim Deaton opened the service with thoughts on a father's life, his love and his legacy. Grandson John Sink (Heidi) proclaimed the Message as he blessed our hearts with the many memories of grandpa. Dean Kinsley reminded us of the glorious resurrection that awaits those who die in the Lord. We laid Dad to rest on a warm summer day by hands and hearts that loved him.

The last years of Dad's life remain sweetly written upon our hearts, and although there were expected challenges, it was an honor and privilege to care for

him. Though his eyes dimmed and his hearing grew faint, the fruit of his lips abounded as he declared over and over the goodness of God in his life.

This closes the last chapter of a life well lived, made possible only by the grace of God. As Dad's offspring, we are keenly aware of our precious inheritance gifted to us through father Abraham. We have been blessed. Our portion is plenteous and our cup overflows.

In his final days, Dad would painstakingly track the rays of the sun and then position himself to enjoy the warmth thereof. Today we are rejoicing that Dad is now basking in the light of God's love for all eternity.

The family would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the many people who blessed us during Dad's final weeks. We have been surrounded by love on all sides and we deeply appreciate you. May God bless you abundantly. To God be the Glory.

The Myron Bowman Family

Terms

Subscriptions should be made through the congregational contact or through *The Testimony* office. Subscription price is \$30.00 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

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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.

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