

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

THE TESTIMONY

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

— VERSE OF THE MONTH —

*"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises
unto thy name, O most High..." Psalm 92:1*

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THANKSGIVING AND FAST

Learning to abound and to suffer need. — Phil. 4:12

For summer's bloom and autumn's blight,
For bending wheat and blasted maize,
For health and sickness, Lord of light,
And Lord of darkness, hear our praise.

We trace to thee our joys and woes.
To thee of causes still the Cause.
We thank thee that thy hand bestows;
We bless thee that thy love withdraws.

We bring no sorrows to thy throne;
We come to thee with no complaint;
In providence thy will is done,
And that is sacred to the saint.

Here, at this blest thanksgiving time,
We raise to thee our grateful voice;
Eternal goodness, Lord, is thine;
And thus believing we rejoice.

— Josiah Gilbert Holland

THE TESTIMONY

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“Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Job 1:21

EDITORIAL

IN EVERYTHING GIVE
THANKS?

Really? Surely not. Everything? Well, no doubt we all can understand this does not include sin and decisions made for it, but rather I Thessalonians 5:18 is referring to the circumstances we find ourselves in.

And yes, everything. And the Greek meanings behind it means EVERYTHING!

In her book, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom tells about an incident that taught her the principle of giving thanks in all things. It was during World War II. Corrie and her sister, Betsy, had been harboring Jewish people in their home, so they were arrested and imprisoned at Ravensbruck Concentration Camp.

The barracks was extremely crowded and infested with fleas. One morning they read in their tattered Bible from I Thessalonians the reminder to give thanks in all things.

Betsy said, "Corrie, we've got to give thanks for this barracks and even for these fleas."

Corrie replied, "No way am I going to thank God for fleas." But Betsy was persuasive, and they did thank God even for the fleas.

During the months that followed, they found that their barracks was left relatively free, and they could do Bible study, talk openly, and even pray in the barracks. It was their only place of

refuge. Several months later they learned that the reason the guards never entered their barracks was because of "those blasted fleas."

What is really being discussed here is our perspective and attitude. We can go through life complaining and bitter and whining, but that doesn't glorify God and acknowledge His sovereignty over our circumstances and His love and care for us. Paul further writes to the Romans and to all of us as Christians that in all things God wills or allows in our lives, He is working for our betterment. Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Therefore, we can give thanks in all things.

Develop the habit to pause and give thanks as the circumstances happen in your life, even in and especially in the difficult challenges, realizing that among other things:

- Difficult times yield more maturity and growth in our Christian walk than easy times.
- What is happening to us might be protecting us from something else unseen.
- God knows exactly what is happening to us and will never leave us or forsake us.

Daniel faced one of the worst days in his life when Darius signed the decree in Daniel 6, but he immediately opened his window, kneeled, "prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

Matthew Henry was once attacked by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary: "Let me be thankful. First, I was never robbed before. Second, although they took my purse, they didn't take my life. Third, although they took my all, it was not

much. Fourth, let me be thankful because it was I who was robbed and not I who did the robbing."

May we not just enjoy a thankful season but live a thank-filled life! In EVERYTHING give thanks!!

Tim Deaton

SEASONAL

GIVE THANKS FOR THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Anne Askew (1521–1546) was an English poet, author, and eventual Christian martyr living in the time of England's King Henry VIII (1509–1547). Her father arranged for her older sister to marry a man of wealth, but that sister died before the marriage. He then married Anne to the intended groom in place of her deceased older sister. Anne was but 15 years of age at the time of her marriage. Anne, her parents, and the husband were of the Roman faith at this time when the Protestant Reformation was coming to England. Early in life Anne became influenced by Protestant teachings and began reading and studying the recently translated English Bibles. She began sharing Protestant literature with others.

The English Protestant Reformation ran parallel to the German Lutheran Protestant Reformation and to the Anabaptist Reformation. The date of origin of the Lutheran Reformation is set at 1517 at the University at Wittenberg. The origin of the Anabaptist Reformation is agreed to be Zürich, Switzerland in 1525. The

Protestant Reformation in England occurred under the reign of King Henry VIII from 1534–1603. Puritanism originated in the late 1500s and Quakerism in 1650s, about the same time as the origin of the English Anti-pedobaptists. The Anti-pedobaptists were opposed to infant baptism and became the English Baptists. They paralleled the Swiss Anabaptists who also opposed infant baptism and taught an adult confession of faith.

We became interested in Anne Askew recently upon reading from the writings of Merle D'aubigné (1794–1872) in his "Martyrs of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century." Anne became interested in the Holy Scriptures, recently made available in the English language by William Tyndale (1526) and Myles Coverdale (1535). She was soon meditating on them day and night. This led her to a living faith in Jesus Christ upon which she renounced Romish teachings. Thereupon her husband "violently drove her out of his house." She fled to London where she became acquainted with "pious ladies of the court and of the Queen herself." Indeed, the Queen of England often invited Anne and other

Christian women to Bible study and prayer. Anne's husband and family opposed her and the marriage ended in divorce based on her being "an unbelieving spouse." She was first arrested for her Protestant beliefs when she was twenty-five years of age. The details of her imprisonments, interrogation, trials, and eventual torture and death at the stake are examples to us.

It was proved in court that Anne had derived her faith from reading the Holy Scriptures. Therefore eight days before her death a proclamation was issued stating, "...that from henceforth no man, woman, or person, of what estate, condition or degree soever he or they be [consequently, including the ladies and gentlemen of the court as well as other], shall, after the last day of August next ensuing, receive, have, take or be in their possession the text of the New Testament, of Tyndale's or Coverdale's translation, in English, nor any other than is permitted by the act of Parliament...nor after the said day shall receive, have, take or keep in his or their possession any manner of books printed or written in the English tongue which be or shall be set forth in the names of Fryth, Tyndale, Wycliffe...Barnes, Coverdale...or by any of them..." It was required that all such books should be delivered to the mayor, bailiff, or chief constable of the town, to be openly burned.

The Scriptures at that time were permitted only in Latin, and furthermore, were not permitted to be read by anyone beside the

clergy. Fryth, Tyndale, Wycliffe, et. al., were considered heretics, and therefore their translations of the Scriptures and their writings were banned. Anne Askew was imprisoned in the Tower of London where she was twice examined under torture on the rack. She refused to recant but she was so physically broken by the torture of the rack that she could not walk. She was therefore carried to the place of execution where she and another woman were burned, as heretics, by fire.

The reading of such martyrdom—and there have been many more examples—is sickening, shocking, and revolting to us today. Yet we are told that even today Christians give their lives regularly, in other parts of the world, for their unwavering faith in God and our Savior Jesus Christ. In some areas, threatenings, violence, rape, and death are ever present. Yet here we live in peace, having unrestrained access to the Holy Scriptures, divine worship, Bible study, public witness, and any Christian literature we choose to read.

A few years ago, I took inventory of the number of Bibles on my shelves. I counted at least 45 at that time. Today, including those on my phone and my computer, I have access to many, many more. We can reach out almost anytime, anywhere in our home and access the Word of God, in paper or digital form. This is a blessing for which many over the past 2,000 years have willingly sacrificed their very life. It takes approximately 78 hours to read the entire

Bible—fifteen minutes each day for a year. It takes only 18 hours to read the entire New Testament—or listen to it being read. We should read God’s Word daily, or more than once a day. Not only read it but study it. Pore over it. Begin by asking for the Holy Spirit to guide in reading and meditation. Then listen to the lessons the Spirit has to teach.

One of earth’s most precious possessions is the Word of God—available at all times, right at our fingertips! There is no one to threaten us nor to make us afraid. May we not neglect it, disregard it, or abandon it. Rather let us receive it daily with Thanksgiving.

Marcus Miller

A REAL SATISFACTION

Does Satan tempt us to become dissatisfied with what God has given us? Does the grass seem greener on the other side?

Let us consider who Satan is for a moment! Who would dare to want “to be like the most High”? Who is the greatest “Evil one,” even tempting Jesus our Savior? Who is headed for a lake of fire and brimstone, for eternity? So we know we want no part with him!

The temptations Satan tempted Jesus with work even today!

Let us consider our real needs. Have they not been supplied? When we want to have more, many times those wants are not wise. The things we need are supplied where wants are seldom satisfied.

I have read that “America has become weakened by the things she thinks she needs.”

Satisfaction (dictionary) is “a fulfillment.” Jesus found this “by doing God’s will.” Satisfaction is a condition—one that is pleasing.

We pause to note that there are the sick, and those with major troubles that are not of their own doing! Psalm 17:15 reads, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.”

Psalm 90:14 says, “O, satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

Satan tempts each one in our weakest points. A young person in Brazil told me, “You Americans have too many things, so it takes too much of your time.”

Have I gone to the store to be tempted, when my cupboards are already full? Can I fix for company with what I already have?

Have I counted my blessings today, with thanksgiving?

If I cannot do with less, how will I stand in the latter days?

There is one thing I have noticed. If we really are in need of something, often it will be supplied.

Let us practice being thankful! God does really see us through! Let us remember the little blessings along with the larger ones, and most of all, let us remember who has given them all to us!

“In every thing give thanks.”

Vicki Witmer

GENERAL

GOD'S PROMISES
CONCERNING PRAYER

1. Matthew 7:7–11 *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”*

2. Matthew 21:22 *“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”*

3. John 14:13–14 *“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”*

4. John 15:7 *“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”*

5. John 16:23–24 *“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”*

6. Psalm 91:14–16 *“Because he*

hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”

7. Psalm 50:14–15 *“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”* This seems to say it honors God to call upon Him.

8. Psalm 10:17 *“LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear...”*

9. Exodus 22:22–23 *“Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry...”*

10. Psalm 102:19–20 *“For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death...”*

11. Isaiah 41:17 *“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.”*

12. Ezekiel 36:37 *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel,*

to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock."

13. Zechariah 10:6 *"And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them."*

14. Zechariah 13:8-9 *"And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."*

15. I John 3:22 *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."*

16. Mark 11:24 *"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*

17. I John 5:14 *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us..."*

18. Matthew 18:19 *"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."*

GEORGE MÜLLER'S FIVE RULES OF PREVAILING PRAYER.

My edited list:

1. Must be by faith. James 1:6 *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."*

2. Must be in the name of Jesus. John 14:14 *"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."*

3. Use importunity. John 14:14 *"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."*

4. Must be apart from known sin. Psalm 66:18 *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me..."*
John 9:31 *"Now we know that God heareth not sinners..."*

5. Must be according to His will. I John 5:14 *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us..."*

PRECIOUS VERSES TO ME ON THIS SUBJECT

God gives evidence that He hears!

Hebrews 11:2 *"For by it the elders obtained a good report." God responds to a prayer of faith.*

Hebrews 11:4 *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."*

Hebrews 11:5 *"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."*
(God bears testimony to our faith.)

Our prayers are communication with Him.

Philippians 4:6 *“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”*

Romans 8:26 *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

God answers prayer.

1. Because He said He would.
2. Because of the merits of Jesus Christ.
3. Because of the intercession of the Holy Spirit.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jas. 5:16).

I believe most of us pray, but may I conclude by saying, “Try it, it works!”

Roger L. Gish

THE AMPLIFIED VISIT!

There are some very important questions we are asked every year. I wonder, what do they mean to you? TO ME!! Do I see them as just a procedure to pass thru? Are they antiquated? Do I look at them with a “HO-HUM, SO WHAT” attitude? Will they help me maintain myself?

HOW DO YOU CONSIDER THE ANNUAL VISIT QUESTIONS?

We say, “Yes, yes, yes; I have no suggestions or admonitions.” And we go on. Perhaps I can break this down into an array of smaller questions to consider for myself. Let’s simply slow down and see the fine details.

Question #1: “Are you of the same mind as when you were received into the church by your baptism?”

- Am I aware of my sin nature and my need for salvation from sin? This was probably the first turning to the Lord, and our realizing the need for baptism. Peter’s sermon in Acts 2:37–38: “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Think back when did I first start to understand I WAS a sinner and needed salvation!

- Do I still believe that Jesus IS the Son of GOD? This is part of the question we answered as we were baptized. Do I keep this core belief in the forefront of my mind as I live and move? This encompasses His virgin birth, His sinless life, His teachings, His sacrifice, His suffering, His crucifixion, His blood atonement, His Resurrection, and His intercession. As you think on HIM what stands out the most to you? THIS WAS FOR ME!!

No, really it is for His glory! For me this is His perfect timing. The language was developed to share the story, and Rome was waiting to disperse the story.

- Do I still believe that Jesus Christ brought Salvation? This saving grace; this saving Gospel? As I read the Word, do I believe the writings as they point out the fall of man, and the coming salvation through Christ? Over and over we clearly see the Scripture points to Christ. All of the miniscule details that were fulfilled, the prophecies past, those TO Eve, Joseph, Daniel, Apostle John, and the prophecies to come, zero in around the Gospel of Christ. In short do I believe the Bible?!

- Am I still committed to a covenant relationship with Christ? This is a lifetime commitment. Yes, it can be broken but not without consequence—we can fall away. Many times, this looks like a “slow fade” simply not doing maintenance and the paint peels, slowly at first, then the boards rot, the nails rust out, the wind blows, rains come—and the old house falls! How am I living this relationship with Christ? Do I talk with Him daily? Do I meditate on His Word? Do I wait for Him?

- Am I loyal? Is my allegiance to Christ and His kingdom? (I borrow this from the COB.) “Will you be loyal to the church, upholding it with your Prayers, your Presence, your Service, and your Substance?” How much have I prayed for the church (local or worldwide)? Prayer for the leadership? For the

poor? The sick? The lonely? Those full of joy? What about my presence? Do I go to church? Fifty percent of the time? The IRS states that an active member is present more than 75% of the time. Even with our interactive schedule in Ohio do I stay home on our “off Sunday”? What about assisting with things that need done in the body? My Service: “Someone else can mow, someone else can visit the elderly, someone else can... You name it!! Can’t you see I’m busy? My family needs me, my business needs me, I deserve a vacation.”

Am I still committed to a covenant relationship with Christ? This is a lifetime commitment. This can be broken, but not without consequences.

“Besides that, it’s so hard to get the extended family together for a week! I’m not fit to be a missionary. (How could I leave Grandpa’s farm?) My Substance: what about my stuff? It’s mine. God gave it to me.” NO, it’s all His! We are just stewards. At the least do I give back a portion first? To assist others, even if all of us gave 5% to our local treasury we would have tremendous to give away to those in need. Do I look for opportunities for prayer, presence, service, or substance?

- Do I still desire to walk together with this local assembly? Am I desiring to fellowship with the local assembly for guidance, correction,

accountability, fellowship, etc.? Do I want to be a lone ranger? Is this local assembly (church district) following in the steps to be a part of the world-wide church “ecclesia”? Not the one-world church, but a living, breathing portion of the called-out believers of Christ.

• What about the principles taught when I was baptized? Non-resistance, non-swearing, and non-conformity?

Nonresistance — (Generosity in the face of conflict.) “Laying down my life.”

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Matt. 5:38–42).

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36).

This is about how I respond when a driver cuts me off, or when another shopper gets the last item of something I really want or need. It starts as a child when another grabs a toy and they say “MINE!” The final application of this principle is not going to the battlefield. Have I sought to understand this

teaching? What about practicing it? We are able to practice this at home, at work, at church. In fact, we can work on this anywhere! There is a difference between a *peace maker* and a *pacifist*. We want to be a peacemaker who uses godly ways and means, not a pacifist who uses worldly ways and means. Am I teaching this principle to my children both in word and in deed? Do they see in me Nonresistance?

Non-swearing — “Truthfulness and honesty.”

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matt. 5:33–37).

“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (Jas. 5:12).

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God

is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?" (Eccl. 5:1–6).

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

The Scripture is full of this! We must always tell the truth. Then we only have one story to remember. This principle calls us to a standard in business that is not crafty or deceiving. But an open and honest style that will never leave us without witness. And of course, when we do deal with the occasion where we may be called to swear, we can simply affirm. There is no need to swear as we tell the truth always. Do your children see this principle in you? Are you teaching this by word and deed? I had some hard lessons as a youth; I remember what soap tastes like.

Non-conformity — "Conformity to Christ."

Do I still think like the world? Do I go to the same places the world goes for entertainment? Do I act like the world? Do I look different from the world? What does non-conformity look and feel like? This is an item that starts in our heart but fleshes out in our actions and reactions. In all reality non-conformity encompasses both non-swearing and non-resistance and every other aspect of my life. If I get angry with ____; if I vacation with ____; if I look to ____ (you fill in the blanks) for satisfaction other than from Christ; if I walk into a store and my dress and actions do not portray that I am living for Christ, I have missed it. What about a call to political action? What kingdom am I a part of? Fashion, fun, and freedom must be from following Christ.

• Am I maturing? Am I growing in grace? Do I engage myself daily in the warfare of this world? Or am I engaged in the fight for life! *"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"* (II Tim. 2:4). Alone I will fall; do I call out to the Holy spirit to fight for me to assist my weaknesses? Do I thank Him for the victories given?

In short, am I living for the glory of GOD?!

Is the Victory HIS?!

This first visit question is about the core of my beliefs!

(to be continued)

Samuel Benedict

BIBLICAL BEHAVIOR

Part 10

“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 I Peter 1, verse 18.

*“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain **conversation** received by tradition from your fathers,” (I Pet. 1:18).*

Up to this point our verses have mostly been positive in nature. This one, on the other hand, is describing behavior to avoid. From verse 17 we understand God judges all men based upon their works, and not upon their person. Peter learned this in a trance on a rooftop described in Acts 10. He tells us that this understanding causes us to live, or sojourn, in reverence of God's holy standards. Recognizing our ancestry or nationality will not redeem us. Our verse begins with *forasmuch*, or based upon this understanding, our redemption was not accomplished by corruptible things as handed down by the futile behavior of the Jewish fathers. Rather, our redemption was accomplished singularly by the precious blood of Christ. It's preciousness was validated by the fact that God raised Jesus up from the dead and gave Him glory. This shows God gladly and wholly accepted this blood as the adequate sacrifice to redeem every believer.

As we dig a little deeper into this subject, I'm interested in understanding the statement, “*vain conversation received by tradition*

from your fathers.” As we have already seen, Peter is contrasting this with the precious blood of Christ. But what does this phrase mean? The construction of the phrase seems to indicate that the fathers had actually made this claim. One of the clearest examples of what Peter may be talking about is found in Mark 7. The Pharisees had found fault with Jesus’ disciples because they did not wash their hands before eating. Verse 3 uses the phrase “*holding the tradition of the elders.*” Apparently the elders placed emphasis upon these types of traditions, even to the point of resting their redemption upon them. Peter targets this kind of behavior and clarifies that God will not redeem anyone, except by the blood of His Son. Peter states that God will not redeem us because of our **person**. God will not redeem us because we have **precious metals**. God will not redeem us based upon any **practices** that tradition recommends, regardless how precious they seem to us. Our only way to be redeemed is by placing our faith in the precious blood of Christ. We must understand that there is nothing wrong with washing our hands before we eat. There are many wise practices we can engage in, and we should. Peter is not calling us away from traditions, but from placing our confidence in them to redeem us. In all our wholesome behavior, may we never lose sight of the truth of this verse—only the precious blood of Christ can redeem us.

Until next time, may your behavior be *because* you are redeemed, not *so you can be* redeemed.

Grant Fullmer

KEN AND I

Jesse Martin

“Get out of my shop! I don’t need people like you around me! And never come back!”

My lips quivered as I looked into the dark, angry eyes of the yelling man. I blinked back the unbidden tears, realizing that once more, I had to leave this man that I loved. All night I could sense that we were coming to this, and I had tried so hard not to let it happen. With one last attempt, I feebly yelled above the tension, “Ken, we don’t want to...” But once more, I was rudely cut off. With slumped shoulders and downcast eyes, I turned to escape the confines of his dingy, pawn shop, his ever-crescendoing voice drowning the last hope of respite.

The lingering smell of smoke and the echo of his angry voice joined the troubled thoughts of my emotionally overwrought mind, as I slowly walked up the street. “What do you think, Josh?” I asked my faithful, quiet friend.

“I don’t know,” he responded, and we fell back into silent anguish at the outcome of our supposed Bible study, grasping for an explanation for the terrible response. What could we have done differently? Why could he not accept the truth? What lay behind

those flashing eyes, and what memories are stored beneath his ever-crowning beanie?

Ken was born on a country farm in the rolling hills of Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, a splendid place for a curious and adventurous little boy to live.

When Ken was four years old, his parents separated. He had heard them fighting a lot, but he didn't know that it was possible for Mom and Dad to separate. It crushed his heart and confused his innocent soul. He did not know how to handle the stress and change that was tossed on his peaceful life.

The terror and confusion of his mom hurriedly packing their belongings, loading him and his siblings in the car, and driving away are still riveted in his mind. It made no sense! Why couldn't they just go home? In his musty bedroom at their little, dingy apartment, he lay staring at the moldy ceiling, wondering endlessly what had gone so wrong.

Ken soon adjusted to his new home in the city of Pottsville with only cars, people, and sidewalks instead of cows, frogs, and mud. But fate did not leave the small security his new lifestyle provided him. His mom was not able to properly care for him and his siblings, and so the children were placed in different foster homes. That was even worse than leaving Dad! The clothes he wore were the only things familiar to him. Instead of understanding and loving him, each new family brought more yelling, hatred, and beating. Terror, tears, loneliness, and pain accompanied him.

Ken thought the second foster

home that he was placed in would be a safe, loving home. The dad was tall and strong and appeared to be gentle. The mom was overweight, but her friendly smile resolved his fears. But the first night, when he reached for the food, he accidentally dumped a cup of water. She screamed at him and told him that he was worthless, and she wished they had never gotten him. The dad continued eating as if he didn't hear or care. Why didn't the strong man stop her?

That evening, Ken crawled into his big, strange bed, already crying in loneliness, when he heard the mom yell. He quickly jumped out of bed and, with trembling legs, slipped behind the door to hide. She charged up the stairs bellowing angrily, and Ken was sure that he was in trouble. To his relief, she continued down the hall. He was still too scared to leave his hiding place for fear of receiving a beating. He wiped his tears as he began to sing under his breath a song he had heard in Sunday school, "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world." He stopped to think, and his crying quit. "Then why am I here?" he wondered. "Have I done something wrong? God must not love little children. That song is not true! If God loved me I would not be here!" With that conclusion, he burst into tears and lost hope in God. He woke the next morning, still hidden behind the door.

Darkness had long fallen, and my family was all peacefully sleeping in our old farmhouse. I cried myself to sleep, crying for Ken's

soul, crying because I didn't know what to do, crying because my friend, the man I longed to see at peace with God, hated me.

Ken continued to fire questions. "How can God be good and allow so much bad? How could God let children suffer?" I listened on as he continued saying the same things that I heard so many times before, giving me no chance to talk.

Again, it was time to leave, and I was so glad to do so. He kept talking as we backed out the door. Once more, my friend and I walked up the street—tired, frustrated, and wishing never to come back.

Ken was 13 years old, and his life was no better than it had been when he was first put into the foster system. His life was in turmoil. He was continually yelled at and belittled at home. Ken was tired of crying. No one cared, and there was no one with whom he could share his problem. That's when he came up with his clever plan. His school friend was a hippie, and his parents traveled a lot. They were called Gypsies. He heard that they were headed to California. So, Ken told them about his terrible life and asked if they would give him a ride. They were glad to help. That exciting morning, he just did his usual thing. He left for school and instead went to California. He didn't mind leaving all his stuff behind—he really didn't have much anyway. His foster parents didn't even care that he left.

In California, Ken lived on the beach and worked for fishermen, and whoever else needed help. He

always had enough to eat and something to do. He had his fellow beach bums, but he was still alone inside. His heart was still empty. He longed for love.

Ken lived on the beach for a year and a half and then hitchhiked to Arizona. There he found a home in a homeless shelter and got a job. He did well and soon was on his own, but his search for love took him down the wrong roads. Ken really wanted to be married to a loving wife and have a family, but the girl he married did not marry him because of love. She was hurt, and Ken's own hurt soul was attracted to her. They got married and all was well for a few years until he found out that his wife was seeing other men. His heart was broken, and his world was thrown into turmoil. Ken wanted desperately to provide security for the children that were born to them, and so he tried his best to stay together. He did not want to put his children through the life that he experienced. But after eight rough years, they got a divorce.

Ken moved on and tried to recover from the devastation of the divorce. His search for love brought him only more sadness and pain. Since Ken was hurt and unhappy, he found satisfaction in making others happy. He spent all his money on them, and when he had nothing more to offer, they left.

Now Ken is sitting in his pawn shop, alone, hurt, sad, and hiding. He found through his sad life that no one cared. Every time that he opened himself to love, he was always hurt. Deep down inside, he

truly felt that God did not care. He lost hope in God, people, and last of all, he lost hope in love itself. That is why we were still visiting the dingy, smoke-stained shop after six years of very little apparent success. God kept bringing us back. He put in us a persistent love and relentless burden for this wounded soul. That is why we spent many hours hearing the same criticisms over and over. The same problems, the same confusion.

Nearly every month, he would fluctuate between hope and despair, love and hate, new life in God, and sadness and sin. We never knew what the next visit would bring. We could be swelling with hope and filled with blessing, or torn with angry words and sickened with dread. But we kept going back, and slowly he emerged from the pit of despair, and slowly allowed himself to be wrapped in the wonderful love of God and the glorious message of His redeeming grace. It was amazing to see the change in his life and to hear his ever-growing confidence in the love of Christ. Today Ken loves the Lord. He is learning to walk with God. He has seen the love of God. He has found hope in God. He has experienced the unconditional love of God.

He is still growing, and we are excited to see what God has for him.

I'm so glad that God brought Ken into my life. God had a plan for Ken and me. God wanted to show Ken that He loved him and that He would be there for him even when Josh turned his back

on Him. God also wanted me to carry a burden in my youth. He knew how easily I would be distracted with money and fun. He knew that I needed a burden to carry, a soul to care for. He wanted me to be able to see beneath the shell of a hard soul and see a hurting child within. He wanted to give me a burden too big for me to carry so that I would learn to lean on Him. And most of all, He wanted to equip me to serve Him in broader ways. Fellow Christians, open your lives to the work of God. Find an opportunity to love a hurting soul. Search out someone who needs a friend, and love that person, and wait and see what God has in store for you. Love until it hurts so badly that you don't know what to do, and then turn to Jesus, who is there to help you through. God may be waiting for you to make the first step before He will use you. Your life is before you. You can choose to live a comfortable, happy life, or you can open yourself up to be hurt and find that after years pass, your life is overflowing with meaning and purpose. Jesus opened Himself to the pain and anguish of this world, and only through that do we have hope. He is asking us to follow His example, to open ourselves to pain so that others can have hope. And as He was glorified, so will we be glorified, in some measure, someday, and we will never regret the pain that we faced.

Selected from the Spring 2024
The Heartbeat of the Remnant by

The Editor

PREPARE FOR CHRIST'S APPEARING

The concept of the Rapture, the belief that Jesus Christ will return in the clouds to take His believers to heaven, is a significant aspect of Christian eschatology. Preparing for this event is a matter of spiritual readiness, characterized by faith, repentance, righteous living, and a vigilant heart. I John 3:3 says, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

UNDERSTANDING THE RAPTURE

I Thessalonians 4:16–17 states, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up [*harpazo*] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This passage provides a vivid depiction of the Rapture [*harpazo*], emphasizing the sudden and glorious nature of Christ meeting us in the air to take us home.

FAITH AND BELIEF IN CHRIST

The foundation of preparing for the Rapture is faith in Jesus Christ. John 3:16 declares, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior is the first and most crucial step in being ready for His return. This faith must be genuine and

transformative, influencing every aspect of a believer's life.

REPENTANCE

True heartfelt repentance for our sins is of utmost importance according to Scripture, as it signifies a sincere turning away from sin and a genuine desire to seek God's forgiveness and grace. The King James Version of the Bible emphasizes this in verses like Acts 3:19, which states, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord..." This repentance is not merely an expression of regret, but a profound transformation of heart and mind, leading to a renewed relationship with God. It involves recognizing the gravity of our sins, feeling true contrition, and making a committed effort to change our ways, thereby aligning our lives with God's will and receiving His mercy and salvation. This repentance is further solidified by making a public confession of faith with water baptism.

LIVING A HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS LIFE

The Bible calls Christians to live holy lives as a testimony to their faith. In I Peter 1:15–16, believers are exhorted, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." This holiness is not limited to outward appearance and actions, which are secondary, but in the purity of heart and mind, which only a born-again

Christian possesses. Ephesians 5:27 reinforces this, stating that Christ will present to Himself a glorious church, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

VIGILANCE AND WATCHFULNESS

Hebrews 9:28 states it is very important to be watching for Jesus as Paul says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Also, II Timothy 4:8 states, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Jesus repeatedly emphasized the need for vigilance concerning His return. In Matthew 24:42, He warns, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." This call to watchfulness is echoed in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), where the wise virgins who were prepared with oil for their lamps were able to meet the bridegroom, symbolizing readiness for Christ's return. Therefore, being spiritually alert and discerning the times is crucial.

PRAYER AND COMMUNION WITH GOD

Maintaining a close relationship with God through prayer and daily Bible study is essential in preparing for the Rapture. In Luke 21:36, Jesus advises, "Watch ye there-

fore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Prayer not only strengthens faith but also keeps believers aligned with God's will, providing guidance and reassurance.

SHARING THE GOSPEL

Part of being ready for the Rapture involves fulfilling the Great Commission. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commands, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." Sharing the message of salvation and leading others to Christ is a significant aspect of living in anticipation of His return. We don't have to go overseas or to a third world country to share the Gospel. We come in contact with people every day who do not know Him. These people are our friends, acquaintances, coworkers, children, and those we meet on the street.

PERSEVERANCE AND ENDURANCE

The Christian journey requires perseverance. Hebrews 12:1 encourages believers to "...run with patience the race that is set before us." This endurance is necessary to remain steadfast in faith, especially in times of trial and temptation. James 1:12 also promises, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to

them that love him.” We must hold on to our Lord as fiercely as He holds on to us.

The Scriptures provide clear guidance on how believers can ready themselves for this anticipated event. As I John 3:2–3 aptly summarizes, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we

shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Through these practices, Christians can live in joyful expectation of meeting their Lord in the air.

God bless you as you make yourself ready for His appearing.

Tracy Beaver

MEDITATIONS

We sometimes grieve not for what was, but for what might have been.
If Scripture seems contradictory blame the reader, not the author.
Satan goes to church, but don't let him crowd you off the bench.
Thanksgiving from the heart is the purest form of worship.
Temptation often comes from nearby, not from afar.
Satan is real! I've done business with him!
All I can say is, "Thank you, Jesus!"

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.

- Many may wonder if God is still speaking today, or if His voice has fallen silent now.

Many times in the Scripture, the voice of the Lord is spoken of. In Psalm 29 the voice of the Lord is mentioned many times, and infers that God's voice can be heard in many ways, and is very glorious.

Psalm 29:4 "The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty."

Questions:

 1. If we notice a sudden opportunity to do good, and bless another, is this God speaking to me?
Am I listening?
2. When we hear of a sudden calamity that came to a neighbor (fire, water, wind), is this the voice of my Lord to me?
Am I listening?
 3. If I begin to sense in my wife, or husband, or child a little heaviness or struggle that may need encouragement, is this the voice of the Lord to me?
Am I listening?
 4. If I notice that perhaps I have more interest in money and occupation than in providing devotional time for my family, is this the voice of God to me?
Am I listening?
 5. Am I sensitive to His leading?
 6. Am I able to hear His voice?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Sept. 8, 2024; Cutler Ridge, IN
 Braden Flora
 Sept. 11, 2024; Living Epistle, NM
 Margaret McConnaughey
 Sept. 11, 2024; West Manchester, IN
 Travis Long
 Sept. 18, 2024; Morning Star, OH
 Tanner Deaton
 Kyra McCloud
 Sept. 22, 2024; Cascade Valley, WA
 Olive Garber
 Sept. 26, 2024; Lower Twin, OH
 Jack Yost
 Sept. 26, 2024; Lower Twin, OH
 Theodore Oyler (Tennessee)
 Eli Brubaker
 Sept. 29, 2024; Bethel, OH
 Sylvia Flora

COMMISSIONS

Sept. 16, 2024; Western Kansas, KS
 Ezra Miller (with wife Danyel)
 Advanced to the second degree
 of the ministry.
 Oct. 3, 2024; Bear Creek, OH
 Johnny Denlinger (with wife Holly)
 Advanced to the Second Degree of
 the ministry.
 Roland Flora (with wife Amy)
 Called to the Ministry.
 Evan Bowman (with wife Krista)
 Called to the office of Deacon.

COMMUNION NOTICES

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..... Pine Grove, FL
 Feb. 22, 2025..... West Manchester, IN
 Mar. 2, 2025..... Morning Star, OH
 Mar. 22, 2025..... Sugar Grove, OH
 Mar. 29, 2025..... Dallas, OR
 Apr. 5, 2025..... Cutler Ridge, IN
 Apr. 12, 2025..... Fair Haven, KS
 Apr. 12, 2025..... Salem, OH
 Apr. 26, 2025..... Cascade Valley, WA

HARVEST MEETINGS

Nov. 28, 2024..... Pleasant View, OH

2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Lord willing, the brethren and sisters of the Mt. Zion (PA) and Shenandoah (VA) congregations anticipate hosting the next Annual Conference at Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH, on May 24–27, 2025. The brethren chosen for the 2025 Committee of Arrangements have organized as follows:

Joseph Jamison (Foreman),
 Carlton Brubaker (Treasurer),
 Donnie Beckner (Asst. Treasurer)
 Christian Filbrun (Secretary)
 Leslie Bowman (Asst. Secretary)

As our various committees begin to meet in preparation for Annual Conference 2025, we ask an interest in your prayers as we labor together for the glory of God, for the edification of His people, and for the proclamation of His Gospel! Submitted on behalf of the 2025 COA,

Christian Filbrun, Secretary

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL NOTICE

We are making our call for subscriptions for the year 2025 at this time. The subscription price for each subscriber continues to be \$30.00 per year, and should be received by December 1, 2024, from the District Agents. **Each District Agent should include an updated list of their subscribers, with their current addresses.** Individual subscribers' subscription payments should be received by December 1, 2024, as well, if possible, for the 2025 subscription year.

POEMS

**THE SECRET OF A
HAPPY DAY**

Just to let thy Father do
 What He will;
 Just to know that He is true,
 And be still.
 Just to follow hour by hour
 As He leadeth,
 Just to draw the moment's power
 As it needeth.
 Just to trust Him, this is all!
 Then the day will surely be
 Peaceful, whatso'er befall,
 Bright and blessed, calm and free.

Just to let Him speak to thee
 Through His Word,
 Watching, that His voice may be
 Clearly heard.
 Just to tell Him everything
 As it rises,
 And at once to Him to bring
 All surprises.
 Just to listen, and to stay
 Where you cannot miss His voice.
 This is all! and thus today,
 Communing then you shall rejoice.

Just to ask Him what to do
 All the day,
 And to make you quick and true
 To obey.
 Just to know the needed grace
 He bestoweth,
 Every bar of time and place
 Overfloweth.
 Just to take thy orders straight
 From the Master's own command.
 Blessed day! When thus we wait
 Always at our Sovereign's hand.

Just to recollect His love,
 Always true.
 Always shining from above,
 Always new.
 Just to recognize its light,
 All-enfolding;
 Just to claim its present might,
 All-upholding.
 Just to know it as thine own,
 That no power can take away,
 Is not this enough alone
 For the gladness of the day?

Just to trust, and yet to ask
 Guidance still,
 Take the training or the task,
 As He will.
 Just to take the loss or gain
 As He sends it;
 Just to take the joy or pain,
 As He lends it.
 He who formed thee for His praise
 Will not miss the gracious aim;
 So today and all thy days
 Shall be molded for the same.

Just to leave in His dear hands
 Little things,
 All we cannot understand,
 All that stings;
 Just to let Him take the care,
 Sorely pressing,
 Finding all we let Him bear
 Changed to blessing,
 This is all! and yet the way
 Marked by Him who loves the best,
 Secret of a Happy day,
 Secret of His promised rest!

—Frances Ridley Havergal

BLESSED SAVIOUR, THOU ART MINE

Blessed Saviour, Thou art mine,
All I have is wholly Thine;
Take, oh, take me now, I pray,
Wash my every sin away.
Let me of Thy fullness know,
Make me whiter than the snow;
Pure and holy let me be,
That my life may tell for Thee.

Every sin I now forsake,
As I of Thy fullness take;
Thou hast promised power Divine,
May it evermore be mine.
All in vain for peace I sigh,
Naught on earth can satisfy;
Thou alone canst be my rest,
Fold, O fold me to Thy breast.

Save me from the power of sin,
Give me victory within;
Grant me holiness of life,
Keep me spotless 'mid the strife.
May Thy Spirit fill my heart,
Power for service now impart;
Till I see Thee face to face,
Learn the secret of Thy grace.

—Oswald J. Smith

THE CROSS

Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross;
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss.

Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all,
This is happiness to me.

Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
I should prove a castaway?

Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Bring me to my Saviour's feet,
Lay me low and keep me there.

—William Cowper

GRATITUDE

O precious Father, as we bow
Before Thy throne today—
We count the many blessings
Thou hast shower'd upon our way.

The comfort of our humble homes,
Our health and happiness,
The strength provided for each day
To meet the strain and stress.

We praise Thee for Thy precious Son
Who brought salvation free,
And for this mighty land of ours—
A land of liberty!

So, Lord, help us to give Thee thanks
For all that we hold dear—
Not only on Thanksgiving Day
But each day of the year.

—Author Unknown

WE THANK THEE, LORD

For days of warm Spring rain and
Summer sun,
For Fall and Winter chill,
For bringing us safe through
another year,
With strength to do Thy will.
We thank Thee!

—Phyllis C. Michael

A THANKSGIVING POEM

The sun hath shed its kindly light,
Our harvesting is gladly o'er
Our fields have felt no killing blight,
Our bins are filled with goodly store.

From pestilence, fire, flood, and sword
We have been spared by thy decree,
And now with humble hearts, O Lord,
We come to pay our thanks to thee.

We feel that had our merits been
The measure of thy gifts to us,
We erring children, born of sin,
Might not now be rejoicing thus.

No deed of ours hath brought us grace;
When thou wert nigh our hearts were dull,
We hid in trembling from thy face,
But thou, O God, wert merciful.

Thy mighty hand o'er all the land
Hath still been open to bestow
Those blessings which our wants demand
From Heaven, whence all blessings flow.

Thou hast, with ever watchful eye,
Looked down on us with holy care,
And from thy storehouse in the sky
Hast scattered plenty everywhere.

Then lift we up our song of praise
To thee, O Father, good and kind;
To thee we consecrate our days;
Be thine the temple of each mind.

With incense sweet our thanks ascend;
Before thy works our powers pall;
Though we should strive years without end,
We could not thank thee for them all.

Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1872–1906)

TO OUR BELOVED

It singeth low in every heart,
 We hear it, each and all—
 A song of those who answer not,
 However we may call;
 They throng the silence of the breast,
 We see them as of yore—
 The kind, the brave, the true, the sweet,
 Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up
 When these have laid it down;
 They brightened all the joy of life,
 They softened every frown;
 But, O, 'tis good to think of them
 When we are troubled sore!
 Thanks be to God that such have been,
 Though they are here no more.

More homelike seems the vast unknown
 Since they have entered there;
 To follow them were not so hard,
 Wherever they may fare;
 They cannot be where God is not,
 On any sea or shore;
 Whate'er betides, thy love abides,
 Our God, for evermore.

—John White Chadwick

OBITUARIES

SHELLABARGER — Evelyn Mae (Lavy) Age 79, of Bradford, Ohio, passed away Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at the Village Green Healthcare Center, Greenville, Ohio. She was born May 15, 1944, in Troy, Ohio, to her parents Ervin and Estella (Haas) Lavy. Evelyn graduated from Newton High School class of 1962 and was a member of the Shiloh Old German Baptist New Conference Church. On January 10, 1965, she married Stanley

Shellabarger and together they shared a life for over 59 years. Evelyn worked as a homemaker in Bradford where she raised her two sons Michael and Zane. For the past 30 years, she and Stanley attended many farmer's markets. You would find them on Saturday mornings selling their produce and baked goods. Evelyn was famous for her chocolate chip cookies and various pies.

Evelyn is survived by her husband

Stanley Shellabarger; sons and daughters-in-law, Michael and Barb Shellabarger, Zane and Jennifer Shellabarger; granddaughters, Emily, Erika, Stella, Lillie, and Eva; brothers and sisters-in-law, Bob and Sharon Lavy, Everett and Reta Lavy; sisters and brother-in-law, Edie Murphy, Eileen and John Henderson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother, Paul David Lavy; brother-in-law, Ferdie Murphy. The family would like to thank the staff at Village Green and Ohio's Hospice of Miami County for the care they showed to Evelyn during her stay.

Visitation was Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at the Shiloh Meeting House from 3:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Funeral services were held at 10:00 A.M. Thursday, April 25, at the Shiloh Meeting House with interment following at Newcomer Cemetery.

The Family

RENICKER — Mary Catherine (Miller) was born to Clyde and Velva (Flory) Miller near Modesto, California, on January 19, 1934. She departed peacefully to be with the Lord on September 4, 2024 at the age of ninety.

Mary grew up in the Modesto area, attending Prescott Elementary and Modesto High Schools. Later, her family moved near Waterford, California, where her parents farmed almonds and raised poultry.

Mary committed her life to the Lord Jesus Christ and was baptized

in 1948. She was a faithful member of the Columbia River District Old German Baptist Brethren Church—New Conference, and her faith remained steadfast until her passage into Heaven.

She married Virgil R. Renicker at her parents' home on September 12, 1954. They shared nearly seventy years together. Virgil often said that he and Mary were childhood sweethearts, having first met in the church house baby room as their mothers rocked them side by side.

Virgil and Mary made their home near Waterford, California, where they farmed almonds. God blessed their union with three children. In 1968, the family moved near Twain Harte, California, to the mountains they so cherished. They spent many summers exploring the wilderness and taking family backpacking trips into the High Sierras, camping, fishing, and cherishing time together.

Mary possessed a gentle nature and cherished her family and friends deeply. She found profound joy in the outdoors, often seeking solitude to experience a special closeness with her Creator in nature, where she felt as if she were touching the very fingerprints of God. Her most treasured moments were those spent alone with her Lord, feeling His presence in the wilderness, engaging in heartfelt prayer, lifting her voice in song, and immersing herself in Bible study. In these natural sanctuaries, Mary felt

as if the veil between her and her Lord had lifted, yet she understood her calling to return home where Jesus had work for her to do. Blessed with an exceptionally intimate heart-connection to God, Mary lovingly shared this divine bond with her husband, children, grandchildren, neighbors, and caregivers, touching lives with her radiant faith, godly wisdom, and meek and gentle spirit.

In 1989, Virgil and Mary moved to Ellensburg, Washington, and sixteen years later, they settled in Pasco, Washington. Over the years Virgil and Mary grew up in the new church planting of Modesto and were charter members in the following districts: Tolumne, Sierra Pines, Cascade Valley, and Columbia River—New Conference.

She was preceded in death by her parents; two sisters, Joan Cardin and Evelyn Skiles; one brother, Denton

Miller; a brother-in-law, Albert Skiles; and a granddaughter, Shawndra Wilcox.

Mary is survived by her loving and devoted husband, Virgil; two daughters, Rosemary (Timothy) Bauman and Carilyn (Ron) Wilcox; and one son, Mark (Judy) Renicker. She is also survived by nine grandchildren, and nineteen great-grandchildren, as well as numerous nephews, nieces, relatives, and friends.

The funeral service was held on September 15, 2024, at the Columbia River meetinghouse with interment at the adjacent cemetery. The funeral was conducted by Brethren Everett Wray, Galen Flory, and Mylon Wolf. Brother Sam Wray spoke at the graveside and Brother Denton Flory offered words of hope and encouragement at a separate meeting for the family.

The Family

Terms

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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.
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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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