

BIBLE MONITOR

VOL. XCVIII

JUNE, 2020

NO. 06

“For the faith once delivered unto the saints”

OUR MOTTO: Spiritual in life and Scriptural in practice.	OUR WATCHWORD: Go into all the world and preach the gospel.
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OUR AIM: Be it our aim to be more sanctified, more righteous,
more holy, and more perfect through faith and obedience.

MY GOD MY FATHER

My God! my Father! Cheering name!
O, may I call thee mine!
Give me with humble hope to claim
A portion so divine.

This only can my fears control,
And bid my sorrows fly;
What real harm can reach my soul
Beneath my Father's eye?

Whate'er thy providence denies,
I calmly would resign;
For thou art just, and good, and wise-
O bend my will to thine!

Whate'er thy sov'reign will ordains,
O give me strength to bear;
Still let me know a Father reigns,
Still trust a Father's care.

—Isaac Watts

DISCERNMENT

Many times, when Jesus dealt with the Pharisees and Scribes, the scriptures note that He discerned their thoughts and intentions. He understood the motives behind their questions and criticisms. To counter their motives, He would often answer their questions by asking questions of His own. They were often put on a spot that they had originally designed for Him. They faced a dilemma. His discernment detected and set at naught their designs of disrupting Him.

Since that time, there have been many schemes designed to take Christians unaware. There is a need amid today's political and social climate for Christians to exercise discernment in reacting to the surrounding culture. Many ideas and philosophies

may sound plausible and even beneficial as they are presented. As these schemes become known Christians need to discern where they would eventually lead believers. They could lead believers astray.

Discernment is born of wisdom, the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit's direction. It is looking beneath the surface aspects of suggested programs to see the true outcomes. Many ideas and programs guarantee drawing many to follow Jesus. These ideas may present Christianity in an appealing way that promise a way of improving life that does not account for the cost of following Jesus. They may present God's demands as options that may be ignored or minimized.

Discernment will inform

THE BIBLE MONITOR JUNE, 2020

Published monthly by the Board of Publication of the Dunkard Brethren Church in the plant of Haines Printing Company.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Haines Printing Company, 10575 West Main Road, North East, PA 16428.

Terms: Single subscription \$5.00 a year in advance.

Send all subscriptions and communications to the editor.

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believers that Jesus chose His words carefully when He warned there was a price, they must pay to faithfully follow Him. The believer should count the cost of the struggles that may be part of the journey. God carefully chose the commandments that He required of His followers. In His Love for His children, He gave directions that would better their lives and would please and honor Him. The discerning believer does not view those commandments as being outrageous, although they are not popular.

The history of Christianity displays many changes in emphases. There are periods when certain themes are more prominent than in the past. These themes will last a few years or even a few decades, but that emphasis will change. Other themes draw people's attention. The discerning Christian must look at these themes and determine whether the standards of God are being eroding or strengthened. Some changes are driven by social or cultural changes, fluctuating from one fad to another. The believer must determine whether these changes will honor God or afterwards bring reproach. Themes may arise that do bring a deeper Spiritual experience

to believers. Christians must discern whether suggested improvements are Spiritually better, or they are only a feel-good experience.

With the best of intentions, believers may decide a course is good, only to find later that it was detrimental. What seems wise and farsighted at one time may not be a blessing. Good intentions may not be the wisest discernment. The well-intended action may prove to be unwise because it did not conform to God's expressed will.

That which is accomplished lacking a well-discerned pathway may become a problem rather than a solution. Often decisions made very quickly can become problematic because there was not time given either to properly think the action to completion or to garner the support of the body of believers.

The expression of Christianity does not remain static. There are always changes that affect worship services. There are new suggestions for observing the ordinances. The ways of the past should inform the present. Often when changes are made quickly or without forethought, it will be discovered that there were good reasons to continue the present

way. It is far better to move slowly on change rather than burst forward with a seemingly good idea that ends up bringing division and dispute. Discernment realizes that convenience and speed are not the desired objects of the service. To encourage Spiritual growth and fruitfulness some time for teaching and seeking God's will be much more profitable.

We have been asked to travel our Christian journey in faith, not by sight or by the ideals of our

surrounding culture. We must discern our way carefully to best express our faithfulness and to honor God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We cannot serve God by ignoring His will. Our heart-felt service must worship and honor Him as expressed in His Word.

Are you discerning how you live both your individual lives and as a part of the Body of Christ? Has discernment become a part of your Spiritual characteristics?

M. C. Cook

A SUPPER NEVER TO MISS

Read Luke 14:1-24

Jesus asks a simple question. "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day?" Those gathered there in the home of a member of the Sanhedrin, the one who invited Jesus to eat bread, were people of prominence. They were likely close associates of his with a wide variety of skills that included both the knowledge and practice of the Law. One person may have been specifically selected, not for his expertise, but for his physical condition. Perhaps he was a member of the Pharisee's household or maybe even a servant. But he was also bait

with which to tempt Jesus to heal. (verses 1-3)

Jesus had chosen His question carefully. He already knew that the Law did not forbid healing on the Sabbath. Rather it was the tradition of the elders that declared healing on the Sabbath as unlawful. This tradition was developed over the process of time as issues arose about what was lawful including what would be considered work on the Sabbath. Healing was defined as work and therefore not lawful on the Sabbath. This was the tradition that the Pharisees

upheld. It was the final verdict on how the Law was applied. As a comparison think of the Constitution as the Law and the whole body of law under it as the tradition of the elders. There was always a need for lawyers to rightly understand not just the law but the intricacies of the tradition of the elders as well.

No one attempted to answer. Their silence spoke loudly to the fact that the Law did not forbid healing on the Sabbath and therefore healing was not unlawful. They were stuck with an untenable position. Jesus then healed the man who had dropsy. But Jesus' concern was not with winning an argument. Rather, it was the condition of their hearts. They cared more about upholding their tradition than they cared for the person governed by the law. Jesus presses this upon their conscience when He points out their own willingness to save an ox or donkey that has fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day. Is not a person of far greater value than a farm animal is the implied question He does not ask. (verses 4-6)

How can peoples' hearts become so callous? How can they be so indifferent to someone who needs help, hope, and

healing? Jesus had already seen them vying for positions of prominence by where they seated themselves. They reveled in their sense of self-importance. Humility and humbleness were not the path to power and glory. No, they needed people who could help lift them just a little higher. Trading favors gained them leverage over others seeking to climb the ladder of success. (verses 7-11). Jesus illuminated the coldness of their hearts as they never considered blessing those who could never bless them in a similar fashion. They sought immediate temporal gain rather than God's eternal blessing. (verses 12-14)

Jesus' final warning to them was meant to puncture the illusions of their own prominence. Otherwise, their self-absorption in the importance of their own affairs would, by their own choice, exclude them from the most important Supper of their lives. Others would be compelled to come to that Supper. But their invitations would be revoked, stamped as invalid, and expired due to the blindness of their own spiritual condition. (verses 15-24)

Here are some observations to consider as we listen to what the Lord is trying to tell us:

1. We all have blind spots

in our walk with the Lord. When we cannot see them, we cannot surrender them to the Spirit's control. When the Spirit is not allowed to control that blind spot, it will reveal itself as the work of the flesh in our lives. The issues that Jesus brings to the attention of those gathered in this passage are common to our own experience. We see others as well as ourselves acting in similar ways to various degrees. As we begin to see these areas as God sees them, we experience the transforming power of God's Spirit at work in us.

2. All of us get stuck with misunderstandings of what the Scripture teaches or at least implies. Sometimes our knowledge is in short supply. Other times our level of spiritual maturity has not yet prepared us for a fuller understanding. So, we jump to conclusions that are not consistent with what the Scripture teaches. I remember as a six-year-old first grader learning to count to 100. I did not know what came next until another student told me, "101". I was so excited that I had a hard time going to sleep that night. Before I went to sleep, in the wisdom of what I knew as a six-year-old, I was sure I had counted to a million. I

had plenty of math lessons yet to learn. In life there are no shortcuts we can take to become biblically sound in our understanding.

3. Like the issue of healing on the Sabbath there are biblical texts that do not always tell us everything we want to know. As a result, we search for answers from many texts to gain as clear an answer as we can discern. As we become more comfortable with our position or answer, it ultimately becomes a part of our identity as a Christian. Whether it is doctrine or practice it becomes embedded in what we believe, what we do, and who we are. As we pass these on from one generation to the next it becomes our tradition.

4. Tradition is neither good nor bad. Tradition proves a sense of connection from one generation to the next. We do not have to constantly reinvent the wheel so to speak. But tradition can also blind us to other avenues that can be every bit as meaningful and fruitful as the traditional way. We react to the difference, not on the intent and teaching of the Scripture, but based on the threat to our identity. Rather than seeking further illumination we become rigid and entrenched in the past. We resist applying

familiar truths to new or changing circumstances. We are unable to respond with love and truth to the challenge that Jesus places in our path.

5. Truth and love are inseparable values in all that we believe and practice. Without love truth becomes bondage imprisoning us in rote answers and lifeless choices. Love without truth leaves us anchorless and rudderless upon the seas of our surrounding culture. Both individually create the same result. We lose the rich heritage that challenged the faith of those before us, no sense of where we are going, and no clear idea of what we should do.

6. When truth and love are bound together as fruits of the same Spirit then truth produces freedom. It is the freedom that a servant has who knows the love of his Master. All thoughts are of pleasing Him. Love is the foundation that keeps the entire household secure through all the storms of life. When the church seeks to understand the will of its Lord the truth brings freshness to our hearts. It is not a dead relic of the past that we are trying to prop up. Rather, it is the convicting power by the same Spirit at work in us that invigorated those who

were before us. As we put truth into practice God's love flows more freely amongst us. No one bears a greater burden than the rest of us must bear. The liberty we experience through God's Spirit leads to the most loving way we can all fulfill the call to obey with fidelity to the Word of God.

7. Not unlike nearly any group with a long heritage that is valued there is a struggle to hold on to those truths and values that continue to speak to our hearts and minds. As we grow, as opportunities to move into cultures different than our own, as our own culture changes, the challenge we face is how to apply those same truths and values in a descriptive way rather than prescriptive way. As we look to the Scripture for guidance on how to apply the same truth in a different context, we want any change in practice to describe the same scriptural intent as our traditional practice. But if we prescribe the same practice without concern for limitations foreign to our experience, but very real in the experience of others, then we turn Spirit inspired tradition into a cold-hearted taskmaster.

8. One of the central battles in the pages of the New Testament is between the rule of law and

the rule of the Spirit. That battle still rages today. The law offers security in its unchanging nature. But the law can only demand obedience not create it. The Spirit offers freedom but is outside of our control. The Spirit requires faith so that all its expressions of obedience reveal the heart and truth of God. The struggle at times that takes place in us and among us is choosing between

law and Spirit, tradition and liberty. Discernment is hard work.

Sometimes we fall back on what is comfortable rather than challenging. God calls us to His Supper table. Let us never fail to accept His invitation. He feeds us joy and renews us in His strength.

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

ONE WAY

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.” James 2:10

It only takes one offence to put a person in jail. You may be pristine in your life and never break the law, but it only takes one broken law to fall into judgment. Every broken law has a penalty attached. Breaking God’s law carries the death penalty because we fall short of God’s Glory. The word “sin” means, “missing the mark.” It does not matter how big or how small the sin is, it separates us from God.

The Law of God never changes. It matters not how rich you are or how poor, the moral law is the same. It does not consider how weak we humans

are, or whether we have the capability to keep these laws. It does not strengthen us to keep it or weaken us not to keep it. It is an absolute law of God. The Mosaic Law, for instance, displayed to the Jews the impossibility to keep it. To atone, sacrifice had to be made each year.

Looking at the New Testament, we see Jesus preaching on the Mount. Again, His preaching shows man’s inability to please God through obedience. Man needed something more than Law. When Jesus came, He said, “Follow me.” He preached, He healed others, He helped many, and then He died. His death was our sacrifice for our sins. There was no way our behavior could save us. His resurrection was our

victory over sin and death.

His resurrection proved to the world that Jesus was the only way to God. Man could not keep the law. He could not even keep the precepts that Jesus taught. He had to see himself as a GUILTY sinner, worthy of death, without hope in himself. He had to fall on his knees before God, claiming the sacrifice of Christ as his salvation.

How many of us could serve God on our record as a sinless, righteous human being? None. ALL OF US must bow before Him, begging for mercy, because there is no way we can satisfy Him. He has paid the price.

Sing praise! The tomb is void
Where the redeemer lay;
Sing of our bonds destroyed,
Our darkness turned to day.
Weep for your dead no more;
Friends be of joyful cheer;
Our star moves on before
Our narrow path shines clear.

He who, so patiently,
The crown of thorns did wear
He hath gone up on high;
Our hope is with him there.
Now is his truth revealed
His majesty and might;
The grave has been unsealed;
Christ is our life and light.

Brethren Hymnal #176

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler's Congregation

THE FOUNDATION MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Nobody ever knows how stable a building is until it is hit by a storm. The hurricanes in our past have done a great deal of devastation to buildings. The strength of a building is never seen, it is the foundation.

The Bible talks about someone who built a house upon the sand and another who built his house upon the rock. When the storms come, and they always do, we know what will happen.

When the storms come it is not the building that really matters, but rather what that building is built upon. The foundation is the most important aspect of every structure. No matter how good the building may look or how much money was spent in the construction of it, its standing is equal to the foundation.

That being so, great care needs to be taken in establishing that foundation. If you are going to build

a building, make sure the foundation can handle the building.

Of course, what Jesus was talking about was not constructing a building, but rather building our lives.

Some people build their lives upon a foundation that will never last nor endure the storms of life. The building looks good, in fact, you could not tell it from any of the other buildings. However, it is the storms of life that determine the stability of the building and the stability of that building is only as strong as the foundation it is built upon.

We have a culture today fascinated with outward appearances. It is vogue today to have a good outer appearance. It does not matter what is inside, it is the outside that people can see that really matters. How superficial.

Does it really matter how good a person looks or how good a person is? Looks are not everything, in fact, they can be deceiving. The outward charm sometimes hides an inward catastrophe. Only the storms of life can bring this to the surface.

When our lives are built upon a faulty foundation, we are in trouble and the sad part is we do not know it until it happened. The storms of life, which will always come, cause our life to fall completely to pieces. In such a case, it is very difficult to put those pieces back together again. Even if you could, the foundation would still be the same.

When looking at a building, it is not what you can see that really matters. It is what you cannot see. The outer shell may be spectacular to look at. It may be of the latest architecture and the envy of everybody in town. But if the foundation is not adequate, the house will crumble when a crisis comes.

Such is a person's life. Take two people who look very much alike and have much the same life pattern. Then catastrophe hits and one falls to pieces and the other stands against the storm.

What was the difference? The difference was simply the foundation. What was that life built upon?

Bringing this over into my spiritual life, I need to be very

careful that I am building on the foundation that has been set for me. I wonder how many Christians are really building their life on the foundation that God has established for them. It is easy to find out. Just wait until the next storm comes.

Getting into the Word of God enables me to understand God's intention of my life. When I begin to understand that, I begin to see that He has laid down a foundation for me to build my life and ministry on. That foundation is the most important aspect of my life.

If I do not have a great foundation no matter what I do will not last. I may be doing good things, but when a catastrophe comes, everything is wiped away.

The Scripture says, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do." My focus each day should be to make sure I understand what the foundation of my life is and keep my life within the confines of that foundation to the glory of God.

How many stories are there about people who were hit with a catastrophe in their life and somehow survived?

But not just survived; they became victorious in their Christian experience.

We do not know about those hit with a catastrophe and their life was destroyed. It is the one who stands against the catastrophe victoriously that gives testimony of a solid foundation in their life.

Sometimes people do not understand the significance of their foundation until a storm hits. Then they realize that it was not wasted time focusing on establishing a good foundation in God.

Standing victorious in the face of a catastrophe is not just having personal application. It also has an application to everybody that is around me. Perhaps somebody around me has crashed without a proper foundation. Because I have a proper foundation, I am in the position to reach out and help that person going through a crisis.

When the storms of life come in their fury, the foundation makes the difference.

James L. Snyder
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PHIL'S PONDERINGS

As we *“study to shew ourselves approved unto God”*

June 2020 Study Questions

June 7 – Luke 13:10-35

What is the difference between obeying the law and fulfilling it?

How does Satan use the law to create bondage?

What is the commonality between the parables of the mustard seed and leaven?

What is the nature of the mustard seed and leaven?

What does a narrow gate require of us?

How do the mustard seed, leaven, and narrow gate correlate to each other?

What is missing from the power capitals of our time?

Commentary: Love is never illegal. Paul writes in Galatians 5 about the fruits of the Spirit. He concludes by saying, “Against such there is no law.” (verse 23). Most of us have felt the restraint of law as we have sat at the red light while no cars can be seen from any direction. The law does not free us to do what is sensible much more what is loving, kind and good. God’s love expands our vision of His grace and mercy even when “we’ve never done it that way before.” But it requires the nurturing of our faith, no matter how small the seeds, or insignificant the leaven seems, to see the expansive, life growing nature of God’s kingdom working in our midst. The shackles of law have been thrown aside, replaced by the constraints of love as we yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the narrow gate that opens the way for us to partake of the tree and the bread of life.

June 14 – Luke 14:1-24

What is dropsy?

What is a ruler of the Pharisees?

Why were so many articulate people silent in their response to Jesus' question?

How do you respond when someone is exalted above you?

How can we better implement inviting people into our homes who cannot respond in kind?

What is the common theme of each of the excuses given for not attending the supper?

Commentary: How easy is it for any of us to speak truth to power? Few of us relish the chance to enter conflict and some of us just do not know how to avoid it. But Jesus chooses to initiate the conflict which totally silences their opposition. Perhaps they realize they were done before they could even begin. But Jesus does not stop with the healing of a man. He chides them on their fleshly mindset. They liked the seat of highest honor. Humility was out of fashion. They are glad to be among such conspicuous company. The thought of inviting those who have no way of elevating their importance (the poor, the handicapped, and the blind), has not crossed their minds. One brave soul ventured a detour to safer ground. "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (verse 15). Jesus uses it to tell a story that illustrates their true spiritual condition. They are so absorbed in their own importance that they are in danger of being excluded from the very kingdom they think is their birthright. With the warning that comes from these verses may our hearts be open to hearing the truth of our own standing before the Lord.

June 21 – Genesis 18:16-33

What reason is given by the Lord for knowing Abraham?

What is God's plan or vision for Abraham?

What kingdom is God inaugurating through Abraham?

Why does God choose to reveal His immediate plan for Sodom and Gomorrah?

In today's political landscape how is Abraham's intercession perceived?

How are we to intercede in similar situations?

Commentary: As of this writing it is just shy of three months till Father's Day. Today's statistics, over four hundred U.S. fatalities and closing quickly on fifteen hundred worldwide deaths, will be just a distant memory. In three months, the circumstances may be far worse. Or perhaps sheltering in place will deprive the Corona virus of new hosts so that it can no longer survive and be transferred. None of us know. What we do know, and need are sons and daughters of Abraham interceding before the Lord. Our intercession is for the righteous but our pleas for God's mercy impacts all. May God's mercy be evident in our lives so that others will give the Lord praise for their deliverance from judgment and a new and Holy sense of Father's Day.

June 28 – Luke 14:25-15:10

How would you put verse 26 in your own words?

What did the cross represent in this context?

What is the greatest cost we must be ready to pay?

What makes us salty?

What drew sinners and tax collectors to Jesus?

Are you looking for lost sheep and lost coins?

Commentary: Luke 14:28 "...whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." To those of us still in our bodies there are no sharper words than these from Jesus. Who amongst us can say I have forsaken all? Perhaps we can say forsaken much, or most, but all? Based on

all physical appearances such as our homes, our garages, our bank accounts, and so forth we will have a hard time making much of a case for ourselves. The easiest path we can take is to minimize His words by saying: Does Not apply to us. If we did such a thing, I for one, fear ending up a goat. I want to be a sheep. All I really can do is bleat that I am lost apart from my Savior. It is this same Jesus who has found me and rejoices over me that now I am found. The answer to our dilemma is somewhere between “forsaking all” and “lost without Jesus.” It is not a middle ground we seek but the tension resulting in being pulled one way and then the other. Just like the pendulum of a clock swinging back and forth between two extremes there is life in Christ Jesus. It is never in perfect time until we hear the words, “Well done...”

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

“I WANT TO HEAR: I WANT TO TALK”

Rudy Cover

It was a beautiful day. The birds were singing and the sun shining. Lake Galilee was a blue expanse of water, pleasant to look upon. The breezes coming off the water were cool and soothing to a weary traveler.

Jesus was near the Sea of Galilee in the land of Decapolis. He was teaching and healing people. Great multitudes came to Him to be cured of all manner of diseases. There were lame people, blind people, deaf people, mute people, lepers and many, many others. Jesus

healed them all. No wonder people came to Him by the thousands. What would people do today if there were someone who could heal them of any malady. I am sure they would go to that person just as they did when Jesus was here. Today we pay doctors a lot of money to get well when we are sick. Sometimes they help us and sometimes they do not, but we pay just the same. Jesus did not charge a cent and He always made them well again. Everyone who came to Jesus was made perfectly whole.

There was a man in the multitude who could not hear or talk right. He was tongue-tied. His tongue could not form words correctly and it was hard for him to make people understand. He could not hear the birds sing and he could not hear Jesus. The man looked on as Jesus healed others and thought to himself, "I want to hear. I want to talk like other people. Will Jesus heal me?"

The man had friends who brought him to Jesus and begged Jesus to put His hand upon him. When Jesus touched people, they got well. Just a touch of the Master's hand was all that was needed. But this time Jesus did something different. He took the deaf and mute man and led him away from the crowd of people. Then Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears and spit and touched the man's tongue. Jesus looked up to Heaven and said, "Be opened." Do you know

what happened? The man could hear Jesus just like anyone else and he could talk plainly too. It was a happy day for that man. He could hear the birds and tell others all about it. His friends did not have to motion to him with their hands. He could hear and speak.

If you can hear and talk, you should thank God for it. It is only because of God that we can live, move, and have our being. He has given us eyes to see, ears to hear, a tongue to talk with, the senses of smell and touch. We cannot begin to understand how God created us to enjoy the blessings of life. God wants us to live for Him. Without God you are deaf and tongue-tied spiritually, but He can make you hear and speak. He will control your life, if you let Him.

Selected from the
June 1, 1980
issue of the Bible Monitor

STEADFASTNESS

Howard J. Surbey

"For every house is builded by some man: but he that built all things is God. But Christ as a son over his own house; whose

house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Heb. 3:4,6. God is our Creator, our

Lord almighty, Christ is building His church, of those who through faith and obedience faithfully serve Him, upon the foundation of faith and allegiance to a Saviour as the Divine Son of God. Christ is building this Church to present it unto God, as His chaste bride at the consummation of this age.

“And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.” Mark 4:20. This parable of our Lord is worth our sincere meditation, upon its entirety and its detailed pictures. Definitely those on good ground only, are His church and body. They are those who are willing and have time, to hear and receive His Word. Each of us will bring forth fruit, for our Saviour, according to our talents. Each of us personally are temples of the Holy Ghost, who will guide us and lead us to be faithful to our Lord.

As such servants of Christ, we are loyal and devoted to His service. We are united by the precious bonds of the graces, truths, ordinances, gospel discipline and devotions, which we receive as examples from the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. We do not wander to and fro, we do not doubt, we are not lost in despair

and discouragements do not overcome us; as those who serve Satan through sin, for God’s plan of salvation is certain, enduring, eternal and all powerful. We should not waste our time groping around in despair and things of no purpose, as the servants of sin do, for the New Testament reveals to us, definitely and detailed the things which we should engage in. “But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.” 2 Thess. 3:3

According to our text we set out as servants of Christ, in the things and by the ways which are mapped out by His apostles, in the New Testament. As a part of His House, our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, labor with steadfastness firm unto the end of our lives. First, we must take the truths of the Gospel into our hearts and lives. Second, we labor and build our activities according to these truths. Third, we go, teach, practice and tell these truths that others may accept them also. Fourth, we willingly and joyfully labor according to these truths, while God gives us life and opportunity. For if we do not use our talents, in faith and practice of the Gospel, how can we expect our Lord to own and approve us? “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast,

unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I Cor. 15:58.

Our spiritual houses, built and established according to Christ's teachings, are part of His Bride, the church of the living God. What excuse can we then give for using our time, our talents, our service in the ways and devices of Satan? "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." Heb. 13:9. How easily are we removed from

the deeds which Christ taught and gave us His humble example? True there are many ideas and teachings, which Satan uses his power to broadcast, that if possible he may keep individuals from serving Christ. Christ has warned us, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." Am I going to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the works of the Lord, or am I going to yield to the deceitfulness of Satan?

Selected from the
June 15, 1960
issue of the Bible Monitor

AN IMPENDING PENALTY

J. F. Britton

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matt. 3:9-10.)

We see in these two verses or texts, a strong mandatory and imperative demand for a reformation, in heart, life and

character, not through civic righteousness and social regeneration, but of Repentance, Faith and Baptism, which are the foundation principles on which to start the Christian life.

The ninth verse discloses the fact, that John denounces and disabuses their minds of depending on the piety of their ancestors. Hence, he says, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance", which denotes a spiritual reformation. The phrase,

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees.” Shows the ineffable impending penalty against those who continue to neglect known duty, in the presence of knowledge.

It is a splendid thing and very comforting for one to think of his ancestors as being pious and godly. But it should be borne in mind that piety is not hereditary nor transferable. Hence, it is only a delusion and illogical to think that one can be saved on the spiritual merits of his ancestors. “For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6.) This text verifies the fact that man has his part to do, in his salvation.

The reader should note that the little words “pious” and “piety” are not to be found in the Bible. But it should be borne in mind that there are no other two words in the English language, that denote and imply a greater degree of the Christian graces and requisites than those two little words. They set forth in very glowing and imperative terms, the cardinal Christian requisites, which are as follows, Consecration, Sanctification, and “Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14.)

Who will assume to question the essentiality of consecration? Or, who will claim that one can be saved without the sanctifying merits of the Holy Ghost? And by virtue of God’s Divine appointment, holiness becomes the crowning asset of a Christian’s life. Therefore, by virtue of man being created with what is known as a volitional faculty that constitutes him as a free moral agent, to choose for himself, it stands to reason that man becomes responsible for his actions. Hence, the Author of our Text says: “Therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” Which is the penalty and retribution for willfully refusing to respond to the call of Him who said: “I am come that they might have life, and they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10.)

Dear Reader, if you really knew that your life was in jeopardy or exposed to some awful peril, and you had a chance to save yourself, how long would it take you to decide what to do? May God help you to decide to accept Christ while it is still day. Amen.

Selected from the
June 15, 1930
issue of the Bible Monitor

BLASPHEMY OR BLESSING

V. O. Whitmer

In a recent Sunday School lesson, we had the record of a very blasphemous man who was the General under Sennacherib, King of Assyria. It seems that the king himself had directed the invasion into Judah and had taken many of their defended cities. Jerusalem was not going to be easily captured, so King Sennacherib sent general Rabshakeh with a great army. As it stood by the conduit of the upper pool, an ambassage, in the person of Eliakim, Shelah and Joab came out to meet them.

Rabshakeh began by ridiculing Hezekiah for relying somewhat on the assistance from Egypt, in case of an invasion. He further discouraged any thought of their trusting in God and sneered at Hezekiah for taking away the high places and altars, which he no doubt knew were products of idolatry. Even so, he scoffed at Hezekiah for establishing worship at the proper altar. He also argued that the Lord was on his side and he had been sent to “Go up

against this land and destroy it.” In a loud voice he directed a discouraging message to the men on the wall, not to trust in Hezekiah nor the Lord. After a false agreement was offered Rabshakeh continued his blasphemous speech by reducing the Lord God, in his estimation to a level with idol gods of other lands, and inasmuch as those gods could not deliver, neither could the Lord deliver Jerusalem. With fearful apprehension the ambassage returned to Hezekiah.

As we continue into another lesson, there are some points of special interest, or at least should be, to God’s people. Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh to Jerusalem to “reproach the living God”, Isa. 37:4. Hezekiah pointed out this fact to Isaiah as he requested prayer “for the remnant.”

Isaiah’s prayer was effective, and international complications interfered with Sennacherib’s plans, but never-the-less another threatening message was sent to Hezekiah. After reading

the letter, Hezekiah “went up into the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.” As he entered into prayer, in behalf of Jerusalem, he acknowledged God, as his God, and as “the God of all the kingdoms of the earth.”

Sennacherib sent words “to reproach the living God.” Hezekiah prayed that they might be saved from this evil king “that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou are the Lord, even Thou, only.”

So much for the narrative of these lessons. On the one hand we see an evil king, and his general, full of blasphemy and reproach for the living God. On the other hand, a righteous king acknowledging God as the true God, and prayed “that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even Thou only.”

These two attitudes are so prevalent in our world today. There are still those who love God, and those who hate God and His people as well.

Our Sunday School lessons show the danger of blasphemy and reproach – Sennacherib’s great army was destroyed and presently his idol worship. He was slain by two of his sons,

and the third son reigned in his stead.

To those who were believers in, and servants of the living God, that clear cut line, came Salvation from the enemy. Would to God, that the clear-cut line could still be maintained in our world today.

As Paul addressed the Church at Corinth, “to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,” he was thankful “for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ” and for that enrichment by Him. His desire was, “That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” but in the next breath he was pleading with them, “that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, in the same judgment.”

If every member of the body of Christ would be as Paul said, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified” there would be no divisions or contentions in the church. Again, in I Cor. 3:3 Paul said, “For ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is division among you; envying, and strife and divisions; are ye

not carnal, and walk as men?"

May we be reminded – I Cor. 3:9 – “for we are laborers together with God.” There were plenty of corrections that needed to be made in the church at Corinth besides being out of fellowship, their moral standard was low, even in the matter of worship and communion. Correction was needed.

The scriptures both Old, and New, have much to say regarding our conduct one to another and how to so live that we may be in fellowship and unity. One-point Paul took up especially with the Church at Corinth was in regard to going to law with one another. I Cor. 6:7, “Now, therefore there is utterly a fault among you because ye go to law one with another.” Does he not suggest the “Jesus” way? When he asks, “Why do ye not rather take wrong?” “Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?”

Before being baptized, we all promised to follow Matt. 18. There is a blessing pronounced on the peace makers, Matt. 5:9. How about those who will not make peace?

In the Lord’s Prayer we

pray “and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,” and the promise is attached, “for, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly father will also, forgive you.” But the deal works both ways – “not to forgive, is also not to be forgiven.” Did you ever hear a sermon on the unpardonable sin? And wasn’t it frightening, to think one might commit such a sin?

Well, suppose we refuse to forgive our brother, and die that way, would it not be as bad to die that way, as the one who committed the unpardonable sin? And remember, God is not interested in our gift, at the altar until we are reconciled to our brother this is not only a matter of the communion table, it could just as well apply to any part of any service we might engage in.

Following the institution of the Lord’s supper, Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this, shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

This is one of the outstanding missions of the

Church. To be anything less as His “friends”, John 15:14-15 or “brethren”, Heb. 2:11-12, would not only be a reproach to His Holy name, but a hindrance to the promotion of the Gospel of our loving Lord.

Every true follower of Jesus should have a testimony akin to Peter’s great confession. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Some of us might find it hard to express it in words, but we can be as Paul said in II Cor. 3:3, “For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ.” This would actually be living epistles, as we have often heard ministers use the term. Rom. 9:23-26, Paul brings out the thought of God making known the riches of His glory, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, and “where it was said unto them, ye are not my people – then shall they be called the children of the living God.”

Today we are reaping the benefits of this promise and why? Because there were faithful servants of God who loved our Lord and each other. Thus, was transmitted the Gospel to us, through word and deed.

Cannot each one of us have such a desire to pass the word to oncoming generations, and to the multiplied millions now living in darkness? “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren and he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”

Going back to our Sunday school lessons, let us remember that a blasphemous king met his fate: and what if some one is made to blaspheme God because we fail to live up to our profession. Rather, may we have the attitude and desire as a righteous king had, “That all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou are the Lord, even Thou only.”

This can only be accomplished by obeying the instructions that Jesus gave. First, He said, “ye are the light of the world.” Matt. 5:4, and again “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” Matt. 5:16.

Selected from the
June 15, 1960
issue of the Bible Monitor

IN CHRIST

Reuben Shroyer

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

The preacher’s business is to preach Christ, not himself. A preacher is not to air his own peculiar notions. His main object is to lift up Christ before the people. Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.” As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and called upon the Israelites to look upon it and live, so the preacher calls upon his people to look to Christ for salvation. When a man has accepted Christ as his personal Savior, he is a new creature. “In Christ” is a phrase which denotes that Christ is the beginning of our spiritual life. And is also the end of that same life. Our spiritual life is to be “hid with Christ in God.”

The beginning of the Christian life makes an important epoch in man’s religious history. The facts are it changes his whole career. He may have decided upon a certain course of life and be studying and working to that end. But when he found his life in Christ, then he had a new vision of what

he ought to do. Paul declared for him to live was Christ. His efforts were to exalt Christ, to lift Him up. No man ought to be satisfied with the beginning of his Christian life anymore than he ought to be satisfied with his beginning of school life. Progress is the law of Christian life, as it is the law of physical and mental life. There is no such thing of standing still. You are either losing or gaining ground. You are becoming a better man or worse. A man can go down as well as up. We have seen some men who have gone down, and we have seen others who have gone up and are still climbing. We ought not despise the beginning of spiritual life and we all should remember that we ought to be getting somewhere. You need not forget all together the beginning of your Christian life, but you are to keep on running the race set before you, ever striving to reach the goal. We are thinking just now of some runners who have given up the race, and that shortly after leaving the starting place. We also are thinking of many we know who are faithfully pressing on. The desire for a richer and deeper experience is not new. It is as old

as the spiritual life of man. Yes, as old as the Gospel itself. Those who imagine that the desire for more of this life in Christ is a product of this age would better study the lives of Christians in every century of the Christian era. Yes, study the lives of the apostles. You will learn how desirous they were of making progress in the Christian life. Paul said, "I press on towards the goal." Forgetting the things of the past and pressing towards the things to come. Peter said, "Add to your faith virtue," and other graces. The gospel stresses the present duty and ever looks towards the dawn of a brighter and more perfect day.

The desire for something more of the Christian life in the hearts of believers is a proof of the living Christ and the power of His gospel. It does not change His gospel that is always the same. To be in Christ means that my life is a new life, a changed life. It also implies that Christ will be in my daily life. When I abide in Him and His words abides in me, I shall have a constant desire for more of His life and character. I shall experience my oneness with Him. My union with Christ as my spiritual life is a great truth and fills me with boundless stores of grace. In Christ means that our lives are to be serviceable. I am to

live a practical and useful life. Our oneness with Him must express itself in some practical way. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

"Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Christ "came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life as a ransom for many." It is said we are to serve our own generation. We are Christians to develop character, discover talent, and use it, and do what good we are capable of doing. We are not to put it off to some future time but do it now. We cannot do it any other time for now is the only time we can call our own. Our life, whether secular or spiritual should be in Christ. This life in Christ breaks down the arbitrary wall of separation between what is called secular and spiritual, and it causes us to look upon every department of our life as sacred. The Christian religion should permeate every part of our life. For the gospel certainly makes it all sacred. "Whatsoever ye do do it heartily as to the Lord and not

unto men. Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do do all to the glory of God.”

When a man realizes that then his whole life is sacred. Because it is in Christ. Paul was just as much a Christian making tents making them the best he knew how as when he was preaching the gospel. Our Master Himself clothed human life with sanctity while at work as a carpenter. So, any man who puts his conscience into his legitimate work, doing it honestly, is making it sacred, and is following the Nazarene carpenter. God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. This is life eternal to know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent. The knowledge of God and Christ is to experience the highest quality of life. “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not the life.” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

To be in Christ implies that I have made a full surrender of myself to Him as my living head. It carries the import of my vital union with Christ as the branch, is in vital union with the vine or tree. The branch is in the vine or tree and

derives its life from it. The Christian derives his spiritual life from Christ. Because of this vital connection the Christian bears fruit. “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine no more can ye except ye abide in me.” The scripture teaches that when we are in Christ, we are members of His body. He is the living head. This vital oneness with Christ is made known to us to be used for the good of others. And like every power we have is to be developed in the using. One way to use it is to think much of Christ. Think how good, loving, tender, true He is, and you will become like Him. We become like that we think much about. What think ye of Christ!

Think of Him until every thought is brought into subjection to His will. Neglect not this consideration. Thinking much of Him will elevate your soul. Think daily on Christ and you will know what communion with Him means. Dear reader, have you this life in Christ? Have I? It is surely ours to obtain. Are we in Him as the branches are in the vine? If so, then surely, we are fruit-bearing Christians.

Selected from the
June 1, 1930
issue of the Bible Monitor

NEWS ITEMS

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2020

The date of the 2020 General Conference has been changed from June to August 29 through September 2.

During a recent meeting by way of a conference call, the Elders of the Brotherhood have decided that due to the Coronavirus outbreak and the many unknowns surrounding the issue, the date of the 2020 General Conference will be changed from June 6 through 10 to Saturday, August 29 through Wednesday, September 2. In this way, the basic format of having General Conference from Saturday afternoon through Tuesday evening with Business Day on Wednesday will be maintained.

As more and more states issue “stay-at-home” orders, and with gatherings of any size being discouraged or forbidden, it has become increasingly clear that our normal June date was in question. Add to that concern the fact that three of our four Districts had to postpone their District Meetings, it became obvious that it would not be possible to give adequate notice of any potential queries in advance of General Conference if held on our normal June dates.

The management of the Roxbury Holiness Camp in Orrstown, Pennsylvania, very graciously offered the dates of August 29 through September 2 to us as an alternative to our normal June dates. However, they and the caterer needed to know of our decision shortly. So Standing Committee met by conference call recently and made this singular decision.

The Elders are painfully aware that the time of the rescheduled conference will present a conflict for some. There is at least one revival meeting scheduled for that week. Many students will have begun school by that time, and many college students report to campus and begin their classes during that time. There are other activities related to Labor Day Weekend which immediately follows. Also, quite a few people must hand in for their vacations the first week or two of the year, and it will be very difficult or impossible for them to get time off work for the new dates.

However, there was a strong desire throughout the Brotherhood to reschedule General Conference rather than to completely cancel it. It is anticipated that several Districts will be sending on one or more queries for consideration, and there is a groundswell desire that these queries be considered and not be put off for another year.

While it is always important to register for General Conference so

adequate food and lodging can be arranged, it will be crucial for all who are planning to attend the rescheduled conference to register their intentions with the lodging committee as soon as possible. Partly because of the interest generated by the anticipated queries, we expect a larger than usual attendance this year. So, in consideration of our lodging committee, conference staff, and caterer, please send in your reservations to the lodging committee as soon as you know you are planning to attend. That will make things go more smoothly for everyone. Folks who plan on attending for just one day or even for only one or two meals should let the lodging committee know out of consideration for the caterer.

When making reservations please state date of arrival, approximate time of arrival, number of people in party, and approximate time of departure. Please send e-mail, text, or phone reservations to Duane and Tena Priest.

Duane and Tena Priest
51 Hillside Ave.
Manheim, PA 17545
505-771-2974
Duaneandtena3@icloud.com

Thank you! We hope and trust these revised plans will suit most folks! And we hope and pray the Coronavirus plague will be long gone by then.

With love in Christ
Brother Bob Lehigh

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2020

2020 General Conference will be held August 29 through September 2 at Roxbury Holiness Campgrounds located at 13763 Cumberland HWY, Orrstown, Pennsylvania 17244.

Those traveling on the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) at exit 201 take Route 997 south to the campgrounds.

Those traveling Interstate 81, North or South, take Exit 20 (Scotland Exit) and follow Route 997 north to the campgrounds

Please bring your own sheets and pillowcases. There is plenty of room for campers and trailers.

Conference Lodging Committee

NOTICE

All queries, reports and any other business for the 2020 General Conference should be in the hands of the General Conference Writing Clerk by July 15, 2020. Thank you.

Brother Bob Lehigh
5137 Waltersdorff Drive
Spring Grove, PA 17362
717-225-4928
rlehighdb@gmail.com

MINISTERIAL LIST CHANGE

Please add to the Ministerial List: Jonathan Skiles (M) (Juniper Hills) 6565 Mountain Hawk Loop NE, Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144, 505-506-3649.

DEACON LIST CHANGE

Please add to the Deacon List: Seth Skiles (Juniper Hills) 6604 Mountain Hawk Loop NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87144, (505)379-8088.

THANK YOU

A special thank you to all those who sent us cards for our 80th birthdays. It was a real treat. May God bless you all.

Brother David and Sister Rhoda Kegerreis

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR JULY 2020**July 5 – The Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32**

1. If the lost son was hired to feed swine, why did he have nothing to eat?

2. How far is a great way off?

July 12 – The Unjust Steward and a Beggar Named Lazarus – Luke 16:1-31

1. How are the children of this world wiser than the children of light?

2. Do we sometimes think we need a special appearance (for any miracle) to be believed?

July 19 – Forgiving the Offending Brother and Ten Lepers – Luke 17:1-19

1. Is it possible that the command to rebuke is taken to two extremes? (Either it is left out or it is done without following through with forgiveness.)

2. Were the other nine lepers made whole as well?

July 26 – The Hidden Kingdom Waiting to be Revealed – Luke 17:20-18:8

1. What did Jesus mean by the kingdom of God is within you?

2. How can we lose our life to preserve it?

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