

BIBLE MONITOR

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JANUARY, 2021

NO. 1

“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.

NEARER EVERY DAY

Draw me nearer O my Saviour,
Nearer as the days go by,
When the storms of life assail me,
To thy shelt'ring arms I'll fly.

In thy presence O my Saviour,
I can sweetest comfort find,
And thy wondrous love and mercy,
Doth suffice for all mankind.

Draw me nearer O my Saviour,
To thy precious wounded side,
And thy suff'rings, thy compassion,
Let my heart no more deride.

Draw me nearer O my Saviour,
Let me never from thee stray,
May thy tender love restrain me,
Draw me nearer ev'ry day.

-C. Austin Miles

JANUARY

Many are looking forward to the coming of January and a new year. This year has been filled with much that has prevented people from doing what they wished to do. There have been many restrictions and limits placed upon people's social activities. The effectiveness of these various regulations has been questioned. The effects were not only on the social and physical lives of those affected but also on their political and financial lives. People are not used to being restrained in their social relationships, so these regulations have become burdens to them.

The idea of liberty seems to be compromised by these regulations. People have become as willful children unwilling to be restrained by their parents.

Those tasked with applying these restraints have not always been wise in their formulation and the enforcement of the regulations. There seems to be enough hypocritical actions on the part of all involved, that the sincerity of both those who try to govern and those who oppose them can honestly be questioned. Some have abused their power, and some have attacked them in the harshest and most unforgiving terms. Rumor and inuendo have been the basis of communications sent across social media.

Unfortunately, many Christians have become embroiled in these activities. The tactics of those unrestrained by Christian and moral boundaries would be expected. Christians engaging in these same activities are not

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sharing a godly or expected witness that should define their lives.

Amid these conditions, it is no wonder that many people are looking forward to January. While the new year might promise a betterment of present conditions, there is no absolute promise that those desired changes will happen. The conditions of the new year may well mimic present conditions. COVID-19 may not be cured or controlled any better than at present. Men devoted to their political and social philosophies will continue to promote their ideas. Regulations and restrictions may be resisted by those who are affected. Our hope is not in the changing of the calendar, the political scene, or the philosophical ideas of either those in power or those seeking to be in power.

Our hope must be firmly established in the God of Heaven. We must realize that the God who created this world is the ultimate power in preserving, changing, or ending it. Despite the power He has shared with men in high places, He, not they, is in total control. Our lives may be relatively easy, or they may be difficult; whatever their condition, He expects us to be

faithful and continue serving Him. He deserves as Creator and Lord to be recognized by each of us as the One in control. He raises up and puts down leaders as He desires. We do not always understand what His purpose is in these changes. His wisdom is far above our powers of thought and reasoning.

He desires that we would concur in His will for our personal lives and our lives as citizens, strangers, and pilgrims. The derogative term “sheepie” has been used to describe those who have been compliant to the various regulations. It does seem difficult to comply with directives that seem capricious and ill-designed, but unless those orders are aimed directly at limiting our Christian lives, we should be obedient. Rationally it is difficult to submit to ill-advised regulations, but we must remember that Christians have been called by the Good Shepherd to be His sheep. The sheep are totally cared for and protected by the Shepherd. He provides the green grass and still waters. Amidst death and danger, the sheep can gather at the table of the Lord.

As the sheep of the Lord’s pasture, we have an exalted position. It ranks higher than civil or military rulers. We have

been rescued from a world that is not friendly to our souls or our spiritual well-being. We have been rescued from the desires of Satan who would want us to be condemned with Him to the fires of Hell. God has not only cared for our physical and social well-being, but He also paid a high price to secure our spiritual well-being.

During the pandemic, social unrest, political divisiveness, and physical discomfort, we need to

put our trust in the God of Heaven rather than those who hold power in this temporal world. As our Creator and Spiritual Father, He wills our well-being.

As you look forward to the new year, are you concerned about your spiritual well-being? Do you have a relationship with God who has done all to secure your future as well as your present?

M. C. Cook

ARE YOU ALL IN?

Do you believe that the Bible and its teaching are relevant today or were they just for the time when the Biblical ruins were new and prosperous? Do you think that only the red letters matter, and the others are of no importance? Are the letters to the churches only for them and their problems, or is their teachings and doctrines for us today?

I can think of a couple times in scripture that makes it very clear that it was for everyone and for all times. Jesus in his prayer in John 17 says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through

their word;" That is a clear indication that the prayer was for all believers everywhere and at all times.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians writes this, "Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." It was addressed to the Corinthians but includes all who call upon the name of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22 says, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these

things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

In these three places I believe that there is sufficient evidence that the whole book, every word, is intended for everyone. In fact, Timothy says this, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

I know people that discount this teaching or that teaching because ‘it was for their time’ or ‘that was a particular local teaching’. I know a guy who said he believes everything but the age of Enoch. (Like that is the hardest thing to believe.) The problem with casting doubt on a certain verse, fact, or teaching, is that it brings the whole Bible under scrutiny. How do we know which passage is true or which ones apply to us? The ones we like. The blessing but not the corrections?

I for one BELIEVE LITERALLY

EVERY WORD OF THE BIBLE and BELIEVE EVERY WORD LITERALLY. If the Bible says it, I believe it. I may not understand it but by Faith I believe God meant it and it will come to pass just as He said.

The following is a song I have been listening to:

“I believe that God is sovereign over all
And He alone is worthy of our Praise
Father, Spirit, Son, - the Holy Three in One
He reigns no matter what the world may say
Surely time has come for us to take a stand
To hold to our convictions without shame
Opposers to the faith abound on every hand
But the gospel must be fearlessly proclaimed

I believe the Bible is the Word of God
Given to the world to show the way
No room for compromise
All its trustworthiness
Is there for us to follow and obey
There are absolutes that cannot be denied
And what is true forever shall remain
I made my choice to live for Christ the Crucified
The Living One who is the only way.

“I believe there is one true God and Jesus Christ is His Holy Son. That He is the living word and that by Him and through Him all things were made.

I believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless

life, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and brought the dead back to life.

I believe in the cross, that Jesus, God's sacrificial Lamb, shedding His blood, was crucified as atonement for the sins of all the world and whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

I believe in the Resurrection - that on the third day He rose from the tomb conquering death, hell, and the grave and today He sits at the right hand of the Father and that because He lives, we shall live also.

I believe in the Church, a harbor of souls where God is glorified, Saints are edified, Grace is multiplied, and Mercy is magnified.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who lives within all who are saved by grace through faith. He is our comforter, our friend, our guide.

I believe that one day Jesus will come again to claim His own and prove once and for all that He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I believe He rose again and that He lives today
And soon He's coming back to earth again
More than just a creed; this is what I believe
Jesus is the only way

This is my Statement of Faith
This is my Statement of Faith."

Words to the song "Statement of Faith"
used by permission of the Booth Brothers.

Written by Wes Tuttle.

In these times that we live in, we need to drill down deeper than ever into the solid rock of the Word. We need to, with God's help, decide what it is trying to teach us. We need to decide that we believe it to be the only truth, the only thing that matters and whatever may come, we will stand to the very end to defend it. It may cost us our very lives, but may we find comfort in verses like Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

As we start this year, be like Paul; be ready to die and be with Jesus, but until then, live for God that we may be a benefit to those around us. Don't be content to go to heaven alone... make friends on the journey. Show them the way, so when their time comes to meet their creator, He will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Brother Joe Cover
Dallas Center, IA

SPEAKING TRUTH WITH COMPASSION

If I am going to follow God's way, I will come into conflict with somebody along the way, to be sure. God's way is never man's way, and that is where the difficulty comes.

Committing myself to God's way is a profoundly serious matter for me to consider. It means that God's way and God's word will always take the preeminence. Everything else I say and do has to come in line with the Word of God.

I can understand how this works out in the world when I am confronted with obvious falsehood. What disturbs me is when I find this within the church.

When I find heresy in the church, do I have an obligation to speak against that heresy?

Of course, my first response is that I have an obligation. However, it is not that simple. What if the heresy is coming from some church leader within my church? Then it is not so easy.

I know I can get involved in debating opinions, and that happens all the time. It can also be an interpretation of some Scripture verse that could go one way or the other. I am not afraid of a healthy debate about some doctrinal issues; in fact, I think more of this is needed.

I am not against debate against heresy, but what do I do when I discover heresy in my fellowship?

I am sure this has been the reason so many churches have become divided and eventually split. I do not think this does the work of the Lord any good.

One thing, I must just swallow my pride and let the heresy go on. After all, I am not the leader in my group. Should not the leaders have everything together?

The Old Testament is filled with such situations. Amos, for example, had to confront the Jewish leadership concerning heresies that were developing in Israel. Instead of appreciating Amos, he got into a lot of trouble because those immersed in the heresy would not listen to Amos. After all, he was just some country preacher from the hills.

I believe we need to stand against heresy, and we need to do it from a biblical perspective. Too often, even in church situations, things get out of control. Hatred seems to boil up with the least provocation. Many churches are known for a spirit of hatred.

Hatred is not the Jesus way to do anything, and yet it is nourishing many Christians. Too many are trying to cram the Bible down people's throats, and yet they are

not modeling the Bible lifestyle.

It is extremely easy to condemn somebody else and judge them, but we give ourselves a pass when it comes to our own life. If I am really going to condemn somebody, it should be by my lifestyle and not my words.

One great quote that goes around says, "We should preach the gospel every day and, if necessary, use words." Of course, this is an exaggeration. However, I think behind it all is that we should be an example in our lifestyle of what we preach.

If we preach one way and live some other way in contradiction to what we preach, then we are hypocrites and are doing the gospel no good whatsoever. If I am going to talk the talk, I also need to walk the walk.

As we live the life as set forth for us in the word of God, we are going to live a life in contradiction to the society and culture around us. It is so easy for us to blend in or at least try to water down the gospel to such an extent that it no longer has the power to change lives.

A great patriarch said, "Give me liberty, or give me death." We understand exactly what he was talking about. That is a political statement, but there is a spiritual statement that follows suit.

Our commitment to Jesus Christ is going to contradict many of our friends. This is the hardest thing for us to grasp as we begin to live our Christian life. Those who we thought were our friends now become our enemies. Our great challenge is to give in to the culture around us and sort of blend in. Otherwise, we may be accused of hating people.

This is where the Christian life stands tall. Despite the criticism that comes our way, we do not back down from our spiritual principles. We would rather die than compromise our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I first became a Christian, I was so excited I told everybody assuming everybody would be just as excited as I was about my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I soon found out that I was very wrong.

Many people soon made fun of me and tried to harass me to get me to do what I used to do when I was a sinner like them. It took me quite a while to realize that although my salvation was absolutely free, paid for by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross, and the Christian life came with a great cost factor.

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THE LOVE CHAPTER

(I would kindly remind the reader of this article to be sure to have your Bible open to the referenced scriptures in this article.)

We know from the study of Scripture that the Corinthian church, perhaps more so than any other early church, gave the Apostle Paul the greatest challenge in bringing them to spiritual maturity. Paul in his letters to that church addresses several problems. The church was divided into competing factions (I Cor. 1:10-11). Open immorality was tolerated (chapter 5). Some were suing each other in civil courts (chapter 6). Paul also answers questions about marriage (chapter 7), the role of women in the church (chapter 11). Chapters 12 and 14 deal with the issue of spiritual gifts. And right amid it all is that grand, noble, and inspired portion of scripture we call the Love Chapter!

Allow me to acknowledge the truth that I am not an expert concerning the subject of the Biblical concept of love. But God is: for God is love (I John 4:8).

The word 'love' could possibly be one of the most misused words of the English language. It is often thrown around to mean different things or perhaps nothing. We

hear people exclaim how they 'love' various things, from their pit-bull to pepperoni pizza! The term is used loosely to describe their enthusiasm for these things. The term 'love' is often defined in terms of feelings of affection toward someone or something.

God gives His view of love in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians! Only thirteen verses, but what beauty! What words to build our lives around!

Now we know the New Testament was written in the Greek language. We also have learned that Greeks had different words to define love such as "eros", which is romantic love, and "phileo" which is brotherly love. "Agape" is the Greek word used in this chapter and most other places in the New Testament. It describes a giving, self-sacrificing love. According to one commentator, the term "agape" is never used in secular Greek literature. So, imagine for a moment a new Greek convert to Christianity reading these words written by Paul for the first time! His eyes fall upon "agape" repeatedly as he or she would read this part of Paul's letter. It would have been – as it is today – a higher form and expression of love.

In the first three verses of the

Love Chapter, I like to think Paul sums up most or all the spiritual gifts mentioned in chapter 12:3-10.

Verse one speaks about what we could call the world's greatest orator. After all Paul mentions the tongue of even angels! A gifted orator knows how to sway whole audiences with his words and the way he expresses himself. Yet, if the speaker has not love he is merely making noise – the kind anyone could make by simply applying a hammer to a piece of metal!

Verse two speaks about the world's greatest prophet. To prophecy is to speak the message of God. Also note the word "all" to describe knowledge and faith. This prophet has complete understanding of the deep truths of God's word and accomplishes great things through his faith. His faith would make the heroes of Hebrews, chapter 11 look like amateurs in comparison! If he has not charity – self-giving love – he is nothing. Some would probably be impressed by the actions described in these verses, but we are not here to impress people, and certainly not our brethren and sisters. In our flesh, we could be tempted to act out of self-serving motives and ambitions. And many can see through the sham of

a person who claims to speak for God without love despite all the knowledge we might share. People will not care how much we know until they know how much we care.

Think with me for a moment about why the people followed Jesus. His words were authoritative (Matthew 7:28-29), but His heart was full of compassion (Matthew 14:14). Now, the power to have the same supernatural love is available to every believer because "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5)

Now let us go to verse three and look for a moment at the world's greatest benefactor! This man gives all his goods to feed the poor and even gives the ultimate sacrifice of his own body to be burned. Giving to the poor is a good and noble deed. Jesus did say the poor you will always have with you and whensoever ye will ye may do them good (Mark 14:7). Surely, some can give without love. The Pharisees and hypocrites did! (Matthew 6:1-4, Matthew 23:5). People today can give without love. Sometimes, all we need is a good tax advisor! What about this "giving my body to be burned." Could that be done without love. Well, let me tell you

the story of a man named David Buckel. Early on the morning of April 14, 2018, David, a sixty-year-old retired gay rights attorney, left his cozy Brooklyn, New York home and walked to nearby Prospect Park. A few minutes later he doused himself with gasoline and set himself ablaze! He left a note saying his doing so was an act of protest against the use of fossil fuels and the pollution they cause in the environment. He profited nothing by his actions! On the flip side, history records the thousands who gave their lives for the gospel. Yes, some were literally burned to death, while expressing forgiveness toward their persecutors.

Perhaps to sum up Paul's argument in verses 1-3 is this: The

spiritual gifts mentioned in chapter 12 are for the ministering to the saints, not to bolster one's ego. It seems the Corinthian church needed to learn that truth, and we are not all that much different. And let us consider the words of Paul in another place, "For brethren ye have been unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." (Galatians 5:13). These scriptures are a reminder to all of us who seek to walk with the Saviour and supreme example, Jesus Christ.

Perhaps we will continue another lesson in this great chapter on love, written by your brother who is still learning!

Edward Trone

GOLD OR TUNGSTEN?

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich;" Revelation 3:18

Pure gold, 24 carat gold, has had all the impurities removed. It has had all other metals removed. Pure gold at the present time yields an astronomical price. Tungsten, on the other hand, is about the same weight as gold and has many of the same properties. You can electroplate a minute amount

of gold onto a tungsten bar, and no one could tell the difference between the tungsten bar and one of pure gold. Unless, of course, you took a knife and scratched the gold off the tungsten bar.

Many people have affected a similarity between themselves and true Christians by starting on the outside. They make the outside look like a Christian, but what, of any value is inside? Tungsten is

ten dollars a pound, while gold is \$1,286.00 an ounce. Dollar value aside, the goldsmith knows when his product is pure when he can see his reflection in the molten gold.

When God looks at you, does He see His face? Or does He see yours? A goldsmith, in order to test its authenticity, will take a knife and scratch at the outside to see if there is gold inside. Sometimes a little persecution scratching at our surface will determine how authentic we are. What does God see?

The soul that Jesus loveth
He'll chasten and refine,
That like a golden luster

It may the brighter shine:
The dross alone will perish,
The gold is brighter made;
Be not discouraged, Brother,
Fear not, be not afraid!

—Abram Metzler

Those who totally surrender themselves to God will find themselves rich, not necessarily in the things of earth, but in the things of God. Yet the blessings here below do not begin to compare with the things of Heaven. He goes to prepare a place for us. Are we serving the One True God?

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler's Congregation

PHIL'S PONDERINGS

As we "study to shew ourselves approved unto God..."

January 2021 Study Questions

January 3 – Galatians 1:1-17

What similarities and differences exist between Paul's apostolic office and the other apostles?

What does Paul's emphasis on his apostleship in verse 1 suggest about the Galatian church?

How many ways could the believers in Galatia have responded to his stern denunciation?

How does Paul build a bridge between himself and them by reminding them of his past?

What two verses form the primary point that Paul is trying to convey to the Galatians?

Commentary: The message of the Gospel has always been under attack. It had not been long since Paul had ministered to the churches in Galatia for Paul “marvels” that they had so soon turned to another gospel (vs6). Those who were troubling the Galatians are sometimes called Judaizers. They believed Jesus was the Messiah but also maintained the necessity of observing the Mosaic Law. They also maintained that their authority came from the apostles in Jerusalem which superseded anything Paul taught. So, Paul is forced to defend his apostleship and the gospel he preaches. This scenario, and many others as well in various churches where Paul ministered, is to our advantage. For the clarity of the gospel message was forged in the fires of conflict and not in some ivory tower far removed from the realities of Ground Zero living. It is not in the hypothetical issues of life that we discover the clarity to share and live our faith. Rather, it is allowing the fullness of Christ and His salvation message to inhabit every aspect of our own Ground Zero in our homes, congregations, and workplaces.

January 10 – Galatians 1:18-2:10

Is Paul's history sharing important to us?

During Paul's 15 day visit with Peter what are likely things they talked about?

For what reasons might they have decided it best for Paul to leave Judea?

What important event occurred during Paul's second visit to Jerusalem?

In verse 6 what does Paul mean when he says, “they...added nothing to me?”

Commentary: While the clarity of the gospel message was forged in the fires of conflict it is rooted in the history of God's dealings with His people. God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, but He frequently identifies Himself as the God of Israel, who led them out of bondage in

Egypt and ultimately to the Promised Land. He is the God of Abraham, Jacob, David, and many others who loved and obeyed Him. He is not some cosmic Genie we call on occasionally for help. Nor is He a vague force devoid of personality we tap into for noble causes. Ultimately, He is the God who revealed Himself most fully in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus. Who God is and what He has done has not been done in the dark but in the light of history for all to discover. As Paul shares his own personal history from persecutor to apostle let us remember that God has had an eternal purpose set forth in our lives from the time we were separated from our mother's womb till we are called home. It is to reveal God's Son, Jesus Christ, in and through each one of us.

January 17 – Galatians 2:11-21

What blame is Paul associating with Peter?

Is Paul trying to make himself look good in the eyes of the Galatians?

Why does Paul make the issue with Peter a public event?

Why do the Jews at Antioch seem to fear James?

What doctrine is Paul addressing in his confrontation with Peter?

How does Peter respond to Paul?

Commentary: As Christians we should realize that conflict is to be expected with the world. But often enough we discover that there is conflict within the church as well. This can be quite unsettling when mature leaders clash over issues that concern us all. What can we learn from Paul's confrontation with Peter? 1) There are issues that need to be confronted. When issues are ignored the unity of the church is sacrificed for a superficial peace. 2) The truth is not easily embraced. When truth shines light on new possibilities it can also close doors on long held priorities that prevent the church from growing. The necessity of circumcision, certain foods, and not fellowshiping with Gentiles were obstacles to a New Testament church no longer anchored in Judaism. 3) The truth does not always look the same when applied in different situations. When Peter preached to

the household of Cornelius, he realized God's acceptance of the Gentiles since they received the Holy Spirit. The only Jews present were those who accompanied him. In Antioch, with a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, and the addition of those who came from James, the right choices did not seem so obvious. 4) The size of the audience to the conflict should match the size of the audience involved in the conflict. If Peter and Paul, simply disagreed between themselves over the issues at Antioch their conversation would have been just between the two of them. But once Peter separated himself from eating at the same table with the Gentiles his hypocrisy was witnessed by everyone. To overcome the confusion and hurt created by Peter and other Jews who joined him the confrontation needed to be just as public.

January 24 - Galatians 3:1-14

What makes 'works of the law' attractive as the means of salvation?

When are you most aware of the Spirit working in you?

On what basis do you claim to be a child of God?

Who gets the glory when the works are done in the flesh?

How do you measure your growth in the Spirit?

Commentary: Few of us enjoy losing. The recent presidential election is all the evidence we need to make our point. But there is a losing that we should all long for. It is losing that innate desire to be in control of our own lives. The only way that can end up feeling like winning rather than a series of ongoing disasters is to let God be the one who controls our lives. Paul says this eloquently in the previous lesson, verse 20: "... It is no longer I who live," (losing) "but Christ who lives in me" (winning). But Paul is shocked when he hears that they have begun substituting the law for faith. "Who has cast a spell on you," (bewitched) he asks. The only honest answer is our own flesh. An acquaintance of mine said, "the problem with a living sacrifice is that it has a tendency to crawl off the altar." This is our struggle along with the Galatians. Our own righteousness through the works of the law is something we can measure, weigh, and compare. I can use it to make myself look good and others less so.

I become the center of my universe again. So, let us be reminded that “we have died with Christ” and as a result we receive all His righteousness as though it is our own. There is no bigger win than that.

January 31 – Galatians 3:15-29

What are covenants typical to our own experience?

Did the Law fulfill the promise made to Abraham?

What purpose does law fulfill?

How is the Law both a guard and a schoolmaster?

How is keeping the Law and keeping the faith different from each other?

What barriers does faith break down?

Commentary: Not all of us believe the same thing at the same time with the same intensity and conviction. Think of the debate over the wearing of masks during this Covid-19 pandemic. Lots of people with very differing conclusions often leave us confused. How do we discover the truth? I suspect the apostle Paul wondered frequently what the best way was to convince people of the truth. From our lesson two things emerge. One is very subtle because it is never viewed as an option. The second is very obvious by the dominant means Paul uses to convince his listeners. The obvious choice is how Paul continues to search the Scriptures for answers to his present problem. He must show that the law is not the way to please God. If faith is the means to please the Lord, then there must be evidence of it in the Scripture. Paul discovers through Abraham’s relationship with the Lord that key to demonstrate faith’s favored position. Once discovered then Paul teaches and preaches and contends for faith to become operative in the lives of his listeners. Paul exercises faith that God can open their hearts to receive the truth. The subtle choice Paul does not use is turning the truth into Law to effect the change that is necessary. In other words, he does not attempt to force a decision by legislating the correct response. Decisions of the heart must be nurtured amidst honest questions and doubts. Simply getting in step with what every-

one else says they believe will never provide the endurance that only faith can provide through the struggles of life lived in the Spirit.

Brother Phil Franklin
Modesto, CA

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Rudy Cover

Matt 18:1-3; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48

Jesus talked much about the Kingdom of Heaven to His disciples. They did not understand what kind of kingdom Jesus was talking about. They hoped that Jesus, who could do miracles like healing the sick and making the blind see, would surely be a great King over all the world and He would rule over all the kingdoms of the earth. Israel, God's people, were in bondage to the great Roman Empire. They had to pay taxes and obey the laws of the Emperor of Rome. They were hoping that soon God would send a great King for them that would overcome and subdue all their enemies. The disciples were convinced that Jesus was the one and very soon great things were going to happen.

Of course, they reasoned among themselves, if Jesus were King, then those who were near Him would have very important

places in this new Kingdom. Jesus had even chosen them to be His disciples.

They came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus sat down and called the twelve disciples to Him and said, "If a man desires to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

What do you suppose the disciples thought? Each would have desired to be first in the kingdom and have the most honorable position. Doesn't everyone like to be great? Jesus was telling them if they had such a desire, they would be last. How could this be? This was very confusing, to say the least. And Jesus said such a one would be a servant of all! This was just too much!

Then Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of the disciples and said unto them,

“Except you be converted and become as little children, you can not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little one in my name, receiveth me.” This was straight talk, indeed. Jesus says we must be humble as a little child. Children forgive easily. They do not hold a grudge. Grown-up people are inclined to be independent and have their own way with little consideration for others. A little child is dependent on his parents. He knows that he needs help. When a child gets hurt or in trouble, what does he do? Why, he runs to mother or father for help and sympathy. That is the way Jesus wants us to be. He wants us to depend on Him when we have trouble

or problems. Jesus wants us to come to Him and talk it over. Jesus says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of God and the Lord will lift you up.”

Jesus was humble. He made himself of no reputation. He was always praying to His Heavenly Father and depending upon Him for strength and help. Jesus did not come to establish an earthly kingdom but a heavenly kingdom. The rules of the Kingdom of Heaven are not the same as the kingdom of this world. Who is the greatest? God is the greatest. Jesus said, “My Father is greater than I.” When we have the mind of Christ then we can humble ourselves as a little child and Jesus will bless.

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

YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING

Howard J. Surbey

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you: If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” 1 Cor. 3:16-17

One of the major lessons

that we gather, from the long history of God's dealings with His people, in the Old Testament, is the Holy sacredness of His Temple. It is astonishing as we read and meditate upon the worship of God, in His temple, of the expense, preparation and

accuracy which was necessary to properly worship God. No doubt the original reason for the importance of the Temple was to get the people to respect the temple, to look to this careful worship service as their means of contacting God and to keep their respect and devotion away from things of this heathen world.

Even at the time of Christ, though their pomp and prestige as a Nation was gone and their worship sadly forsaken and polluted, yet the Jews had much regard for the Temple. They could understand its earthly grandeur, but they could not understand its spiritual purpose. For one to defile the Temple, in any insignificant way, would mean persecution and perhaps death or banishment.

Dear reader this lofty, holy, and magnificent state of the "temple of God" is still existing today, in the sight of God. But notice "ye are the temple of God." Can it be that our weak, sickly, sinful, and frail body can be the temple of God? Yes, that is true if we allow it to be. Without question we must allow our body to be His Temple. We must submit unto His will or we will be only a tool for Satan. Of

what value is Temple worship if God is not there? Of what eternal value is our body if it is only a tool of Satan?

Dear reader what greater blessing can one expect than "that the spirit of God dwelleth in you"? So often in our life we know not which way to turn, however if the Spirit of God is with us, He will guide us into all truth. We could expect nothing better or more useful than this promise. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." 2 Cor. 13:5. A reprobate is one condemned, rejected, or disowned. Certainly, we do not feel that way in the sight of God. Yet this might be true if we are not in the faith. Christ suffered severely and gave His life to show us the way. Why not follow it?

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." The word used in the Greek is the same in both clauses, defile and destroy come from the same word "phtheiro" to corrupt, defile, or destroy. If any man corrupt, defile or destroy, "him will God corrupt, defile or destroy." Actually, our fate is in

our own hands, according to our faith and practice. How careful are we with this extremely accurate body and its many members, which God has given us? It takes little study in anatomy to be convinced of the wonderful body which God has given us. David says, "for I am fearfully and wonderfully made", and modern science and medicine has really proven the truth of his saying.

"For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." How much do we think of our being holy? How many others know that we are holy? Is it any wonder that we find so much teaching on the tongue and its use? Is it any wonder that we have so much teaching on fruit-bearing? Our body is holy, a fit place for God and Christ to dwell, if we allow it to be so. Am I God's building? If not, why not? We rejoice much in hero worship, actually each

of us is a notable hero, if we allow our lives to be so. Can we be too careful, lest we allow ourselves to say, do or practice something that would alienate us from God? Without question we receive all our great rewards from God, will I receive a full reward?

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19-20. How much space should we take to enumerate acts and practices which hinder our body from glorifying Almighty God? On the other hand, Christ and the apostles tell us how to best glorify God, why not follow it?

Selected from the
January 15, 1961
issue of the Bible Monitor

CHRISTMAS AFTERMATH

Elta K. Blythe

The holiday has come and gone. For those interested only in material things it is a vast relief. A great burden of obligations, parties, house guests, gift-giving

and social climbing is over. The weary celebrant can relax for another year. For the spiritually minded it is a refreshing renewal of life. The celebrating of Christ's

birth does not end in one day.

Let us review the preparations we made for the holiday that is so noteworthy. Through the years it has become custom to send greetings and give gifts to those we know and love. Each of us has heard the remark, "I wish they would do away with greeting cards. I had my list all made out, but this morning I got a card from my neighbor and now I have to make a trip to town to get a card for them." I don't believe we receive a blessing for attitudes like that.

The same applies to gifts. The Wise Men brought gifts to the Christ child. I believe they gave freely and with hearts of love. I don't think they expected Joseph and Mary to repay them, for the costly spices and ointments they offered. We each have heard this statement, "I thought I was through Christmas shopping, but I received a gift from an old schoolmate, so I must get something for her." What blessing does that kind of attitude receive? God loveth a cheerful giver", can hardly apply to us when we send greetings and give gifts because we feel forced to do so.

We can now, almost feel the atmosphere of released tension that had prevailed before the holidays. Why all the frantic rushing about? Why have we created

such a crescendo of frenzied activity, that is gone, like a burst soap bubble on the evening of December 25th. We return to our daily duties exhausted and listless, glad it is all over. A condition such as this is sad indeed.

For the spiritually minded person it is greatly different. He gives from a bountiful heart, forgetting animosities. Most of all, he gives of himself. For that was the Angels message, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" means. That is what the whole life of Jesus meant. I think we all have experienced the contrast of giving "something" and "ourselves." We have an indefinable feeling of happiness when we give of "ourselves". The somethings can be repaid in like merchandise and have only fleeting value. Giving of ourselves is never ending because it is the spirit of love.

Let us give deeper thought to Christmas and what it means to us as this New Year begins. When a baby is born in our homes, the family and friends rejoice. But they are not happy and gay only on the day the child is born. They are filled with happy anticipation of loving an adorable child. And as the child grows to maturity, they share his joys and

sorrows, in the fulfilment of love.

Why then, do we celebrate Christ's birth on only one day? If it had not been for the Christ child we could not even hope for love of our children, in the way we do today. Because before Christ, it was a barbarous pagan love, without compassion or goodness.

In the coming year we will receive a blessing if we recall some portion of the life of Jesus, daily. Think of Him as a fellow-being, who lives and breathes with you, who helps you understand peace

and good-will. As each day is new for us, so it was for Him. For Him, each day was spiritual perfection, if we share each new day with the life of Him who perfected love.

Material or Spiritual? Which side are you on? Are you glad and relieved that Christmas is over? Or does the real meaning of the Christmas spirit of love, permeate your heart?

Selected from the
January 15, 1961
issue of the Bible Monitor

OBITUARIES

JAMES M. HITE

Brother James M. Hite, 79, of Palmyra, died peacefully on November 5, 2020, at the Lebanon Valley Home, Annville, Pennsylvania.

He was born January 16, 1941, to the late Franklin Daniel and Frances E. (Wert) Hite.

James retired from the Hershey Chocolate Factory as a chocolate molder after almost thirty-nine years of work. He was a long-time member of the Lititz Dunkard Brethren Church and was an accomplished writer. He wrote for newsletters and was also highly active with church publications. Most importantly, he was a loving father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and brother.

He is survived by his daughters: Aimee L. Brandt and Lori A. Faiola and husband Dino; nine grandchildren; ten great grandchildren; sisters, Jennie Dimeler and Margie Boughter; and brother Robert Hite, Sr., and wife Brenda. He was predeceased by a daughter, Tina M. Clark, and his siblings Edward, Franklin Jr., George, and Charles, and a brother-in-law Robert Dimeler.

A private graveside service was held at Grand View Memorial Park, Annville, Pennsylvania.

ELDON W. FLORY

Eldon W. Flory of Jamesport, Missouri was born June 20, 1935 in Defiance County Ohio, and died in Missouri University Hospital, Columbus, Missouri, November 17, 2020.

He was united in marriage to Delores Gray, July 28, 1956. To this union was born seven daughters, and one son, Rebecca, Deborah Flory, Donna and Matthew Beery, Anita and Samuel Miller, Timothy and Sandra Flory, Gina and Henry Lentz, Barbara and Eugene Bowman, Janet and Wendell Austin.

He is survived by his wife, six daughters, one son, forty grandchildren, eighteen great-grandchildren, one sister, Ruth Ann and Maurice Wells, several nieces and nephews, and many good friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dorrice Lee and Irene Flory, one daughter, one grandson, two brothers-in-law, two sisters-in-law, one niece and one nephew.

He was received into the Brethren faith by Christian baptism at an early age and was called to the ministry in 1954. He labored faithfully in this calling until his death.

NEWS ITEMS**NOTICE**

Presiding Elders or their designates should check the information concerning their congregations in the February 2020 issue. If there are any changes that need to be made, please inform the Editor of those changes by January 1, 2021. Your co-operation will ensure the accuracy of the information in the February 2021 issue. Thank you,

Editor,
951-845-6231
mcookdb@gmail.com

CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Bro. Frank Reed has agreed to preach weekend meetings for the Chambersburg Congregation on February 26-28, 2021. The topic for the weekend is: The Formation and History of the Dunkard Brethren Church. We invite all to attend.

Brother Gerry Priest

THANK YOU

We wish to thank those across the Brotherhood and beyond for the many cards, words of encouragement, and gifts through the past couple years. Especially we thank you for your prayers. When traveling through life's valleys and in difficult times it is such a blessing to know the Saints are praying and interceding on one's behalf. The journey has been long and wearisome, but we continually find the Lord to be faithful. Thanks again and may the Lord bless each one.

In His Care,

Brother Tom and Sister Susie St. John

THANK YOU

To our Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends,

We want to express our Heartfelt Appreciation to each and every one of you.

I have been Blessed and Humbled by all the Prayers, Cards, Texts, Emails, and Phone calls during my journey through COVID Pneumonia. I spent several weeks in the hospital, cared for by an absolutely wonderful staff of doctors and nurses. Yet it was only through the Blessings of our Heavenly Father that I was able to rest, relax, and begin healing.

It was indeed a Blessing to call for the Anointing Service. The doctors allowed my Dear Brother to come into the Isolation Unit and anoint me. Afterwards the doctors and nurses asked our Brother to pray for them also, what a Blessing!

Another Blessing was the comfort from a fellow Minister, Elder, Doctor, who took the time to call me and answer concerns and questions, plus before disconnecting he prayed for me.

May our Awesome Father God continue to Bless and watch over each and every one of you.

Again, THANK YOU and Blessings. To GOD be the Glory.

Brother Paul and Sister Shelia Noecker

2021 CASP PROJECT - REBUILDING

Our fourth CASP Pilot Project is being planned for the month of January in 2021. We recently received confirmation that this project will take place at Port Arthur, Texas. The dates are January 4 through 29 (the time for reporting to the site is Saturday, January 2, 2021). Unlike our other projects, this is a rebuilding project.

This project is an opportunity for young men of draftable age (18-25) who are members of the Dunkard Brethren Church to develop spiritual growth, grow in maturity, enjoy the satisfaction of service, and develop new, deeper, and lasting friendships with like-minded young brothers from across our Brotherhood. The cost is taking a month out of the volunteer's life from a job or whatever else he might be doing. The experience will be somewhat stretching but rewarding. Usually, it is when we get outside of our comfort zones that real growth occurs.

Along with the work projects, emphasis will be made throughout the time of service on outreach in the community, personal spiritual growth, times of Bible study and singing, recreation and other activities to promote spiritual development.

Young men who are interested in serving on this project should contact Bob Lehigh at rlehighdb@gmail.com or 717-817-6025 (cell # for texts or calls). As of now, we have eight young Brethren who have made a commitment to serve.

We deeply appreciate the prayers and financial support of the Brotherhood during our past projects and would appreciate that on this project as well. It is our goal to have the Brotherhood cover the costs associated with this project, including reimbursement for travel costs of getting to and from Port Arthur, Texas. Contributions for this project should be made as follows:

Dunkard Brethren Church Relief Board

And sent to:

Ward Deaton, Secretary

2620 Thacker Rd.

Zillah, WA 98953

Please mention that your contribution is for the Dunkard Brethren CASP Pilot Project.

If you have questions (or if a young man has questions), feel

free to get in touch with the Civilian Service Board member from your District or Bob Lehigh.

Thanks so much for your prayerful support and cooperation in this effort.

Sincerely in Christ,
Brother Bob Lehigh

CONNECTIONS

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh

God felt it loving and needful to enter into our humanity as a human in the person of Jesus. God did so to fully communicate in word and action who He is and what His purpose is for each of us. Jesus is our connection to God and God's connection to each of us. As we respond to His purposes, revealed in and through His Son, those purposes define our lives. As God's sons and daughters, we are to reveal the glory of God in all of our daily living. But we need help as we grow in God. The truth of God seldom comes all at once in full measure. The garment of His glory in which we are clothed is sewn a stitch at a time. As members of the Bible Study Board, our hope in writing a monthly article related to the Adult Sunday School Lesson is that we all see afresh different

points of connection that reveal the Word made flesh.

Galatians 2:19

"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."

As we study Paul's letter to the Galatians together over the next several months, we see the recurring conflict of trusting the law set against trusting in the grace of God through faith in the person of Jesus Christ. Paul uses his own life as a living illustration of that conflict. At first, as a keeper of the law, he tried to destroy the church of Christ. After his conversion there were times of struggle and conflict within the church because of its roots in Mosaic law. As the church emerged from the shadows cast by the law and into the light of revelation through Christ, two realizations took place. (1) It was separate and distinct from

its Jewish heritage. (2) The fulfillment of the Mosaic law and the promises proclaimed by the prophets are realized by faith in Christ. This new covenant was not only for Israel but for all who received Him by faith. Paul had powerfully portrayed the supremacy of life in Christ as he had ministered amongst the Galatians. Now, in writing this epistle, he has thrust himself back into this conflict. Judaizers had begun teaching these new believers that they also needed to keep the law of Moses in order to be saved.

So, what does Galatians 2:19 tell us? As we begin to meditate on this verse notice that it is as autobiographical as it is theological. Paul, in just a very few words, has condensed the futility of his experience in trying to keep the law. The law cursed Christ for hanging on a tree (Deuteronomy 21:22, Galatians 3:13). By extension, His followers were cursed as well. His zeal to uphold the Law results in his determination to destroy the church. His zeal was a thin disguise for the murderous hatred that drove him and was meant to terrify the Christians he was persecuting.

In Acts 9 Luke records Paul's experience of meeting

the resurrected Christ. He says to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (goads)." What is a prick or goad? The goad is a piece of iron sharpened to a point and attached to a long pole. Its primary purpose was to discourage a farm animal, primarily an ox, from kicking in rebellion against pulling a plow. A few pokes with a goad against the backside of the ox's rear leg quickly discouraged such behavior. It also could be used as a potent weapon. We read in Judges 3:31 that Shamgar killed 600 Philistines using nothing but an ox goad.

Notice that this is not a question but an observation that Jesus makes about Paul. So, what was the goad that Jesus was referring to in Paul's life? It was the love and joy lived out by the very Christians Paul was persecuting despite their affliction. Their faithful response to Christ's love stabbed his heart and unmasked his zeal for what it truly had become: a deathly heart devoid of the mercies of God. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." (Rom. 7:10-11) Spiritually he was

dead though he did not realize it until meeting the risen Jesus. Zeal for the law had killed him. When he tried to keep the law, he only succeeded in killing his spirit. Paul experienced the great paradox of life in Christ. When he died to the law as the means of his righteousness and accepted by faith the supremacy of Christ Jesus and His righteousness, he experienced God's life within his own. In Christ his sins were forgiven. With God's Spirit within, Paul was now equipped to overcome sin so that he might live unto God. He experienced the good news of life in Christ Jesus.

The temptation is to see this conflict as soundly resolved in the pages of Scripture and therefore merely a historical reminder that has little relevance in our lives. While nearly 2000 years of history has passed since Paul wrote to the Galatians, human nature has not changed. There is still a fatal attraction to codify rules and laws and principles as the means to gain our righteousness before God. The more we are seduced into keeping the law the more we are reduced in living by faith in Christ. Faith in Him allows us to trust the leading of the

Holy Spirit and rely upon the Scriptures as the final authority for doctrine and practice. In other words, we are always in danger of giving law an authority that is misplaced and deadly in its spiritual impact upon our lives. When we walk each day with our Lord, we learn obedience to His commands out of love for Him.

Any move toward a righteousness based on law (deception) will result in a corresponding loss of spiritual life in our own hearts (death). Nor can we grow spiritually if we compartmentalize our Christian lives into a dual nature where salvation is by faith and obedience is based on law. The fruits of the Spirit, part of our study in Galatians next month, will never mature and fill us with the richness of His life when nurtured by the law. So, as we study this epistle together let us examine our hearts for any law-led tendencies and attitudes that attribute some sense of righteousness to ourselves apart from Christ himself. Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is totally sufficient for every spiritual need as we walk together in the New Covenant of faith in Him.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR FEBRUARY 2021

Feb. 7 – Heirs of God Through Christ Enticed by Bondage – Gal. 4:1-15

1. Is immaturity confined to a certain age group?

2. How do we worship people like the Galatians did in verse 8?

3. What are the “Beggarly elements” that make us backslide today?

Feb. 14 – The Bondswoman or the Freewoman - Which is Your Mother? Gal. 4:16-31

1. How do you affect those around you?

2. What has been “Born after the flesh” in your life?

3. How have the things in your life that were “Born after the flesh”, come to persecute you now as a Christian?

Feb. 21 – In Christ Jesus Neither (insert issue of choice) Avails Anything, but Faith Working through Love – Gal 5:1-15

1. How has Christ made you free?

2. Do you use your spiritual liberty to serve your flesh?

3. In verse 15, what is the outcome of strife in the church?

Feb. 28 – The Best De-Fence Against the Lust of the Flesh - Walking In the Spirit – Gal. 5:16-26

1. What is it like to “Walk in the Spirit”?

2. How do others see that I have crucified the flesh in my life?

3. Is there a difference between “Live in the Spirit” and “Walk in the Spirit”?

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