

BIBLE MONITOR

VOL. XCVIII

NOVEMBER, 2020

NO. 11

"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.

WEEP FOR THE LOST

Weep for the lost! Thy Savior wept
O'er Salem's hapless doom;
He wept to think their day was past,
And come their night of gloom.

Weep for the lost! The prophets wept
O'er Israel's gloomy fate,
When vengeance had unsheathed her sword
Repentance came too late.

Weep for the lost! Apostles wept,
That men should error choose,
That dying men should Christ reject,
And endless life refuse.

Weep for the lost! Lord, make us weep
And toil with ceaseless care,
To save our friends, ere yet they pass
That point of deep despair.

— *Anonymous*

BORDERS AND BRIDGES

The Niagara International Rainbow Bridge connects the cities of Niagara Falls, New York, United States and Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. It was completed in 1941 to replace the Honeymoon Bridge which had collapsed in 1938.

The Rainbow Bridge is one of several bridges around the world that connect two countries separated by a river. Cooperation was necessary to build and maintain this shared resource. There are several other bridges that connect the United States and Canada. West of the Great Lakes the two countries share a lengthy land border.

Borders delineate various political jurisdictions. Borders determine the laws and sometimes the customs practiced by those on either side. States, counties,

townships, and municipalities have borders that affect their political operation. Although there are many national laws that apply to all these divisions, yet each of these bodies can enact laws that apply to their jurisdiction.

Borders can become places of contention and irritation between these jurisdictions. Nations do defend their borders. Wars have been fought over the exact location of legal borders. Passports and visas may be necessary to legally enter another country.

Like the jointly planned, built, and maintained Rainbow Bridge, other bridges may provide a means of reducing tension between rival countries or individuals. Tensions can be lessened when psychological bridges are employed to bring better relationships. Cooperation

THE BIBLE MONITOR NOVEMBER, 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.

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on minor projects can bring further cooperation on major events. This may lessen the possibility of warfare between countries or hatred and disagreement between individuals.

The borders and bridges of the political world may provide an illustration of the boundaries and bridges of the Christian Church.

The Church of Christ has been constituted with boundaries for her members. In the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 19:14. Proverbs 23:10) it was recognized as a great crime to remove the landmark of a man's inherited property. The landmarks whether rocks, trees or other methods marking his borders were to be honored and not be moved. If those landmarks were moved, the victim could become landless and lose his inheritance.

The Church is empowered to protect the landmarks of the faith. These timeless landmarks have been established by the Word of God. Removing those landmarks makes uncertain the guidelines that would direct those professing faith. If there are no borders, how can he know how to translate his faith into living? These landmarks are not inventions of men's fertile minds but those established by the Holy Spirit inspiring the human writers of God's Holy Word. These

landmarks include "repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrines of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." (Hebrews 6:1b-2) These landmarks are built upon the foundation of the doctrines of Christ concerning His origin, birth, life, ministry, death, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, return and rule. These eternal truths serve as the spiritual borders of the Church.

The church also provides bridges for those who are not in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The mission of the Church is to reach out to those not in God's Family. The Church must be sharing the message of individual salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus, the sin-bearer. Just as physical bridges need to be built so Christian lives must be built through bridges built by individual believers with those who deny, question, ridicule, or under-value the price God has paid for each soul.

When shared bridges are built the boundaries are maintained. Neither the United States nor Canada gave up their sovereignty when the Rainbow Bridge was built, but the bridge did require cooperation. The Church must maintain her boundaries of belief

and practice, while she builds bridges into the lives of those who need to find Jesus. It would be ironic for the Church to offer the Bridge of Jesus Christ to the lost only to have fallen off the foundation of Jesus Christ and Biblical landmarks.

The boundaries of the Church must be taught in an intelligent manner. Boundaries are not built

on superstitions or fairy tales; they are built on God's Word.

Are you extending the bridge of Jesus Christ to those who are outside the boundaries? Are you helping to maintain the boundaries that will make the offered bridge worthwhile?

M. C. Cook

THE GOD OF PROMISE

Every time there is a political election all that is heard from the prospective politicians are their promises. There are more promises given than a person can keep up with, which is what the politicians are counting on. If we try to keep the list of every promise uttered by these people, we will have to cut down every tree in North America.

Promises are what life is built upon. Do away with promises and life collapses, as we now know it. At the core of every relationship is a promise.

For the husband and wife, it is a promise "until death do us part." The quality of that marriage relationship depends upon living the promise of the marital vows. Every divorce is based upon breaking some promise.

There was a time when a man

took another man at his word and sealed it with a handshake. There were no contracts. Lawyers never came into the picture. A man's word was his bond and society seemed to thrive upon that very thing.

Now, it is quite different. When once we took a man at his word, now we assume that he will not keep his word. We look for hidden meanings and loopholes in the agreement. Enter the lawyer. Even though everybody seems to hate a lawyer, lawyers are the first person they call when they get into trouble.

It is impossible to deal with personal relationships apart from calling in some expert on the legal aspect of that relationship. It does not matter what the promises are that we make, there is always the potential of not keeping the promise.

Man's promise is only as good

as the man who makes the promise. This is the problem. Although everybody has good intentions, sometimes things happen that keep that person from honoring his or her promise.

Not so with God. God's promises always align with His nature and character making it impossible for God to lie. God can never contradict Himself. He will always act like Himself, which is a good thing for us. We can rely upon His Word. We can depend upon Him coming through and honoring His promises. That is what makes a relationship with God a very sound and wonderful thing.

It is a sad commentary on our society when there are so many promise breakers. Breaking a promise reflects upon the character of the person doing it.

Quite frankly, it has become a lifestyle in society today. Nobody expects anybody to keep his or her promise. When we enter into a contract, it is page after page that must be authenticated by signature after signature. Then there must be witnesses to that signature. Even then, there is wiggle room for a lawyer to undo the whole thing. The paper contract is not what it used to be.

It was Yogi Berra who made the observation that, "An oral contract

is not worth the paper it's written on." Such can be said today for a written contract. There is no written contract that cannot be undone by some clever attorney.

In contrast to the promise breaker is the promise keeper. I am referring of course, to God. He is the great promise keeper. There is no promise He has ever uttered that He ever broke. This should give us a great deal of confidence in our relationship with God.

God therefore is the expert on making a promise. A promise is of such a nature that it creates expectation. If I promise to give someone \$100.00, they have a corresponding expectation of receiving \$100.00. When God makes a promise, He is creating expectation.

Every promise of God reveals several things about God. It reveals both His nature and character and what we can expect from Him on a personal basis. To understand God's promise is to understand God. He can never promise anything that in any way contradicts His nature or character.

Once I have an expectation of God, I begin to understand what His expectation of me is. Every promise He gives reveals to me what He is expecting from me. I cannot do anything that God has

not promised. I cannot do anything that God has not amply provided for. Every promise creates the expectation of God's provision and God will never be inconsistent with His nature.

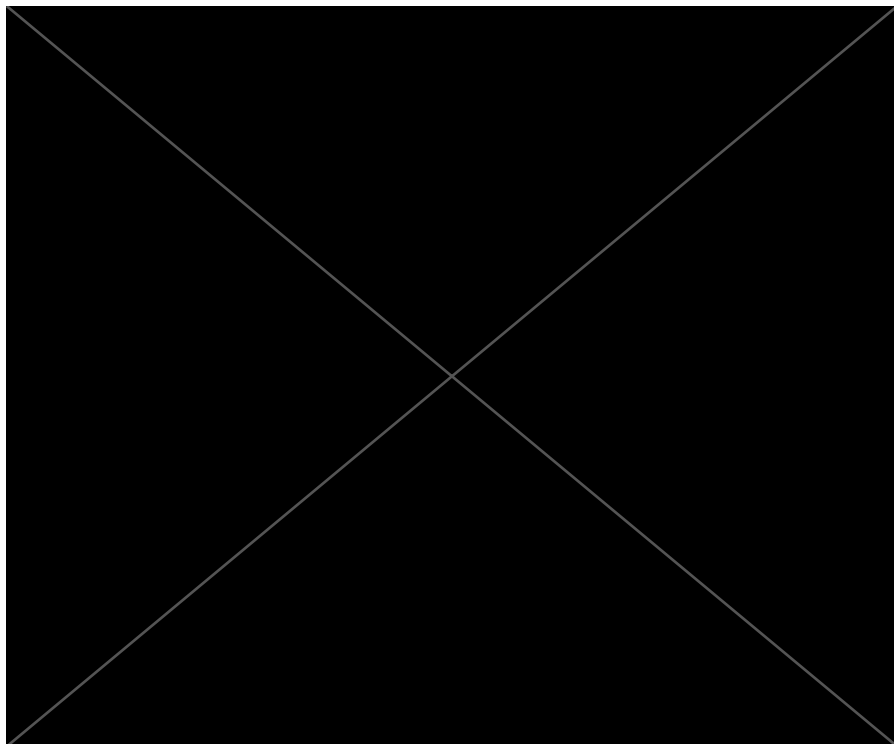
To honor the God of promise I need to live a life in complete harmony with His expectations. In His promises, God is opening His heart for me to understand Him and experience Him in the richness of His nature and character. I cannot know all there is to know about God, but I can begin to understand

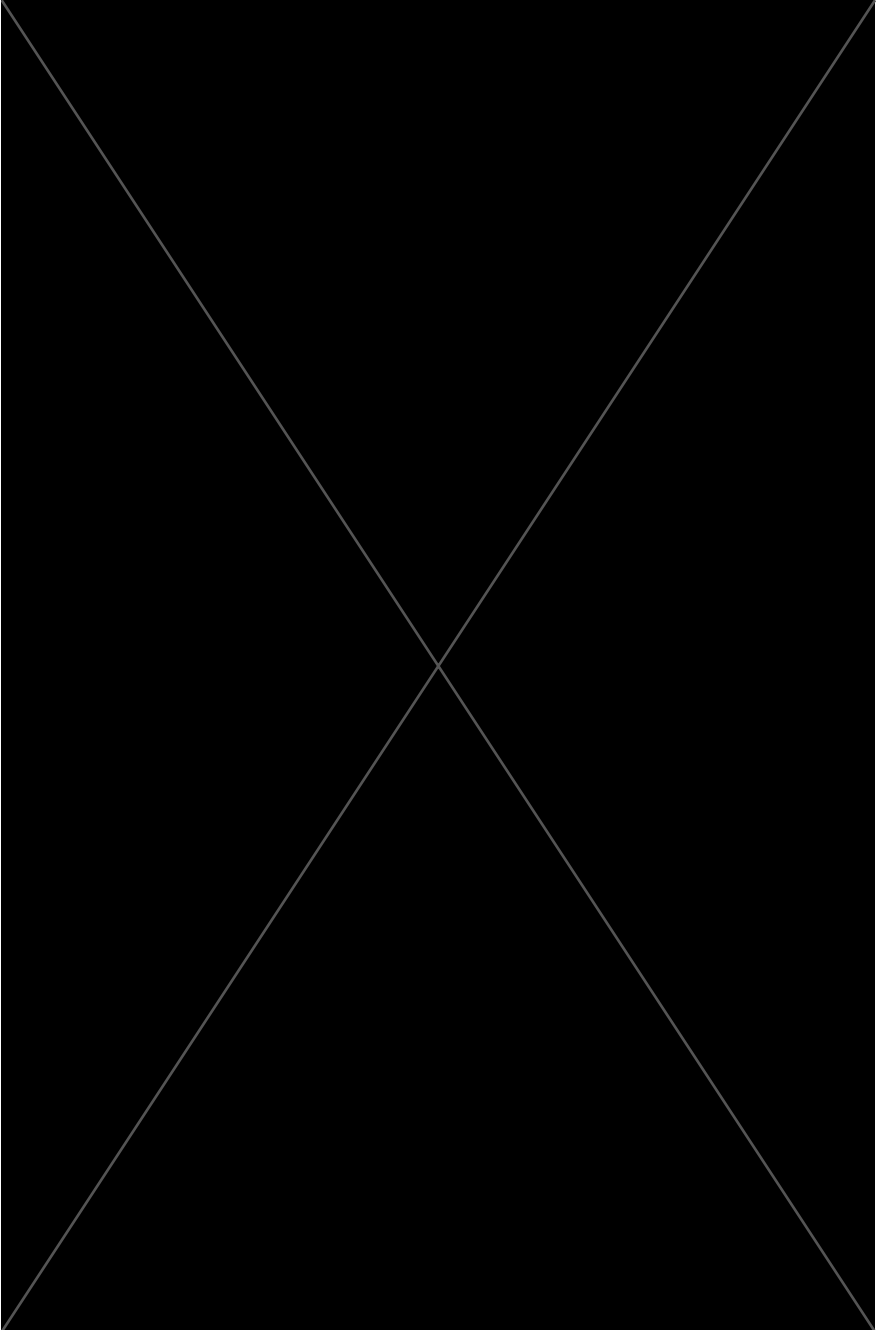
everything about Him that He has promised in my direction.

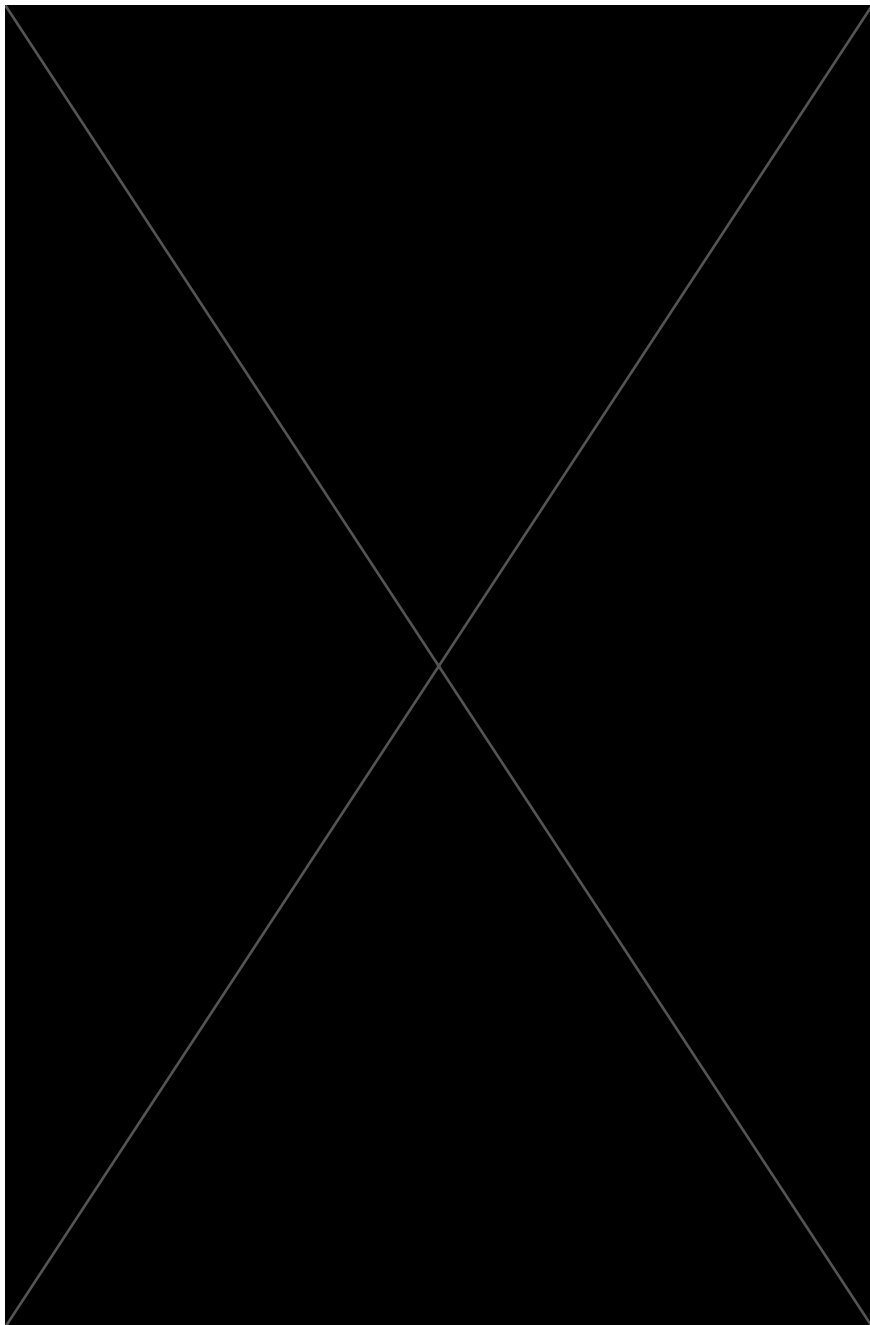
A promise is not an end in itself; rather it is a bridge to a personal encounter with God Himself.

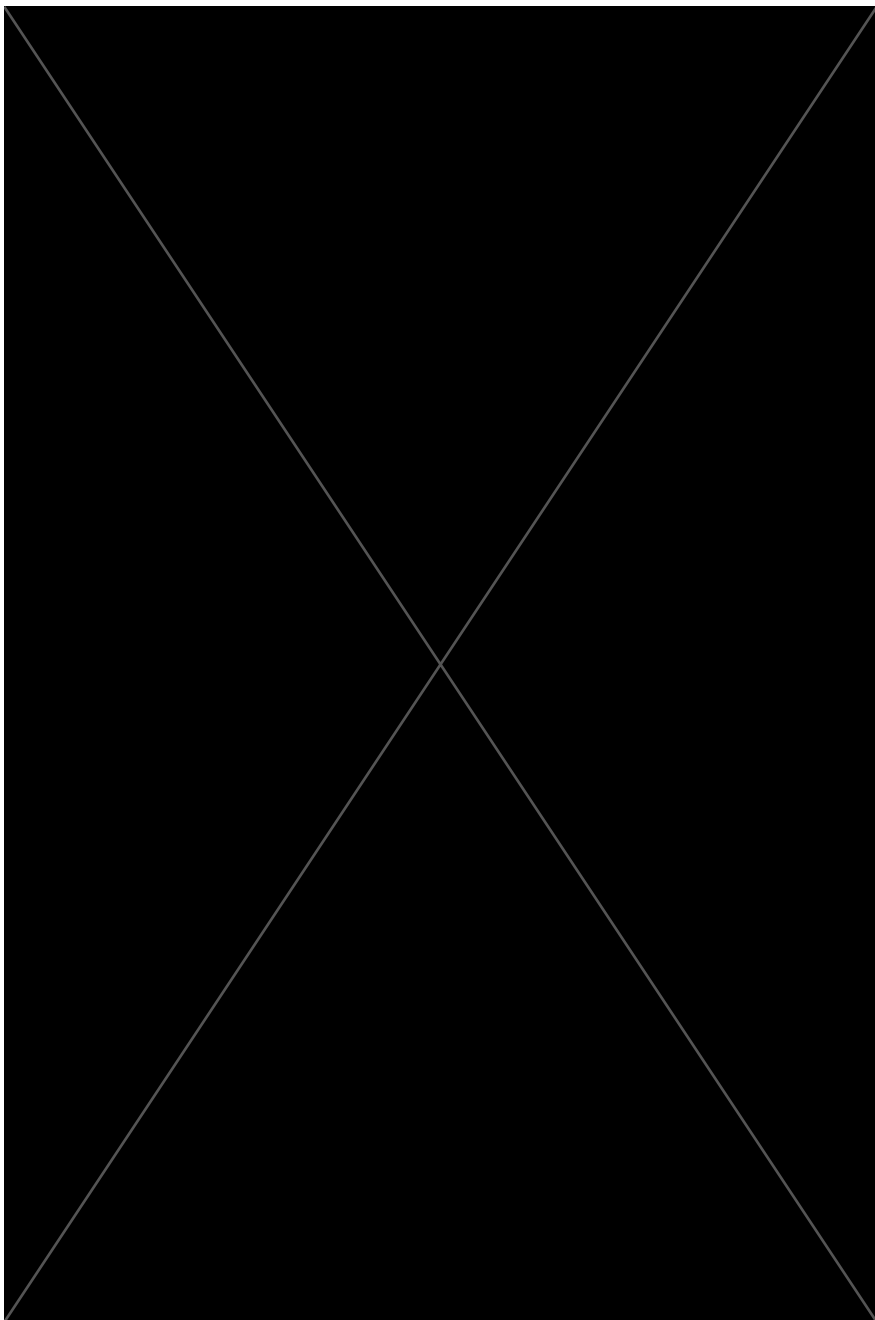
Years ago, in Sunday school, we used to sing, "Every promise in the book is mine, mine, mine." We sang it with a great deal of enthusiasm, but rarely did we live it in the power of God's expectation.

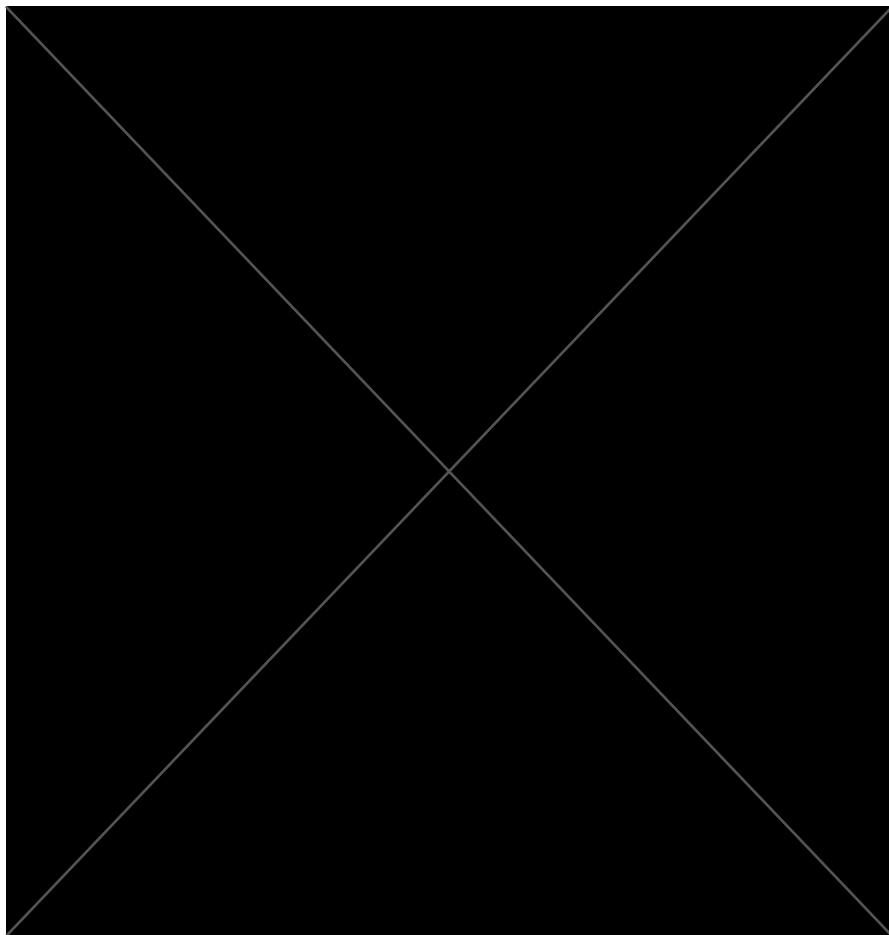
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“I’M GOING TO SUFFER; I’M GOING TO DIE”

Rudy Cover

Matt. 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-38; Luke 9:22-27

Jesus came into the world as a baby boy. He was born to die that you and I might live. Why was such a terrible thing necessary? Man had sinned

by disobeying God. God is pure and holy. God cannot sin, neither can He be tempted but man can and is.

We have an enemy; his

name is Satan. He is the devil. He is jealous of God and wants you and I to turn away from Him. Satan is a spiritual being. We cannot see him, but he can get into our minds and suggest things that are not right for us to do. Because he is invisible, we may think that the evil things that we think of are our own ideas, but they are not. By reading the Bible, which is the Word of God, we can learn what is right and what is wrong. Sin is disobeying God.

Man had sinned and could in no way help himself. Jesus told the disciples, "I'm going to suffer; I'm going to die and be crucified on a cross so that God will forgive your sins." Jesus was tempted in every way that we are – yet without sin. He was the Holy One of God. He was pure and undefiled. God could accept a sacrifice that was without sin. Jesus was the only one who could pay that debt and satisfy the righteousness of God.

We should never forget how difficult it was for Christ to give His life for the sins of the world. To be crucified on a cross was the punishment for the worst of crimes. Jesus had to be made to look like a criminal so we could have our sins forgiven. This was

what was so hard for Jesus to do. He had never sinned. To be made to look like the worst of sinners was repulsive to Him. He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." His sweat became as great drops of blood falling to the ground. It wasn't easy but Jesus did win the victory over sin. He was willing to suffer and die for you and me.

It was not so much what He did but Who He was. Many wicked men have died on a cross, but Jesus was pure, holy, without sin. He died that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

The disciples didn't seem to understand until after Jesus came back to life. Then they knew what He had done for all mankind. Whosoever will, may come to Him. Some day He will come again – not to suffer and die but to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The greatest that we can do is to live for Jesus, the one who suffered and died for us.

Selected from the
August 15, 1980
issue of the Bible Monitor

REVEREND

"...holy and reverend is his name." Psalm 111:9

Holy and rev'rend is the name
Of our eternal King,
"Thrice holy, Lord," the angels cry;
"Thrice holy", let us sing.

Examining the Bible, as well as this hymn (Brethren Hymnal #2), shows us that "Reverend" is not a title, but a state of mind and heart ascribed to the Presence of God.

The deepest rev'rence of the mind,
Pay, O my soul, to God;
Lift, with thy hands, a holy heart
To his sublime abode.

With sacred awe pronounce his name,
Whom words nor thoughts can reach;
A contrite heart shall please him more
Then noblest forms of speech.

How, then, shall we deal with those who feel they can bestow this title on others who, of course, cannot live up to it? Even more so, how can we deal with those who take the title, "Reverend" and expect others to address them as such? Only God is to be revered.

We as a group have come a long way. We must continually revere God and follow in His steps. We must teach and uphold Biblical convictions. Matthew 23:9-12 tells us, in the words of Jesus, "Call no man your father upon the earth:

for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

If we follow Him, and exalt Him in all humility, we will have to keep ourselves abased before the Lord. We cannot allow others to exalt themselves.

Thou, holy God, preserve my soul
From all pollution free;
The pure in heart are thy delight,
And they thy face shall see.

Some of us fellowship with others of similar faith that use the title "Reverend". We must take care that we do not find ourselves calling them by such names. Let us keep humble by exalting only God.

Shun evil companions, bad language
distan, God's Name hold in rev'rence, Nor take it in vain,
Be thoughtful and earnest, kind hearted and true,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

— H. R. Palmer

Brother Lynn H. Miller
Mohler's Congregation

BLESSINGS FROM GOD

Howard J. Surbey

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." I Cor. 2:9. We do not have time nor space to mention each of the blessings, which God has offered to man if we will only trust and serve Him. However, we wish to refer to a number of the most precious blessings, that our meditation upon them might stir us to wholeheartedly trust and serve Him.

First let us refer to the New Testament for some of our temporal blessings. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:30-33. Food and clothing are perhaps the first concern of most human beings. To a certain

extent this is right for us, however most of us spend entirely too much of our time and talents for these temporal items. Honestly, just how much of your time and talents are spent, seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?

"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." John 6:31. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness." 2 Cor. 9:8-10. God created all food. God stores the germ into the seeds, in order that plants may sprout after their dormant state, God must multiply the fruit and the seeds, else we would have no harvest. Why should we place these temporal things first in life, do we not trust God with what He has promised?

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2

Pet. 2:9. Without these marvelous blessings we would not need to look for a hereafter. Praise the Lord that He can and will, deliver us out of our many temptations. Remember God can and will punish the evildoer. Thanks, be unto God, that He also will reward and bless those who love and serve Him according to His will.

Now let us turn to some, even more important blessings from the God in Heaven. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and he shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Mal. 4:2. Alas we today do not need to look forward to this great promise, but He has already risen, and we can be healed now and can grow in grace and in knowledge of The Truth. Why not fear His name and serve Him?

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." Jas. 1:17-18. How variable, changeable, and uncertain are the things of this earth, but not so with the things of God. We experience so many

uncertainties and untrue things upon this earth, but not so with the things promised by our Heavenly Father. Can we truthfully say that we are among the first of His creatures, or are we so far away from Him that it is even a question whether He knows us or not?

Christ prayed "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." John 17:11. Are we being kept through His name? There is no reason why we should not be kept, through the saving power of the New Testament. Are we laboring to be kept as one through the one plan of Salvation. "And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20:32. "Which is able" will we allow it to free and build us up, into His sanctified Kingdom?

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:7. Do we look to Jesus Christ and His teachings for peace? Are we allowing His commandments to keep our hearts and minds? Or are we so wrapped

up in our own striving that we do not have time nor effort, to learn and follow His way? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:7. My what a bountiful blessing, do we appreciate it? Today people are much concerned about cleansing in various ways, but how much are we concerned about being cleansed from unrighteousness?

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 24. If He is able to present us unto God Almighty "faultless", what more should we be concerned about? Do we have many privileges and opportunities? Do we have many eternal promises? Is the future bright for us? What is keeping us from trusting, obeying, honoring, and praising our Lord? Why worry, fret, be downcast and so fearful of the duties of life? "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you." 1 Pet. 5:6-7.

As we glory in the knowledge of all these wonderful blessings, we

must remember that they depend upon several definite conditions. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Matt. 10:22. There may be sore trials and problems, but if we just remain true to our Lord, unto the end, we need not fear. "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Col. 1:21-23. What a blessing, regardless of our past ignorance, now if we continue in the faith of the Gospel, as delivered unto us from God, through Christ and the apostles.

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. 6:11-12. If we show diligence, if we have hope, if we be not slothful; but follow

through faith and patience." Is there any reason why we should fail to inherit God's blessings? "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10. That crown of life, eternal life, what is it

worth to you? What would it take for you to be unfaithful? The blessings of Almighty God are beyond our comprehension, they are too great, too high, and too wonderful for us to understand; but none need to fall short of them.

Selected from the
November 1, 1960
issue of the Bible Monitor

THANKSGIVING

Viola Broadwater

Yes, another year has come around and it is thanksgiving time again, but how thankful are we? Can we love God without gratitude? Living in this land of unbelievable plenty, where our hands are fuller than our hearts, so it seems, we need training in one of the oldest of arts, that of being grateful.

God has given us a good full life. The harvest is ripe, and the reaping is done. There's plenty to see us through the season, but do we stop to see from whence it came? Who made it possible? Yes, we have plenty to be thankful for: our homes, our children and our loved ones, our freedom of worship and our jobs; just to mention a few. Do we count our blessings? Or do

we take things for granted?

"Ye, that fear the Lord, praise him: all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him, all ye the seed of Israel." Psalms 22:23. "Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moveth therein." Psalms 69:34. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Psalms 150:6. Do we just remember to be thankful once a year? Psalms 145:2 says, "Every day will I bless thee: and I will praise thy name forever and ever." "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Hebrews 13:15.

We are thankful for material things, but shouldn't we be even more thankful for Jesus? Who

suffered and died that we might have eternal life, who gave His life's blood for our sins? "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57. We are thankful that we can work out our soul's salvation through Him. Help us to be ever more thankful this coming year. Things that are lasting, that endure, that give us eternal life; these let us be thankful for. As for a material gain, we should also be thankful, but first let us remember the Lord our Creator and thank Him for our every being.

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto

him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations." Psa. 100:4-5. "Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits." Psa. 103:2. "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done...they are more than can be numbered." Psa. 110:5. I want to say this with special emphasis, "Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me, Bless His holy name. Let us be thankful that He did not die in vain."

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

LET US GIVE THANKS

L. W. Beery

In these dark hours in the history of the world when the dark clouds of strife, turmoil and carnal warfare are threatening to envelop us on every hand and we are beset by problems, trials and difficulties that tax our endurance, we are apt to have our minds diverted from the source from which we can obtain grace sufficient for our every need. Our Lord knew well the things his people would be confronted with

in this period of time in which we live and has made provision for it. When we encounter some of the unpleasant experiences of life, we are likely to magnify our troubles and forget the blessings that we are enjoying. As Christian people we should not lose sight of the good things that the Lord is doing for us, nor should we fail to express our appreciation to the Lord in songs and prayers of thanksgiving.

It is true that our great nation is facing some very serious and alarming issues. Our peace, happiness, security, and prosperity are being threatened from without and within, but in spite of this we have great reason to rejoice. So far, the Lord has seen fit to spare us from the awful carnage of carnal warfare that is raging among our fellowmen in other lands. To be spared from the terrible sufferings, woes, heartaches, and grief which are an inevitable consequence of such a conflict is worthy of our deepest gratitude to our Heavenly Father who has protected us thus.

Then too, we are enjoying many other privileges and blessings which our fellowmen in other lands are denied. We are as yet, living in a land of liberty where we enjoy freedom to worship God as we feel is acceptable to Him. We are at liberty to speak and conduct our affairs with little restraint or interference. We enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In view of what exists in most of the other nations of the earth where rigid dictatorship has regimented and vassalized the people, we are indeed a privileged people. When we think of the attempts

that have been made to take away our liberties, surely the Lord alone has spared us and kept us a free people. For this we should be thankful.

In the past season many sections of our country experienced a severe drouth that cut our crops very short. In spite of this however, as a nation we have plenty of the fruits of the earth to supply all our needs and much to spare. When we think of the millions in other lands who it is said, are in destitute circumstances and possibly facing starvation this coming winter we should be mindful of the fact it is only through the goodness of a merciful Father above that we are provided for.

It is not only in these temporal matters that we are wonderfully blest. As Christian people living in a world of sin and darkness, we have the bounties of heaven with which to feed these yearning souls upon. The church of Jesus Christ which is the pillar and ground of the truth is still a living and vital force in the earth to those who are walking in the light of the gospel. Because of this we can keep the commandments, statutes and ordinances of the living God which are a means of energizing and sustaining us in

the midst of these troubled times. It is as true today to all who fear and trust God as it was to David when he uttered these joyous words: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105.)

We would indeed be in darkness and despair were it not for this blessed word of God to comfort, cheer and enlighten us on our pilgrimage through this world. It is by embracing this in its entirety that we are assured of a safe journey, a peaceful departure, and a triumphant entrance into the world beyond. It is due to the marvelous scripture of our Lord Jesus Christ that this has all been made possible.

When we think of all these

bountiful blessings our hearts should overflow with gratitude and our lips should speak forth the praises of him who doeth all these things for we poor weak mortals here below.

The Pilgrim Fathers recognized the goodness of God by a special day of Thanksgiving to show their appreciation for the blessings from above. Surely, we as a nation have much to be thankful for. Let us praise our God for his goodness to us and implore his mercies and blessings upon those in other lands who are in deep despair.

Selected from the
November 15, 1940
issue of the Bible Monitor

THANKS AND PRAISE TO GOD

J. F. Marks

We are approaching another Thanksgiving Day. As we think of the blessings of life during the past season, we must truly admit we are blessed far above that which we are worthy of. While God is so richly blessing us with His bountiful hand, do we thank and praise Him enough for the way He has cared for us.

We have great reason to be

thankful for our great heritage: religious freedom, the open Bible, the plan of salvation, and the willingness of God to send His only begotten Son into the world. He came to take away the sin of the world, behold the Lamb of God. He can take away sin from those only that become willing to accept His blood.

I cannot see how people

who do not fully accept the plan of salvation: can in reality thank and praise God for it. When Christ was here on earth, He saw some who honored Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. How about many professing Christians in our day, what do their actions prove to us? Actions speak louder than words.

I believe we will not adorn our bodies with unnecessary appendages, paint, etc., if we are thankful that He created us in His own image. We should thank and praise Him for health, strength, homes, and habitation. I believe it is well for us to consider David's exhortations: to thank and praise the Lord for His wonderful works to the children of men.

There are works of man in the world that we cannot thank or praise God for. Christ taught against war, what a terrible thing is taking place, the willful destruction of human life. How sad a condition that some of the great nations of the world are at enmity with each other. What terrible results may be the outcome of this great preparation for war?

We hear that people in some nations are hindered

from religious work. Surely, we should thank and praise God for our freedom in this country. We cannot thank or praise God for the injustice and many other works of darkness about us. In this so-called Christian nation, how much true Christianity have we? Instead of abiding by the Golden Rule as they should, many professing Christians impose upon others, things they themselves would be unable to bear. We must be aware of the fact, that the works of injustice are the works of the evil one.

I was asked how it is, if a person leaves this world and does not make restitution and peace with his fellowman. According to the gospel, if we neglect the opportunity to make restitution and peace with our fellowman on our part, it is an impossibility to be right with God and not be right with man.

Much deceitfulness is in the world. God will not believe the untruth, how sad to think people will put themselves to condemnation through the unrighteous judgment of others. Man will never deceive God. He knows the heart. We should not let anything of this world hinder us from rejoicing in the Lord and offering thanks

and praise to His holy name.

We should thank and praise God for the many kind deeds shown toward us by neighbors and friends. I believe our life should be such that it appears to all men that we are thankful to God.

As we view the life of Abraham, we notice a life of success and, thankfulness to God. As we think of David, his writings in the book of Psalms show to us that his heart was filled and over-flowed with thanks and praise to God. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him and bless his name." Psa. 100:4. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifices of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Heb. 13:15.

We could refer to many men of God of long ago with their examples and exhortations to thank and praise God. I believe it is a good thing for us to think of our forefathers who came to this country many years ago for religious freedom. At first, they met with severe hardships yet after they received a harvest of food, their thankful hearts have brought to us what is called

Thanksgiving Day. Surely, we have a reason to be grateful for this. It is a reminder to forgetful humanity of part of their duty toward God.

To praise and thank God from the heart means more than lip service. We need it in our everyday life. Let us thank and praise God for the freedom of living a true Christian life. Some may have met with greater trials than others. Sometimes we think this is a world of trouble and sorrow. We should be thankful we have the privilege to prepare for a better place for our future. We have great reason to thank and praise God that in the day of judgement, the untruthful words against us will not mean anything.

Our life, in reality, is what will count. God is not mocked or deceived. Let us think of the righteous judgment in the day of all days and stand opposed to all that is evil. There is no opportunity for preparation for Heaven after this life. In our every day life let us ever be true to thank and praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Selected from the
November 15, 1950
issue of the Bible Monitor

“INFLUENCE”

B. F. Masterson

Influence is a big word and far-reaching. It is a power flowing out of our personality and shapes the character of those with whom we come in touch. This is no doubt what Jesus was alluding to when he said: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”

One shows his light by chaste conversation, moral conduct, and modest appearance, which has a controlling power over the lives of those with whom we come in contact for good and tends to the glorification of the Father. Christ had a divine personality, although His activities were confined to the limited territory of Palestine, and yet His life and teaching influenced individuals, homes, society, and nations to the ends of the earth. “In Him was life; and the life was the light of man.” Jesus said to His disciples; “Ye are the light of the world.” For this reason has He instituted His church, composed “Of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should

shew forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”; to show others how to live, that her influence might be felt to the end of the earth. “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

No doubt this is what Paul had in view when he said, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” The Christian is the reflector, with an open face he looks upon Christ consequently he is reflecting in his life the life of Christ, and thus he is transformed into the image of Christ – from glory to glory – or from one degree of glory to a higher degree of glory.

As he continues to look upon Christ and walk in His light he becomes purer and holier in character, and thus becomes the light of the world, as Jesus was the light when upon earth; as the influence of Christ has

transformed the Christian's life into the image of Him. So, His life will influence those with whom he comes in touch to become transformed into the image of Christ.

Our influence over the lives of others will shape our future destiny; it will accompany one's personality to the final judgment, and there will either excuse or accuse the person. How important it is then that we walk in the light as He is in the light, that we may have fellowship one with another. Light has no fellowship with darkness – absolutely not. The record says that if we are to walk in the light, but if we do not, we are in darkness. We should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. "What communion hath light with darkness?" If we walk in darkness our influence is a power for evil. If we walk in the light of the word of God, our influence has a telling effect for good. Believe me, we will be held responsible for the fruit of our doing in the final windup.

The influence of a religious organization can be a power in breaking down the sins of a nation. Sixty years ago, the temperance cause was in its

infancy, and its advocates were looked upon as fanatics. It originated in the Society of the Quakers and the Church of the Brethren. It was not enforced upon the people by political or physical power, but it was taught to be sinful even to sell grain to distilleries, let alone to drink it or traffic in the stuff, until it had taken such a hold on the people that not only the churches throughout the United States advocated the temperance cause, but non-professors saw the impropriety of the traffic, and the Eighteenth Amendment was voted to the Constitution. That is what the influence of a Christian people will do, although comparatively few in number. How true, "That the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard", which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs.

The same can be said of the non-resistance doctrine which was advocated by the above named organizations, as well as by the Mennonite church, and its members had to suffer much in time of wars for refusing to take up arms against their fellow

man. It was during the World War that ministers of certain denominations declared from the pulpit that men who died on the battlefield were like Christ who died for his fellow man. But today all seem to advocate the peace principle. In fact, it has taken such a hold on the people that our nation is about to form a league with other nations to abolish war. That is what the influence of teaching will do. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

The evil effects of intemperance and war have been taught from every angle — the negative as well as the positive side of the question has been brought out until it has such a convincing effect on the people which brought about the present results.

There is another doctrine when the opposite of its teaching is indulged in is just as damaging in its effects, if not more so, than with intemperance. But the Church fell down on it, not because it was a wrong cause, but the passion for what it condemns is so deeply seated in human nature that even the church yielded to the clamoring for its abolition.

Consequently, she has lost

her power of "influence" in favor of non-conformity to the world in vain and fashionable dress. It is worldliness in one of its worst forms, and is so deeply seated in the hearts of men and women that they will go the full length to gratify their desires, whether by legal means or otherwise, and console themselves by thinking there is no harm in its indulgence, because ministers do not cry against it.

If the evil effects of this sin were traced to the extent that the evil effects of war and intemperance are, people would be educated in the knowledge of its sinfulness.

It is indeed a prominent phase of worldliness, and we are taught in the Bible not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world." (1 John 2:15-16.)

It is the passion for fashionable dress that has taken possession of the hearts of the church people, and their influence is a power for evil instead of for good. The

ministers have ceased to cry against this sin, consequently the laity feels justified, because "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark." (Isa. 56:10.)

They say, "preach the positive and not the negative." But I notice in the churches where this rule is followed, the laity is not only clad in the height of fashion, but the gold ornaments and diamonds are in evidence. What a terrible influence to account for, in the day of all days. Paul preached both the positive and the negative, when he said, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." He did not stop there, he also brought in the negative notice: "Not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (1 Tim. 2:9-10.) This language

being included in a solemn charge to a young bishop makes it doubly authoritative.

Must the doctrine of non-conformity be crucified on the cross of worldliness? Does it become the painful duty to be separated from a church organization in order to be separated from the world; or must conservatism be exchanged for so-called progressiveness? Which?

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having, therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

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

OBITUARY

NORMA FUNK

Norma Susanna (Keller) Funk, 96, died September 18, 2020. Norma was born October 4, 1923, near Dallas Center, Iowa, the first daughter of William and Mary Keller.

Norma graduated from Dallas Center High School, valedictorian of the class of 1941. She completed teacher training at Cedar Falls, Iowa, and taught grade one through eight at Maple Ridge Country School. During her teaching years, Norma corresponded with a young man from Pennsylvania, Stanley Funk.

Norma and Stanley were married December 22, 1945 and set up housekeeping in Dallas County. Between the years of 1946 and 1964 nine children were born: Mary Sue, Rebecca, Wayne, Philip, Kevin, Janet, Laura, Eva, and Benjamin. Norma enjoyed homemaking, providing a homey atmosphere, and cooking many meals for her husband and children. Norma and Stanley also opened their home to numerous people in need of lodging. If there was an extra bed in the house, there was always room at Norma's table.

Norma was a faithful member of the Old Order River Brethren Church, joyfully attending every service as long as she was able. She boldly testified of God's faithfulness and praised Him daily.

Norma was a woman of prayer, praying for family members, her beloved church, world events and the farmers in the field. The grandchildren cherish the memory of hearing Grandma pray for them by name at Christmas time. She would often end her prayer with, "May we all meet in heaven without the loss of one."

Norma is survived by her daughters, Mary Sue Moss, Laura Hawbaker and husband Nelson, Eva Keller and husband Daniel all of Dallas Center, Janet Dietz and husband John of York, Pennsylvania, sons, Philip and wife Nancy, Kevin and wife Becky, Benjamin and wife Deb all of Dallas Center, Wayne and wife Othelia of Oberlin, Kansas and son-in-law Wayne Miller of Quinter, Kansas. She is also survived by forty-four grandchildren, eighty-nine great grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren. Norma was preceded in death by her parents, husband, sisters, Maxine Eby and Mary Lou Meyers, daughter Rebecca, son-in-law Jerry Moss, grandchildren Nathan Funk, Ethan Moss, Dora Funk, great grandchildren Emma Funk and Mace Byers.

Funeral services were held September 21, 2020 at the Dunkard Brethren Church, Dallas Center, Iowa. Burial was in the Brethren Cemetery in Dallas Center, Iowa.

DAY 259 (LATE AUGUST)

What is Day 259? There is nothing special about this being Day 259. I have not been looking forward to this day for any reason. Nor am I likely to remember this day as anything special. But Day 259 has come because there was a Day 1 and Day 1 can be any day of the year. Therefore, beginning to read through the entire Bible in a year's time can start today or any day.

While there are many reasons for reading through the Bible one reason, we can relate to is the tumultuous time in which we are living. The headlines of this year have impacted all of us to some degree. Covid-19 is a reality all of us are wrestling with. While only a few of us have contracted the disease all of us are responding in a variety of ways. Many times, those responses are based on our political views, cultural outlook, or medical perspective. Since I have used the word "political" few of us need reminding that this is an election year with all the propaganda that is typical during it. Add to this stew controversies over racial discrimination, police brutality, riots, economic ups and downs, hurricanes, wildfires in the West and it all adds up to something very untypical compared to most years. Oftentimes during great controversies, during a worldwide pandemic, during social unrest, and political change, truth is the first casualty. Indeed, it is a rare commodity to be found.

So, where can we turn to know the truth? In the midst of the tempest of our times it can feel like we are children, "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph 4:14.) These words of Paul describe accurately the state of our culture in America. We live in an increasingly polarized society with many voices proclaiming diverse and conflicting versions of the truth.

Hopefully, some of you have noticed that I left something out in the verse quoted above. It begins, "That we henceforth be no more children..." In other words, we are not to be like children who neither have the maturity or experience to be rooted and grounded in the truth. Rather, as Paul goes on to say in verse 15, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

So how can we grow up so that the tempests of our time ultimate-

ly strengthen our faith and understanding? We need to be rooted in God's Word. Reading the Bible begins and ends with the simple purpose of listening for what God wants to tell us. Our need to know what God wants to tell us is not a class we take or a group of courses from which we will graduate. It is a lifetime assignment. It is as necessary for our spiritual life as food is for our physical life. This growing up into our head, Christ Jesus, means sinking our roots deeply into the Scriptures so that our distinctly Christian worldview is biblically based.

There are a variety of ways to sink our spiritual roots into the Scriptures. Reading through the Bible in a specific time frame, such as a year, helps the big picture of who God is and what He has done grow in our minds. We see God's creation come to life in the beginning. We see the end of history and the eternal life that awaits those who have received the spirit of adoption into God's family. The story of salvation history is woven into the tumultuous times experienced time and again by God's people throughout history. Our own tumult may only be a singular page in the story. But we are part of that story and therefore participants in God's salvation that we receive by faith through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, whatever reading program you may choose, and there are many to choose from, let Day 1 begin right away. It will require daily discipline. Some readings will be tedious. Our humanity can discourage us as we become lazy, easily bored, overwhelmed by the struggles of life, exceedingly busy, and so on. The Lord knows this about us. Yet so perfect is His love for us that He is constantly wooing us to fellowship with Him. His Word speaks to every condition in our hearts and lives. Learning to turn to Him each day, learning to enjoy His fellowship, learning to understand His ways, His wisdom, and His love is why we are alive. Reading His Word helps focus our hearts so that in spite of what our present experience feels like at the moment the constancy of His eternal nature upholds, comforts, and grows us into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. As you progress and persevere you will have reason to praise God, with thanksgiving, for His Word. Do not wait; just begin.

On behalf of the Bible Study Board,
Brother Phil Franklin

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR DECEMBER 2020

Dec. 6 – The Lord Exalts Mary and Mary Exalts the Lord – Luke 1:26-56

1. Why do you suppose Mary was troubled by the angel's appearance and what he said to her? (verses 28-29).

2. In the Hebrew language, what does the name Jesus mean?

3. Elizabeth's response in verses 42-43 is comparable to what the angel Gabriel said in verses 28-33. How could Elizabeth understand these things?

Dec. 13 – The Birth of John the Baptist – Luke 1:57-80

1. In the Hebrew language, what does the name John mean?

2. In verse 63, the people marveled at the naming of John. Why?

3. Zacharias gives a detailed prophecy in verses 68-79, including a role for his young son, John. According to this prophecy, what would John's role be?

Dec. 20 – The Birth of Christ – Luke 2:1-24

1. Christ's birth in Bethlehem was prophesied in Micah 5:2. Approximately how long before Christ's birth was this prophecy made?

2. Why would God choose shepherds to be the first to hear such an important message of good tidings and great joy?

3. Comment on the different responses of Mary and the shepherds in verses 19-20.

Dec. 27 – Simeon and Anna Prophecy – Luke 2:25-52

1. Verse 25 indicates that Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel. What exactly is that? Did he know what he was waiting for?

2. What were Anna's reactions to seeing the Christ child?

3. Considering that Joseph and Mary knew that Jesus was special from birth and had raised him twelve years at this point, why do you suppose they did not understand Jesus' response in verse 49?

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