

"And the dragon...went to make war with the remnant...which keep the commandments of God, and have...

THE TESTIMONY

...of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17

VERSE OF THE MONTH

"...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:13-14

Vol. XIII

January 2022

No. 1

THIS I KNOW

*I do not know what next may come
Across my pilgrim way;
I do not know tomorrow's road,
Nor see beyond today.
But this I know—my Saviour knows
The path I cannot see;
And I can trust His wounded hand
To guide and care for me.*

*I do not know what may befall
Of sunshine or of rain;
I do not know what may be mine,
Of pleasure or of pain;
But this I know—my Saviour knows
And whatsoe'er it be,
Still I can trust His love to give
What will be best for me.*

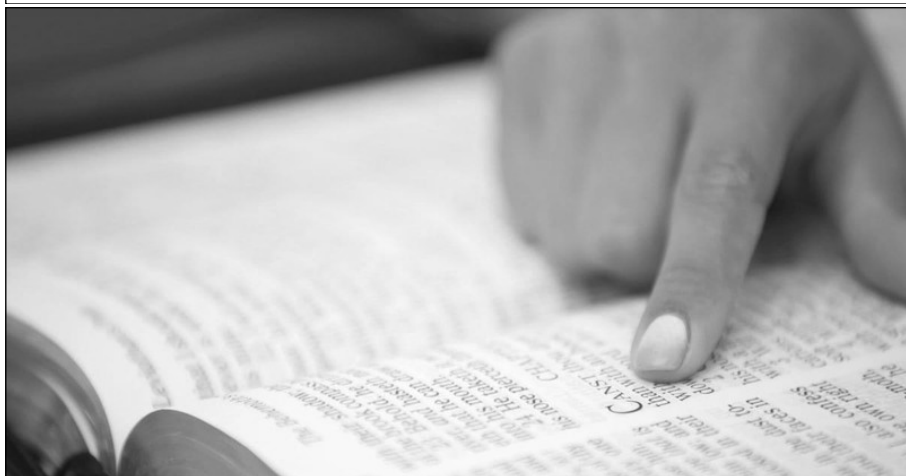
*I do not know what may await,
Or what the morrow brings;
But with the glad salute of faith,
I hail its opening wings;
For this I know—that in my
Shall all my needs be met;
And I can trust the heart of Him
Who has not failed me yet.*

— E. Margaret Clarkson

THE TESTIMONY

CONTENTS

FRONT COVER	1
THIS I KNOW	1
EDITORIAL	3
A TIME OF CHANGE.....	3
GENERAL	4
THE FOUR AMERICAN "GOSPELS"	4
JOSEPH, THE HUSBAND OF MARY.....	12
BAAL WORSHIP AND ROCK MUSIC.....	16
JOHN 3:16 THE GREATEST VERSE	21
MEDITATIONS	22
QUESTIONS TO PONDER	22
GENERAL ITEMS	22
POEMS	1, 23
OBITUARIES	25



EDITORIAL

A TIME OF CHANGE

“Change” is something we’re all accustomed to, for we know that nothing stays the same. Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, has said, “The only thing constant in life is change.” Some changes occur frequently, while others rarely happen; some happen quickly, while others take more time. At this time of year, we’re changing our calendars from one year to another. Some calendars need changing every day; for others, we change them every week or month.

Some changes in life are not to our liking, while others are. The loss of a loved one, a terminal illness, a serious accident, or the loss of our house due to fire or wind are not changes that we like to experience. But usually after a period of time, we can look back on these changes and realize that they have also resulted in some blessings.

I recall, in 2008, when the presidential candidate was advocating “change.” Then, coincidentally, about a month after he took office, I experienced the sudden change of losing my job. Unexpected changes such as this can be a shock at the time, but when we look to the for all our needs, we can take comfort and have peace in these times of change. For we know that He will never leave us nor forsake us. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

Each year we can notice a change in our bodies. Children and young people will get stronger and grow to maturity. Later in life we lose some strength, and our bodies begin wearing out and showing signs of age. All living things go through a similar aging process. Even the heavens and the earth grow older and will sometime be changed to a new heavens and a new earth. These changes began at the time of Adam and Eve’s transgression and will continue as long as this old earth remains.

The past two years have been a time of change which has affected most all humanity. And we don’t expect to see things change back to the “normal” we once knew. These changes, such as being anti-social, losing jobs, scarcity of merchandise, rising prices, government control, sin, violence, and deception, can be discouraging to some people. But when we understand that God’s Word tells us these things are coming before Christ returns for His bride, we can go forward with strength, faith, and hope for the future. We’re so thankful that we have an Anchor which is the solid rock and never changes. “For I am the LORD, I change not...” (Mal. 3:6).

Sometimes changes are welcomed and anticipated and can bring much joy. A young man and woman anticipating marriage is one example. We welcome new children into our family and look forward to the changes they make

as they mature. The most welcome change possible is when people repent of their sins, accept Christ as their savior, and surrender their lives to Him. The angels of heaven rejoice at this change!

As we reflect back on the past year, I hope the Lord has seen some change in each of us which gave Him glory. Possibly, it was some spiritual growth, or showing more love to others, or crucifying our selfish ways so that His will might be done through us. In the coming year, let us use all our changes to praise the Lord—even the change from sleeping to waking up each morning!

What should our reactions be to the changes we experience? To begin with, we need to thank God for them. The letters to the Ephesians and Thessalonians give us these instructions: “Giving thanks

always for all things unto God...” and “In every thing give thanks...” No matter whether the changes bring suffering and loss, or joy and prosperity, we should take these things to the Lord. He can provide the necessary healing and comfort, or guidance for using our blessings. In every situation we can grow stronger, and God will receive the glory.

We know for certain, that there are more changes coming in the future. With anticipation, we look forward to one of the biggest changes yet—which will happen: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (I Cor. 15:52).

Darryl Filbrun

GENERAL

THE FOUR AMERICAN “GOSPELS”

John Mark Comer

(It is not our intent that this publication be focused primarily on the errors of men. We want our people to be pointed to Christ. Yet we do believe there is a place for warning against misunderstandings of the Gospel that may not present the Lord’s intended message.

Jesus came bringing the “Gospel of the Kingdom.” It was a Gospel that focused on setting up a new Kingdom in the hearts of men in the last day, that included salvation by faith in Jesus, and that found the perfection of that faith in following Jesus and being obedient to the will of the King. The complete fulfillment of that glorious Kingdom was prophesied to be yet in the future.

But there have arisen other Gospels in more recent years that are exposed in the following writing, just as the Apostles sought to expose heresy. The author does not intend to condemn **people** or **denominations** here, but simply expose **doctrines** that are misleading. — The editor)

Matt. 19:16–30 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said

unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

We recently have tried to present the Gospel that Jesus preached. And we feel strongly that **if we do not stick with the Gospel that Jesus preached, we could easily end up with a Gospel that Jesus did not preach.** And I would argue that this is exactly where we are in the western American church. Mark's one-line expression of what Jesus said is, **"The time is at hand. The kingdom of God has arrived."**

The Gospel that Jesus preached is very different from the Gospel that I grew up hearing. So what we want to do is run a comparison between the Gospel that Jesus preached and some of the most popular Gospels in the American church. I hesitate to do this, but *this is exactly what Jesus Himself did on the Sermon on the Mount*, to push back against interpretation of Scripture that were off based.

So we want to look at four of the most common misinterpretations of the Gospel in our time. One author recently said, ***"We must do nothing less than engage in a radical rethinking of the Christian concept of salvation."*** He does not mean a rethinking of the historic concept of salvation taught in the Bible, but rather a rethinking of the modern concepts that a lot of us grew up with and that are being taught today.

Our understanding of the Gospel is based on our understanding of **salvation** itself. What does it even mean to be **"saved"**? Does it just mean, "go to heaven when you die"? Or "have your sins justified in the legal

court of heaven”? Or something else? How you define salvation will determine how you define the Gospel, and vice versa, and will determine the trajectory of your soul. It is my conviction that much of what Christians call the Gospel is not necessary all heretical, but it's not the Gospel of Jesus. N.T. Wright says, “I am perfectly comfortable with what people normally mean when they say ‘the Gospel.’ I just don’t think it is what Paul means. In other words, I am not denying that the usual meanings are things that people ought to say, to preach about, to believe. I simply wouldn’t use the word ‘Gospel’ to note those things. We need to measure our preaching of the Gospel against Jesus’ preaching of the Gospel. He is the ultimate Teacher, and the litmus test for the Gospel.”

And Jesus, as we just read, is full of surprises. The young man of privilege (Matt. 19:16) said, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

Now for those who care about preaching the Gospel, this is the dream question! This is what we hope people will ask us! Now based on my upbringing, I know what Jesus is supposed to say here. He is supposed to say something like, ***“DO! You don’t need to DO anything! That’s RELIGION! That’s man earning his way to God! That’s works-based righteousness! That’s not the Gospel! I’m about to do it all for you on the cross! ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS BELIEVE!”*** But did Jesus say that? No. His reply is *heretical to many!* Or at least it’s a bit of a head scratcher! Basically, what does He do? He tells the man to keep the commandments. “All these have I kept. What do I still lack?” Interesting. Jesus doesn’t disagree that the man has kept the commandments. But both the man and Jesus know that there is something more. They both know that whatever salvation is, it is not LESS than “morality,” but it is a lot more than “morality.” Then Jesus tells him to sell all his possessions and come apprentice under Him.

Now the man is not asking, “How do I go to heaven when I die?” (as many think). As a first century Jew, he would have had some concept of life after death, and maybe even of a place called “The Heavens” with the living God. First century Jews were waiting on pins and needles for the Messiah, the long-awaited King of Israel and of the world from God Himself to arrive and usher in the Kingdom of God, the reign of God, not only over Israel, but over the world. And Jesus is either that Messiah, or He is claiming to be that Messiah. The man is asking, “What is it that I need to do to make sure that I am a part of that kingdom with you?”

The phrase “eternal life” may throw us some. It is not here just speaking of endless life but is better translated, “the life of the age to come.” In the New Testament, the words, Kingdom, Salvation, and eternal life are used many times interchangeably.

The Four most popular misinterpretations of the Gospel:

My heart here is not to say, "All of these people are wrong, but we are right." No, my heart is *pastoral*. I want to guide you into the way of Christ, and the Gospel that He preached. I want you to know Jesus, become like Jesus, do what Jesus would do.

1. The Evangelical Gospel, or what some call "The Simple Gospel."

Here is a popular level summary: *You are a sinner going to hell, God loves you, Jesus died on the cross for your sins, if you believe in Him, you will go to Heaven when you die.*

The preaching of **this Gospel** is usually followed by some version of the sinner's prayer, or a call to put your hand up at the end of the sermon or come forward. This version of the Gospel rose to prominence after World War II, in tandem with the rise of what cultural analysts call "Mass Culture." It was an attempt to simplify the Gospel into an appealing and accessible message for the masses. They were wanting to win converts, and they were a generation who (far more than our own) were taking Jesus' call to preach the Gospel very seriously. And there are some things that this does very well. It's a call to personal conversion, etc. I grew up evangelical. Some of you were baptized as infants, etc. and you know that often **there is no moment of commitment to apprenticeship under Jesus as Lord.**

Of course, there are some issues with this Gospel as well. Most notably, this is **nothing close** to the Gospel Jesus Himself preached. **If you search for this formulation in the New Testament, you simply won't find it.** The problem is less that it's wrong, but more that **it is nowhere close to the full picture.**

You see, salvation for Jesus is not about getting you into Heaven, but about getting Heaven into you! It is not just about a **transaction**, but about a **transformation**. And it is not just about a **transformation of an individual like you or me, but a transformation of societies.** It's not just about what God wants to do **for** us, but what God wants to do **IN** us! It's not just about what happens when we **die**, but what happens if we **live**! It's not just about going to church after you are "saved," but about being baptized into the family of God! With God as your Father, and other followers of Jesus as your brothers and your sisters. **And it's about your primary allegiance.**

This Gospel does not necessarily involve a life of apprenticeship to Jesus. There is no call to discipleship. Discipleship is something that happens after you get "saved" and offered as an optional "add-on" for those who are really **"into it,"** rather than the pathway into salvation. This Gospel can easily lead to "sin-management," by a kind of salvation by **"minimum entrance requirements."** When people ask, "Is So-and-So saved?" what they mean is, "Do they meet the minimum entrance requirements to get into heaven when they die?"

But is that what salvation even is? Is it like you have to keep doing enough to keep the right status? Or is it more like the New Testament metaphor of marriage? Imagine if I would say to my wife, “What are the minimum requirements that I need to do to stay legally married to you?” This would not go over well. And I would be missing the entire point of what marriage is! Marriage **IS** a legal status, but that is on the edge! That is not the center! It is a relational covenant! And in the same way, Jesus describes His definition of eternal life (John 17:3) “...that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.” It is participation with God! It is being in union with God!

If salvation includes the healing of the soul and union with God, then this “Gospel” is a very poor foundation upon which to build a life of discipleship that is conducive to deep healing and transformation.

2. The Reformed Gospel

This label is not mine. It is used by a number of Reformed Calvinist preachers and church planting organizations. They have put the word “reformed” in front of the word “Gospel.”

At a popular level it sounds something like this: **God is a perfect, holy, just God (both love and wrath). You are morally guilty before Him. God’s demands must be kept. You cannot possibly do it. But Jesus did it for you on the cross. Hallelujah!**

This Gospel equates the preaching of the Gospel with the preaching of a cluster of reformed doctrines, penal substitutionary atonement, and mainly justification. As the president of the Southern Baptist Theology Seminary put it, “Justification by faith alone is not one doctrine among others, it is not merely one way of describing the Gospel, **it is the Gospel.**” John Piper, one of the most vocal advocates of this view in his book, **God is the Gospel**, says, **“I am thrilled to call justification the heart of the Gospel.”**

Now to clarify, Justification is not a doctrine of the Reformed Church. It is a New Testament doctrine. But it is not focused upon, or used nearly as much in the New Testament as people think. It is used one time by Jesus, in the beautiful story of the Pharisee and the Publican. It is used more by Paul, but only in four of his letters, not at all in his other nine or ten letters. And it is never used by John, or by Peter, or by the other New Testament authors. And that’s pretty strange, if that **“is the Gospel.”**

In the reformed view of justification, it means that *Jesus has earned merit on our behalf, through living a sinless perfect life that we could not live, and in the heavenly courtroom of a holy just God, He has imputed that merit somehow over onto you, dying in your place, so that you are now declared righteous by sheer grace, not by anything you have done. It is by Jesus’ merit. You are justified. It is “just as if you had never sinned,” as the saying goes.*

There are also toxic versions of this Gospel that make God look like an angry tyrant in the sky that is so mad at humanity that He killed His

Son. But the Scriptures are clear (John 3:16), "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son..." And remember that the Gospel is not just about what God has done, but about who God is.

One author said, "The Gospel presentations that I hear seem to focus only on the cross. The Gospel is set forth almost exclusively as a transaction to be experienced in a moment of time. To believe, or to exercise faith, is to trigger the transaction and fulfill the Gospel."

Now, what makes this tricky is that there is a transaction that is a part of the Gospel, and that allows us to experience God's good news. However, there is more to Jesus' Gospel.

Now, there is some good in the Reformed Gospel, starting with its emphasis on the cross. And the Reformed Gospel has a view of guilt (which our generation is sorely lacking) and a means to deal with that guilt (which our generation is also sorely lacking). It is also not afraid to talk about God's wrath, which is all over Scripture, and it also sees God's wrath (for the most part) as an expression of His love.

But there are some massive issues with this Gospel; the main one being that you are hard pressed to find it anywhere in Jesus' teachings. And Jesus did not go around beating up on "self-effort" and "works-based righteousness." When He used the phrase "good works," it is clear that He actually thought that good works are good. But somehow in our day, good works have become "bad." Jesus said, "That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven."

When Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount, He gave a picture of two men. One heard these teachings and did them, and Jesus said he was wise. The other heard the teachings and did not do them. He was called foolish. Can you imagine Jesus then hurriedly saying, "Now don't worry! I know some of you are scared right now! Don't worry! I am about to do all of this for you! You don't need to do anything at all! Because that would be works-based righteousness!" It is unimaginable that Jesus would ever say something like this! But the main problem again is discipleship. The Reformed Gospel defines works in Paul's writings as "self-effort" in general. And then it equates "self-effort" with earning. All of these things sabotage "discipleship." When we are told continually that *it is not about what we can do, but about what God has done*, we can end up with a very passive spirituality, which has a high view of Christ (which I applaud) but a very low view of apprenticeship to Christ. Christ tells us to do things constantly, and the New Testament is full of commands, and even demands on our moral and social lives. Much has been said about the rise of "Consumer Christianity" in recent decades in the U.S. Much less has been said about its possible connection to the way the Gospel has been preached, either as in "cheap grace," (the Gospel I grew up with), or as in "Jesus did it all. You don't have to do anything." Sadly,

this can produce consumers of Jesus' merit, rather than disciples of Jesus' way.

3. The Prosperity Gospel, also called Health and Wealth, or Word of Faith.

This is a relatively newcomer to the scene, in the last century, "a religious belief among some protestant Christians that financial blessings and physical well-being are always the will of God for them." The atonement is interpreted to include the remediation of sickness and poverty, which are viewed as curses to be broken by faith. This is believed to be achieved through donations of money, visualization, and positive confession. The popular version sounds something like this: *God loves you, He is for you, you are His child, you are royalty made in the image of God. Through His death and resurrection, He has won the victory. His victory is your inheritance by faith; victory over sickness, over poverty, and over failure. The best is yet to come, and your breakthrough is on the way.*"

The leading scholar in the world on the Prosperity Gospel, in her book, "Blessed," has four markers of the Prosperity Gospel. **Faith**, **Health**, **Wealth**, and **Victory**. She divides it into two kind of camps; **hard prosperity** and **soft prosperity**. Hard prosperity is the original version from a generation or two ago. It's more heretical, full of false teaching, and therefore it was always more "fringe." It uses language like, if you give God \$100, He will give you \$1,000. This Gospel was discredited much by the televangelist scandals of the 1980's and 1990's.

In its place has come "soft prosperity." It is more therapeutic. It is more focused on principles for emotional health, relational flourishing, and material success. It's more mainstream in its culture. Many celebrities and celebrity pastors are involved in it. It is very "Hollywoodish." Studies show that 17% of churches in America identify with the Prosperity Gospel. And over half of churches over 10,000 people preach the Prosperity Gospel. Those who preach it often gain fabulous wealth.

The good things about this Gospel are that it focuses on a loving God who is for you in hardship, and a God who can do miracles—one that can come in and do the miraculous in your life. It is a holistic view of the Gospel.

What's wrong is that it is simply not the Gospel that Jesus preached, and it is the exact opposite of the life that Jesus lived. And it sets people up for disillusionment with the popular phrase "the best is yet to come." This would have sounded strange to the many Christian martyrs who, after they believed, were tortured for their faith, and slain.

4. The Social Gospel, or Liberation Gospel

This Gospel springs from a Marxist worldview and sees all of human history as a power for struggle between "oppressed" and "oppressor" and sees most relationships through the grid of "power dynamics." Inside this

kind of framework, it sounds something like this: *Jesus was a political revolutionary who came to liberate the poor and marginalized from the hierarchy of oppression. He was killed as a threat to the empire, but He inaugurated a kingdom of peace and justice and equality. America is the latest liberation in a long line of empires. Jesus is on the march now, as He was then, to stand up against those who abuse power, and to liberate those on the margins, such as the poor, immigrants, refugees, the LGBTQ community, and many more. The church's role is essentially an activist role, to move America toward a progressive and socialist and political model.*

On the good side, this Gospel uses the language of “Kingdom,” and it understands that the Gospel isn’t about us going to heaven, but about heaven coming to us. It understands that you can’t separate the preaching of the Gospel from the demonstration of the Gospel. It has a sophisticated view of not only *individual* sins, but also of *institutional* sins. It preaches the dignity of all people. It has courage to call out racism and classism, even in the church. It is a great reminder of how Jesus radically subverted the world’s models of power.

But again, this Gospel bears no resemblance to the Gospel that Jesus preached. Jesus lived in a politically charged environment. And yet He did not go to Rome but remained mostly in remote areas of northern Israel. He seemed to have what some writers have called an “intentional indifference” to politics. He simply refused to engage in the political activism of His day. “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.” And He was certainly not a “progressive” by the current moral definition of the word.

This Gospel does not require discipleship to Jesus at a holistic level, because it equates discipleship with political activism. **This is not the Gospel that Jesus preached.**

Which of these four Gospels do you find yourself believing? Most of us may have been raised hearing the Evangelical Gospel, or the Reformed Gospel. Some of you were traumatized by them because of the abuses, and are moving toward the Prosperity Gospel, or the Social Gospel. at the other side of the proverbial pendulum.

But the answer to **one distortion** of the Gospel is not **another distortion** of the Gospel. The answer is **rediscovering Jesus’ Gospel**. Every generation has to do this. Our children and grandchildren will have to do this. We have to do the hard work of thinking, and reading, and going to the source, which is Jesus, to disentangle the Gospel from its cultural trappings. Some have tried to place Jesus’ words in another dispensation to avoid their application in the lives of His followers.

But let **the Gospel of Jesus** recapture our hearts and recenter our lives.

Selected and adapted by the Editor.

JOSEPH, THE HUSBAND OF MARY

Encouragement for Husbands and Fathers

Jesus Christ was the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary in fulfillment of Divine prophecy; however, Luke 4:22, John 1:45, and 6:42 refer to Jesus as “*the son of Joseph*,” and Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 call Him “*the carpenter’s son*.” As we read the first chapter of Matthew and the third chapter of Luke, we discover the records of Jesus’ human ancestry, genealogies which clearly established Him as a descendant of Abraham through the family of King David (*which helped to identify Him as the Messiah*), also establishing Him as a legal son of descendants from the line of Israel’s kings (*which made Him eligible to be the King of Israel*)!

Matthew 1:16 differs from other genealogies in that it does not say that Joseph “begat” Jesus, unlike the references to the more than forty other men who are named in the same list; what we do read is this: “*Jacob begat Joseph [who was] the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ*.” What little we know of this man, Joseph the husband of Mary (and the foster father of Jesus) is to be found primarily in the first couple chapters of Matthew and Luke. Rare are the Christmas carols written about Joseph, and it is tempting to dismiss him as a lesser character

in the story, a man with little to offer outside of the story of Jesus’ birth; still, there are several things which we may learn about him and thereby bring more depth and color to the story of Jesus’ birth and early life.

Joseph did not physically beget Jesus, yet he was used of God to provide a husband for Mary and to act as a foster father for Jesus when He came to this world and took on flesh. As we look into the Scriptures for further information about him, we discover at least six things: Joseph was an upright man. He was a considerate husband. He was obedient to the Lord. He led his family in worshipping the Lord. He was a protector of his family, and he was a caring father.

#1—As we read in Matthew 1:18–19, we find that *Joseph was an upright man*. His place as a foster father and the fact we have no record of his words sometimes lets him fade into the background, but we can be sure that the Lord well knew the character of the man He called to care for Mary and Jesus, and that His Divine providence brought them together. Consider that Joseph and Mary seemed to have lived in the same community; when we compare Luke 1:26 with Luke 2:4, we find they both lived in Nazareth, even though Joseph may have first been born in Bethlehem.

Matthew 1:19–20 refers to Joseph as Mary’s “husband” (and she as his “wife”), even though they were espoused—their marriage

not yet having been consummated. How well we know the story, as an angel told Mary that she would give birth to a child, not by normal physical means, but by the overwhelming of the Holy Spirit. Can you imagine how difficult this situation must have been for them, looking forward to their wedding day, and now Mary had to tell Joseph that she was expecting a child, even though she had not been with another man?

#2—Matthew 1:20–23 shows us that *Joseph was a Considerate Husband*. Though Mary went away to her cousin Elizabeth's home in Judea for the first three months after the angel's announcement, she returned to Nazareth and had to tell Joseph of her condition. How difficult must it have been for him as well to hear such a story from the one he loved and considered to be honest and blameless! For wondering at her story, we cannot condemn him, for in all of time past, such a thing had never happened; and yet what inspiration we can take as we see Joseph's love and compassion in his refusal to condemn her to the Law for what must have seemed to be not only an obvious act of infidelity on her part, but an insult and disgrace against him as well!

The Scriptures call him a "just" (or a "righteous") man, and we learn that he was willing to take his time in considering what to do, and it was during this time that the angel of the Lord came to

him in a dream to confirm the truth of Mary's story! How cruel Joseph could have been, having the opportunity to have Mary stoned, or at least divorced in disgrace, yet in his compassion and kindness, he dealt thoughtfully and gracefully with Mary, treating her gently; what a lesson and an example for every father and husband who reads the Christmas story to his family!

#3—Matthew 1:24–25 demonstrates that *Joseph was Obedient to the Lord*. At every step, we see Joseph seeking to follow the Lord, and instead of quietly putting her away, he did just as the angel of the Lord had commanded him: he went ahead and took Mary to be his wife regardless of what must have surely been the condemnation (or at least lack of understanding) from others, and "he called his name Jesus." To be sure, Joseph probably did not understand it all, yet he acted in faithful obedience to the word of God's messenger, trusting that the word given was true.

Are we willing to obey the teachings of God's Word as well, even when we may not always understand why God desires them of us? Faith in Christ (a real, saving faith) is validated by obedience to the will of our Heavenly Father, not merely by our words (Matthew 7:21); are we committed ahead of time to do the will of God as He reveals it to us in whatever situations He allows us to encounter?

Take note of Joseph's obedient example as he awoke from his dream revealing that Mary was expectant by the hand of the Lord—the implication is that he promptly went ahead and married her in spite of any misgivings or potential grief from others, giving her the protection of a husband, and to Jesus the dignity of a foster father.

#4—A few weeks after Jesus' circumcision and after Mary's forty days of purification were accomplished (per Leviticus 12:1–8), we see that *Joseph Led his Family in Worshipping the Lord*. Luke 2:22–40 records the story of how Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus up to the temple to present him to the Lord and to offer their sacrifice in keeping with the instructions of Exodus 13:1–2 and 11–16. We see the devotion of both Joseph and Mary toward the law of God in this account, as it was mentioned three times in verses 22–24 and again in verses 27 and 39; we also remember Luke's reference to Mary's devotion (1:38, 46–55), and as we read on in Luke's account, we see that they went to Jerusalem every year to celebrate the Passover (2:41–42).

#5—Some time after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem, Matthew 2:13–23 gives us another picture of Joseph, this time showing us that *Joseph was a Protector of his Family*. When Herod found out about the birth of Jesus from the Magi and sought to kill the newborn King, God spoke to Joseph in yet

another dream, warning him to take Mary and Jesus and flee into Egypt. Matthew 2:14 says “they departed by night,” under the cover of darkness, as Joseph once again obeyed the Word of the Lord, and discretely led his family away to the south for safety.

History also tells us that there were Jewish colonies among various Egyptian cities, a fact which would have given the fleeing family hope of finding a place of refuge and comfort; nevertheless, their journey likely involved more than one hundred miles through a desert wilderness with its extreme temperatures and even the potential for robbers and bandits. Many of our picture books often show Mary riding on a donkey, but the young family may well have made the trip on foot for the most part, traveling through landscape marked by hills and cliffs and deep valleys.

Imagine if they had fallen along a rocky path atop a ridge, or sickness might have come upon them, or the extremes of temperature might have threatened the tender young child! Or suppose that Joseph had delayed his obedience to the Word he was given, and Herod's men might have slain Jesus! And yet, God used Joseph, an upright, considerate, and obedient young man, as His instrument to protect the little family. Matthew 2:22 goes on to tell how Herod died, and after an angel appeared to Joseph for the third time, he

took Mary and Jesus and returned north to Galilee, settling back in the town of Nazareth. What a lesson that God will speak to those fathers who are willing to listen and obey His voice, and that He may use them in ways they might never have imagined!

#6—Finally, Luke 2:41–50 gives us the last record we have from the life of Joseph, the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus, showing us that *Joseph was a Caring Father*. Twelve years after Jesus' birth, we see the family going up to Jerusalem to attend the Passover once again; when the events were completed, the caravan of people began moving toward their homes in the towns and the countryside, and only after a couple of days on the road did Joseph and Mary discover that Jesus was missing!

When they determined that Jesus was not with the group, we read that Joseph and Mary retraced their steps to Jerusalem, where they found Jesus talking with the scribes in the Temple. Their surprise shows us two more things in this short look at the character of Joseph (and Mary). First, it demonstrates that Jesus had typically been obedient to His parents, even to the point that Joseph and Mary seemed to have had full confidence in His dependability, which would explain why they were now so seemingly confused that He had remained behind. Second, this suggests that

Jesus' childhood had been normal and natural, not having been marked by supernatural abilities or other strange events after His birth.

This account at the end of Luke 2 concludes without any mention in the Scriptures of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the man who was called by God to be the foster father of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Though he is not mentioned by name when they found Jesus, Mary told Jesus (Luke 2:48) that she and His "father" had been looking for Him anxiously. He may not have received much mention in the Scriptures and there may be few carols extolling his deeds, yet Joseph offers a godly example to every husband and father, for he was an upright man, he was a considerate husband, he was obedient to the Lord. He led his family in worshipping the Lord, he was a protector of his family, and he was a caring father. Had he not been these things, the Lord would surely have raised up another. Yet because he chose to pursue the things of God, Joseph had the privilege and blessing to be an integral part of the work of God in bringing salvation to men through the life of Jesus Christ, and we have the opportunity to learn from his example!

Rise up, O men of God!

Christian Filbrun

BAAL WORSHIP AND ROCK MUSIC

(This writing was first published in The Vindicator in the year 2000 and is being submitted again by the author for our day.)

Having a burden on my heart for a good while, I am going to attempt to examine the subjects listed in the title. I want to be clear as I start. I do not feel that rock music is Baal worship as Baal worship was historically practiced. However, I do believe the same *spirit* drives rock music that drove Baal worship. Jesus had this to say, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn. 8:44). We can see from this that all falsehood and deception come from one source, Satan and his angels. I trust that an alarm can be sounded on these pages for the good of our souls.

As a little background on the history of Baal, our reading has shown that Baal can be traced to Nimrod, the “mighty hunter” who appeared shortly after men began to multiply after The Flood. He was the founder of the kingdom of Babel, or Babylon, as we know it (Gen. 10:8). His kingdom included eight cities eventually, one of which we are familiar with, which

is Nineveh. Nimrod became a great man in the world. “And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the Mighty hunter before the LORD” (Gen. 10:8–9). But all was not well with Nimrod. The Hebrew translation of *mighty* in verse 8 is “tyrant”; and the name *Nimrod* means “rebellion.” Also, in the phrase “before the LORD” one of the Hebrew words meaning *against* is translated “before.”

So the picture we can draw about Nimrod is something like this. “Nimrod a tyrant in the earth; Nimrod the rebellious; Nimrod the tyrant hunter against the LORD.” I realize that translation can be an inexact science and sometimes we are not sure about all that we read. But if we consider that the city of Nineveh was founded by Nimrod’s kingdom of Babylon, and that the tower of Babel was built by the subjects of the kingdom of Babylon, I feel we can agree that all was not well with Nimrod before God.

History further tells us that Nimrod was a religious leader, a priest of a devilish and heathenistic mystery religion. After Nimrod’s death, his wife, Queen Semiramis, claimed that he was now the sun-god. Semiramis later gave birth to an illegitimate son named “Tammuz” (see Ezekiel 8:14), whom she claimed was Nimrod reborn. She also claimed that Tammuz was super-

naturally conceived, and a system of "Mother-of-God and her child" worship began, whose implications can be easily enlarged on by the understanding mind.

We must leave that avenue of thought and continue with Nimrod, or Baal, as the sun-god was called. Fire was considered his earthly representation. Candles and ritual fires were burned in Baal's honor. Nimrod was also symbolized by sun symbols. This idolatrous system spread to all the nations as men were scattered from the tower of Babel. Names of idols changed from language to language, and also some of the rituals. But Scripture and history do testify that truly Babylon was the Mother of "Mystery," idolatry in all of its forms.

As the "Mother and Child" worship became established, the "Mother" became the wife of Baal and was worshiped as the goddess of fertility. She had different names in different nations, but the Old Testament refers to her as Ashtoreth, or queen of heaven. It appears that Baal worship always included the worship of Ashtoreth. "And they forsook the LORD and served Baal and Ashtoreth" (Jud. 2:13).

Now what was it about this Baal worship that was so ensnaring to the Israelites, who knew the truth of God? I think a common misconception is that idol worship was a passive thing. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Baal

worship was a very active religion, to which its devotees sold out, spiritually and bodily. Baal was very pervasive throughout the ancient world in one form or another. Abraham and all of the patriarchal age would have no doubt been intimately familiar with it. The worship of Baal primarily appealed to the senses of the body and the imaginations of the ungodly mind. The "high places" or "groves" we read about in the Old Testament were the places of worship and sacrifice to Baal and Ashtoreth. I will try to be discreet as we examine the acts of Baal worship. These high places had living quarters for the priests and priestesses, who were no more than male and female prostitutes, serving in the lewd rituals of Baal. They were available to the community, which usually was filled with Baal worshippers.

It is to be understood that the immoral conduct of the worshippers was a great and gross indulgence of sin, and not necessarily in private but rather to the contrary. This activity would be exalted by the burning of incense and fires, and by singing or chanting, drumming, and music of some sort, to work the people into a frenzy. We know of no pagan religions, be it Africa's jungle worship, or the American Indians, who do not use driving, hypnotizing music at the height of their sacred ceremonies. Do we remember the signal to worship the image of gold that

Nebuchadnezzar had made, was music?

The priests of Baal were also the offerers of sacrifice. They were murderers of babies; many old sites of “high places” are surrounded by burial jars of infant remains from this very thing. Firstborn were also sacrificed and buried in the foundations of houses for good luck. Horror of horrors! —a goddess, self-centered religion that offered as a sacrifice the very product of its lustful rituals in request for blessing and protection from a dumb idol who could hear nothing, see nothing, do nothing. We read about a similar idol in the Old Testament called Moloch, the fire god. The Tammuz we read about earlier had a meaning of a name as follows: perfect (*tam-*) by burning (*-muz*). The idol Moloch required sacrifice by burning and so babies were placed into the outstretched arms of the idol and into the fire-pit inside the idol, while drums pounded, and priests chanted to drown out the screams.

I realize this is distasteful and gruesome, but we need to realize that the devil that Jesus described in John 8:44 is still among men and he has never changed his intent. Read II Kings 21 through 23 for a very good insight into the struggles of Israel with Baal, Moloch, and the other idols of their neighbors. Actually, you can follow this all through the books of I and II Kings. The first four chapters of

Hosea deal with the subject, as do many other Scriptures.

Is it any wonder God commanded Israel to utterly destroy man, woman, and child as they possessed Canaan? He told them to do so lest they be tempted to “go a whoring after their gods.” Is it any wonder that Elijah slew the prophets of Baal, four-hundred-fifty of them? Is it any wonder that Israel was taken into captivity in Babylon? I believe much of the bloodshed we read about, in the Old Testament is more understandable when we realize the idolatrous conditions that prevailed in that age.

Now what does all of this have to do with rock music? First of all we should realize that music is one of the most powerful influences on the emotions, above nearly anything else. The Bible teaches us about the good uses of music, as in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We are all familiar with these. We also will find that not all music is pleasing to God. “Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols” (Amos 5:23). “That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick...” (Amos 6:5). Amos 6 begins with, “Woe to them...” Read the context of these few verses and you will find more of the reason for God’s displeasure, some of which has to do with “Moloch and Chiun your images” (5:26). “As he

that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart" (Prov. 25:20). These Scriptures do not really tell us a lot specifically, but I feel that if we study the context and think on the statements, we can find a thought something like this: Song and music can be used to drown out conscience or to forget reality. Music can increase slothfulness and gluttony or drunkenness.

Instrumental music has been around the world ever since soon after man was driven from the garden of Eden. In Genesis 4:21, we find, "And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." I feel that we can safely assert that the greatest excesses of idolatry and rock music would scarcely be possible with only vocal singing. In Ezekiel 28, we find a description that is commonly believed to be Satan's qualities as an anointed cherub. The last part of verse 13 says, "...the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created." Pipes and tabrets are musical instruments. Satan was equipped to make wonderful music to God among the angels, but he was cast out and is now "the prince of the power of the air." As he perverts everything he touches, we should

never doubt his ability to pervert the role of music in the world. I want to say that I do not believe that all instrumental music or entertaining music is satanic, but I believe the line between safety and satanic influence, and even possession, is very murky and stepped over, in the realm of instrumental or entertaining music. The modern technology of radio and electronics has allowed men to produce extremely complex, loud, hard-driving rock music that captivates the mind and souls of much of society. In the southern areas of this country, the older generations said that the fiddle was the devil's instrument.

As to comparison with today's rock music (and I will include country western and jazz), comparisons to Baal worship pop up to me every time I get to thinking about this. First of all, *rebellion*. No rebellion, no rock music. Rebellion is and always has been the driving force behind it. *Immortality*—the life of sin led and practiced, promoted, and sung about doesn't shock people as it once did, but I believe it is still a great factor in stealing the hearts and minds of the young. *Occult*—witchcraft activity is rampant among entertainers as evidenced by names of bands and songs. *Universal appeal and acceptance*—have you been on hold lately on the telephone? Rock music. In the stores, rock music; on the job site,

rock music; the traffic jam, rock music; and, sad to say, at many churches, rock music. For Christians, I say, "No way!" Little children start and it is with them all the way through life. We live in a society that is saturated with messages of Satan being pounded home by thousands of screaming guitars and pounding drums and the "people love to have it so." Also, *the shedding of innocent blood*—how many unborn lives have been sacrificed to hide the results of unbridled passion and lusts excited by the hard-driving, mind-numbing music of a rock concert or an ungodly party?

I started this writing by stating that I believe the same *spirit* that drove Baal worship is driving rock music. This spirit will manifest itself by its fruit, as we can surely see. Rock music is not just a passive thing, nor only a noisy nuisance. It is a real snare of the devil. Those of us who have felt its power can testify that it can be addictive and dangerous. What spirit but Satan's would cause a person to appear indecently before thousands and thousands of people? To scream and sing obscenities over the microphone and incite people to be immodest? People intoxicated and overwrought collapse and are trampled into the ground. Such is the spirit of rock music.

Another thing I have noticed, and that I believe is very satanic,

is all of the tattoos we see on people, dedicated to the worship of rock music. Also the earrings, nose rings, and so forth. "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:28).

I appeal to us all to somehow be able to open our eyes and be aware of the reality of Satan's devices. I am weak and I still find that old spark of passion and desire to rock-and-roll well up within sometimes when I hear a song from the distant past. But thanks be unto God I can truly say I am forgetting more and more as the years go by. For this I am truly thankful. As the children among us move out into young folks and the world, they have many opportunities to become acquainted with the devil's music. And I do not have the answer for all of this. Some parents have been able to persuade their children to not expose themselves to radio and other media. This is commendable, especially for the child who would abide by this. Their soul will surely be spared a thousand snares. Let's not fail to make our children aware of the danger, for there is a trinity of evil that pervades much of the modern world's entertainment. That trinity is often referred to in this manner: *drugs, lust and rock and roll*.

I would like to re-emphasize that I do not limit my concern to only what could strictly be called rock music, or hard rock, but to all music promoted by the entertainment industry, for Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” and “the god of this world.”

In closing, I offer you, “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).

*Songs of praise the angels sang,
Heav'n with hallelujahs rang,
When Jehovah's work begun,
When he spake, and it was done.*

*Songs of praise awoke the morn,
When the Prince of Peace was born,
Songs of praise arose when He
Captive led captivity.*

*And shall man alone be dumb.
Till that glorious kingdom come?
No, the church delights to raise
Psalms and hymns, and songs of praise.*

*Saints below with heart and voice
Still in songs of praise rejoice,
Learning here by faith and love
Songs of praise to sing above.*

*Borne upon the latest breath,
Songs of praise shall conquer death:
Then amidst eternal joy,
Songs of praise their powers employ!*

—Hymn 93

Galen Mohler

JOHN 3:16 THE GREATEST VERSE

For God	the Greatest Person
So loved	the Greatest Emotion
The world	the Greatest Company
That He Gave.....	the Greatest Act
His Only Begotten Son.....	the Greatest Gift
That Whosoever.....	the Greatest Opportunity
Believeth	the Greatest Simplicity
In Him	the Greatest Attraction
Should Not Perish	the Greatest Promise
But.....	the Greatest Difference
Have	the Greatest Certainty
Everlasting Life	the Greatest Possession

Author Unknown

Selected by Norma Rapp

MEDITATIONS

Peace is not absence of conflict. It is the presence of the Prince of Peace.
The last thought on falling asleep is likely the first on awakening.
Never tear down fences until you know why they were built.
Now is the end of the past and the beginning of the future.
Most of us gave our parents ample reason to pray.
The future is as bright as the promises of God.
Happy New Year! Precious blessing.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

This section offers some questions to think about, or for Sunday afternoon discussions, or to prompt future articles from our readers, etc. Readers are encouraged to offer questions.

A new year is upon us. Will it be different from the old year? What will make our resolve and commitment and spiritual strength different than it has been in the past? As we remember specific instructions in the Scriptures, we must ask ourselves some hard questions:

1. Am I trusting in the Lord? Or am I leaning to my own understanding?	my ways, so that He can direct my paths? (Prov. 3:5–6)
2. Am I acknowledging Him in all	3. Am I fervent in spirit? (Rom. 12:11)
	4. Am I praying without ceasing?
	5. Am I giving thanks in everything?
	6. Am I seeking first the kingdom?
	7. Am I hungering and thirsting after righteousness? (Matt. 5:6)
	8. Am I doing unto others as I would have them do unto me?
	9. So, will this be a different year?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Nov. 27, 2021; Morning Star, OH
Layna Brubaker
Dec. 1, 2021; Morning Star, OH
Alexander Mohler

Apr. 2, 2022 Fall Creek, IN
Apr. 16, 2022 Modesto, CA
Apr. 23, 2022 Cascade Valley, WA
Apr. 23, 2022 Sugar Grove, OH
May 14, 2022 Shiloh, OH

COMMISSIONS

Nov. 5, 2021; Shiloh, OH
Trent Eikenberry (with wife Holly)
Ordained to the Eldership

2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

After two years of cancelling our Annual Conference due to complications from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Northwest Districts are again planning for a conference in 2022. Due to being unable to secure a commitment from a location in the West, the Annual Conference will be held, the Lord willing, on May 28–31, 2022, at Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio.

On behalf of the 2022 Committee of Arrangements,

Eric Meador, Secretary

COMMUNION NOTICES

Jan. 22, 2022..... Olive Branch, OH
Feb. 5, 2022..... Living Epistle, NM
Feb. 5, 2022..... Pine Grove, FL
Feb. 26, 2022..... West Manchester, IN
Feb. 26, 2022..... West Modesto, CA
Mar. 5, 2022..... Morning Star, OH
Mar. 26, 2022..... Dallas, OR
Mar. 26, 2022..... Fair Haven, KS
Apr. 2, 2022 Mt. Zion, PA

POEMS

COMMUNION

In Thy holy presence, Father, the world is bright and new,
The hills seem made of velvet; the sky a brighter blue;
Fragrant are the flowers, and brilliant is the sun,
And precious is the union, of my heart joined with Thine.

I come humbly before Thee, prostrate, upon my face,
To plead for Thy forgiveness, a measure of Thy grace;
Renew my falt'ring spirit, and cleanse my heart again,
Remind me of Thy mercy, and give me strength to stand.

My hands, use for Thy bidding, Thy holy will to do,
My lips to speak for Jesus, so others'd love Him, too;
Please guide my steps t'ward Heaven, upon the narrow road,
To run the race with patience, that He, before me trod.

My heart, dear Lord, needs softened, reminded of Thy care,
Eyes made to see Thy will, for me to serve Thee here;
My will bent to Thine, Father, I know that Thou wilt bless,
And hold my heart and hand, with careful tenderness.

Teach me, please, dear Father, just how to be content,
Appreciate each moment, which Thou hast to me lent;
And never take for granted, Thy blessings rich and free,
Or the dearest loved ones that Thou hast given me.

This life was meant for sharing, and not to spend alone;
Father, you've made another, for me to call my own;
I've given my heart to Him, with joy and willingness,
Please help me to live faithful, and never love Him less.

That Thou wouldst guide me, Father, and keep me in Thy way,
Oh, give me Thine instruction; be Thou my Head and Stay;
Please help me to serve others, Thy holy name to bless,
That we might serve together, in truth and righteousness.

My Father, up in Glory, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy will be done in Heaven, here it shall be the same;
Help make my heart Thy haven; my face turned t'ward Thy throne;
I ask Thee now, dear Father, to guide me safely home!

Nicole Jamison

A HYMN BY JOHANN NAAS

*(Naas (1670–1741) was one of the
first ministers of the Brethren and
ministered both in Germany and
North America)*

One thing there is that grieves me much,
And on the earth my heart doth touch:
So few have yet been saved!
Do we not care as they pass by,
As to Destruction's end they fly
And to a hopeless grave?

Alas! How many fearless go
And careless leave this life below
From every rank of men?
Some few do enter into life
But numberless are those outside!
What cause should bring their end?

So simply comes the answer now;
In envy men live for the hour,
And do not to live for God!
Their lusts and follies they pursue
As if they somehow never knew
The narrow road to trod.

What vanity that we can see,
And pride as men now strive to be
On earth so greatly known!
Where pride increases every day,
And earthly honors deck their name,
To Heaven men cannot go!

*Adapted to Common Peculiar
Meter for singing in English by:*

Christian Filbrun

**I KNOW SOMETHING GOOD
ABOUT YOU**

Wouldn't this old world be better
If folks we meet would say,
"I know something good about you."
And treat them just that way?

Wouldn't it be fine and dandy
If each handclasp warm and true,
Carried with it the assurance,
"I know something good about you."

Wouldn't things be more pleasant
If the good that's in us all,
Were the only things about us
That folks bothered to recall?

Wouldn't life be lots more happy
If we would praise the good we see:
For there is such a lot of goodness
In the worst of you and me.

Wouldn't it be nice to practice
That fine way of thinking too?
You know something good about me,
I know something good about you?

Louis C. Shimon (1935)

Selected by

Harold and Mae Gish

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Happy New Year, precious blessing!
To our Maker be it spent,
Love Him better, give Him glory
For the time He to us lent.

#336

OBITUARIES

SWITZER — David Vernon was born January 28, 1930, to Charles and Pernia (Root) Switzer at Watford, California.

In the early morning of October 18, 2021, his spirit took its flight, completing a lifespan of over ninety-one years.

Growing up in his country home, Dad enjoyed collecting birds and small animals, pedaling around the countryside in search of anything new. Living near the Tuolumne River, he spent many hours catching salmon. He had many interesting stories from his youth, of which the family never tired of listening to.

At age seventeen he came under conviction of the Holy Spirit and with nine other young men was baptized on June 29, 1947, becoming a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church in the Modesto District. He was steadfast in his commitment of faith in our Savior Jesus Christ all his life.

Dad again made a life commitment when he chose Sarah Lee Bowman for his wife. They were married May 14, 1949, and enjoyed their lives together for more than seventy years. The warm hospitality of their home was shared and enjoyed by many as the years went by.

Our father earned his living by building custom homes in the Modesto area. For many years he partnered with his brother Fred. Their quality work and desire to build each customer their dream home left many lasting friendships in the community.

Dad and Mother lived in the Modesto district during their early years. As the city of Modesto grew around them, they built a new home east of Empire and became members of the Tuolumne district in 1971.

Dad had a love of beauty which was reflected in all the colorful flowers surrounding his home. He enjoyed collecting old tools, egg-beaters, rocks, and many other things.

On November 30, 2019, Mother was quickly called home. Dad desired to stay in his own home, and health challenges required that he have assistance. He employed Sister Mary Ann Barton who faithfully and lovingly took care of him until his passing. Two days before his last trip to the hospital he asked for the anointing service, committing himself to the will of the Lord.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Sarah Lee; his parents, Charles and Pernia Switzer; parents-in-law, Orville and Margaret Bowman; a granddaughter, Sarah Landes; sister, Doris Byfield and her husband Paul; brothers, Kenneth and wives, Clarice and Donna, Fred and wife Neva; sisters-in-law, Audrey Switzer, Doris Meador, and Susan Bowman.

Our father is survived by his daughters, Rhonda Landes and husband Daryl, Leah Miller and her husband Paul, Donna Bauman and her husband Russel, Sandra Wray and her husband Everett; seventeen grandchildren, fifty-eight great-grandchildren, and

two great-great-grandchildren; a brother, Charles Switzer; a sister, Sharon Lifton and husband Doyle; and in-laws, Barbara Switzer, Dallas Meador, Ben and Mary Jane Root; along with many nephews, nieces and many friends.

We children will be forever grateful for the example his life portrayed, his faith in God, his peace with all men, and the lovingkindness he felt for all of us. It indeed was a privilege to call him Dad.

A funeral service was held October 25 in the Tuolumne meeting-house conducted by the home brethren. Burial followed in the Wood Colony Cemetery with closing remarks given from his grandson, Curtis Wray.

The Family

MILLER — Hubert Earl was born at Whittier, California on April 9, 1921, to Lloyd Orion and Rhoda Belle (Rumble) Miller. He was their second son of four boys and was a native son of California. He attended Los Nietos grammar school and graduated from Whittier High School. On June 15, 1937, he accepted the Lord and was baptized along with six other young people by Uncle Esta Kreider. This was in the New River District of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church at Whittier.

On June 27, 1941, he was married to Mildred Ellen Root in Empire, California, by his Uncle Hubert Rumble. This marriage was blessed with seven children and 80 years together. They made their home at Whittier where he farmed

oranges, peaches and avocados with his father and two brothers, Aaron and Harold. As town was coming closer and crowding out the farming they made the decision to move to Modesto where he continued to be in the farming business with his brothers. Over his lifetime he farmed peaches, almonds, walnuts, grapes, rice and was involved in sheep husbandry. Over the years he served on several farm related boards.

He was a charter member of the Tuolumne church district near Empire and a charter member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, New Conference.

He was anointed at the same time as our Mother in May 2016 when she was in the hospital.

He enjoyed camping and fishing at Herring Creek with his family, hiking, running, abalone diving at Tomales Bay, several trips to New England and some international travel. Searching out and including antiques for his many collections, growing roses, the trips he took to the nursery where he would fill up the back of the pickup with blooming plants and flowers were things he enjoyed. In his retirement years he did woodworking and shared his creations (birdhouses and little tables) with his children. In his later years he loved to read stories about the western movement and north-west mountain men. His last few years were enriched by listening to sermons.

He was pleased with and enjoyed his one hundredth birthday party on April 10, 2021, attended by his multitude of offspring and his nieces and nephews. It was a beautiful day for a bar-b-que and

picture taking time together.

He went into the presence of his Savior on October 29, 2021, having lived 100 years, 6 months and 20 days.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Lloyd and Rhoda Miller; infant brother, Carl David Miller; brother, Aaron Miller; brother, Harold Miller; daughter-in-law, Karen Miller; granddaughter, Corrie (Miller) Bauman; great-grandson, Josiah Wren Brubaker; and stepmother, Anna Miller.

Left here to remember and praise God for the memories that we enjoy are his wife, Mildred; seven children, Esther and husband Alfred Huffman, Robert and wife Shirley, John and wife Mary, Paul and wife Leah of Washington, Marilyn and husband Garey Boone of Virginia, Sue and husband Leland Jamison, and Richard and wife Dawn; twenty-eight grandchildren; eighty-one great-grandchildren; and fourteen great-great-grandchildren; one brother-

in-law, Ben Root; stepsister-in-law, Clara Meador; many nieces and nephews, cousins, brothers and sisters in Christ and friends.

Our special thanks go to the wonderful group of caretakers who made it possible for our parents to continue living in their own home together.

We thank our Heavenly Father for our many years of time spent with our father and God's grace and mercy to all of us.

Services were held November 7, 2021, in the Modesto District meeting house by two of his grandsons. His body was laid to rest at the Wood Colony Cemetery between his two brothers, Aaron and Harold Miller after words of remembrance by three more of his grandsons. We look forward to the day in the near future when we, along with him, will praise and glorify our Lord and God in His heaven and around His throne together.

The Family

Terms

Subscriptions should be made through the congregational contact or through *The Testimony* office. Subscription price is \$20.00 per year. New subscriptions should be paid (prorated) through the remainder of the current year. All renewals begin at the first of the calendar year. Newly married and those unable to pay for a subscription may receive a free subscription through the agent of their local congregation.

Contributors

Authors of essays, devotionals, poems, etc. are asked to review the Statement of Purpose on the back page of this periodical. Articles should

be based on Scripture. References are appreciated. Shorter focused articles are more desirable than articles that move from one topic to another. Selected material will be considered. Original writings are preferred. It is recommended that writers submit themselves to the Spirit, which reveals the will of God to the Church in every age, according to the varied needs and circumstances.

Written articles should be legible. Typed material is preferred and should be double-spaced. Electronic transmission or CD will be accepted. The author's name and address must be included on all material. An attempt will be made to contact the author of articles that are not accepted.

Old German Baptist Brethren
Church—New Conference

THE TESTIMONY

353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102

The Testimony is a Christian publication intended for those who desire nourishment in their spiritual walk, and for writers who wish to express witness to the Truth of the Gospel as experienced in their own lives. It holds the Holy Scriptures to be its only Creed. Its purpose is to bear witness to the Truth of God's Word as it is applied in the daily life of committed Christians. It supports the anabaptist and pietist foundations of the Brethren of Schwarzenau, Germany (1708) including the biblical principle of the community of believers bound by a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus confirmed by adult immersion baptism (Mark 16:16). It strives to promote a life of true living piety among all who confess Jesus as their Lord. It seeks to restore and

maintain a fellowship of true primitive Christianity through the communication of all good things.

Send all communication to:

The Testimony
353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102
Phone: (937) 604-9464
thetestimony@emypeople.net

The Testimony Committee

Roger Rapp
Lowell Miller, Editor
Dean Kinsley
Gary Peters
Larry Bower

Associate Editors

Marcus Miller
Darryl Filbrun