

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

THE TESTIMONY

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

— VERSE OF THE MONTH —

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:7

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LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand,
Ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords in human vesture, in the body and the blood,
He will give to all the faithful His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank, the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of lights descendeth from the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanquish as the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six winged seraph; Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord most High!"

— Gerald Moultrie, 1864

Hymn #202 in *Hymns For The Church*

THE TESTIMONY

CONTENTS

FRONT COVER	1
LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE.....	1
EDITORIAL	3
AND SHALL WE DOUBT HIS CARE?	3
SEASONAL	4
THE GLORY OF THE LORD	4
THE WONDER OF SWADDLING CLOTHES	7
'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME.....	8
GENERAL	10
THE FAMILY	10
BIBLICAL BEHAVIOR (PART 11)	11
THE AMPLIFIED VISIT!	12
THE BOOK OF BOOKS	16
LIFE AS A MIRROR.....	16
MEDITATIONS	18
QUESTIONS TO PONDER	18
GENERAL ITEMS	19
POEMS	1, 18, 19, 20
OBITUARIES	21
THE 2024 INDEX	25



**“For God sent not
his Son into the
world to condemn
the world; but that
the world through
him might be
saved.”**

John 3:17

EDITORIAL

AND SHALL WE DOUBT
HIS CARE?

In I Peter 5:7 there is a small but profound statement given to the New Testament saints. In the context of exhorting us all (elders and others) toward humility and toward casting our cares upon the Lord, he adds this little gem about our Lord and Savior: *"He careth for you."*

We know the story well of the coming of Jesus as a Babe in Bethlehem. We celebrate it in song and special services. We show the picture books to our children, and they take special notice of the little Baby in the manger. We speak of the angels and of the shepherds, and of the glory of the Lord that shone round about. We tell the story over and over again.

But, shall we then doubt His care for our bodies and souls and lives?

The thought of His care is so rich! What comfort can be drawn from the knowledge that all that He has done in redemption has been done because of His great care for us!

The writer to the book of Hebrews gives us a special description of what took place when the Lord Jesus came down to seek us and to save us. And when we read this writing, we must always remember that this is the One who was the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Per-

son, and who upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). This is God who is manifest in the flesh for us all!

WHY DID HE DO THIS?

GOD, who is self-sufficient in every way, and who is all-powerful and all-knowing, and who holds the universe in place, had pity on His created beings and loved them. He took an interest in their redemption and salvation after their miserable failure and lack of loyalty to Him! He cared for them! He wanted to adopt them all as His children and bring them into glory!

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." (I John 3:1).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The Bible is very clear upon this point! In very plain and concise language, the apostle Paul says this in Romans 8:32: ***"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"*** In other words, if God went so far as to send His own Son as a babe in a manger, to be delivered to the cross for us all, then we can know that He will give us all of the rest of His promises in full measure!

So shall we question His love for us, and shall we doubt His care?

Lowell Miller

SEASONAL

THE GLORY OF THE LORD

In Luke 2:9 we read, “And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.”

I have never seen an angel. I have been in the room when angels were present and were seen. And I have heard people relate having seen angels. But I have never seen an angel myself—unless it was unawares.

In my experience, of those who have seen angel-messengers, those people did not seem to be afraid. Those angels brought a message of peace. Even though the message was of peace, it was different when angels appeared to some poor shepherds one night on the hills of Judea, outside Bethlehem-Ephrata.

Sometimes angel-messengers come in peace. Sometimes they come to disturb. The shepherds outside Bethlehem were first terrified, but then assured that the message was one of peace. Perhaps it was the sudden great light in the middle of the night that made them afraid. But the message soon calmed their fears when the angel said, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

That was not an ordinary light. That great light was the Glory of the Lord.

A Pharisee named Saul was once traveling from Jerusalem down to the city of Damascus accompanied by several men, probably armed. He was probably walking those 185 miles rather than riding a horse or donkey, for as they continued the journey “...they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.” But as they went, suddenly at about noon day the travelers saw a great light. In addition to the light, Saul heard a voice which he immediately recognized as the Lord. Saul did not see an angel-messenger because the Glory was so great that it blinded him, leaving him with scales on his eyes. All the men dropped in reverential fear with their faces to the ground before the Glory of the Lord. In Acts 26:14 Paul later recounts, “And when we were all fallen to the earth...” In Acts 22:9 Paul says the men with him, “saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.” That is why you may not see the angels that your departing loved ones see in the room.

The Glory of the Lord was first mentioned at Creation (Gen. 1) when the Light shone out of darkness even before the beginning of the first day. Then it appeared in the Old Bible in Exodus 16 and 22 when God came down to speak to Moses on Sinai, and again in Exodus 40 when the Glory of the Lord

filled the tent of worship in the wilderness. The physical presence of the Glory of the Lord is sometimes called Shekinah although that word is not in the Bible. But the Glory of the Lord is light, a light that Saul could not resist. A light that neither Moses nor the people could look upon in olden times.

Although God Jehovah is everywhere—omnipresent—His full glory has broken through upon



man only on very special occasions. It appeared to Moses where God said, “My Glory shall pass by you, but you shall not see my face.” There God said, “I will show you my goodness, and my grace, and my mercy. But you shall not look full on the glory of my face.” Not and live—not and live in the flesh. Men have seen the Glory of the Lord, but men have never seen the fullness of His glorious face. Maybe in heaven, but by then the scales shall have fallen from our blinded eyes.

Another time the Glory of the

Lord appeared is recorded in Matthew 17 where Jesus was transfigured—changed, transformed—before Peter, James, and John, “and his raiment was white as the light.” That was a time when messengers of Jehovah broke through the barrier between the Spiritual and the Physical—as usual, accompanied by Great Light.

There are other examples of God appearing in His full Glory to men. In addition to His appearance as fire on Sinai, in the Tabernacle, and later in the Temple, and at the Transfiguration, there was the burning bush seen by Moses in Exodus 3; the presence of Jehovah between the wings of the cherubim above the Mercy Seat; the vision to Isaiah in chapter 6 where the whole earth was filled with the Glory of the Lord; to a vision of Ezekiel in chapter 1 where he saw “...the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD,” and to John the Revelator in chapters 4 and 5. There may be other examples, but right now we want to focus on the appearance to the shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem. That might be the most important appearance of all.

It was an unpretentious appearance when God revealed Himself to mankind through Jesus Christ. Born to a young girl from far north Nazareth, who gave birth in a village of Judea, even in Bethlehem, an insignificant village which was “little among the thousands of Judah.” The Glory appearance was to a few lowly shepherds who tended

sheep, perhaps on the same hills as the lad David did when he “went and returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.”

The Glory of eternity shown on those hills, even the Glory of the Lord. And the rays of that intense, extreme, overpowering light of Glory shines yet in the hearts of men and women today. John writes in 8:12, “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

Saul who became Paul after seeing God’s Glory on the Damascus road, wrote in II Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

The disciple John was on the Mount at the Transfiguration of which Luke wrote in 9:29, “...as he [Jesus] prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.” Later that same John foresaw that same glory-light on Patmos of which he wrote in the Revelation 21:23, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

When we hear read the story of the birth of Jesus—the physical manifestation of God among

men—let us remember that, from time to time, God sends angel-messengers, sometimes accompanied by the exceeding great Light of His Glory. But now His Spirit abides in us, for Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, “Ye are the light of the world.”

Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:8, “For ye were sometimes [one time] darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” Peter wrote in his first letter 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

Here is a sobering thought: If we look into a mirror, or if others see us on the street, or elsewhere, we should appear in His image and we should reflect the Glory of the Lord in our face—if we have been changed from carnal to Spiritual beings. Paul writes in II Corinthians 3:18 “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

This Christmas season—and all the year—may we reflect that Glory of the Lord which shone in all its fullness one night on the peaceful hills of Bethlehem.

Marcus Miller

THE WONDER OF SWADDLING CLOTHES

Swaddling a baby is an old practice to keep the baby warm and wrapped tight but comfortable.

In our day of central heating it is not as vital as it was in the day of a fire on the hearth.

Today there might be a special blanket made for the new little one, but when Jesus was born that long ago night Joseph and Mary may have reached for the nearest available thing, little knowing the connection. Our hindsight makes us think that they were all prepared to deliver a baby because we read "And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered" (Luke 2:6). While we read this from God's eyes, Joseph and Mary really had no idea when she would deliver and it is entirely possible that they had no way of knowing the approximate date of 40 weeks. Had they thought of the prophecy concerning the arrival of the Messiah they would have been prepared to deliver at Bethlehem of Ephrata.

Priestly garments were not thrown away when they wore out. Remember, there were no looms to mechanically weave this cloth. It was done by hand and they were made of fine linen. When they wore out they were torn in strips, braided together, and used as wicks in the four very large menorahs which lit up Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. They were also used to swaddle, especially lambs after birth. Shepherds

around Bethlehem would have kept a supply of these cloths, in where else but the stable, to swaddle the lambs in this area where sheep were raised specifically to provide sacrifice at the Temple.

So we have Immanuel, ("God with us," to tabernacle), also called Jesus (for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21), the Light of the World, the Bread of



Life, our Saviour, and Great High Priest, wrapped as a sacrificial lamb in priestly cloth used as wicks to lighten the City of David, born in the House of Bread, Bethlehem, of a Virgin, to parents of the lineage of Judah. We wonder if we can trust God? We wonder if He means what He says? Maybe we should just wonder from afar. Far down the ages the old, old story is still guiding us like a star to the Son of God.

We may want to be in the stable, but all we would have seen would have been a newborn babe, a promise not yet fulfilled. How thankful we should be for all we can see, the coming King of kings!

Rachel Brubaker

'Twas the Night Before Jesus Came

Back in the 1990s, I wrote an article with this selected poem included in it. It seems like in this day and age, we need to pass on words like these more than ever! So let's hear these words again:

'Twas the night before Jesus came, and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house,
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mom in her rocker with babe on her lap
Was humming a lullaby, while I took a nap.

While out of the East there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!

The light of His face made me cover my head,
It was JESUS! Returning just like He had said!
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the book of life which He held in His hand,
Was written the name of every saved man.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name,
When He said, "It's not here," my head hung in shame.

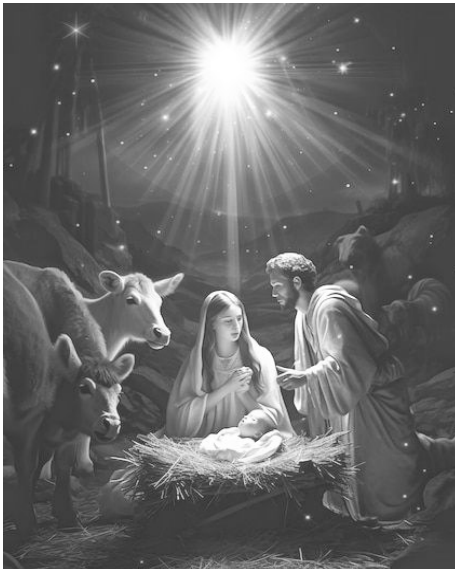
The people whose names had been written with love
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without sound
While all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late,
I had waited too long and had thus sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight,
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight!

In the words of this poem, the meaning is clear,
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There's only one life, and when comes the last call,
We'll find that the Bible was true after all!

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:11–16).

L. D. Flory



GENERAL

THE FAMILY

As the Fall and Winter holiday season approaches, there is a warm anticipation of being together with family. Perhaps for reconnecting with some that we aren't with so much otherwise but also just to relax with those we are comfortable with. For some though, there is a dread of this season.

This desire for nurturing, healthy families is not unique to the Church. This attraction is God's design and built into creation. We readily observe that "birds of a feather flock together" is a mark of this creation in the animal kingdom and is evident as the Father's ultimate purpose in His human creation. The triune God is the original family and existed eternally. They then created heavenly beings to expand this family. The image-bearing human family began with the creation of Adam and Eve. He gave them dominion over His animal and material creation as He dazzled them with the majesty of His handiwork. They were created in the image of God to complete this family. Like the angels, they were given free will. Like the fallen angels, they chose to rebel against God and resist His lordship. Because of this, sin entered into this creation and because of sin, death also.

Among the horror of this fall was man inventing his own idea of "good and evil." As such, man devised his own religion including perverse forms of worship.

Fractured families or dysfunctional relationships can open smoldering wounds. There is both a desire and reluctance to "get together" when these feelings have been lying dormant for a time. Feelings of abandonment and sadness at times permeates the air when there has been recent separation due to sickness or death. The holiday season carries its share of pain for some.

Further evidence of God's desire for a healthy family was His calling out of Abraham to be the Father of many nations. By choosing His descendants to be a people special to Him above all other peoples on earth, He was illustrating His passion for a human family submitted to His lordship. This family faltered by assimilating with enemies of God around them. In so doing, they evoked His judgment. Still His heart for this people and all peoples on the earth, never wavered. Through the prophets of Israel, He began to reveal His ultimate plan to redeem His human family by the atoning work of His Son on an old rugged cross. This family would include His Jewish brethren who received His Son by faith, as well as "whosoever will" from every

tongue and tribe and nation on earth. This family would make up His kingdom and be expressed on earth as His Church.

As we gather with our relatives this season and enjoy the "...social talk and evening fire..." (hymn 511) let us not sideline our Lord who is preparing our hearts for His ultimate family. May we look for ways to include those not raised in the blessing of godly homes that they might see a renewed sense of joy in Christ-centered families. May our Lord be the center of these festivities. Remember that "The Family" is His idea. With the Apostle Paul may we rejoice in that,

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:14–19).

What a day that will be!
In anticipation,

Stanley Boyd

BIBLICAL BEHAVIOR

Part 11

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15).

This is a continuation of a previous article. The purpose of this continued article is to provoke thoughts as to how we, as born-again believers, should behave. In doing so, it is not our intent to lose sight of the basis of behavior, which is belief. Belief dictates behavior. I offer the following axioms:

1. All behavior is based on a belief.
2. Lasting behavioral change always starts in the mid.
3. When people genuinely change, it's because their beliefs changed first.
4. Changing your behavior without changing your belief is not true change at all. This is why Paul says, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

As we mentioned before, the apostles used the word "conversation" to describe behavior. In the Greek it is the word *anastrophe* which means "behavior." *Anastrophe* is rooted in *anastrepho* which means to turn, or to turn oneself about. This implies the idea that godly behavior is a turning away from a direction you were once going, and going in a different direction. This is the essence of repentance—a change of

your mind and direction of your life—turning away from sin, self, and the world, and turning toward Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and heaven.

Because the Word of God is quick (living), we will, no doubt, only touch a fraction of the depth and meaning of the verses calling us to a godly behavior. The next verse we will consider is found in I Peter 2, verse 12.

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (I Pet. 2:12).

This is a call to honest behavior. In addition to this, Peter explains that this honest behavior must be obvious to others, since he says, “among the Gentiles” and, “which they shall behold.” Let’s look at both of these ideas.

The meaning of the word “honest” implies goodness, virtue, and value. Along with these attributes it also means to be beautiful and attractive. To paraphrase, Peter is saying our behavior should be honest and virtuous, which is winsome and appealing to others. In essence, it is an evangelistic tool. The latter part of the verse clarifies that ultimately God gets the glory. This type of behavior becomes a beacon of beauty that will serve as a testimony in the day when God judges all things. The honest, attractive lives of Christians will be shown to have impacted others for the glory of God.

There is a thought promoted by

many sincere individuals that the church should batten down the hatches, preserve, and overall just pull back from society. While there is wisdom in careful involvement, this verse clearly calls us to let our lives be on display. No doubt Peter is hearkening back to Jesus’ illustration about the candle and the bushel, 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.” Christians need to do all they can to promote the kingdom of God. As we interact with the world, may our behavior be honest, so that others will be drawn to the Lord, and God will be glorified!

Until next time, may your behavior be honest, and may it be on display for God’s glory.

Grant Fullmer

THE AMPLIFIED VISIT!

(Continued from the November issue)

Question #2: “Are you willing to receive and give counsel according to Gospel order?”

It is important that *receiving* is asked before *giving* regarding this. It is understood that if one is not willing to receive counsel, that one is not in condition to give counsel. Consider the question worded this way: *Are you willing to labor for an increase in holiness both in myself and in my brethren?*

• How do I receive counsel? Do I receive it with humility? Do I justify myself? Is there any other attitude that would hinder my ability to hear my brother? When king David heard Nathan the prophet, he was angry with the sin and the sinner; when confronted that it was he, he was humble and repentant. When others come to me do I look for the love they are bringing? It may not feel like love but as we listen, we will hear and feel it. There are times that the person coming to us is an older brother or sister, or even a peer. What if the one coming to you is someone younger than yourself? Am I willing to hear them? We read in Matthew 18, "...if thy brother shall trespass..." What if the one coming to me sees something that may lead me astray, or be a hinderance in my life, but not a "trespass"? Will I hear him?

• Am I willing to be vulnerable/open to those around me so that my heart is exposed? When others see and know my heart, they will be better equipped to engage me in the upward way.

• Is truth the focus of my thought life? Do I yearn for it, and do I call others to it? *"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end. I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love. Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word"* (Ps. 119:111–114).

• What is Gospel order? Consider the beam/mote (Matt. 7; Luke 6). Am I active in the process of sanctification? Am I continually working to be close to GOD, and thus, far from sin?

• Do I have regular intake of the WORD OF GOD—receiving counsel from the Word? How is my devotional life? *"Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counselors"* (Ps. 119:24).

• Do I desire growth in my life? And am I willing to go the distance to get there? *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit"* (Ps 51:7–12).

• Does the philosophy of men direct the angle from which I receive or give counsel? Have I searched the Scriptures for the basis of platform? (Col. 2:8, and Jas. 3:17)

• Do I pray for GOD'S direction before going to others?

• Do I go in love as I engage others? *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14).

• Do I have the mentality that I am right? Or am I teachable? Consider the question asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Was he wanting to be teachable or to justify himself?

• Am I being timely—not rushed, but not delayed? Always pray first and last! *“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing” (1 Thes. 5:14–17).*

This second visit question is about the core of my attitude and my aim! The desire I have for growth!

Question #3: “Are you living at peace and union with all the dear members as far as you know?”

This is really two questions in one. The first is about “peace,” and the second is about “unity.” This question moves from where is my heart, and how do I interact with my brethren, to where and how are things in my life fleshing out. This isn’t my interaction with the church at large, but asking about those close by—those with whom I have fellowship agreements and accountability.

AM I LIVING AT **PEACE**

WITH THE MEMBERS?

• When I see faults in my life does the love of Christ constrain me to make amends?

• Will I give up any or all of my rights (As Americanism wears off, we seem to claim more.) to gain the peace needed between us?

• How are my words (both written and audible) toward my brethren and sisters? Do they tend toward peace?

• Do I gossip?

• Do other members know and feel that I love them?

• Am I trustworthy when someone shares a burden with me?

• Does the peace of GOD flow from me? Does happiness, joy, and contentment?

• Am I longsuffering? Churlish?

• Do I react or respond to others?

• Am I harboring bitterness toward any member?

• Am I a team player?

• Am I practicing daily repentance? Or am I trying to self-correct?

AM I LIVING IN **UNITY**

WITH THE MEMBERS?

• Do I recognize the different gifts in the body, how they complement each other and that each build together—to recognize that I cannot do everything the same as another?

• Do I do things, or go places, that I cannot tell some, or all, in my local congregation?

• If I would meet any of my brethren anytime in public, would I have angst due to my appearance or location?

• Are there practices in my life that I cannot talk freely about with all the members?

• Do I have double standards

about brethren participation in community events?

- Am I involved with my brethren in such a way that when they have (spiritual or physical) needs, I am willing to care and assist?

- Am I walking alongside close enough to my brothers to see their needs?

- If someone sees lack on my life am I willing to receive assistance through funds or goods?

- Am I consistent in practice?

- Do I participate? Is my absence felt? Am I aware of others absence and care to reach for them? *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).*

- Are the good deeds I do done for the glory of GOD? Or am I doing them that others may see?

- Jesus made a statement to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Are the differences of the two kingdoms evident in my thought life and in my practice? Does this hold true in all aspects of my life—not limited to just resistance to war?

This third visit question is about how I practice! How do my beliefs, attitudes, and aims flesh out?!

Question #4: “Is there anything more you wish to express?”

Sometimes this seems to be asking for admonitions or suggestions, although these can come to the local body anytime you have a

burden, not just on the visit.

- What has encouraged me?

- What has discouraged me?

- Is anything unclear?

- Is there anything that would assist our local congregation?

- Can I encourage or engage something?

- I feel very cared for and wish to express thanksgiving.

- Something causes me pain.

- Pray for me in an area.

- The needs of the children consume much of our time...

- I’m thankful I can assist. Are there other needs?

- Have I prayed about the admonition I’m sharing?

- Is this admonition aimed toward the heart?

This last visit question is a time to share your heart!

This is not an attempt to make this so hard that all fail in some way, but rather an attempt to look closely and appreciate the annual visit; to keep it alive and real to each of us; that we promote spiritual growth and interaction. I appreciate and look forward to the annual visit each year. The spiritual discussion, concerns, and joys as we prepare our hearts for communing together is wonderful. This is a step in self-examination, a vital part of communing worthily.

In HIS love,

Sam Benedict

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

(A Compilation of Quotations)

The Bible, Our Bible, it is the book of books standing alone, superlative in its solitary grandeur, preeminent in its splendor, mysterious in its power, and as high above all other volumes as heaven is above earth.

No other book has been so persistently attacked, and yet it has seen the downfall of its enemies. It has survived the rise and fall of nations and stands today, solitary and supreme, above the dust of a thousand crumbling civilizations and raises its head above the wrecks of time.



No other book has been so minutely and critically studied; none has had so many volumes written about it; no book has been the basis of so much literature, the inspiration for such a myriad of hymns, liturgies, devotional writings, and sermons; nor has any book been as great a stimulus for that which is sublime in art, and poetry, and even architecture as the Bible. Years ago, a man by the name of Professor Huxley who was an ad-

mitted agnostic argued for Bible reading in the schools on this very ground.

When one understands and believes the Bible, he acquires a rational, consistent, and truly satisfying philosophy of life. He also experiences inner peace, the power to overcome sin, and a joyous hope for the future.

The Bible gives us a standard (JESUS) by which all religious experiences and declarations of faith may be evaluated. It tells us what to believe and how to live, and it speaks with the authority of God Himself.

Philip J. King

LIFE AS A MIRROR

Teresa Flora

I stare into the mirror. What do I see? It looks like me, but it isn't really. It is a reflection. I smile and the mirror reflects my smile. I frown and the mirror frowns back. Life, like a mirror, reflects myself back to me. Sometimes it is good. Sometimes it is not!

When I look at my husband, I see my reflection. My respect and honor for him come back to bless me. Or perhaps my selfish, stubborn will comes to miserably mock me.

Children imitate and copy the grown people in their lives. Some-

times it is cute, as when the three-year-old girl sitting between her grandmother and me in church Sunday night looked at both of us, crossed her legs like ours, and carefully smoothed her dress. Sometimes it is ugly when our faults are magnified back to us.

Most of us look in the mirror every day because we want to look presentable. We want our face to be clean and our hair combed neatly, not disheveled. The mirror allows us to see our physical likeness. But our spiritual likeness is what God sees!

We look at Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, on Sunday. But what about Monday? We can't go our own way the rest of the week and expect to truly live. When Moses made the brass serpent in the wilderness, he lifted it up. The people who were dying of snake bites had only to look up to live. If we look around, we can be distracted from our goal. If we look back, we become discouraged by past mistakes. So look up to live!

How we describe our friends, neighbors, and fellow church members might reveal more about us than it does about them. How we see others is a reflection of ourselves. If we are selfish and grasping, that colors how we see others. If we constantly find something to criticize in others, the problem is not other people, but our critical spirit. Who we are determines how we see others.

We can project our own motives

onto other people. When we assign ulterior motives to others, we may be revealing our own wrong motives. If we wouldn't assume wrong motives ourselves, we wouldn't so quickly surmise that others have them.

We see what we look for. If we look for positive, we find it. If we choose to look for negative, we find that too. *"If we had no faults, we would not take so much pleasure in finding them in others,"* says author Duc de la Rochefoucauld.

If we constantly have relationship problems, we likely are the problem. Before we give someone the label of lazy, critical, or unkind, we need to remind ourselves that how we see others is a reflection of ourselves—and then find a better perspective. Often what we invest in a relationship is what we receive from it. Likely, those around us will absorb our bad mood. But if we make the choice to be kind and congenial, letting the law of kindness be on our tongue, we will likely see kindness returned to us. Our husbands, children and friends all need our love. This is what Christ did for us.

May Christ be reflected in the mirror of our life as we strive to pattern after Him.

Selected from the October 2024 issue of *The Vindicator* by

AliceMae Haney

THE CLAMOR OF THE HEART

Ephesians 4:32

In the noise and loud confusion in this dark and evil day,
When the voices are so many, and distractions in our way,
With the heart inclined to worry, natural hopes oft torn apart,
Though my voice sometimes is silent, is there clamor in my heart?

Oft I hear myself complaining, and expressing doubt or fear,
When prospects that are uncertain take away light hearted cheer.
When I fail to turn to Jesus, and the peace prayer will impart,
Though my face is smiling sweetly, is there clamor in my heart?

Lowell Miller

MEDITATIONS

I love stories. Nothing is so dear as the ever-new old story of Jesus.
We all need to hear, "I love you"—but we all need to say it, too.
God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.
Be sure you are also among those "whosoever will."
A lot of angels attended the birth of Jesus.
What a way to start a New Year!
Hallelujah! Blessed Savior!

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.

One of the most blessed promises found in the Scriptures is found in the writings and prophecies of Isaiah. In the midst of describing how the Lord will judge nations and peoples for their sins and departure from Him, Isaiah says in ch. 26, vs. 3: *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*

Questions:

1. Does God always protect His People while He punishes the nations they dwell in?
2. If our own nation is brought down by God to a low place because of her sins, will God protect His own?
3. Do I find myself trusting in the strength and prosperity of this nation for my peace?
4. Is my mind stayed on Him?
5. Am I trusting in Him?
6. Is that "perfect peace" spoken of in Isaiah 26:3 a reality in my life?
7. Do I find myself being fearful and speaking in fearful ways?
8. How can I best encourage peace among God's people?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Oct. 20, 2024; Modesto, CA
Isaac Boone, Benjamin Fall
Oct. 27, 2024; Modesto, CA
Steven Cover
Oct. 30, 2024; Bethel, OH
Miles Garber
Nov. 17, 2024; Pleasant View, OH
Krislin Garber, Kaci Denlinger

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED

Oct. 20, 2024; Fall Creek, IN
Ellie Brooks

COMMUNION NOTICES

Feb. 1, 2025 Living Epistle, NM
Feb. 1, 2025 Pine Grove, FL
Feb. 22, 2025 West Manchester, IN
Mar. 2, 2025 Morning Star, OH
Mar. 29, 2025 Dallas, OR
Apr. 5, 2025 Cutler Ridge, IN
Apr. 5, 2025 Shiloh, OH
Apr. 12, 2025 Fair Haven, KS
Apr. 12, 2025 Salem, OH
Apr. 19, 2025 Modesto, CA
Apr. 26, 2025 Cascade Valley, WA
Apr. 26, 2025 Sugar Grove, OH

WHAT IF?

What if the church, alive and well
Sought means to lift the loads
Of every weak and struggling saint
Who stumbled on life's roads?

What if a booklet, sweet to all
Arrived each 30 days
And all contributed their thoughts,
Who love the Savior's ways?
What if each minister, well skilled
In offering thoughts at hand,
Could take small portions of his thoughts
And bless our little band.

What if the poems often read
At end of stirring talk
Would be sent in to bless us all;
Inspiring all the flock?

What if the little incidents
That give us smiles and cheer
Could be passed on in writing
To dry the traveler's tear.

The mother with her children,
The father and his son
Stories to offer others.
Enough for everyone!

What if I never did neglect
The gifts God gives to me?
And never said, "I cannot."
But, "I'll try!" And, "We will see!"

There are some giants in the land,
But selfless faith moves through,
Like Caleb, takes the hand of God
And takes the "mountain" too!

O, then, perhaps the church at large
Could be more knit together,
And ready for the trials here
In any kind of weather.

The Editor

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL NOTICE

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

POEMS

YET FORTY DAYS

Yet forty days—and Ninevah is done!
This, after one day's journey, Jonah sung.
His testimony surely carried weight
With slimy seaweed wrapped around his pate.
The God of second-chances rescued me—
Repent! And see what He may do for thee!

Yet forty days...but after only one,
The Ninevites, both old and very young,
Their herds, and all their flocks, yes, every man!
Repentant, turn from evil “in their hands.”
Their hearts are open, waiting, calm and still,
Just simply “being,” knowing God shall fill.

Yet forty days till Mary shall give birth;
As tiny Babe, our Lord shall come to earth!
But where in all the world shall there be room
For Christ to come from out the virgin womb?
The town of Bethlehem with people teems—
The world has room for all but Him it seems.

Yet forty days, but God well laid His plans.
This Babe will come—but not by others' hands.
His earthly father, Joseph, catches bare;
And lays Him in the manger low, with care.
The angels welcome Him with praise and song
This One to whom all Christendom belongs!

Yet forty days—shall I be overturned?
This “elder brother” who so long has spurned
The love of God, His mercy, and His grace,
And for His Holy calling not found place?
Could I but hollow out a manger bed
Within my heart instead of in my head!

Yet forty days—Oh, surely one will do—
My “younger” shall come forth for God is True!
This new-born babe, this lowly servant-child,
Will clothe in righteousness, be meek and mild.
Though poor in Spirit, blessed shall I be
For mine the Kingdom is, when I am free.

Irene Cover

OBITUARIES

FLORA — Dana Ranene (Denlinger) was born August 15, 1967, as the youngest child of Tom and Shirley Denlinger. She peacefully left a diseased body here on this earth on August 14, 2024, the day before her 57th birthday, and joyfully entered the presence of her loving Lord who has been preparing a place for her. Our family has taken comfort in imagining what her first birthday in eternity may have been like. She was preceded in death by her dad, Tom, by just 9 days. The night before he went home, Dana took his hand, told him goodbye, and assured him that she was following right behind him. Though we don't always understand, our God's timing is perfect. She was a faithful wife, loving mother, fun grandma, joyful helper in ministry, and kind friend to many. We as her family were blessed and inspired by her determined personality that pushed her on in the face of challenges.

On June 23, 1990, she was married to Mike Flora and they were blessed with 34 years serving the Lord together, as one in Him. The Lord she loved gave them 6 children to love as well, Caleb and his wife Jolyn, Troy and his wife Marci, Braden, Elly and her husband Weston, Maya, and Daniel. She was deeply devoted to her children, giving of herself for their well-being and intentionally creating countless lifelong memories together. Her focused prayers for each of them were a testimony to us of a mother's love and faith. She had especially looked forward

to being a grandmother and treasured her 4 young grandchildren, Decklin, Finlee, Svea and Calihan. Though her time with them was short she purposed to make as many memories with them as possible. They never knew Grandma Dana fully healthy, but they experienced her love, laughter, and sweet care nonetheless. One of her greatest disappointments was the thought of not being here to love them and pray for them through the celebrations and challenges of life. She found comfort in the assurance that her prayers for them were not bound by time or hindered by a faltering mind, and she consistently prayed over both current and future grandchildren. We know that her experience in Heaven far surpasses anything she could have looked forward to here.

Dana had a strong faith in Jesus Christ which began at a very young age. This mature, fervent faith in God was one of the things that attracted Mike to her from the beginning. Together they publicly professed that faith in Christ and were baptized on August 28, 1988. She was a faithful member of the Old German Baptist church and deeply loved her church family. She and Mike were stretched together after being called to serve in church leadership beginning in 1998. She served effectively and gracefully, giving of herself willingly wherever God called her.

Her four year cancer journey was a difficult one. She was courageous, yet real in her suffering, admitting her worries and strug-

gles but always assuring us that “God is good” and “it’s OK.” Our family was blessed to walk with her and grow in our own faith in Jesus whom she held onto so tightly.

We have been blessed by so many during this journey and we want to thank you from our overflowing hearts. Our church family has faithfully walked with us through the toughest of times. Your care, support, and abundant provision have made us feel very loved. We know that there are many diligent prayer warriors who have held her up for years. She thanked God for you often, and He faithfully responded to your prayers, though sometimes in ways that were different than we had imagined. We feel that He brought the best medical professionals available to our aid. We came to think of them as family and praise God for the heart He has given many to care for others in their physical need.

Dana was longing for the rapture, the day that Christ calls all believers home to be with Him. She spoke often of how beautiful it would be to all go with Him together! Clearly, His plan was for her to go sooner than the rest of us. We continue to hold onto the hope of His soon return and are committed to serving Him until either that day or the day He takes us individually as He received her. It gives us great peace, hope, and confidence to know that in that day we will see her again.

Visitation was held Saturday, August 17 at the Wood Colony Hall where our family was blessed by the care of many. The funeral service was Sunday, August 18 at

the Modesto District Old German Baptist Brethren Church led by the home brethren of our church family. Burial followed at the Wood Colony Cemetery. We are comforted to know that she is safe in the arms of Jesus experiencing all that He had prepared for her. And we are confident that it far surpasses anything she could have imagined. Together, we will look forward to that same experience some sweet day.

Even so come Lord Jesus!

The Family

KILLINGSWORTH — Harold Lloyd was born December 20, 1940 to the late Lloyd and Mae (Garber) Killingsworth near Sawyer, Kansas. Harold suffered from a massive heart attack during a heart catheterization procedure and was in ICU at IU Arnett Hospital, Lafayette, Indiana. On Thursday, September 12, 2024, he entered his eternal home. Harold grew up most of his life without his father due to a fatal tractor accident in 1948. God watched over that little seven-year-old boy that was riding on the fender, as he was thrown clear.

Harold was baptized September 1, 1957, and was a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, Sand Creek district in Kansas. He later was a member of the Bachelor Run congregation at Flora, Indiana, and remained faithful until death.

He was one of the first six CO’s to serve at Miami Valley Hospital in Ohio. He worked the evening shift in the emergency room which he thoroughly enjoyed.

Before marriage he was an over-the-road truck driver. On August

15, 1976, he married Carmen Elizabeth Blocher. They lived in Sawyer, Kansas, for a year and a half. In the fall of 1977 they came to Carroll County, Indiana, for the winter and then moved here the spring of 1978.

Harold drove semi for Jackson-Lee-Pearson for 28 years, retiring in 2006. After that he drove semi for Singletree Transportation, part time for 15 years.

He drove the Flora Community van, always willing to help when he could. He enjoyed working in the lawn and garden, feeding and watching the birds. He also had many enjoyable trips with family and friends.

In June 2019 Harold suffered a cardiac arrest while working in the garden. He was hospitalized and recovered quite well. He was known at the hospital as the "miracle man."

Harold was a blood donor, giving over 31 gallons of his rare type of blood.

Harold was a kind, calm, faithful man and enjoyable to be with. It was a privilege to know him.

Being blessed and thankful for 48 wonderful years together, his wife survives to mourn his unexpected passing. Also surviving are two sisters: Helen Wray and Donna (Vernon) Hirt both of Sawyer, Kansas; sister-in-law, Marsha Blocher of Flora, Indiana; two brothers-in-law, Craig (Marg) Blocher of Rossville, Indiana, and Martin (Carolyn) Blocher of Bringhurst, Indiana; along with several nieces, nephews, cousins; and 3 aunts, Neva Garber (Lawrence, Kansas), Norma Jean Barnhart (Rossville, Indiana), and Helen Eikenberry (Flora, Indiana).

He was preceded in death by his parents; a brother, Verlin (Darlene) Killingsworth; and an infant brother; one brother-in-law, Donald Wray; his stepfather, Paul Johnson; stepbrother, Bill Johnson; stepsisters, Joanna Sager and Mary Jo Patton; and his father- and mother-in-law, Joseph and Esther Blocher.

On September 22, 2024, a short family service was conducted by Wesley Killingsworth at the Wheeler Family Funeral Home. A funeral service followed at the Bachelor Run Old German Baptist Brethren meeting house by the home brethren. Thankful for our hope through Jesus Christ, he was tenderly laid to rest in the Maple Lawn Cemetery near Flora, Indiana.

Farewell brethren, farewell sisters, till we all shall meet again.

The Family

DENLINGER — Raymond Earl was born on May 7, 1941, to Charles and Ellen (Sandy) Denlinger in Whittier, California. He peacefully passed away, surrounded by family, on September 15, 2024, at the age of 83.

Dad grew up in Whittier, California. He attended both elementary and high school there, graduating in 1959. Dad always said that the 50s were a great time to grow up in Los Angeles. A favorite part of his childhood was spending time with his Denlinger cousins, both those from Whittier and the ones that would visit from Modesto, California. They were all very special to dad and his sister.

He was united in marriage to Phyllis Boyd on May 15, 1965.

They shared 59 years together and were blessed with 4 children, Debbie, Matthew, Deanna, and Donna; 13 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren, with one more on the way. Dad loved his family and enjoyed spending time together—camping, coaching softball, Sunday afternoon drives, and museums. After the children were older, with families of their own, his favorite birthday celebrations were the whole family taking day trips together to zoos, gardens, Columbia, etc.

Dad grew up going to church with his mother and grandmother. He always enjoyed attending young folks gatherings when his family visited Modesto. Knowing he needed a Savior, he was baptized and fellowshiped at First Baptist Church in Whittier. After moving to Modesto, he became a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church. He enjoyed the fellowship of his church family and faithfully served in the West Modesto—New Conference fellowship. He made a point to connect with younger ones and to encourage them.

Dad worked as an electrician for 47 years, the first 22 years working for John Brubaker Electric. In 1989, he went out on his own and started Denlinger Electric. Matt worked with Dad and took over the business when Dad retired in 2015. Though retired, he never lost his interest in his customers, visiting them often. Many of his customers became his lifelong friends. Much of Dad's work was centered around the Agriculture industry. After harvest, Dad enjoyed taking off on his motorcycle. He often didn't have a destination but just enjoyed the ride. He especially enjoyed the desert and the

canyon lands of Utah. Dad was very intentional about sharing his faith in the work place and on his many motorcycle adventures.

Dad and Mom enjoyed many trips together, with and visiting many lifelong friends. Special highlights include Annual Conference, Israel, and Alaska. In later years they enjoyed the Extra Mile trips. He took special enjoyment in his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He enjoyed attending their various sporting events, camping trips and just hearing what they all were doing.

In the recent years, Dad was challenged with the beginnings of dementia. It was frustrating to him and it was a concern not knowing how the disease would progress. On Monday, September 9, Dad was experiencing chest pains and Mom took him to Doctors Medical Center. He had suffered a heart attack. He was treated and stabilized that day but it proved to be too much for his body to overcome. In the week following, our family received comfort from moments of recognition and his acknowledgement that he was ready to go home.

He was preceded in death by his parents; parents-in-law, Jesse and Fern Boyd; sister, Pat Della (Kent); brother-in-law, Dan Della; and sister-in-law, Louise DeBoer.

He leaves to mourn, his wife Phyllis; his four children, Debbie and Ben Eller, Matthew and Karey Denlinger, Deanna and Jay Cook, and Donna and John Overholtzer; 13 grandchildren, Brandon and Kalie Eller, LoriAnne and Clinton Grover, Travis and Katrina Eller, Ashlee, Brock and Shelby Denlinger, Nathan and Katelyn Cook, Kristin and Collin Gipe, Li-

sa and Timothy Rumble, Jared and Kyla Overholtzer, Nicole and Trevor Filbrun, and Dallas Overholtzer; 13 great-grandchildren, Gianna and Jack Eller, Raelie, Maxwell and Danica Grover, Colton Eller, and baby sister arriving soon, Granger and Archer Gipe, Davis, Tyson and Navy Rumble, and Easton Overholtzer; brothers-in-law, Doyle and Marlene Boyd and Kenneth and Cindy Boyd; sisters-in-law, Ellen and Bill Heinrich, Joan and Merle Howser, Lynette Boyd; as well as many nieces and nephews.

We will greatly miss our beloved husband, Dad, Grandpa and Grandpa great. We take great comfort in knowing he is in heaven where he longed to be.

Visitation was held Thursday, September 19, 2024, from 4–7 P.M. and the funeral service was held September 20, 2024, at 10 A.M., both at the West Modesto Old German Baptist Brethren Church. Burial followed at the Wood Colony Cemetery.

The Family

DIX — Soul Evans went on to his final reward on September 29, 2024, at 9:48 A.M. at Riley Children's Hospital. He was born on September 27, 2024, at 11:59 A.M. in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Soul is survived by his loving parents, Justin and Faith Dix; sister, Maka Dix; grandparents, Roy and Sherry Dix, Norma and John Talbert; great-grandmother, Irma Dix; uncle, James Dix, and aunt, Rachel Filbrun.

He was preceded in death by grandparents, Levi and Sheryl Filbrun; great-grandparents, Leslie Dix, Gladis Shepard, Ray Dix, Willis Haskell; great-grandparents, Laurence and Mildred Filbrun, Morris and Esther Boyd; great-great-grandmother, Betty Sportsman; and aunt, Mychia Williams.

Visitation was held Sunday, October 13, 2024, 10:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M. at Old German Baptist Brethren Church, Fall Creek district, followed by the service at 1:00 P.M. with Brother Russell Bowman officiating.

The Family

2024 INDEX

A CALL FOR ARTICLES AND POETRY

No.-Page

Call For Articles, A 3- 4

EDITORIAL

No.-Page

Accountability 5- 3
 And Shall We Doubt His Care? 12- 3
 Back To School 9- 3
 Even Greater Than Faith 3- 3
 Extreme Love 8- 3
 Growing Season, The 7- 3
 In Everything Give Thanks? 11- 3
 Love In Sacrificial Action 2- 3
 New Beginnings 1- 3
 New Beginnings 6- 3
 Night Of Time, The 10- 3
 Time To Feast, A 4- 3

FOR CHILDREN

No.-Page

Bees 2-17

GENERAL

No.-Page

"Am I...Shall I...Must I..." Song, The 6-12
 Amplified Visit!, The 11- 9
 Amplified Visit!, The (cont'd) 12-12
 Beautiful People Don't Just Happen 8-20
 Beginnings And The Big Bang 8-18
 Biblical Behavior—Part 1 1-10
 Biblical Behavior—Part 2 2- 8
 Biblical Behavior—Part 3 3- 8
 Biblical Behavior—Part 4 4- 8
 Biblical Behavior—Part 5 5- 6
 Biblical Behavior—Part 6 6- 5
 Biblical Behavior—Part 7 7- 8
 Biblical Behavior—Part 8 8- 8

Biblical Behavior—Part 9..... 9-10

Biblical Behavior—Part 10..... 11-13

Biblical Behavior—Part 11..... 12-11

Book Of Books, The..... 12-16

Book To The Hebrews, The..... 9- 4

Brief Bible Study Of Titus 2:3–5, A..... 3-18

Broken Pieces..... 3- 6

“But I Have Prayed For Thee...”..... 8-10

Christ The Sure Foundation..... 7-15

Christians As Instruments Of Music.... 6- 7

Christ—Traditional Or Progressive?

 Conservative Or Liberal? 4-15

Conclusion Of The Matter, The 9-13

Cross-Training For Life 6-14

Encouragement..... 6-13

Enduring Faith 1-12

Family, The..... 12-10

God’s Promises Concerning Prayer 11- 7

Gospel Is Very Simple To The Sick, The .. 6- 4

“Greet All The Brethren”—Part 1 3- 9

“Greet All The Brethren”—Part 2 4- 9

“Greet All The Brethren”—Part 3 5- 8

Holy Bible, Valued Treasure 6-15

Honor The King 10- 5

Is One The Worst Number? 4-18

John 15..... 4- 6

Ken And I..... 11-14

Lead Me Home 10-16

Lesson From The Killdeer, A..... 9-12

Life As A Mirror..... 12-16

Lifting Up Of The Hands, The..... 2- 9

Light Out Of The Darkness 7-10

Love Of Money, The..... 7-12

Marvel Of Repetition, The 3-15

Meditations On Deliverance 1-19

Nonnionite, Misunderstandings, And

 Herbal Medicines..... 8-14

Model From John 4, A..... 5- 4

Morally Pure In A Corrupt Society..... 10-11

Prepare Him Room 2-16

Preparing For Christ’s Appearing..... 11-18

Rose Of Sharon (Hymn #242), The 8-12

Separation From The World 10-19

Should We Vote? 7- 4

Sight And Sound..... 10- 7

Story Of Two Trees, A..... 6-10

Things Which Are Jesus Christ’s, The... 10-17

To Be An Overcomer..... 1-20

To Our Young People 8- 4

Two Prayers Of Paul In The Ephesian

 Letter, The..... 2-13

Uncomfortable Truth: Convictions In

 Sermons, The..... 7-16

Uninimity—The Forgotton Ideal (Part 2

 of 3) 1- 4

Uninimity—The Forgotton Ideal (Part 3

 of 3) 2- 4

Weight Of Sin Is Death, The..... 7-17

What Do You Know?..... 6-17

Wonderful Words Of Life 7-11

Young Folks On The Edges 5-14

HOME & FAMILY **No.-Page**

Blessings Of Having A Stay-At-Home

 Mom, The 9-18

Pudding And The Oatmeal, The 3-21

Raising Boys To Be Godly Young Men. 5-18

PROPHECY **No.-Page**

Mark Of Loyalty, A..... 8-21

SEASONAL **No.-Page**

Angel Sat Upon The Stone, An 4- 4

Give Thanks For The Holy Scriptures 11- 4

Glory Of The Lord, The 12- 4

Real Satisfaction, A..... 11- 6

’Twas The Night Before Jesus Came ... 12- 8

Why Christians Should Not Celebrate

 Halloween..... 10- 4

Wonder Of Swaddling Clothes, The 12- 7

POEMS **No.-Page**

Age Is A Quality Of Mind..... 4-22

Another New Year..... 1-22

Be Still!..... 1-22

Blessed Saviour, Thou Art Mine 11-23

Change Of Raiment..... 7-23

Chosen Lessons 6-24

Clamor Of The Heart, The 12-18

Commit Thy Way..... 2-20

Cross, The..... 11-23

Day By Day..... 3-24

Deception..... 6-22

“Doe Ye Next Thyng” 9- 1

Evening Hymn..... 7-22

Exchange Of Wills, An 10-23

Fairest Lord Jesus..... 3- 1

Faith And Trust..... 8-24

Faith Of A Little Child, The..... 10-22

Follow Me! 4-22

For Our Children..... 6- 1

Forbearance..... 3-22

Fountain, The..... 7-23

Gethsemane..... 3-24

Gratitude 11-23

He Will Silently Plan For Thee 10-23

Homeward Bound..... 1-24

How Can I Doubt? 6-23

I Shall Go On..... 7-24

I Will Take Thy Hand 9-23

In Every Circumstance, Be Kind 10-24

Judge Not 8-23

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence 12- 1

Life's Purpose	10-22
Lord, Give Me Faith	2-20
Mother Sings, A	5-25
My Prayer	1- 1
Only A Dad	6-23
Our Blessed Hope	10- 1
Potter's Wheel, The	3-25
Prayer Oasis	7-21
Rejoice In The Lord!	4- 1
Rescue The Perishing	2- 1
Safely Home	5-26
Secret Of A Happy Day, The	11-22
Silence My Heart	7-23
Song Of Praise To Christ, A	8- 1
Soul's Response, The	1-23
Still With Thee	9-23
Storm Of Life, The	1-23
Storm Thrush, The	2-21
Sunday's Coming	4-23
Sure Promise, A	6-23
Thanksgiving	6-21
Thanksgiving And Fast	11- 1
Thanksgiving Poem, A	11-24
There Is Gladness Everywhere	5- 1
Though Troubles Assail	7- 1
Thy Kingdom Come	6-24
To Our Beloved	11-25
Under His Wings We Find Shelter	6-23
We Thank Thee, Lord	11-23
What If?	12-19
Wide Spaces	3-24
Yet Forty Days	12-20
Youth Of Jesus, The	6-24

Terms

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Contributors

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

OBITUARIES

No.-Page

Angle, Marie Ellen	1-25
Angle, Opal Leota	9-25
Balsbaugh, Douglas Allen	2-22
Bashor, Myrtle Elaine	9-24
Bauman, Emily Louise	4-24
Bayer, Lucille Mae	6-26
Bowman, Myron Franklin	8-26
Boyd, Jonathan E.	4-25
Brubaker, Margaret Ann	10-25
Cable, Norman Lavern	5-26
Davison, Dale Arthur	7-24
Deaton, Esther Louise	4-26
Deaton, Rita Sue	9-27
Denlinger, Lowell Edward	4-26
Denlinger, Lynn Allen	1-25
Denlinger, Raymond Earl	12-23
Dix, Soul Evans	12-25
Filbrun, Eunice Iolene	1-26
Filbrun, Rex Alan	9-25
Fisher, Betty Jane	10-26
Flora, Dana Ranene	12-21
Flora, Loretta Faye	5-27
Garber, Helen F.	3-26
Garber, Lois Mae	6-25
Killingsworth, Harold Lloyd	12-22
Kinzie, Anna Elizabeth	1-26
Lahman, Vera Viola	7-26
Landes, Thelma Louise	10-26
Meador, Dallas Wayne	7-25
Renicker, Mary Catherine	11-26
Riffey, Marilyn Kay	3-26
Shellabarger, Evelyn Mae	11-25
Swearingen, Jerald J.	9-26

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

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

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