

St. Andrew's (JKP) Monthly Newsletter

December, 2011

Edification: Unlike Frank Sinatra when it comes to regrets I have more than "a few". One regret that I'm frequented by is that I never learned a second language while my brain was still young and nimble. Being older and noticeably flabbier (yes, not just mentally) I've found it harder to learn a second language, but after years of diligence I think I'm almost there. And no, the language to which I refer is not the ever-popular Igpay-Atinlay (pig-latin). I mastered that by 4th grade. The language I believe I've begun to master is Olde English. It can be daunting at the outset, with all the "thee's" & "thou's" and "heretofore's" & "gainsaying". And it's not simply the archaic words. The typical sentence structure of old English seems to be a cross between classical Latin and Louisiana Cajun. Yet if you're going to glean the riches of Owen and Bunyan and Watson, etc. the work must be done. And what I've found is that reading these great works in their native tongue is quite rewarding. Take for example a formerly well-known phrase from the A.V. (a.k.a. King James) translation of the scriptures (olde English at its finest). In the birth narratives of Jesus Christ it is said of the shepherds that: *"the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid"*. When was the last time in ordinary conversation someone was overheard declaring: *"brother, I was sore afraid"*? Yet this 2 word phrase *"sore afraid"* is used frequently in the KJV, predominantly in the Older Testament. So what does this phrase mean, what does it suggest? Well, another use of it was when the glory cloud descended upon the mountain at Christ's transfiguration. There we're told that Peter: *"wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid"*. Skipping over *"wist"* for now, we find that the context of both episodes is the same. In fact, every time the phrase is used the same context exists. Sinful man comes into close contact with the holy and the encounter has a dramatic effect upon him. He is made sore afraid. According to older sources to be "sore afraid" is to literally experience painful fear. It suggests the idea of pain of mind and conscience. It also suggests painful grief, sorrow (soreness) of heart. To be in the presence of the holy is to the aware sinner fearful, grievous - even to the point of pain. Yet while the entire world commemorates the incarnation of the Eternal Holy One where is the fear? To the believer His incarnation, while truly fearful is truly joyful. To the reprobate the thought of fear at Christmas is anathema. All must be happiness, all must be merriment. They protest the thought of fearing this harmless little babe. To them I would quote the true master of the Queene's English: *"Me thinks thou dost protest too much!"*

Events/Information: Remember - this year's Christmas Eve services will begin at 11:00 p.m. on 12/24. We will conclude after midnight Christmas morning with a candlelight celebration. Let's all be in attendance, as this will serve as our Lord's Day worship service too. Merry Christmas!

"Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. - Isaiah 8:13

Encourage: The Proverbs tells us over and again that *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."* Many are the ironies of the Christian faith, this being chief among them. That which all the world avoids and shuns and protests against is to the Christian a rich source of true life to be embraced. If we were to ask Isaiah and John and Peter when in their miserable lives in this fallen world they were most vigorously alive might they not all say it was when they stood (or lay prostrate) in the presence of the holy, when they were indeed sore afraid? And what about those tired, crusty old shepherds on that cold hardened hillside? In their old age what do you suppose came to their minds as the most spirited moment of their mundane lives? Surely it was when *"the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid"*. The beginning of wisdom, the beginning of true life!