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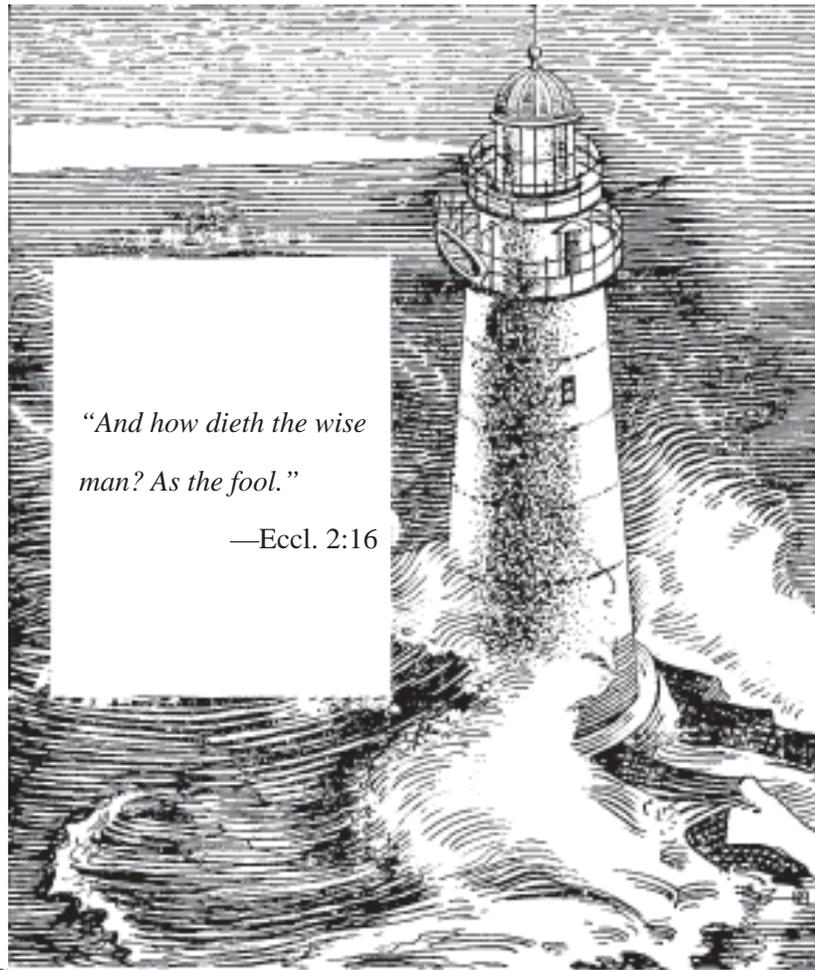


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BEACON LIGHTS

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If any material of *Beacon Lights* is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source and forwarding the printed periodical to the business office.

Beacon Lights Scanning Project

by John Huizenga



The scanning of all the past issues of *Beacon Lights* is going well. At this time, about 10% have been scanned and available in PDF files. We plan to make these available soon along with a MS Excel index on the Faith Christian School website: randolphcs.org. The website has not yet been developed for Faith, and we are glad to make *Beacon Lights* available to you as quickly as possible. These files are being fed through some text recognition software so that they can be searched in a word processor program.

Scanning is moving along at a pretty good rate of about 30 pages a minute provided there are no paper jams or other glitches. Text recognition takes about 10 minutes per issue, and proof reading a couple of hours. The process has not been without its problems, but they are being worked out and the work is enjoyable. In fact, one of our proof readers wrote:

Some of these articles are very, very interesting...early 1954 after the split. Wow! I feel the tension in the articles. I'm grateful for the opportunity to help with this project. I feel like I've renewed my "passion" for our faith. I want to know why and what and when and where for everything (re 1953 split, re 1924 split). I'm reading a lot more and I'm reading substantive books (Reformed bookshelf), as opposed to my murder mysteries or watching TV. Usually I'm not certain of what I know, but I feel like I have more confidence.

We are eager to make this treasure available to many more of our readers. Many of you enjoyed the reprint of material from "Our Boys in Service," so I have included some more in this issue. ❖

Reprinted from the May, 1945 *Beacon Lights*



Current Events

Mr. Jack Boelma
Grand Rapids, Mich.

San Francisco is the place where "The United Nations Conference on International Organization" is being held. This meeting makes the news today. With Germany in her death throes, delegates of 46 nations of the world, representing four-fifths of the

world's population and nine-tenths of the land area of the world, are met here to erect a structure for international security. The world's power and strength are represented in San Francisco.

Purpose

The purpose of this meeting should be clear to you. This is not a peace-making conference, but rather a peace-keeping one. It will not deal at all with the defeated Germany; her punishment or boundaries: that problem will be left to the victors after the war is over. The chief problem here is future security, including, of course, plans to prevent future wars. That is not all for this organization aims to set up plans to solve international problems, such as industrial, social, food, health, educational, and all related problems that need attention for peace and progress the world over. It has been said that two-thirds of the people in the world never had enough to eat, about half of the adults in the world cannot read and write, factories in general are still sweatshops. This conference is to set up organization to solve such problems. That is its purpose.

Machinery of the Plan

Young people should be familiar with the set-up of the Dumbarton Oaks proposed plan. Remember this conference is working on the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and naturally will make many amendments. The machinery follows these definite forms: the United Nations will consist of three main branches and the Secretariat. First there is the General Assembly which will include all the “peace-loving” nations—eventually may even include Germany and Japan. The Assembly meets once a year to discuss problems of relief, air routes, trade, etc., and under it will be associated many agencies as Economical and Social Council, Labor Council, Food Organization, Health Agency, Monetary Council. Second there will be the International Court which will deal only with international laws. The third branch is the Security Council—the real power house. It proposes to have eleven members: five permanent (the U.S., Great Britain, Russia, China, France) and six rotating members; the latter members are elected by the Assembly for a two term period. Hence the Council has the Big Five and six small nations. It will be in session the year around. This body can make decisions and even call upon military forces to put down threat of war. In case of trouble the Council may investigate and make recommendations providing seven out of the eleven are in favor of it. But it is a different case when it comes to enforcing; the Big Five must vote alike before any action can be taken. Even if ten of the eleven are in favor of it, one of the Big Five can block an action. No force can be applied to small countries if one of the five is not in favor of so doing. The Big Five must stick together in order to enforce a deci-

sion. A military staff is to be associated with the Security Council. A fourth branch is the Secretariat, the function of which you can conclude from its name.

Problems

Forty-six nations are met to reach objectives under such machinery. Problems are easily seen. Where does the small nation come in? The Big Five will have dictatorship for they can control, prevent, or veto any step; even if the whole world be against one member of the Big Five, that member can protect itself by veto power. Will the small nations be able to safeguard their interests in this set-up? Look what happened to Poland just recently. Russia did it and that ends it. What can the small nations do? Can they rely on Senator Vandenberg’s idea of “justice” to be done always? This voting in the Council and the place of small nations seem to be the big thorn to be threshed out.

Another problem is the demand of Russia to have three votes in the Assembly. The original plan calls for only one vote for each. This was announced after the Yalta Conference and F.D.R. seems to have given Russia the green light on it. Russia evidently figures that the British Dominions all count up and Russia will add a vote each for her Ukraine and White Russia. Why she should want two more votes in that large Assembly of fifty or more, we do not know; probably no more than mere demand for diplomatic recognition.

How shall the Colonies be handled after the war? The idea of trusteeship has been suggested. Shall the U.S. be trustee over the Japanese islands (the Marianas, Marshall, Caroline, etc.) or shall a strong power control over a dependent area and report to the United Nations regularly? How can that be worked out?

Finally there is the problem of alliances. Shall we have them? It is said that it is possible but they must be under strict supervision of the United Nations. Shall the Wilsonian idea of open alliances be practiced?

The Last Step

The whole plan will be drawn up into a treaty or an agreement. Then what? Stalin, or one appointed by him, needs only to affix his signature and it goes into operation. Churchill can do the same; it is not necessary for Parliament to pass on the document. The heads of other nations represented at the Conference need only to do the same—sign. But it is different for the U.S. This agreement or document must be ratified or approved by a two-thirds vote in the Senate. ❖

To Our Boys In Service

Dear boys:

Winter with all its cold, ice, and snow is gone and spring has come again. The lawns are already covered with a nice green blanket of grass, and many a fruit tree is in full blossom. A wonderful sight, but also in this does God prove His might and glory. But are we always conscious of this? And not only of His great power and glory but also of His love towards His children? How often He seems to be so far away from us—like you who are far away from home, parents, brothers and sisters, yes, all those who are dear to you! Far away from church, among strangers who do not know or do not want to know about God nor His Word and who despise the things you hold dear. Led in a way that is hard and may seem unjust. Yet, let us remember, He Who leads the destiny of nations, also has laid the pathway which we must tread. But the most blessed of it all is that the Lord Who has marked out this pathway for you says, “that all things work together for good to them that love God.” But life’s pathway is so much harder than it was a few years ago! I agree with you. Years ago any one could be a Christian and no one would molest you. But times have changed and more and more this fact has come to the foreground. One must deny our Lord and have peace with the world or confess Him to be God alone and be persecuted and mocked. But may God give grace and strength to be faithful to the end whatever the cost may be. And thou shalt have joy and peace in your hearts which passes all understanding. May the Lord bless and keep you.

*Your brother in Christ,
Mr. Ben Veldkamp*

Somewhere in France

Dear friends:

Just a few days ago I received three copies of Beacon Lights. I wish I could convey to you just how much this meant to me. Like a starving man wolfs his food, so I devoured the contents of all three numbers at once.

Let me briefly sketch my activities since leaving the hospital in England on December 11 of last year. Spiritually there were many privileges which I enjoyed in England. I conducted a few midweek meetings at the hospital chapel and gave a chalk talk. Also worshipped in some of the churches in nearby cities and met some Christian fellow patients with whom I had many pleasant conversations. After leaving the hospital I was shunted about England for a while—thru various re-

placement depots and finally across the channel for the third time and back to France. Along with many other fellow soldiers I made the icing, slow, cold journey from Le Havre to Paris—thirty of us in one of those famous 40 and 8s of World War I fame. Christmas even was spent in the freight yards of Paris, and Christmas night we slept on the hard frozen ground in a woods. New Year’s eve and day was spent in a former German armory, the walls being adorned with swastikas and a huge banner on the wall contained the following statement in German: “To the German soldier nothing is impossible.” On the 2nd of January. I arrived at this outfit—my new army “home.”

We are living in a small rural village; the people here speak German and all of them wear wooden shoes. On Sundays they come out in their finest to attend the 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. services in the local Roman Catholic Church. I originally drove a 2 1/2 ton truck hauling gas, ammunition, etc. but my nerves were not equal to this. I now have a steady job in the kitchen which is much better for me. Our kitchen is housed in the village school. There are many interesting things I could say about the life here—but I do not want to take up too much space. Now to come back to my opening statement about how much Beacon Lights means to me.

You see I am required to work 7 days a week and so there is no opportunity to observe the Sabbath. Besides this there is no place to worship if I did have the time, and finally, I have not found a single Christian fellow although I’ve been here nearly two months now. Spiritually therefore it is a lonely life, hence any Christian literature means so much to me. I hold a sort of a service by myself, reading one of the Lord’s Days and follow it with the reading of one of Rev. Hoeksema’s explanations in the S.B., and I also sing a few Psalter numbers to myself, but one cannot realize how much Christian fellowship means until it is denied us as at present. Yet the Lord is faithful and I can testify of His grace and nearness, and with Paul I am learning by His grace, to be content in whatsoever state I am. I have not written these things, dear friends, to evoke pity, but that you may see how great a privilege is yours, who can worship with God’s people on the Sabbath and meet during the week in Christian fellowship to learn to know Him better Who is the author and finisher of our faith. Avail yourselves of every opportunity to grow in the knowledge of Christ for it is then that we build up ourselves spiritually for times of dearth as I now am experiencing. And so in closing may God richly bless you all and may you con-

*tinue to present the Protestant Reformed truth in Beacon Lights, for it means so much to us who are away. With Christian greetings,
Andrew Voss*

April, 1945

Dear friends:

Since the war began, letters from all over the world have appeared—on the pages of our magazine and now I would like to throw one in from Panama. As you know, the government has a great interest in this part of Central America because of the Canal. A few months ago I found myself flying over the Caribbean Sea and shortly thereafter I was made a part of Uncle Sam's defense forces here.

One of the most interesting things about this area is the mixture of races which is found here. You can almost trace the history which has taken place in this section by observing the people. The basic population was once Indian, but today only one variety of pure bred Indian remains. This is the San Blas Indian located on the nearby San Blas Islands. The purity of this race is strictly guarded and so much intra-marriage has taken place that a relatively large percentage of the children are albinos.

Most of the other Indians have long ago intermarried with the Spaniards who first took this country away from them. The Panamanian is then a mixture of white and red bloods. There are some real Spaniards left, but the number is small. When the canal was built, negroes and orientals were imported as cheap laborers. Today many of the children and younger people have both negro and oriental blood in their veins as well as Indian and Spanish, while the older people are pure negro, oriental, or a mixture of Spanish and Indian.

Since this area is only about nine degrees north of the equator, the vegetation and wild life is strictly tropical. There are many coconut palms and banana trees and all the growth is luxuriant. The warm weather and heavy precipitation of the rainy season which, by the way, runs from May to December, largely accounts for the thick vegetation. There are many birds of bright color, but although you can always hear them, they are hard to find. The jungle is full of iguanas, wild pigs, deer and other creatures. Two very common snakes found here are bushmasters and boa constrictors. Just as a matter of interest, my roomie has found a little honey bear who is fast becoming a real pet.

*This just about completes my contribution from Panama. I might add that the beauty and interest which can be found here make but a poor substitute for home. Sincerely,
Ens. Herman Hoeksema (Fuller)*

Dear friends:

It has long been in my mind to write a letter in appreciation for the many issues of the Beacon Lights that I have received, but somehow, and probably typical of most other boys in the service, I always keep putting my writing off. However, in my recent reading, I saw that some of the boys have found a bit of time to send in a word of thanks, so I thought possibly I should do likewise, and this time without delay.

This past week I just received two issues of the Beacon Lights. Mail of this nature sometimes takes very long in getting to us. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact it may take such a long time in getting here, the contents never become stale as would an ordinary newspaper. Therein lies its great treasure to us boys who receive them. In the October issue, I enjoyed particularly the article written by the editor entitled "Don't Do It." Yes, it takes a long absence to actually realize what a great privilege it is to be able to attend the regular meetings from week to week. Then the "picture page" of the various boys is also an added attraction which I enjoyed very much. Not only that, but to me, each and every page has a great value of its own, which makes it such a grand publication. And I am sure all the other boys must enjoy it just as much as I do. A word of praise to all those who put forth their efforts to make the Beacon Lights the paper that it is!

It's been approximately 20 months since I left the states, which is not too long. Most of this time was spent in the United Kingdom, and the greatest share of that in the small country of North Ireland. During all this time I have met but one of our boys, and incidentally, one of my best friends, Joe Gritter. That was almost a year ago when I spent a short furlough in London and was very fortunate in being able to locate him. We certainly were overjoyed in meeting each other, and those three days we spent together went by all too fast.

It was early last July when we came up the beaches in Normandy and have been on the continent in various places since that time. During the campaign thru France I had a couple of experiences of what might be called "being at the point" in a spearhead. However it was not so bad back in those days, but the most enjoyable thing of it all was the fact that we were always amongst the

first to enter a town to receive the welcome. Those are but the nicest experiences. Other things are not so pleasant. I have seen war and its effects and can only say it is a bitter experience, as any fellow would say who has tasted some of it. To see the wounded and the dead, to see the trail of destruction in some places, and to see the misery it all causes, are things which will be hard to forget.

Due to conditions at the present time, we are forbidden to reveal our present location. From our earliest days thru France we came thru the cities of St. Lo, Angers, Chartres, Rhiems, Verdun and finally in the mighty fortress city of Metz, where our outfit spent Thanksgiving Day. For now I cannot say more.

Once again the holiday seasons have gone by. They were very uneventful as far as life goes on around here. I was hoping to be able to go to church services on Christmas Day, but there were no services. A week previous to Christmas was the last time I had opportunity to attend church and we made that service a Christmas service. To you it probably would look strange. Not a church building, but an old theatre. Not a group of nicely dressed boys, but boys in battle dress carrying their weapons into church with them. We sang many an old Christmas carol, "Peace on earth, good will toward men," while outside the guns were throwing shells of destruction into the enemy lines. Sounds strange, doesn't it?

The weather during recent weeks, has been similar to our own Michigan weather, although lacking in the great amount of snow. The ground is frozen hard and solid, the fields and forests are covered with a light blanket of snow, which all paints a pretty picture, but not quite so nice to the soldier who must live in it. Fortunately most of the time we are able to sleep under cover, even though at times it may be in some old house, a barn or a cellar, but at least it keeps away the worst of the weather.

Before closing this letter, I might add that last evening I received several copies of the radio sermons. It certainly would seem so much more pleasant for us boys if we could actually sit at home and listen to them, but for the present we must be content with reading. Even at that, they are very much appreciated as are all the rest of the papers. Without them, I think our church life would seem very far from us. Once again, many thanks to all those who make it possible for us to receive our papers. In closing, may God's blessing rest upon you and all the work being put forth and hoping also if it

may be His will, that some day in the near future, we all may be brought together again as in former days.

As ever, your friend,
George Kunz (Creston)

Tacoma, Washington

Dear Friends:

Hello from Washington! My husband and I are stationed in Tacoma, Washington and have been here for nearly eight months now. A long time to stay at one place considering how much the boys in service are transferred from camp to camp.

I am working at the Fort Hospital and this surely is a large place. Yes, this hospital covers 85 acres and contains 2,000 beds so you can get some idea of how large this general hospital is. The boys from the Fort are treated here and now the boys are coming from overseas and I surely have learned a lot since working here. I type up the diagnosis of the boys after they leave the hospital, but very seldom do I come across a Grand Rapids boy.

Enclosed is a contribution to Beacon Lights, which we surely enjoy. One thing by being in the States, this type of literature comes regularly and seeing we do not have our reformed church in Washington, this reading material is of much value. Regularly we receive the radio sermons, Standard Bearer, and Beacon Lights. A word of thanks from both of us!

Cpl. & Mrs. Wm. Kamps (Creston)

Somewhere in France

Dear Friends:

It is sort of hard for me to start this letter. It isn't because I don't want to write, but because that in my two years of army service I have never written you before and I am ashamed of it. I surely hope I can improve that score in the future. Beacon Lights has always followed me wherever I have been. During the past 13 months that I have been overseas, I have never missed a copy and I want you and all the readers to know that your efforts to make Beacon Lights the magazine it is are really and truly appreciated by those of us who are in the service. It was through Beacon Lights that I found out that Wm. Koster of Roosevelt Park was in the same battalion I am although he is in a different battery. We met in Africa and since then we have spent many happy hours together both in Africa and England. We would arrange to meet at every opportunity and I'm sure we both enjoyed them. Needless to say our conversation was

always about the same topics: home, church and loved ones. Since we came to France it has not been possible for us to get together, at least not yet, although I surely hope to. Let me say that Beacon Lights and our other church magazines and papers do mean much to us and do help to bridge those thousands of miles between us. May God bless you and give you strength to continue your work.

Yours in Christ,

Cpl. Jacob Regnerus (Oskaloosa)

England, February, 1945

Dear Friends:

I received the January copy of Beacon. Lights and was very glad to get it. I have been at this rehabilitation center for some weeks now, and expect very shortly to be heading back up. Everything seems to be going pretty well at this end of the line.

Well, I will close for now, hoping everything is fine back home.

Sincerely,

John P. Hazenberg (Fuller) ❖

Gem of the Month

STORMS

*When lightnings blaze and thunders crash
Thy white-hot anger speaks
With fury unsurpassed,
Resounding, crackling shrieks.*

*I watch in awe as skies are rent,
Thy dreadful power is shown;
Thy wrath against all those
Who hate Thee: God alone.*

*And midst the howling clamor
I feel peaceful and secure;
Thy awesome power: my shield,
My trust in Thee is sure.*

*Thy children need not fear Thy wrath,
In Thy sight they are clean—
Redeemed through Jesus' blood;
Mid storms they stand serene.*

Thelma Westra

Watching Daily At My Gates

The Song of Zion

“A Psalter–Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God”

by John Huizenga

May 1-15 in the April issue

May 16 Psalm 18:31-34; Psalter 35:5

For who is God? Who is the creator of all things? Who is almighty? Who is a strong rock to uphold confidence? Who directs the wind and storms? Who has power to turn the heart of kings? Where can the soul find rest? The God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. The God of Israel. Our God is God alone. He is Jehovah, the God of covenant friendship. The God who takes His people into fellowship with Himself. David sings: this God girds me with strength. He gives His strength to me as it were a coat of armor. He makes my way perfect. This means that every part of my life has by God’s sovereign grace been made perfectly smooth in that it leads straight to God’s purpose and goal for me. David was an extremely powerful and fast warrior. This also he acknowledges to be a gift of God. In the way God prepares for us, he also teaches us to do battle against sin in a way beyond normal human strength.

May 17 Psalm 18:35

What man on earth would say that gentleness and meekness makes one great? Among men a gentle spirit never brings glory and power. If you want to get ahead, you must trample the weak and conquer the strong. Pity for others will keep you forever out of the top ranks. But with God everything is different. He is sovereign and therefore looks down with mercy upon the poor and contrite to exalt them without ever giving up His sovereignty. God came to His people in Christ who humbled Himself even unto the cross. Again we see that God’s sovereign good pleasure and love is at the heart of our salvation. God’s salvation, not all the benefits of that salvation for David, was the shield that protected David from all evil. God’s sovereign election saves, not the work we do.

May 18 Psalm 18:36-42; Psalter 36:1

The verses today describe the bloody and complete warfare of David. The sentence structure reveals the proper relationship between God’s sovereign control over His people and their activity in the earth. “Thou hast given ... that I might destroy them that hate me.” Christ has said that the wicked will hate us because they first hated Christ. We are the means whereby God destroys the wicked to His own glory and our salvation. The Psalter number brings out the obvious practical instruction that when God gives of His strength to con-

quer, we do not forsake the battle to pursue our own goals and pleasures, but rather set out immediately to conquer in His Name. We sin when we forsake our spiritual battle and make friends with the enemy. In all that we do, we must walk the antithesis and give God the glory.

May 19 Psalm 18:43-45; Psalter 36:2

Peace is the goal in the spiritual battle. Peace comes to a nation when the people in that nation cease their striving and the people all around that nation willingly submit and obey the king. When Jacob blessed his son Judah he said that earthly kings would rule in his line until Shiloh come (Genesis 49:10). Shiloh is the name that means “Prince of Peace” and refers to Christ. David was in the line of Judah, and Solomon was the type of Christ as the Prince of Peace. Today the people of God from every nation are being gathered and they humbly submit and obey Christ the head of the church. Christ has conquered the kingdom of Satan and crushed his power. Peace that passes all understanding fills the soul of him who lives daily under the lordship of Christ.

May 20 Psalm 18:46-48; Psalter 36:3

Is God alive for you? Do you experience the work of God in your life strengthening you in your battle against sin, comforting you in your sorrows, speaking to you in His word? Calvin writes “the life which David attributes to God is ... to be understood of the evidence of it deducible from his works, which manifest to us that he liveth. Whenever he withdraws the working of his power from before our eyes, the sense and cognizance of the truth, ‘God liveth,’ also evanishes from our minds.” Pray that God will live before you each day. With thankful obedience in all our life let us praise and exalt God who saves the humble in Christ, and justly punishes the wicked who desire to drag us with them on their way to hell.

May 21 Psalm 18:49; Psalter 36:4

Thanksgiving is the response we have to the love and sovereign good pleasure of God to save us. We give thanks and praise unto Jehovah our covenant God. We are not ashamed to voice our thanks and praise among the nations of the world. Our desire is that all peoples of the earth hear and know the wonderful works of God. David made sure that the name of God was praised and exalted throughout his whole kingdom so that the nations round about knew about the God of Israel.

Do your neighbors know that you are a Christian? Do they stand in awe at the work of God in you? For a thorough exposition of this text read the reprint in this issue of Rev. Ophof's work.

May 22 Psalm 18:50; Psalter 36:5

David was God's king. God had chosen him and anointed him to that office. David did not usurp that authority as his enemies falsely charged. Since God had by His sovereign good pleasure chosen David to be king, He gave him the victory over all his enemies. "All who enter on any course without having the call of God, are chargeable with avowedly making war against him" (Calvin). We must humbly submit to God's word and obey if we are to expect the blessing of God. David saw God's mercy and extends God's promise to his seed forevermore. That seed is Solomon as a type, and Christ as the full reality. In Christ we see the mercy of God. Our election also is confirmed in us when we experience the work of God in us to deliver us from sin and death.

May 23 Psalm 19:1, 2; Psalter 37:1; 39:1

Study of a particular building will tell you something about the architect. Art will tell you about the feelings, ideas, and personality of the artist. God, our heavenly Father, and our Creator has fashioned for us a glorious dwelling place. Paradise surrounded man with everything necessary to satisfy his desires of taste, sight, touch, smell, and hearing. At night the high vaulted blue ceiling of the heavens became studded with lights. There is no place we can turn without seeing the handiwork of God. That handiwork of God tells us something about God: He is glorious beyond measure. But seeing God in his handiwork is not enough for the child of God who desires that God speak to him with words and that He dwell with him in the house He has made. God walked with Adam in the garden of Eden, but we the church long for the day when we live with Christ our husband in the new heavens and earth forever.

May 24 Psalm 19:3, 4a; Psalter 37:2; 39:2

All who dwell in this house of creation, with its high vaulted ceiling, glorious plants, animals, and other gifts see the glory of the Creator. It matters not what language they speak, all observe the same house and hear with understanding the language with which the handiwork of God speaks. Just as a piece of art painted by a Chinese man can tell a Dutch man something about the artist even though he could not understand one syllable of Chinese, so God who has created all things including man who sees it speaks instantly and to all men about His glory. The word "line" is understood by commentators to mean either a measuring string, written line for writing words, or sound. Either way, the point of the text is that the glory of God is manifest to every man, woman and child of the earth. This is a manifestation of God which condemns those who hate God, and thrills the heart of the believer.

May 25 Psalm 19:4b, 5; Psalter 37:3; 39:3

Of all the features of the creation, the sun is most prominent. From the perspective of man, the heavens form a taber-

nacle, or tent, for the sun. As the sun approaches its entrance from the east the tabernacle of the starry heavens begins to fade. Without hesitation, with joyful eagerness, the sun quickly mounts up and across the sky. The sun is like a bridegroom who comes out of his chamber. At the time of David, this chamber was a portable canopy supported by four poles held up by four boys under which the bridal pair were married. The bridegroom comes forth with joy. The desire of his heart for a partner is satisfied and he goes forth to enjoy the new day. The sun is a picture of Christ. He is at the center of God's eternal counsel. He is the Bridegroom that will be united with His bride, the church. May the rising sun each morning draw our minds to that day of life eternal with God in heaven.

May 26 Psalm 19:6; Psalter 37:4; 39:4

The sun rises from one end of heaven and continues across the sky until it sets again at the other end of heaven. Nothing on the earth is untouched by its heat. Declaring the glory of God, nothing on earth is untouched by the penetrating voice of God in creation. Remember, the sun is a picture of Christ. God is pleased not only to manifest his power and glory in the creation, but also to send the gospel of salvation in Christ alone to all peoples of the earth. The preaching of Christ comes forth with joy and strength as a strong man running a race. God sends missionaries and preachers out into the world to gather the church. Let us be mindful of our missionaries and ministers in prayer.

May 27 Psalm 19:7; Psalter 38:1; 40:1; 41:1

Having begun this Psalm with the word of God spoken by means of all creation, the psalmist now launches into a growing crescendo of praise of God's work of salvation. Note the change in names from "God" to "Jehovah." The word of nature declares God to us, the word of Scripture declares Jehovah. Nature declares God's power and glory, the Scriptures declare His counsel and will. The "law" is God's pointing out, instruction, doctrine or teaching. For those redeemed in Christ the law is not a curse, but a revelation of God's mercy and justice and a rule for the direction of our free and willing obedience. God has given a law to all creation so that all living and material things work together in marvelous harmony, but the law which God has given to man brings him into the very covenant fellowship of God Himself. The "testimony" of Jehovah is the ten commandments which include warnings to guide weak and sinful creatures such as us in the way which is good and true.

May 28 Psalm 19:8, 9; Psalter 38:2; 40:2, 3; 41:2, 3

In verse 8 the law of God is further described as "statutes" and "commandment." These words both refer to God's declarations concerning what man must do. His statutes are right or straight because they proceed from the absolutely good will of God and lead along the straight path of holiness, the only way that leads to heavenly fellowship with God, the only way to contentment and peace of heart. The commandment of Jehovah is pure. No mixture of error defiles it. It is a light that

makes the will of God clear to our mind and soul. The “fear of the LORD” is not an act performed but is a precept which God’s revelation demands, affects, and maintains. Awe, reverence, and giving glory to God is the revealed way in which God is to be worshipped. The fear of the Lord is the only way to worship God. It endures forever. All other worship carries with it condemnation. May we fear God and know that He is righteous altogether in all that He wills and does.

May 29 Psalm 19:10, 11; Psalter 38:3; 40:4; 41:4

A hand full of pure gold is very beautiful and has in itself value and power to give you the things your flesh desires; but our flesh quickly fades and gold will not bring true peace and joy. The taste of honey, not honey from a store, honey that drips straight from the cells of the honeycomb is unforgettable. It has a refreshing sweetness and wonderful smell. God so works in the heart of His people that the desire for God far exceeds the desire for the greatest earthly pleasures. The words of God which govern every aspect of life endure forever. We are His servants and He warns us of danger and rewards the keeping of His word with eternal life. Though the instruction is clear, we find ourselves so often way off the path and deep into sin. Tomorrow we come to God with the psalmist in prayer for sanctification.

May 30 Psalm 19:12, 13; Psalter 38:4; 40:5; 41:5, 6

Since the law of God is perfect, more to be desired than gold, sweeter than honey, perfect and clear instruction for the way which leads to everlasting life, why would anyone depart

from that way? It makes no sense. The word “errors” means “strayings.” In the original, “strayings” is put first in the sentence for emphasis. When we turn to read God’s word, we so often discover that we have once again strayed far from the commandments of God. These strayings, who can understand them! Sin is rooted so deeply in our nature we are dead and unable to obey God by ourselves. When we think we have overcome one sin, we grow more sensitive and discover more sin. We try to hide and cover sin, but it does not work. The only thing to do is cry out to God for his work of justification, cleansing us from sin and making us innocent in Christ. Only by knowing our righteousness in Christ, can we begin to escape the dominion of sinful pride and walk in that path of righteousness.

May 31 Psalm 19:14; Psalter 38:5; 40:6; 41:7

We can speak with our lips, think, and meditate upon God, but even our best works are defiled with sin. We must pray that God cleanse even our prayers that they be acceptable before God’s holy and pure eyes. We must not pray to be seen and heard of men. Recognize that we pray to Jehovah, the covenant God who will strengthen us. He is our Redeemer. The word for “redeemer” refers to the kinsman redeemer of the Old Testament who buys back a relative’s property as Boaz redeemed Ruth. Redemption is an expression of tender love, compassion, and mercy. We come to God in prayer knowing Him in Christ as our faithful covenant God and savior.

Devotional

Watching Daily At My Gates

The Song of Zion

“A Psalter–Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God”

by John Huizenga

June 1 Psalm 20:1-2; Psalter 43:1; 44:1, 2

Do you pray for others? Do you pray on behalf of the church and the kingdom of Christ? David instructed the people how to pray for him as the king over the people of God, and Christ is teaching us today in this verse how to pray on behalf of the church which Christ presently gathers and preserves. Literally we read and sing “May Jehovah hear thee.” May Jehovah hear David, and today “may Jehovah hear Christ,” the reality of David. “Since Christ our King, being an everlasting priest, never ceases to make intercession with God, the whole body of the Church should unite in prayer with him; and farther, we

can have no hope of being heard except he go before us and conduct us to God” (Calvin’s Commentary). Let us pray knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ knows the troubles and needs of His Church, and pray to the name of the God of Jacob, “Jehovah,” “our Father’s God,” our covenant-keeping God,” as the Psalter reads. We can not know His holy essence, but we know Him by His work within our heart and His mighty acts in history.

June 2 Psalm 20:2, 3; Psalter 43:2; 44:3

Uniting in prayer with Christ we pray “May Jehovah remember thy sacrifice on the cross.” The idea of “remember”

is “to have regard to.” May Jehovah show that the King’s sacrifice is acceptable to Him. Before going out to battle, King David would have sacrifices offered up to God, and God would manifest that He received the sacrifice in the way of victory. Christ offered Himself up once to cleanse the people of God and bring victory forever over death and sin. The “selah” calls us to pause and meditate upon the wonder of the cross of Christ, and lift up our eyes to the glorious fruits of salvation. We pray that Jehovah would grant the desire of Christ’s heart which is in harmony with the eternal counsel of God: to save His people and set Christ over them forever as King. The word of God saying “this is my Son in whom I am well pleased,” and the fact of Christ’s resurrection and ascension come to us as an answer to this prayer. We are saved indeed.

June 3 Psalm 20:5; Psalter 43:3; 44:4

The people of God sang the song of victory in faith, before the battle was won. How much more ought we who live in the day of victory sing the song of triumph! The song of Zion, though often a song of sorrow, is always sung in faith and ends in joy and triumph. Do you rejoice in God’s salvation? There are many who imagine they can rejoice in their “decision for Christ.” There are others who come to church with a long face of boredom because they do not engage in the spiritual battle and therefore do not know the joy of victory in Christ. God is pleased to lift His people up in joy in the way of continuous warfare and battles against sin within our own lives, as well as within the church. In this way, the name of God receives all the praise and glory in Christ.

June 4 Psalm 20:6; Psalter 43:4

“Now I know.” These are the bold words of an assured confidence. The church united as one body says “now I know that Jehovah saveth His anointed.” How does she know? God works it in His people by the power of His Spirit in the way of earnest prayer and opening their eyes to His word and faithfulness to His people in the past. The people of God, knowing that God has been faithful in the past, and seeing that God has anointed one to be King, knows that God will complete His kingdom. The church, with Paul, is “confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). Do you know that the LORD saveth his anointed? Come to His house, pray with the saints, and He will work that confidence in your heart.

June 5 Psalm 20:7; Psalter 43:5

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who trust in human help and those who trust in God. There is no such thing as getting some help from men, and some help from God. Either you put all your trust in God, or all your trust in men. You are either an unbeliever, or a believer. The believer understands that he needs help from fellow men and the inventions of men in order to fulfill his calling to work in this earth, and he recognizes that these things are limited to this earth. When it comes to knowing how he must use these things and conduct his life, he puts all his trust in God’s word. God’s

word directs him in all things toward the goal of eternal life with God. “How vain their ev’ry confidence who on mere human help rely.”

June 6 Psalm 20:8, 9; Psalter 43:6

Those who trust in man may seem at first to stand and prosper well while those who trust in God may be afflicted with suffering and poverty. But our King reigns and all things in this world are serving His people in that all things work together for their salvation. In the judgment day, those who trust in men and stand tall in this earth will be sent to hell, while those who lay humbly before God will be lifted up and exalted to everlasting glory. Jesus, our exalted Lord and King will be in the judgment seat. Let us come to our King who has been given all power and authority to bring the people of God into heaven and pray for deliverance from the sin and misery of this life.

June 7 Psalm 21

Notice the titles of the next few numbers in the Psalter. They speak of Christ, the cross, the spreading of the gospel, the dominion of Christ, and in number 58, the ascension of Christ. At the time the Holy Spirit inspired David to write these Psalms, the words of Psalm 20 and 21 express the hearts of the people of God as they come before God with matters that concern the welfare of their king. They pray for victory in war, they praise God with thanksgiving and hope in victory. The people rally around their king and look to him for deliverance from the enemy nations that surround them. The people are united under their king. As we noticed in the previous Psalm, the kinship of David is a type of Christ’s kingship. Read Psalm 21 and think of Christ each time you read “king.” Think of Christ during the time of His temptation in the wilderness. Hum the tunes of Psalter 45 and 46 and scan the words.

June 8 Psalm 21:1; Psalter 46:1

Just as David was overwhelmed with joy when God so strengthened him that he was able to conquer the enemies and bring peace to the people of God, so Jesus our Lord and King rejoiced greatly when Jehovah God strengthened Him to defeat Satan in the wilderness and conquer death on the cross. Notice the emphasis on the strength given by God. David lived in close fellowship with God, knowing that God was using him as a mere instrument to give peace to His people. David gave God all the glory. Though Jesus is God, He needed to be strengthened by God in His human nature. David was close to God, but Jesus is God and man in one person. Jesus needed to be very man and very God “that he might, by the power of his Godhead, sustain in his human nature the burden of God’s wrath; and might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life” (HC LD 6).

June 9 Psalm 21:2; Psalter 45:1

The king was filled with joy because God had “filled his heart’s desire” (Psalter). Christ’s desire is directed only to God’s glory in the way of the salvation of His people. We, the

people of God, must pay close attention to the work of Christ our king just as the people gathered around David to hear him pray to God and speak to them of God. We must see that we do not stand alone as individuals praying to God, but we stand as a body united in Christ our King. We must hear the word together, and our prayers united in Christ who intercedes for us. “We may gather hence the very profitable doctrine, that we need entertain no apprehension that God will reject our prayers in behalf of the church, since our heavenly King has gone before us in making intercession for her, so that in praying for her we are only endeavouring to follow his example” (Calvin Commentary).

June 10 Psalm 21:3; Psalter 46:2

To “prevent” in this verse means “to give prior to the request in anticipation of the request, and to give more abundantly than the request.” Psalter 46:2 reads “Thy blessings meet Him on His ways.” The idea is that when one sets out down a road to get something he wants, that thing comes to meet him before he covers the whole distance. We find an example of this in Solomon who asked for wisdom and was given riches, wealth, and honor in addition to wisdom. Christ Himself is wisdom, and He, living in perfect harmony with the will of God, receives all His desire, even the salvation of God’s people, because all these things have been forever in the eternal counsel of God. Christ does not make Himself king, but He is anointed and crowned by God. His rule and dominion is the fulfillment of God’s eternal counsel. Pray that Christ would rule in your heart to make you obedient today.

June 11 Psalm 21:4; Psalter 45:2

Life is dear to the living creature. Life brings us into fellowship with the living God. David prayed that God would spare his life in the battle, and God gave him length of days for ever and ever. This life forever is not limited only to David and his eternal life of salvation, but this life is the continuing royal generations of David that end in the birth of Jesus. In Christ the continued earthly life in generations was fulfilled in the eternal life earned on the cross. Note how in this verse also, God receives all the glory. He is the only source of life. God gave eternal life to His Son, and it is in Christ alone that we receive eternal life.

June 12 Psalm 21:5; Psalter 46:3

The earthly king and kingdom receives its glory, riches, treasures, glamour and glitter from his own wisdom, resources, and conquests. Borneo is an extremely wealthy nation in the East which glitters with gold and wealth gotten from rich oil resources. The earthly glory of Solomon’s kingdom was beyond comprehension. Yet the people, watching the kingdom grow in glory, did not say “look at what David is doing,” but rather confessed that the glory of David was great in the salvation and deliverance which God had given. The believing Israelites “set more value upon this, that God graciously showed himself favorable towards their king, than upon all

the triumphs of the world” (Calvin). Do you value God’s favor upon His only begotten Son more than earthly gains?

June 13 Psalm 21:6; Psalter 45:3

The King, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is filled with joy as He reigns over all things and draws His people as lost sheep into the fold. He has joy because God, His heavenly Father looks upon Him in favor. The word “gladden” comes from a word the nomads used meaning “to cheer the beasts of burden with a song and urge them on to a quicker pace.” In general it means “to cheer, enliven.” There is no more desirable state than to be cheerful and at peace. May we be encouraged in this life of sin and sorrow knowing that Christ rules in joyful victory bringing the children of God to know and love God in this life, and preserving them to the end.

June 14 Psalm 21:7; Psalter 45:4; 46:4

Trust in Jehovah, our covenant God, is an essential ingredient to joy and peace. David was a mighty king, but he did not put his trust in his own strength and imagine himself to be the greatest. Within the intimate, joyful fellowship of the triune God, Christ the King who reigns supreme finds the source of His strength in the faithful covenant promise of God to save His people in mercy. Our God is a faithful God. May we ever put our trust in Him. Though God’s plan for our life appear at times to be so confusing, strange, or difficult, we must remember that God is merciful and faithful. We can not begin to fathom the depth of His wisdom and counsel. May we find comfort in Christ who took upon Him the sins of His people and now stands in joyous victory before the favorable countenance of God.

June 15 Psalm 21:8-11; Psalter 45:5

Christ reigns victorious, but He continues to deliver His people from the enemy. As we daily struggle against sin and the attacks of Satan to make us doubt and grow weak in faith, we are assured that the hand of our King will “find out those that hate thee.” Those who hate us hate Christ. God does not bring complete destruction now, but waits for the day appointed when all the elect are born and drawn into fellowship with God. Then God will destroy with fire every being that stands opposed to His holy will. Until then we lay our eyes upon Christ through the reading of the Word, prayer, and hearing the preaching of faithful ministers.

June 16 Psalm 21:12-13; Psalter 45:6

The glory of God is the goal of all things. When we experience the work of God within our hearts to turn us away from sin unto humble repentance, we respond in songs of praise. The way of sin and deliverance is the way of glory to God. The way of Satan and his devils is the way of exalting the creature in proud rebellion. Yet all that is evil is creaturely and not God. God will surely smash the rebellious uprising with haste and completely. By nature we are totally depraved, inclined in all things to exalt ourselves, but the renewed child of God is completely changed. He sees his great sin, he re-

pents, he is turned toward God, and he sings and praises the power of God.

June 17 Psalm 22:1, 2; Psalter 47:1 (1 Samuel 23:25ff)

This Psalm is the psalm of the cross. Psalm 21:6 reveals the highest joy of Christ and, in contrast, the first verse of Psalm 22 reveals the greatest depth of misery ever experienced. This Psalm was written by David under the persecution by Saul. Just as David had to traverse a path of suffering before ascending the throne, so Jesus had to suffer on the cross before His glorious ascension to the throne of heaven. The cry of this verse expresses alienation and yearning. He feels himself rejected of God, the feeling of God's wrath completely surrounds him, yet behind that wrath is felt by faith the hidden love of God. No one ever felt the oppressing wrath of His God more fully than Christ as he bore the punishment of our sins. (Mark 15:34 and context).

June 18 Psalm 22:3-4; Psalter 47:2

We will never find peace outside of the church. For a time, David was separated from the people of God while being hunted down by Saul, and the lack of fellowship and communion with God in church was draining his spiritual strength. Instead of becoming bitter toward God, He began to meditate upon God as He had revealed Himself. God did not change, He is holy and unchangeable. He is pleased to bless His people by means of the church. He is pleased to be "enthroned upon Thy people's praise." David was out of place and he found comfort looking forward to the day when he could be reunited with the people of God. Let us remember the needs of the small congregations. Let us never think we can stand on our own outside of the church institute.

June 19 Psalm 22:5-6; Psalter 47:3

David confesses God's faithfulness to his fathers, yet he feels utterly despised and begs for God's mercy. Begging for mercy can be humiliating and degrading. If two are fighting and one pins the other down so that escape is impossible, the victor can further exalt himself at the expense of the loser by forcing out all sorts of pitiful pleas for mercy. All the loser can do is humble himself in hopes of stirring up some pity. The rebellion of Satan, his fallen angels, and fallen man was crushed by God when He spoke to Adam and Eve, but man was so depraved and lifted up in pride that he will never humble himself before God and repent. Satan and all who fall with him would rather perish in hell than turn back to God. But God in love for His chosen sent His only begotten Son who humbled Himself to death on the cross to earn the power and right of turning the hearts of the elect back to God. May we be humble in Christ and confess our unworthiness to be saved.

June 20 Psalm 22:7, 8; Psalter 47:4

These very words were said of Jesus when He hung upon the cross (Matthew 27:39-43). He suffered the most bitter shame and humility before man. To stick out the lower lip is, in the East, considered a very strong show of contempt. Shaking the head is a gesture of surprise and astonishment at some-

thing strange and unexpected. You know the feeling when someone takes your own words or actions, twists or exaggerates them, and then expresses to everyone around their astonishment at such stupidity. We lash out at those who mock us even for things we do that are really foolish. Christ was willing to give up every shred of human dignity out of obedience to His Father. They pretended to love God and charged Him with hypocrisy. When others revile us and cast our sins before our face, we must be ready to come before God with humble prayer imploring God's forgiveness in Christ.

June 21 Psalm 22:9-10; Psalter 47:5

Under the terrible attacks of the wicked David puts up a fortress of defense by proclaiming the miracle of his conception, birth, and trust in the Lord from his youth. Conception and birth is a wonder of God. We easily grow accustomed to the birth of children and Calvin writes "if ingratitude did not put upon our eyes the veil of stupidity, we would be ravished with admiration at every childbirth in the world." David is able, in this time of affliction, to think upon the shepherd hand of God shown to him by his godly mother who raised him in the fear of God. You can be very thankful if God has been pleased to bring you into a godly home from birth and take you to be His child. Let us also remember the miracle of Christ's birth and the wonder of God with man in our times of weak faith.

June 22 Psalm 22:11; Psalter 47:6

When we see ourselves as we really are in ourselves before God: dead in trespasses and sins, then we humbly confess "there is none to help me." We do not look for help in our own ideas and philosophies about how to find peace and happiness. We do not muster up our own courage to stand up and come forth to the altar and accept Christ. We simply pray that God will come near and strengthen. The Psalter reads "O let thy strength and presence cheer." God alone, by bringing Himself near and drawing us is able to strengthen our faith. In those times when all we can pray is "O God help me," let us do it with the assurance that God will help.

June 23 Psalm 22:12-14

David compares his enemies to huge bulls and lions that charge at him from all sides with horns lowered and long teeth bared. Who would not tremble at this nightmarish scene? David says that he was limp and could be poured out like water, so oppressed and afraid he was. His heart also, by means of temptations and spiritual struggles, melted like wax. That one is moved to gather the most terrible situations in this earth to describe the affliction of the wicked surely knows the battle with sin. How often do we come to God in prayer and express our daily afflictions and battles with sin in such vivid language? We find great comfort in God only by knowing how great our sins and miseries are, and how we are delivered from those sins and miseries.

June 24 Psalm 22:15, 16; Psalter 47:8

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst” (John 19:28). All through the Old Testament God so worked history that a complete portrait of Jesus was painted before He came so that every believer might recognize Him. Here David, recalling his own suffering, directs us to the intense suffering of Christ which words only begin to describe. A potsherd is a broken piece of pot left on the bottom of the kiln that becomes extremely dry and brittle after repeated exposure to the intense heat of the kiln. Even the piercing of the hands of Jesus is foretold here, and in Isaiah 53:5 & Zech. 12:10. Facing the increasing pressure of wicked men, let us remember that their fierce animal rage against Christ and every believer is met with the infinite wrath of God against them to destroy them utterly.

June 25 Psalm 22:17, 18; Psalter 47:9

The Old Testament scriptures reveal more of the scene of Jesus’ crucifixion. David was not literally stripped of his clothes while being pursued by Saul, but the Spirit of Christ speaking these words that describe David’s condition of being stripped of his possessions and glory, speaks about the literal fulfillment in Christ on the cross. “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat:” (John 19:23). Having nailed Jesus to the cross, the wicked nature of man comes to full expression in the brutal mockery of His wasted form. His body is so wasted and stretched that the bones can be numbered. How marvelous is the love of God who by grace washes such sin away in the blood of Christ.

June 26 Psalm 22:19-21; Psalter 47:10

Though David was overwhelmed with despair, he did not cry out thinking his lamentations to be vain. There was no hope in human earthly strength, the only hope he had was the knowledge that God was hearing him. This knowledge is faith which God gives to His people. It is the bond which unites us to God. Faith firmly implants us as a tender branch into the firm trunk of a tree which is Christ. The gift of life becomes so precious when faced with death. David speaks of life when he says “my soul” and “my darling.” Every living creature clings to life as long as possible. Though we are alive physically, we are all by nature dead spiritually. God gives us new life in Christ, and we must so cherish our spiritual life, our faith, our knowledge of the truth, that we cry out to God whenever the enemy threatens.

June 27 Psalm 22:22; Psalter 47:11; 51:1

God heard the cry of David and delivered him from the hand of Saul. Saul had surrounded the mountain upon which David and his men had fled, but then a messenger came to tell Saul that the Philistines had invaded, and Saul left (1 Samuel 23:27,28). David does not think only of himself, but makes known that his salvation is also the salvation of all his brethren. When Christ conquered death on the cross and arose in

victory, he proclaimed victory for all His brethren as well. He sends His Spirit to comfort and to assure them of salvation in His victory (Hebrews 2:9-15). May the doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Christ continue to be heard from our pulpits. May the voice of Christ proclaiming the doctrines of sovereign grace continue to be heard and result in the praise of God.

June 28 Psalm 22:23; Psalter 48:1; 50:1

We turn now to some different Psalter numbers with different titles which correspond to a transition in the psalm from the cross of Christ to His triumphal resurrection and ascension. The glory of God is the goal and end of all things having been created and continually governed by God. David now turns his attention away from the enemy and toward “my brethren,” “the congregation,” “ye that fear the LORD,” “ye seed of Jacob,” “ye seed of Israel.” We notice that David limits his attention to those in Israel who fear the LORD. Not all are Israel who are of Israel (Romans 9:6ff). The true Israel, brethren of Christ, are those who fear God. They are “the children of His grace” (Psalter 51). May we live today as a child of God showing forth His praise in our words and actions.

June 29 Psalm 22:24; Psalter 48:2

Why does David praise God? Why does our resurrected Lord praise Jehovah God? Why does the Word of God go forth from the pulpits exhorting the congregations to praise God? Because God is a God who does not despise nor abhor the afflicted. God does not seek out the strong, the attractive, or those who are able to prove themselves worthy. Many despise a God who loves the lowly and invent their own god who takes into heaven those who decide they want him to be their god. “Let him, therefore, that desires to be of the seed of Israel, and to rejoice in the grace of the gospel, become poor, for this is a fixed truth, our God is one that has respect unto the poor!” (Luther) May we find grace to act as a child of God, as the good Samaritan who did not despise one in great need.

June 30 Psalm 22:25; Psalter 48:3; 51:2

Even in giving praise, David confesses that his praise is not his own, but that it comes from God. God is the author of all that is good. We have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. God is pleased to multiply praise by bringing His people together into a great congregation where they join one who has experienced the joy of deliverance. David paid his vows by making a thank offering in which all the people ate of the sacrifice in a great feast of joy. Christ makes us partakers of the fruits of His suffering when we partake of the Lord’s Supper. May every young person who meditates upon this word of God be encouraged to praise God in the great congregation by making confession of his or her faith. The congregation will rejoice and praise God with you.

Your Life Will Change Today (Are You Ready?)

by Jeanine Huizenga

When you wake up this morning and someone asks,
 “So, what are your plans today?”
Be careful before you say,
 “Nothing special”
For God has a way
 In which the seemingly small and mundane,
Will affect the rest of your life.

You say your first words
 Take your first steps
You get your first tooth
 Or a burn on your hand
Your life has changed today.

Today you start school
 See God in every subject
You talk about one behind her back
 Encourage a friend in his faith
You get hit in the head with a puck and
 need stitches
You act selfishly, or
 Give in, and compromise
You sing your first song, learn how to pray
 Learn to play the violin
You resist the urge to cheat on a test
 Lie to your parents and get away with it
You memorize a Bible verse
 Get rejected by a friend
You fall from a tree and hit your head
 You're unable to awake
Your life has changed today.

Today you give of yourself unconditionally
 In the service of God's kingdom
You make a judgment without compassion
 Give into peer pressure
You stand strong and don't give in to sin
 Take a foolish challenge and nothing bad happened
You change your point of view
 You ask another for help

You learn that you can fool your parents
 That they really don't have a clue
You take your first drink
 Smoke your first cigarette
You decide to try marijuana, just this once
 See your first movie
You go on your first date
 Get your first kiss
You learn to drive
 Get in a car accident
Your life has changed today.

Today you graduate from school
 Make confession of faith
You leave home
 Realize that your parents aren't always right
You accept they have sins of their own to battle
 Understand that they knew more than you ever
 thought
You get lost on your way, do you ask for help?
 Hear of a trial in someone's life
You decide you can be friends with someone who doesn't
 love God
 Find your help meet
You give less than 100% at your job today
 Take supplies or products from the work place
You take credit for someone else's work or ideas
 Make someone else look bad
You buy something new
 But have no clue how you were going to pay for it
Your life has changed today.

Today you have surgery
 Need therapy
You find out that you have cancer, high blood pressure
 Diabetes, high cholesterol
You are living in pain
 Develop a rare disease
You decide to live a healthier life
 Quit smoking

You lose a loved one
Find out you are expecting
Your life has changed today.

Today you decide that divorce and remarriage is a gray area

Christ is not preaching off the pulpit; it's just a man
You decide we need learn to tolerate everyone

Homosexuality is not a sin

You decide skipping church was ok just this once

To do something in "Christian liberty" that others find offensive

You decide sleeping in church is acceptable,

After all I'm busy and find it hard to stay awake

You give of your firstfruits to the church, willingly

Obediently follow in God's way

You are voted in as elder or deacon

Asked for forgiveness, humbled yourself

You read your Bible

Your life has changed today.

In every decision or circumstances

There is always a first,

The second time is easier

The approach you take will be a stepping-stone

To make you, who you will become

Understanding this, you most definitely say

MY LIFE HAS CHANGED TODAY!

Jeanine is a member of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

Letter to the Editor

Clarification on Rev. C. Hanko Memoir

Dear Editor,

Many of our readers have told me how much they are enjoying the memoir of Rev. C. Hanko. These comments are much appreciated. However, I thought it might be helpful to clarify some matters.

First of all, it's important to remember that a memoir is by nature autobiographical. Rev. Hanko wrote at least three lengthy documents about his own life and our churches after his retirement from the active ministry. These documents are what our readers are seeing published in the *Beacon Lights*. The story is his, the words are his, and the writing style is his. That means that my work as editor includes the following: merging the various documents into one; adding transitional paragraphs and words to make the new document flow; changing some of the chapter breaks to make them better fit the article format of the *Beacon Lights*; editing out some of the sensitive material that could prove embarrassing to individuals or churches (while we did obtain permission to publish the memoir before Rev. Hanko died, we are not certain that everything he wrote was

intended for public consumption); adding editorial comments at the beginning of each installment; adding endnotes to clarify a point; adding material from his personal correspondence and from interviews that I conducted with him in the early 90s.

Secondly, a memoir is the author's memories of events that transpired in his life. They are his memories, and thus colored by his perspective. Some of our readers may remember an event a bit differently from what is recorded in the memoir. These differences are sometimes due merely to the different perspectives of the individuals involved. However, there were times, as with all of us, that Rev. Hanko's memory was faulty. Therefore, I have tried to verify the historicity of the memoir as much as possible. But seeing as Rev. Hanko has been gathered to his heavenly home, this is no longer always feasible. We appreciate the readers' forbearance in this regard.

Thank you,

Karen Van Baren ❖

Rev. C. Hanko

Chapter 12

Seminary Training

edited by Karen Van Baren

Editor's note: The trials continued through the spring and summer of 1927. This time they came in the form of sickness and death in the author's own family. But his training for the ministry continued, in spite of this difficult first year.

In April of 1926, my sister Lucy, who had married Bern Woudenberg, had her first baby at our home. It became evident almost at once that the child had certain infirmities which would result in an early death. About a month later the baby died. About that time, my mother's step mother in Byron Center also died.

On May 30 of the same year, my brother Fred died after an operation for a ruptured ulcer. For some time he had complained of pain in his stomach. One Saturday he was at the job when severe pains gripped him. These were so severe that he could not drive the car. My dad called me to come and drive him home. The doctor was called. Fred was taken to the hospital. But the doctor failed to diagnose the cause of the pain. On Sunday another doctor was called in to perform the operation, but the infection had already spread through his abdomen. On Sunday morning he died. He had planned to marry in three weeks.

My parents grieved sorely over the loss of their older son. My father felt as if his right hand had been taken from him. Because of my father's sorrow, I felt compelled to keep him active by working along with him as much as possible. Daily he had to be brought to the job in the morning and taken home at night. Father took very little interest in his business any more. He was getting on in years and had intended to pass the business over to Fred. He soon gave up, especially as his eyesight was failing on account of the diabetes he had had for some time.

There were now but two professors at the seminary, but peace and harmony were restored. Five of the ten students who attended classes the first year dropped out, but three new ones entered the seminary that fall of 1926:

Andrew Cammenga, John De Jong, and Bernard Kok. Everything ran much smoother and even the practice preaching was a much less terrifying experience. During the first year, practice preaching was very uncomfortable. Not only did we have to bear the sharp criticism of the professors, but while we were delivering the sermon, most of the students lay back in their seats with their legs on the desks. About all one could see of them was two feet. All this changed drastically during the second year. Emphasis was placed on the fact that we were dealing with the Word of God and things holy. There was much more reverence in the entire experience.

Shortly after the second year started, I came down with rheumatic fever. I had pain sometimes in the ankle, sometimes in the knee or elbow. For one whole week I lay in bed swallowing pills that caused me to perspire to the extent that even the bedding was daily wet and yellow with sweat. By the end of the week I was so weak that I could hardly walk. The first time I preached again I had to stand on one leg during the sermon. At this point I was also teaching catechism for First Church on Saturday morning in a store building on Wealthy St.

By March of 1927 there was a crying need for preaching in Iowa—Hull, Sioux Center and Doon. Gerrit Vos, Richard Veldman and I were requested to go to Iowa to take care of these three churches. There was a small house in Doon across from Henry Kuiper that became known as "the parsonage." From there we took charge of the three churches, even teaching catechism and leading the consistory meetings. Old Model T Fords were made available to us for traveling to Hull and Sioux Center.

During our stay, Gerrit Vos returned home because of trouble with his back. But Veldman and I stayed until June of 1927. School was already finished when we returned, so each of us took our exams separately in the consistory room of First Church. When I had finished my last exam Rev. Hoeksema asked me if I would be willing to go back to the Midwest for the summer. Although I had been quite home sick at first in an entirely

Dutch environment, I thought a moment and then consented to return. This time, Andrew Cammenga accompanied me.

During the summer months of 1927, Gerrit Vos was appointed to serve temporarily in the Sioux Center congregation, while William Verhil received and accepted a temporary call to Hull.¹

By the time we returned to Michigan the third school year had begun. But we still had to preach, not only in the Grand Rapids area, but also in South Holland, Oak Lawn and Waupun. That meant that every other Sunday we were out of town to preach. In the early spring of 1928 a call for supply came from Pella and Oskaloosa, Iowa. So once more I was drawn away from school to try to keep up with the studies and to supply these two churches. We had morning service in Pella, had lunch with the congregation in the consistory room, and then would take the bus to preach in Oskaloosa at night. Once more I failed to end the school year with the rest of the class. But at least it was a good experience as an internship for the ministry.

I spent six weeks of the summer of 1928 in Waupun, Wisconsin. What stands out in my memory is the family visitation that I was asked to carry out there. These people, with their mystical tendencies, dreaded family visitation. One lady who was in her eighties told me that this was the first time that she stayed for family visitation, and now the only reason she stayed was because she wanted to find out what this young kid would say. In another family of ten children the only ones we found home were the parents. When asked where the others were, we were told that it was impossible to keep them home when the dominee came. The youngest of them was four years old. So we arranged to call on them at supper time. The mother agreed to have everything in readiness at six o' clock sharp, so that the elder and I could come into the house, sit down at the meal, and thus prevent any one from getting away. This succeeded to a point. All went smoothly until I began to talk to the oldest girl, who turned her back to me, and after a while got up and left. The next one stayed but was unresponsive. And so down the line. But at least we tried.

Then there were two girls from another family, one of whom was married. Her husband refused to go to church and her baby was still not baptized. I asked her whether her husband prevented her from having the baby baptized. The answer I received from him is better not repeated. The younger girl looked and dressed like a harlot. Soon it became evident that she was virtually as

she appeared. The excuse was, "I am not converted." That seemed to be a cover-up for much of the evil in the congregation. When I admonished the two girls for their sinful walk, the mother interfered by reminding me that after all, they were not yet converted. Never in all the years of ministry did I experience anything like those six weeks in Waupun, and never did I lose more sleep after my visits.

You may wonder whether during this busy time I had opportunity to do any dating. It was in the fall of 1927 that I met my future wife, Jennie Griffioen. Some time during the first semester, Arie Griffioen invited Len Vermeer and me to visit him at his home. His two oldest daughters impressed me as complete opposites. The older one was quiet and reserved, the other loud and giggly. Shortly after this I was invited to attend a wedding and I took the older daughter, Jennie, with me.

I was still crippling from the effects of rheumatic fever when we went together to Central High School to attend a program given by the Young Men's league of the CRC. Our dating when at home was limited to three nights in two weeks; that is, two nights attending Rev. Hoeksema's Bible class and the one Sunday night when I was not out of town. Later she often accompanied me when I went out to preach in the Grand Rapids area. The rest of the time we had to depend on correspondence.

At the end of my six weeks' stay in Waupun, Walter Griffioen and his girl friend Minnie took my girl friend, Jennie, to Waupun by car, so that we four could travel home together. We came home by going over the Straits of Mackinac and arrived back in time for the last year of seminary to begin.

During this last year none of us was compelled to go out to spend a period of time in the churches, but we all could make full use of the opportunity to prepare to enter the ministry. We did make our visits to Waupun, South Holland and Oak Lawn, but apart from that we could devote our time to our studies and making sermons.

It was around Christmas time 1928 that Jennie and I became engaged. My fiance came from a large family. As a result of the caste system in the Netherlands, her mother, who was of the upper class, did no housework. When the children were small they had a maid. But when Jennie, who was the oldest daughter in the family, was finished with school, she took over in the family. That meant making meals for thirteen people, getting some of them off to work in the morning, cleaning the huge house, doing the laundry, besides all the other chores that came with a large family. She was often so tired at

the end of the day that she fell asleep on the bed without undressing. The younger girls often thought of her as their mother, since she assumed the responsibility of caring for their needs. I think this undermined her health along with the fact that she had a form of rheumatic fever when she was 12. This affected her heart. Jennie looked forward with relief to leaving home and marrying.

Since she had been working at home for room and board, she gained permission from her parents to go out a few days a week to gain money for the necessities involved in getting married. She obtained a job doing housework on the East End, so that she was able to accumulate a little money for things for her future home.

June 1929 came all too soon, as far as I was concerned. This was the time for the classical examination, which was held in the First Church.² Each of the six students, Len Vermeer, John De Jong, Andrew Cammenga, Richard Veldman, Bernard Kok and I, was allowed twenty minutes for his sermon. This was hardly sufficient to get into the subject, so that one of the elders remarked afterward, "If I had to judge you on these sermons, not one would pass the exam." Rev. Vos and Rev. Verhil also took part in examining us in subjects assigned to them.

All six of us were made candidates and all of us eagerly awaited the anticipated calls. I can distinctly remember the evening when Rev. Hoeksema called me on the phone. He appeared to be as excited as I was. He said, "Neal, you have the call to Hull!" Then he asked me to call John De Jong to inform him that he had the call to Doon and Andrew Cammenga that he had the call to Rock Valley.

The summer of 1929 was very busy. Rev. Hoeksema decided to spend this summer in the Netherlands. He would not return home before the middle of September. In the meantime, we had to make wedding arrangements, purchase furniture, schedule our move to Hull, and also



Wedding photo of Cornelius Hanko and Jennie Griffioen, September 19, 1929.

prepare for the examination that would be held in the auditorium of First Church.³

I admit that we six did not pass the exam "magna cum laude." The lower section of the auditorium was filled with people who had a high expectation of these first students who had completed the course in our seminary. But there was too much of the unexpected in the exams. For one thing, Prof. Ophoff decided the last minute to examine on a different subject than that for which we had prepared. Besides, the professors sat up in the balcony with the students on the pulpit, and the questions and answers did not always carry through clearly. Especially the Polemics exam (today's Apologetics) was quite a failure. But the six men were declared eligible for the ministry.

Since the churches were eager to have their ministers ordained into office so that the catechism classes could get started, everything was arranged to take place as soon as possible after Rev. Hoeksema's return. Thus the examination was scheduled for the 18th; on the 19th Jennie and I were married; on the 20th Andrew Cammenga and Richard Veldman spoke their marriage vows; on the following Monday, John De Jong entered the married state. On that same Monday, September 23, 1929, the Hankos and the Cammengas boarded the train for Iowa. ❖

Endnotes

¹ Vos and Verhil were sent out into the churches even though they had not completed their training. When the seminary produced its first graduates, these two men came back to finish their training.

² These classical exams were comparable to our synodical exams, for as yet there was no synod.

³ This was comparable to our present day classical exams.

Karen is a member of Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois, and a granddaughter of Rev. C. Hanko.

5 May 1945

by J.P. de Klerk

The fifth day of May has special significance in The Netherlands because the liberation of the Nazi armies from Germany was a fact in 1945, after five years of occupation, terror, slavery and hunger. The Allied Forces came and an armistice was signed. Military bands marched through the streets; some of them came back several years later to celebrate again, like this group in British uniforms but of Polish origin. The southern part of The Netherlands was liberated half a year earlier, but the Allied Forces became stuck near Arnhem, where a big river blocked their way.

Thousands of Jews had been captured and killed in Germany. Many young people were sheltered by farmers and other people, because they were chased by the Nazis, who wanted them to work for them in their weapons factories (only traitors went there), especially in the last year of the war when they were running out of ammunition.

When the month of May came, The Netherlands had the most severe winter in living memory behind it, plus lack of food and heating (no coal, no gas, no electricity). Most people looked like skeletons. That fifth day it was beautiful weather. In all the cities and villages people left their houses and went on the streets, singing and waving with the national colors, embracing and kissing each other, crying of joy. American, British and Canadian soldiers came from the southern part of the country with food in all their vehicles they had.

The Sunday that followed, all the churches of the country were filled to overflowing (the towers had no bells, because they were taken away by the enemy, making cannons and bullets of them). Generators of the military provided electricity for the organs. ❖

J. P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashhurst, New Zealand.



Church News

BAPTISMS

“For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Acts 2:39

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:
Nicholas David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Josh Lubbers—Byron Center, MI
Abigail Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Schimmel—Georgetown, MI
Elyse Jo, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Ritsema—Georgetown, MI
Whitney Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Mowery—Holland, MI
Jacob Andrew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Loren VanDenTop—Lynden, WA
Nathan Tyler, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Kuiper—Southwest, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

Pete Cnossen—Hudsonville, MI
Cassie Dams—Hudsonville, MI
Bret Dykstra—Hudsonville, MI
Lisa Feenstra—Hudsonville, MI
Bret VanderVeen—Hudsonville, MI
Hillary VanOverloop—Hudsonville, MI
Ryan VanPutten—Hudsonville, MI
Jake Oosterhouse—Randolph, WI
Joe Regnerus—Randolph, WI
Jordan Tamminga—Randolph, WI
Jeanette VanDyke—Randolph, WI

MARRIAGES

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” Psalm 48:14

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Matthew denHartog and Miss Joy Griffioen—Faith, MI
Mr. Henry Huisken and Miss Melissa Lanting—Redlands, CA

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

A Turn of Events: from Chaos to Comfort (Part 3)

Caspar Olevianus was a boy born into a wealthy family in the city of Treves, a stronghold of the Roman Catholic Church. His father was head of a baker's guild, and in the 1500s if parents had money, they sent their children to school. Caspar was sent to many schools—many Catholic schools.

One day at one of these schools a faithful priest put his hand on Caspar's shoulder and said, "My boy, you must never forget that salvation and comfort are found only in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ." Olevianus could not know what those words would mean to him some day. He never forgot them.

But for now he was a growing boy, busy learning and going to more schools. When he was fourteen years old, his grandfather sent him to France to study law. At one of the schools there, he met a son of Frederick III, Herman Louis. The two became close friends.

France was not only a good place to learn law, it was also home to the Huguenots. Some of these persecuted Calvinists were students there too. Olevianus and Herman Louis met with them in some of their secret meetings. These new Calvinist ideas began to take root in Olevianus' soul—maybe deeper than he realized.

One day Olevianus, Herman, and Herman's valet were walking along the river that ran close to the school. Olevianus and Herman wanted to go to the other side in a small boat that was tied to the shore, but other students were already climbing in.

It was a group of loud and riotous drunken boys. The boat rocked precariously.

"Come on! Come on!" they shouted for Caspar and Herman to join them.

Caspar refused, but Herman decided to get in the boat with them. The other side was not so very far away, though the current was swift. They pushed off while Caspar looked on.

In midstream the drunken students took up another of their loud songs and swayed even more. Suddenly—the boat capsized!

"Herman!" Caspar jumped into the cold current of the river. He must help his friend—but how? He could not find him, and now Caspar himself was being swept away. Fear engulfed him as water enveloped him. It was in this terror and panic that the Reformed faith he had begun to learn sprang up in his heart. He vowed at that moment to devote his life to preaching the true gospel of grace—even to staunchly Roman Catholic Treves—if his life would somehow be spared. Finally his head was above the surface and he gasped for air.

Trying to save Herman, Herman's valet managed to grab Caspar instead and pull him to shore. Sadly, amidst all the chaos and confusion, Herman still could not be found.

Caspar's friend had suddenly drowned—and now the whole direction of Caspar's life would change. Such would be the turn of events... ❖

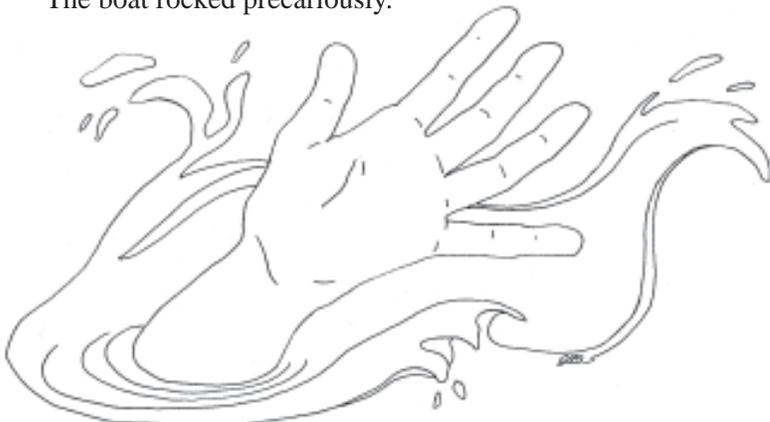
Unscramble the letters to read the words of Psalm 31:7:

I LLIW EB LAGD DAN CEEROJI NI HYT REYMC:

ORF HOUT SHAT DOINEEDSRC YM LORBTUE;

OTUH HATS WONNK YM LUSO NI RADESSIVITE.

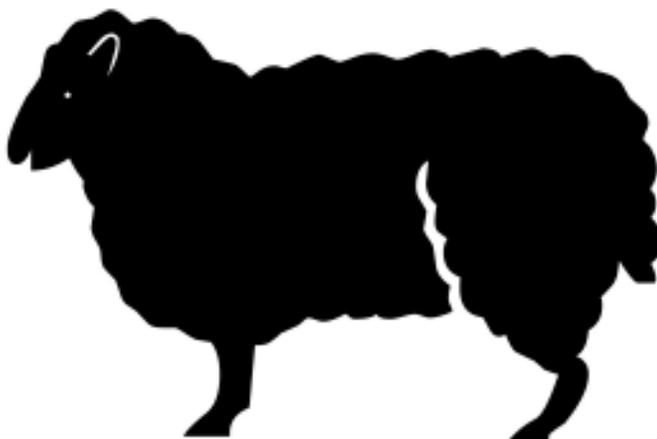
Connie is the mother of 5 children and a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.



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Baa, baa black sheep, how do you get to Hull?
If you're coming from the East, you'll go through one toll.
If you're driving from the West, you'll see some scenery.
You'll know that you've hit Iowa when you see lots of farm machinery.

Before you know it'll be time to travel to the 2006 PRYP Convention!
For more info check out www.prypconvention.com.

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