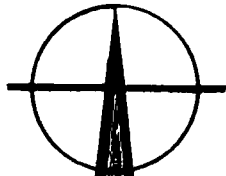


BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*



December 1973

*Determining Our
Calling and
Vocation in Life*

*The Durable
King James*



BEACON LIGHTS

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This article was originally written for and printed in the South Holland Protestant Reformed School Paper, the REFLECTOR. It was written in conjunction with a science unit on astronomy.

JK

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD

The night descended as a blanket and the stars, like sparkling jewels, displayed themselves one by one. From east to west they slowly passed as the earth spun and the night fled. Into this night stepped a man, leaving behind the cozy comfort of his tent. With wondering eye he viewed the starry sky and in hushed whispers of awe and amazement repeated, "So shall thy seed be." The wonder of twinkling stars became the wonder of the Covenant. And Abraham believed.

The oppressive smell of disease, the dull droning of pesky insects, and the pain of festering sores awoke his dulled senses. "An evil sickness," "forsaken of God," "a hidden sin" pounded monotonously upon his troubled mind. Doubt replaced certainty and God spoke: "Job, why dost thou doubt my wisdom and power? Look up in the sky! Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades,¹ or loose the bands of Orion?"² God's power and wisdom displayed in the velvet night sky humbles man. Doubts were quieted and Job's faith revived.

Silently slept the sheep unaware of the crouching form of Leo.³ Silently sat the shepherd lad as he watched Boötes⁴ chase away the two bears.⁵ Unmoved was Polaris,⁶ unafraid of the frightful forms that surrounded him. All was peaceful and quiet. The moment passes when the harmonic cords of a harp and the quivering voice of the shepherd add to the still night a most beautiful song:

*O Lord our Lord in all the earth
How excellent Thy name!
Thy glory Thou hast spread afar
In all the starry frame.*

*When I regard the wondrous heavens
Thy handiwork on high,
The moon and stars ordained by Thee;
O, What is man? I cry!*

David, the shepherd lad, saw the glory of

heaven as the glory of God. He saw the insignificance of man and in humble praise adored the Almighty God.

Abraham, Job, David and many other saints through the ages have gazed contemplatively at the starry sky. They saw the infinite expanse of the universe and worshipped an even more infinite God. They saw an unchangeable panorama of stars night after night and rejoiced in the Unchangeable God. Their thoughts are often recorded in Holy Writ. Isaiah writes that He "stretched out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." David, in Psalm 103:11, related that "as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." In Psalm 147, the Psalmist sings, "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names."

Today, we too can look with awe and wonder upon the same sky. Orion and Pleiades are still there. With the help of telescopes, it is possible to see even deeper into the vast reaches of space; much farther than our forefathers even dreamed possible. This shouldn't cause us to doubt the creation and look for the origin of the universe elsewhere, but rather, it should cause us to worship our God in humility.

When was the last time you viewed the handiwork of God's universe? Surely, THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD!

1. Pleiades is a group of seven stars which was thought to usher in the spring; the time of new life and happiness.
2. Orion is a constellation best seen during the winter. The bands of Orion refer to the bands of winter. Job 38:41.
3. Leo is the constellation of a lion.
4. Boötes is a constellation of a herdsman seen best in the spring.
5. The two bears are two constellations in the northern sky.
6. Polaris is the north star. It is in line with the north pole of the earth. It does not move like other stars seem to move.
7. Isaiah 40:22.

The Durable King James

DARREL HUISKEN

Originally the BEACON LIGHTS staff asked me to write an article on the topic: "The Usefulness of Modern Bible Translations." The more that I thought and read on this subject the more I became plagued with questions. They were: What is wrong with the Bible we use, the King James Version? What makes it the Word of God for thousands, if not millions, of Christians throughout the English speaking world? In a word, what makes it so durable? And there was my topic: "The Durable King James."

As is true of any fine work, a work of quality and worth, there lies behind that work an ancestry of quality. The King James Version of the Bible has an ancestry — a lineage — of quality Biblical scholarship that extends back almost two hundred years before King James called the Conference at Hampton Court in 1604, which in 1611 produced the King James Version.

Although the lineage of the King James Version actually goes back to the Pre-Reformation period, the English Bibles translated during and after the Reformation are more familiar to us. A host of Bibles were translated at this time, but two of them stand out from all the rest. These are Tyndale's Scriptures and the Geneva Bible. Tyndale's Scriptures are outstanding because they were the first to be translated from the original languages. Also, Tyndale's Scriptures were widely read by the common people. The Geneva Bible is outstanding because it was the most popular Bible in English history prior to the King James Version. Consider, then, these two Bibles.

William Tyndale's life and works are fascinating. A few of the highlights of this man's life will give some insight into his work of translating the Scriptures into English.

William Tyndale was born about 1494 in Gloucestershire. He attended Oxford, and, later, Cambridge Universities. While he was at Cambridge, he studied Greek and the Greek New Testament of Erasmus. After his stay at Cambridge he tutored the children of Sir John Walsh. Here he met many

traveling church leaders of the day with whom he discussed the new ideas coming out of Germany. Often at the center of these discussions was the idea of the sole authority of the Scriptures in the life of the Christian. At one of these meetings Tyndale proclaimed to these church leaders these prophetic words:

If God spare my life, ere many years
I will cause a boy that driveth the
plough shall know more of the Scrip-
ture than thou doest.'

From the Walsh family home he went to London. He presented some of his translated work to the leading church officials. Their attitude was expressed as: "Room enough was there in the Lord's House for belly cheer; but none to translate the New Testament."² In May of 1524, he left London for Germany, and little did he know that he left England for good. After he landed at Hamburg, his movements are uncertain and his journeyings hard to trace. His sole aim, however, remained the same; he went to Germany to search out Reformation sympathizers who could help him print and publish his translated Scriptures (at this time he had already translated only parts of the New Testament). He had little success in Hamburg, so in June of 1525 he traveled to Cologne.

In Cologne he finally found a printer, but all did not go well here either. Cologne at that time was a hot-bed for an anti-Reformation movement. Tyndale translated in secret and a printer and his men printed the forbidden work behind closed and locked doors. Before the work was completed, the operation was discovered, and Tyndale fled with the unfinished work to Worms. The city of Worms unlike Cologne was a stronghold of the Reformation. Here Martin Luther a few years before had made his famous stand before the Romish Diet. Now it provided Tyndale space, time, and security to do his translating unhindered. Peter Schoeager printed the Testaments, and, in 1526, the first ones were smuggled into England.

Chased and hounded all of his life on

the Continent, William Tyndale was finally caught. Through the instigation of the English Romish Church authorities, John Doberneck (Cochlaeus) kidnapped him and turned him over to the officers of Emperor Charles V who were determined to rid the Pope of his enemies. He was taken to Vilvorde Castle near Brussels, and from May of 1535 until October of 1536 Tyndale suffered in a cold, dark, and damp dungeon. His work on the Old Testament was yet uncompleted; he wanted to finish it. Echoing the requests of the Apostle Paul imprisoned in Rome, Tyndale requested his Hebrew Bible, his lexicon, warmer clothing for the winter, and a candle to light his work. He never stopped working until on October 6, 1536, with cord and fire, his enemies snuffed out his life. His dying prayer was: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

Tyndale's work was finished, but the Lord was not finished with Tyndale's work: for Bishop Wescott in his *A General View of the History of the English Bible* writes concerning Tyndale's influence on the King James Version.

Not only did Tyndale contribute to it directly the substantial basis of half of the Old Testament (in all probability) and of the whole of the New, but he established a standard of Biblical translation which others followed. It is even of less moment that by far the greater part of his translation remains intact in our present Bibles, than that his spirit animates the whole . . . His influence decided that our Bible should be popular and not literary, speaking in a simple dialect.²

Space does not allow us to pursue the stories behind the Coverdale's Bible (1535), the first printed English Bible; Matthew's Bible (1539); The Great Bible (1539); or The Bishop's Bible (1568). The latter was used as the basis for the King James Version, and all the rest, including Tyndale's, Whitchurch's, and The Geneva Bible, were used when they agreed better with the text than the Bishop's Bible.

There is one more Bible that greatly influenced the King James Version. This Bible was the Bible of William Shakespeare, John Bunyan, the Elizabethan sea dogs, and

Cromwellian soldiers. This Bible was one of the first English Bibles to come to the New World. It was the first to contain **versifications** of the Psalms, chapter and verse divisions, and the use of italics. It was the first Bible that was easy to read and carry—the print was clear, the book was small. Prior to the King James Version this Bible was the mostly widely read Bible in all of the English speaking world; for from 1560 to 1644 this Bible went through no less than 140 editions. This highly unusual and highly influential Bible was the Geneva Bible.

The Geneva Bible was unusual for yet another and more important reason. This Bible, that bore the name of the city in which John Calvin labored, was a Calvinistic Bible. Geneva was a haven for persecuted Calvinists from all over Europe. "Bloody" Mary, Queen of Scots, persecuted the Calvinists in England and Scotland. Many fled to this haven. In Geneva these people established their own English Church. John Knox was their first pastor. William Whittingham, John Calvin's brother-in-law, succeeded John Knox. Building upon the work of Tyndale and Coverdale, using the recent works of Theodore Beza and Pagninus, William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson, his helpers, produced this work.

The production of this Bible brings up a point that distinguishes the Reformation from almost any other major religious movement in history. The Reformation was not a religious upheaval in the sense that the people were looking for something new, but it was an upheaval that was a return to something that had been lost. It was a return to the basics. One of these basics was the sole authority of the Word of God. Coupled with this sole authority was the idea that everyone must bow to that authority—monarch, bishop, pope, and plow boy. In order to bow to that supreme authority everyone must *know* the Scriptures. All the Reformers adhere to this idea, and to assure that everyone *knew* the Scriptures, they made the Scriptures available to everyone in his own language. The number of vernacular Bibles printed during and immediately following the Reformation is simply phenomenal.

The English used the Geneva and for

them it was a durable Bible, durable for the same reason the King James Version is durable today. Behind them both lay quality scholarship and a deep respect for the Word of God, but they are durable for yet another reason.

Biologists and physiologists maintain that the organs and muscles of man's physical body are made to follow this simple rule: Use them or lose them. The same is true of Bible reading and Bible study. The Geneva Bible was widely read in the home, it was memorized, it was recited, and it was sung. It was used consistently in the home and the school. It was written upon the hearts of men, women, and children. The same is true of the King James. The

fact that these Bibles are used in no small way contributed to their durability.

Young people, you have rich heritage in the King James Version. Many are predicting gleefully its doom to the musty archives of forgotten books. Use it, and their predictions are doomed.

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1. Margaret Hills, *A Ready Reference History of the English Bible*, New York: American Bible Society, 1971, p. 5.
 2. Geddes Mac Gregor, *A Literary History of the Bible*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1968, p. 112.
 3. Margaret Hills, *A Ready Reference History of the English Bible*, New York: American Bible Society, 1971, p. 7.

The Seeing Eyes of God

RICH PETERSEN

"And God saw everything that He hath made, and, behold, it was very good."

Genesis 1:31a.

This is only one of the many texts from God's Divine Word which has been under attack by men ever since God has revealed that Word to His Church. Not only this text, but all of Scripture has been and will continue to be under attack by the vain philosophies of men until the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. All attempts of explaining Scripture, when separated from the truth—Scripture interprets Scripture—are nothing but slander against God from the mouths of men. Why is that? All things are of God, and the Scriptures are God's, not man's. The answer may also be found in this very text which men use to base their heresies on; we use as proof for the absolute sovereignty of God as Creator of heaven and earth.

To understand Genesis 1:31 in the proper light we must first look at the word create according to the first chapter of Genesis. To create means to call forth. God called forth all things from His eternal counsel and they came into being as creatures. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He

calleth them all by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isaiah 40:26). God called forth from His counsel by means of His Word, by whom all things were created. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made" (John 1:1-3). The Word which John speaks of is Christ in His divine nature as we see in Hebrews 1:2: "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds." However John does not mean to imply that the Word or the Son of God had an origin when he states: "In the beginning was the Word . . ." For in Proverbs 8:22 and 23 we read: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." All things which God created were called out of His counsel by the spoken Word. It is because of this, all creatures, when they were in the state of perfection, had as their very essence Christ. Each creature was a distinct expression of the spoken Word of God. The bringing forth of the spoken Word to establish the

foundations of the world is more clearly seen in Proverbs 8:24-25. "When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth."

When we read, "And God saw everything . . ." the word 'saw' may be translated as 'to understand' as shown in Proverbs 3:19. "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens." God understood everything, for their essence was Christ, His Son. The creation was complete in all aspects for it was the complete revelation of God expressed through the Word.

Adam too, in the state of perfection, could understand the essence of every creature and named them according to the expressed Nature of God within them. Then man fell, and God spoke another word . . . Death. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). This word, Death, is unlike any other of the expressions of the Word, for it is louder than all others and drowns out all others. Because of man's sin against God's command of obedience, the entire creation suffers though it had no

part of man's willful disobedience as stated in Romans 8:20-23. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Yet God did not leave His creation on account of sin to an evolutionary process or chance, but sent His Son to atone for the sin of His chosen people, and will deliver them along with the creation.

We like Adam, who possess the first fruits of the Spirit, are able also to 'see' the expressed Nature of God's revelation in creation, for God continues to uphold all things by the Word of His power. Only when we put on the spectacles of Scripture in a child-like faith, as expressed by John Calvin, are we once again able to 'see' the wondrous Works of God and truly say they are very good.

Determining Our Calling and Vocation in Life

REV. R. G. MOORE

When I received the request from your BEACON LIGHT Staff to write this article concerning, "How a Christian Determines His Calling and Vocation in Life," I could envision our youth hoping that I could lay out a blue-print of concrete things which would enable each covenant youth to know exactly what vocation to enter. But this is impossible. Rather, it is my hope to turn to the Word of God for guidelines which the child of God may and must use to determine his calling in life.

To do this, let us turn our attention to Psalm 119:9, a passage of Scripture that answers the question which we consider. In this passage we have the following: "Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

At the beginning we observe that the Psalmist teaches that the covenant youth are aware of the need to cleanse their way. The covenant youth, that is the true seed of election, desire to walk as strangers and pilgrims in this world. They desire to walk as brethren and sisters of Christ. However, this means that their way must needs be cleansed and kept clean. But how can the covenant youth accomplish this? By nature he is inclined to all evil. Further, at every turn in the way there is Satan, and the world appealing to his sinful flesh. And the natural inclination is to satisfy one's natural desires.

But the Psalmist speaks of the youthful members of the Church of Christ. They are those whom Christ has quickened by His Spirit. They have been called by

Christ's Spirit and Word. Under the preaching of the gospel of Christ their faith has been activated and has grown to a level of spiritual maturity, whereby they lay hold of Christ and live out of Him. Principally their goals have become the goals of Christ, and His will is their guide. Thus, they are repentant ones desiring to walk as members of Christ's body. Hence, the question, how shall a young man cleanse His way? It is the question of Faith! And it is this question of faith that prompts the covenant youth also to ask: "How does a Christian determine his calling and vocation in life?" "How does he know what is God's purpose for him?"

The world or unregenerated youth have no need for these questions. They despise God's way, they care not for His Kingdom. Hence, the criterion for the world with respect to vocations has no limitations. Money, name, self-glory and satisfaction of the flesh become their goals. When the world begins to select a vocation it asks, what occupation will enable one to make the most money, or provide advancement in society while at the same time will give one the most time for leisure and pleasure. Or such a one's goal may be to find a job or labor where he can do as little as is possible and still exist. However, for the youth in Christ these considerations may not and ought not to govern them. For they are the considerations of Belial.

Rather, Christian young people desire the way that is right before God. This means the considerations of the covenant youth concerning a vocation is limited by his desire to walk as a stranger and a pilgrim in the midst of this world. So that for him the answer to this question of vocation and calling is found in the Psalmist answer: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." The covenant youth must be governed and led by the Word of God. Through that Word we are given the content of a godly walk and life. The gospel of Christ must be our guide also in such a seemingly practical matter as one's vocation. The question of necessity must come down to what will God have me do?

Understand God does not answer this question for you by writing the answer some night upon your bedroom ceiling. Nor must we make the false assumption

that God gives us talent for only one occupation in this world. God surely gives us talents or various gifts or abilities. And our calling is to use them as stewards in the Lord. Yet this may be accomplished in one of several occupations. Which is the right one becomes the question. Again, I would like to remark that the child of God must answer with the question, "What is God's will?"

Understand, this means we must know the will of God! It is the will revealed to us in His Word. We, as covenant youth, must know the Word in order to know His will. Christ uses the preaching of the Word to reveal that wondrous will of God to you. It is a power which enables you to live out of Christ, so that His will becomes yours. Under the preaching through the study of the Scriptures the child of God is led to his answer.

Prayerfully, the child of God must assess his talents. Some have talents for advanced study, some have talents for mechanical work, some have talents for salesmanship, etc. These he must assess, also enlisting others to help him, such as parents and teachers. And I would like to emphasize the aspect of prayer in this matter. One must honestly before God see his limitations, as well as, his abilities. Further, it is necessary to prayerfully consider the possible vocations in which he may labor. And in this prayerful consideration ask: What will God have me to do? Again sincerely and honestly this question must be asked, the Word must direct our way in this. For instance, Christ says we may not be unequally yoked together with the world. This of course means some labor or occupations which require union membership are out. Scripture emphasizes our need to live under the true preaching of the Word, but some occupations would draw one away from it. Or one may for instance have the talent to drive truck, but to take up such a calling in transcontinental hauling would mean no family life, and this is not God's will. Many other examples could be used, but let this suffice. The worship of God, His service, and the covenant family life dictate our decision. Honestly seeking God's will through His Word in prayer is our calling. The covenant youth in whom the Word of God lives will enter a vocation and calling

well-pleasing to Jehovah. By taking heed to his way according unto God's Word, the child of God will enter a vocation

which will serve his life as God's friend-servant. Doing this, beloved youth, you shall be surely blessed.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. GEORGE C. LUBBERS

"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles." Psalm 103:5

"Speaking to Your Own Soul"

O, my soul!

Bless thou the LORD.

David is speaking to his own soul. He is deeply conscious of the great "hear Israel" of Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. And he would have his own soul be tuned to the true worship and praise of Jehovah. For the LORD, Israel's God, is one LORD. He alone is God and there is none besides Him. All the other gods are idols; they are nothing and vanity. But the LORD dwells and is enthroned between the Cherubim of the mercy-seat! Him the Psalmist would love with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength.

It is the great commandment; it is written in the table of the heart of this sweet singer in Israel. The Spirit of the LORD speaks by him, and the LORD's word is on his tongue. That makes David the sweet psalmist, harping upon his harp; he is

harping in hope of one day standing with the angels. Nay, he already is joining the angelic mighty hosts of Jehovah, calling upon these to join him in singing of the great and holy Name of the LORD.

Bless Him, ye angels

Ye angels, that excel in wondrous strength and might; ye ministers of his commandments, harkening unto the voice of His Word.

Bless ye the LORD, all ye His hosts

Bless the LORD, all ye his works in all places of His dominion!

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

• • • • •

The Psalmist's mouth is satisfied with good things!

The Psalmist has received a mouth which is connected with his soul. All mouths are connected with the soul and the heart.

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. And from this new fountain of a redeemed soul must not come forth both bitter water and sweet, blessing and cursing. Only the LORD must be blessed and He must be blessed by the saints in spirit and in truth.

The Psalmist speaks in this Psalm of his mouth as something which is his adornment. His tongue is become beautiful with the praises of God. And the LORD has satisfied that mouth with good things. The LORD is the great Satisfier. He gives food and water which satisfies; eating and drinking from it, one never more hungers and thirsts. It is that which does not merely satisfy the body, but it satisfies the soul which was created by God in the image and likeness of God, and which soul has been renewed after God's image in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. And now his mouth must overflow.

From this mouth must flow the fountains of waters which spring up unto everlasting life. It must be the streams of water that flow from our deep yearning and desires, from the source of our affections and feelings, from our very bellies!

This mouth has been satisfied, and must, therefore bless the LORD. The soul must from its deepest depths acknowledge from Whom it has received this inner and true and abiding satisfaction

O, come my soul, sing and bless the LORD!

Let the blessing be upon thy lips, my soul. Do not sit in silence of unthankfulness. Join the angelic choirs in their celestial songs about the great white throne of Jehovah in the heavens.

May there be good things welling up within thee, my soul!

Upon thy lips, thou satisfied mouth!

Come, thou soul of mine

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Bless Him who manifests His Holy Name to thee in all His wondrous benefits. My soul, do not forget any of all these benefits. Keep them in perpetual and in holy remembrance, and name them one by one in their proper order

Do not forget, O my soul, that you have been forgiven, washed and cleansed from all thine iniquities. My soul, you are by

nature very wicked and iniquitous. You are so very lawless, breaking all the commandments of God and keeping none of them. You are guilty before Jehovah, the judge of all the heavens and the earth. And you are so full of "diseases," too apart from the benefits of the LORD. You are so full of errors; who can understand them? These errors are so deep-rooted and are impossible for you to eradicate. Daily you sin against the LORD in thoughts, words, and deeds. You did this in the sins of youth and now you have become old in sin. But now, my soul, look away from yourself!

Do not forget, O my soul

Look to the benefits of the LORD that are unending!

Yes, the LORD has pardoned all thy iniquities. He remembers them no more; He will never bring you into judgment for them. He is the One who constantly forgives, sends these iniquities away, yea, so fully and completely as if you had in your own person paid for them fully. And what is more, He also heals all thy errors and diseases and makes you what he would have you be. He makes you a doer of His will.

For He is your God, Your Redeemer. He redeems your very life. He takes your very existence and makes you His own for time and eternity. He justifies and sanctifies you; He crowns you and makes you beautiful with the deepest love of the heavenly Husbandman.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Do not forget

Do not be easily satisfied, my soul, with thy "blessing" of the name of the LORD!

All that is within thee must bless, my soul

Nothing within thee may stand in the way of this remembering of the good things of the LORD'S covenant mercies. Ever remember them when you study the Scriptures. May all your thoughts and aspirations be of the LORD'S goodness and mercy and of His ardent love for you. Bless the LORD, my youthful soul. The LORD renews your youth like the eagles. He is faithful and strong to save and to make you strong.

Sing gallantly then, my soul, and join angelic choirs. Sing with the mighty hosts

of the angels who give heed to the LORD'S commandments, hastening to thy help.

Sing in hope of one day being in heaven

to sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb at the crystal sea.

Bless His name for it is holy.

Bless the LORD, O my soul

CONTRIBUTION

THE ANGEL SONG

By MISS S. PORTE

*Eye hath not seen; Ear hath not heard,
Nor has it ever in man's thoughts occurred,
The glories that await in heaven above
Prepared for God's saints, in merciful love.*

*There creatures of loveliest heavenly grace
Fall down in worship before God's face.
They sing of His glory, power and might
Blessing Him ever in the heavenly height.*

*Ministering Angels of God are they
Forever willing to serve Him each day.
They are eager to behold the eternal plan,
That God did prepare for Salvation of man.*

*Coming as messengers from heaven above,
To proclaim to Abraham this word of love,
That a son shall be born to this Patriarch
of old.*

*And through this promise, salvation's plan
shall unfold.*

*All peoples through Abraham's seed shall
be blest.*

Thus to enter into the haven of rest.

*Again to Isaac and to Israel
Of this glorious promise they did tell
To David also, and the prophets too;
This same message was brought anew.*

*But then there is silence, for many a year.
The angels in glory, to God's throne draw
near;*

*Awaiting His bidding, to go once again
Fulfillment of promise to proclaim.*

*Then Gabriel, the archangel, so glorious
and grand,*

*Who in the presence of God does stand
Was seen in the temple, at the time of
prayer*

*When Zacharias the Priest, was serving
there.*

*Fear not Zacharias for I bring you this word,
That God in heaven your prayer has heard.*

*Your wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son.
He brings joy and gladness; His name shall
be John.*

*He shall be great in the sight of the Lord.
And make ready a people prepared for the
Lord -*

*Proclaiming God's Word, He goes before,
In the Spirit and power of Elias of yore.*

*Once more the Angel Gabriel was sent to
earth,*

*To announce to a virgin of royal birth,
That she most blessed of women would be
For highly favored of God was she.*

*In her, God's word would be fulfilled
She would bring forth the promised child
The greatest of miracles; For not by will of
man,*

But by God's power, according to His Plan.

*Then with Joseph, her espoused, they went
to Bethlehem.*

*But for them, there was found no room in
the inn.*

*Thus in a stable she brought forth her son,
Wrapped in swaddling clothes, in a manger
laid Him down.*

*Thus step by step, the Angels watch God's
plan unfold*

*And gaze in awesome wonder to behold
Fulfillment of God's gracious everlasting
plan,*

By giving His own son, for salvation of man.

*And Lo! to lowly shepherds, keeping watch
o'er their flocks by night.*

*The Angel of the Lord appears, radiating
heavenly light.*

*God's glory shining round about, in many
rainbow hues*

*Through everlasting covenant love, those
blessed rays diffuse.*

*The Angel speaks in silvery accents clear
And gentle tones: Oh Shepherds, do not fear.
For good tidings of great joy I bring to thee,
Which to all peoples on the earth shall be.*

*Your Savior was born in Bethlehem town.
He is Christ the Lord; And this is the sign.
In swaddling clothes ye shall find the Babe
In a cattle stall, and in a manger laid.*

*Then suddenly the light spreads far and
near*

*In waves of color, bold, deep, and clear
And a multitude of heavenly hosts appear,
Their voices blending on the midnight air.*

*In harmonious tones their golden voices
swell*

*In glorious song, their Praise to God to tell.
Glory to God on high, and Peace unto the
earth,*

*To men of His good pleasure and of
priceless worth.*

*And, as the shepherds gazed on high
The many hues are slowly fading from the
sky.*

*The melodious song, with echoes soft is
stilled.*

*While the shepherds' hearts with heavenly
bliss are filled.*

*They go in haste to see this wondrous thing
That God has wrought, and of which angels
sing,*

*Praising God on high, and spreading forth
the word
Of all the wondrous things which they had
seen and heard.*

*Have you heard that song, and seen the
blessed Lord,*

*Upon this Christmas Day? Has your heart
been stirred*

*To echo forth in praise, unto your God on
high?*

*Did you kneel down in prayer, and unto
Him draw nigh*

*In lowliness of heart, in thankfulness to
raise*

*Unto His glorious name, a blessed song of
praise?*

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

Christian Competition?

By BERTHA DENHARTOG

"Best-selling shampoo in America, . . . sexiest smile . . . Bayer Aspirin is better." Advertisers seek to cajole us into buying their products by appealing to our sense of competition. A national characteristic of the American people is that we are constantly seeking the biggest, the brightest, the newest, the best. Every aspect of our lives has been geared to that end. In our jobs, tremendous pressure is placed on us to be best, to get promotions. In school we are urged by our parents and teachers to be the best in the class, to get the highest grade. In our social life we strive to be the most beautiful, the most popular, the most prominent. In sports, competition is a major factor and the desire to win and be number one sometimes overrides all other considerations. So competition becomes a motivation for at least a part of

every aspect of our lives until we are totally immersed in competition. How must we as Christians regard competition? Does it affect our Christianity?

I believe that extreme competition can be and is deprecatory to the Christian life. I believe extreme competition leads to self-glorification, dissatisfaction, coveting and in short becomes "another god" that we worship.

Because we are the best or the highest in the class we begin to feel a smug satisfaction with ourselves. Because we got the big promotion, we note conceitedly that good work pays off in the end. Because our team is first in the state, as a part of that team, we feel that our athletic prowess has led us to the top. Constant success seems to assure us that success is an indication of superiority. We are better than our neigh-

bor. Perhaps all men are equal in God's sight but we can't help but feel that we are perhaps a little more equal. No longer do we look to God as the ultimate source of blessings. After all does not "the Lord help those who help themselves?" Although we may send up a hasty thanks for His Grace bestowed on us, we have a niggling suspicion that even if we did not entirely bring this blessing about, at least we had a hand in it. Yet we are forced to compete and I would be the first to admit that competition is almost unavoidable. Although consistent success may lead to self-glorification, consistent failure can lead to self-hatred and coveting. Because we are not V.I.P. number 1, we are sure we are a nobody. Because we were passed up for the promotion again, we torture ourselves with the thought of our inadequacy. Because our talent is small, we become resentful and are apt to bury it. Not only do we begin to hate ourselves but we begin to feel resentful of the one who gave the talents, "I knew thee, that thou art an hard man" (Matt, 25:24). We feel slighted by God and ignoring our purpose in life, feel worthless.

In the face of our redundant failures, we look to our neighbors and begin to covet. We cannot love our neighbors because we long to be like them, to have what they have. We cannot love God because we are dissatisfied with His wisdom as shown in our lives. We cannot accept ourselves because we have begun to believe that success measures worth.

Perhaps the real danger of competition

is that in an extreme it begins to be an end to itself. No longer do we view God's creation for its beauty and its indication of His omnipotence, instead we see it as an implement or detriment to our success. In school what becomes important is not education itself but where it gets us. In our jobs what matters more than a job well done is its material rewards. In our sports a well-played game loses precedence over victory. Our lives begin to retain meaning only in so far as where it gets us. Even in our Christian lives we are urged by the big gospel sellers to win the world for Christ (emphasis on winning). Competition becomes a god who demands our complete obeisance.

As Christians, responsible citizens of God's Kingdom, it is surely our duty to cultivate and multiply the talent God has given us but always keeping in mind that through ourselves we can do nothing. As Christians we must learn to be content in whatsoever state we are, we must accept and trust God's will for our lives. In a sense as sinful creatures we can never succeed not even in the smallest way, but in a larger sense as recipients of God's Grace we can never fail "If He be for us who can stand against us." We must never forget that God judges not as men. Didn't he choose a small uneducated band of fisherman to be His apostles? We, as His children, must recognize the irrelevance of competition and ask ourselves how much does it rule our lives. Are we willing to "Gain the whole world and lose our own soul"?

OPEN FORUM

THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS

This is in response to the interesting article "The Christian and Politics," August-September issue. Statements of special interest centered around the duty of the child of God to participate in politics; for Christians to show themselves as the most exemplary and most purposeful citizens because we live the life of Christ on the earth seeking God's glory.

The writer is correct in insisting that the Christian pilgrim must not join the present two major political parties for such unholy alliance would break down the antithetical wall that separates Christians from the world. A child of God could not maintain the principles of Scripture and stay in either of the major political parties. Does this mean then that Christians have no witness

at all in the political sphere? The answer: A Christian must join himself to an organization that will bear the standard of Christ and His Word. However, in the absence of such an association, Christians should act on an individual basis.

Herewith are made a few comments on the possibility and desirability of organizing a Christian political witness organization. It should not be one in the sense of being a political party but as a separate organization which would promulgate the true Scriptural principles by adopting a set of truths and then witness for these in newspaper stories or in paid editorial insertions preceding election days. Also copies could be mailed to government authorities of cities, states and nation.

Here are a few political truths which should be stated in a proposed list of Christian Political Principles. We surely do not need any more seminars where Christian political thinkers get together, advocating parochial and further extension of social handout programs and before they get thru with their arguments and assertions, they just about agree with everything the two major political parties stand for in their socialistic-totalitarian, sinful misuse of the God-appointed institution of government. Who of these seminar delegates would ever dare to propose that because the American public school system is wholly anti-Scriptural and sinfully totalitarian it should be changed over into parental controlled and administered school systems separated from government dictatorship and tax financing? But in any true Scriptural political witness, this would have to be one of its proposaks. Then, too, if we could organize a "Christian Political Witness," the first and most important to proclaim would be the absolute sovereign Messianic rule of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, over all rulers, potentates, kings, presidents, governors, legislators and judges and that all these should repent and believe the Gospel of Christ and be in obedience to His commandments in the Holy Scriptures. How can any ruler, legislator, or judge perform his duties if he does not know and obey Christ's commandments, for according to the Word of God - Peter, first letter, chapter 2:14—they are appointed by God for the punishment of evil-doers. How do they know what is right and what

is evil if they do not know God's commandments? How can they provide good and right laws if these are not based upon God's laws? Evil, socialistic laws and measures are about the only ones politicians in these days know, propose and enforce. Those in authority must be wise, honor and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Who appoints them to their offices, Psalm 2.

With our emphasis on the anti-thesis, it seems some such afore-proposed organization should come into being.

HAROLD TILMA



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Lynden	\$ 17.65
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Hope, Redlands (2 coll.)	99.70
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Holland	50.25
Faith	20.50
South West	72.71
Hope (2 coll.)	258.61
Pella	27.20

The Beacon Lights Staff would like to sincerely thank these congregations for their cheerful giving. Without your help, it would be impossible for the Beacon Lights to continue.

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

JEANNE KARSEMEYER

From our Hudsonville Church:

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Kamps were blessed with a baby daughter, Lois Marie, on October 27.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Beute rejoice in the birth of a son, Joel Thomas, born October 8.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Lubbers received a son, Scott Michael, on December 4.

From our Randolph Church:

Rev. and Mrs. Wayne Bekkering were blessed with a daughter, Julie Kay, on November 14.

Prof. Hanko gave a Reformation Day lecture in the church on Friday evening, November 16.

On Friday, Nov. 2, the South Holland Young People's Society travelled to Randolph for a combined society meeting and hayride. On Saturday both societies went to Devil's Lake State Park.

The Young People's Society sponsored a program given by the Southwest Men's Quartet from Grand Rapids on September 14. It was held in the church auditorium, with proceeds going for the new church building.

On August 3 the young people held a baseball game at the community ball diamond. Refreshments were served after the game.

The Young People's Society held a car wash on October 13 to raise money for the new church building.

From our Holland Church:

During the evening service of October 21, public confession of faith was made by John Schipper.

The membership papers of Mr. Robert Drnek were received from the Bethel Reformed Church.

From our Southwest Church:

Mr. Harry Vanden Berg and Miss Mary Lotterman were joined in marriage on Friday, November 23, in Hope Church.

From our First Church:

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Postma were transferred to our South Holland Church.

Mr. James Gerritsen and Miss Marjorie Pastoor were united in holy matrimony on October 5.

The membership papers of Mrs. Della Westenberg were received from the Fifth Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

The Jr. Young People's Society sponsored a car wash and baked goods sale on Saturday, November 3, at Adams St. School.

A certificate of dismissal was sent to Mrs. Joha Cooke, nee Susan Yonkers, at her request, that she may affiliate with the Cascade Christian Reformed Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Speyer and their son Darron have been accepted as members from the Plainfield Christian Reformed Church of Rockford.

From our Loveland Church:

On Tuesday evening, September 4, the Men's Society and Church Extension Committee sponsored a public lecture in the church. Rev. W. Bekkering of Randolph spoke on "Neo-Pentecostalism."

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Duane Alsum have been received from our Redlands Church.

A Reformation Day lecture, sponsored by the Church Extension Committee, was held on November 16 in the Loveland Community Building. Rev. D. Engelsma spoke on "The Reformation and Good Works."

A talent program, sponsored by the Ladies Circle, was held on November 30 in the church. A collection was taken for the school.

From our South Holland Church:

The membership papers of Mrs. Wm. Lenting Jr. have been received from the First Christian Reformed Church of South Holland.

On October 15 Rev. J. Kortering spoke to the congregation on "Biblical Evangel-

ism." This lecture was arranged by the Men's Society.

The Graduate's Club held a Gym Night at the Illiana gym on October 24. Everyone in the congregation was invited, and the proceeds went for our school.

The Choral Society sponsored a Thanksgiving singspiration on Sunday, December 2. The Choral Society gave a few special numbers as part of the program.

Mrs. Arthur W. Zandstra, nee DeBoer, has been received as a member in full communion from the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church.

Mr. and Mrs. David H. Poortenga rejoice in the gift of a son, Jason Wade.

From our Hope, Walker Church:

Mr. and Mrs. Louis De Young have been received as members from the Spring Lake Christian Reformed Church.

Mr. and Mrs. David Moelker rejoice in the birth of a baby boy, Kevin David, born October 8.

Mr. and Mrs. Dave Tanis received a son, Edward Lee, on Friday, November 16.

At her request a certificate of dismissal was sent to Betty Ringerwole.

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Scholten were blessed with a son on November 29.

New servicemen addresses:

C. R. Robert Kamphuis 371-79-0120
EDA 07-74-CBC
Port Hueneme, California 93041

ETRSR Harry Allen Petroelje
371-62-9359 - O.E. Division
U.S.S. Hancock, C.V.A. 19
F.P.O. San Francisco, California 96601

Pvt. Jack A. Huizenga 362-60-3282
Co. A. 1st BN 28th Infantry
Fort Riley, Kansas 66442

RMFA John Kamphuis 377-62-5542
COMOCEANSYSLANT Box 100
Norfolk, Virginia 23511

From our Hull Church:

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Kooiker were blessed with the birth of a son, Kerwen Gwen, on September 28.

The Young People's Society sponsored a baked goods sale on October 13 to raise money for the 1974 convention to be held at Dordt College.

The baptism certificate of Miss Floretta Hoekstra was transferred to our Hudsonville Church.

Mrs. David Groeneweg made public confession of her faith on October 28.

The Young People's Society sponsored a Reformation Day singspiration on the evening of October 28. There was singing, special numbers, and a speech by Rev. Kortering on "Peace With God." An offering was received for the coming convention.

The young people held a rummage sale on November 17, also to raise money for the convention.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. James De Boer and four baptized children were sent to their home at their request. They intend to affiliate with the Christian Reformed Church of Luverne, Minnesota.

From our Redlands Church:

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Van Uffelen are the grateful parents of a baby daughter, Dawn Renee, born December 7.

David De Jong and Joanne Feenstra were united in marriage on October 26.

Mr. Wayne Baker and Miss Janice Feenstra were joined in holy matrimony on November 2.