

Beacon Lights

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*“Blessed is the man that walketh
not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor standeth in the way of sinners,
nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”*

Psalm 1:1

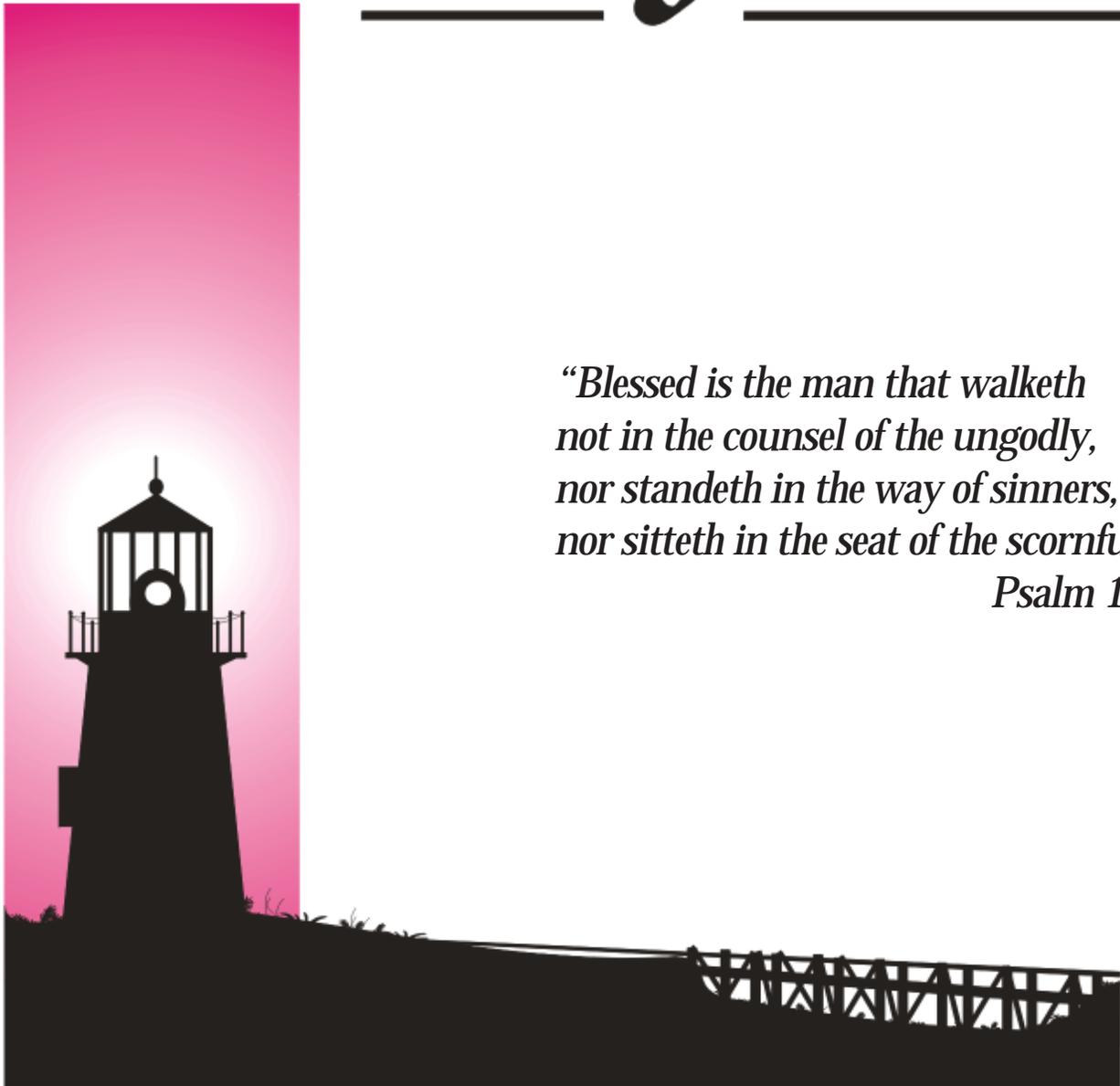


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A Happy New Year

by John Huizenga

“Happy new year” from the *Beacon Lights* staff to our readers in Christ. We do not merely *wish* and *desire* your happiness, but on the basis of God’s covenant faithfulness we are assured that you will have a happy new year. Though jobs be taken away, fields be barren, health wither, money dwindle, or friends depart we hesitate not to say with confidence “happy new year.” In fact, we know that God will bring to you the happiness of which we speak in and through any afflictions and loss you experience.

The happiness of the child of God comes from the new heart which is planted within him and bound to Christ by faith. His happiness is a spiritual happiness of peace and hope for salvation. Apart from Christ man faces death and eternal damnation. There can be no real happiness in this life when it is clear to everyone that this life will end. Every philosophy, religion, and lifestyle that is not rooted in the revelation of God in Christ is an attempt to hide from death and find a temporary happiness for this life. It is a deceptive happiness that arises from a heart dead in sin.

Our happiness is rooted in God’s gracious gift of faith. The faith which God gives to his people in Christ brings them into fellowship with God and His word of comfort and hope in the Bible. Death is no longer the end. Christ has conquered death, washed away sin, and earned the new life which God gives to his people now in principle, but fulfilled in heaven. The believer, therefore, rejoices in Jehovah and finds joy and happiness in the God of his salvation. Our life in Christ also sanctifies the laughter and fun which we have with one another.

While we remain on this earth and the old man of sin clings to us, our happiness does not always well up within us to form a smile on our face. There may be periods of great anxiety or deep depression that all but squeeze every drop of happiness from us. But the faith which God gives and never takes away is the source of happiness, and our happiness can always be renewed. God uses the church with its members, elders, and deacons to bring God’s word of comfort and demonstrate Christian love which restores the happiness of the child of God.

Sin is always at the heart of unhappiness. We are born in sin and never cease to fight against our sinful nature. Sin can turn laughter and fun into something which is not true happiness. Sin can take joy from our life. Our “happy new year,” therefore, is also an admonition to walk in the fear of the Lord and seek forgiveness of sin in Christ. Only in a godly walk can we find happiness (Psalm 1).

God maintains the happiness of the believer chiefly by the pure preaching of the Word. We have noted also that every believer in the church must work to bring true happiness to his brother or sister in the Lord. I would like to explore in this editorial the way in which God has so created the year that it too declares the gospel of salvation to the believer and thereby lifts him up in joy and praise.

Seed time in Scripture is often used as a picture of the preaching of the gospel (Isa. 55:10-11). The child of God who has the new heart of regeneration receives the word and it grows into a fruitful life of sanctification. As in the spring time God sends the rain and sunshine to provide for the sprouting seeds and budding trees, so God provides for His people as they grow in faith. The joy which this work of God brings to God's people is expressed in verse 12 of Isaiah 55 where we read "ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace."

Summer is a picture of our life on this earth. In this life we have only a beginning of our happiness in Christ. We must live for a time among the wicked with all its trials and tribulations as Jesus instructed in the parable of the wheat and the tares. Summer is the time when the people of God gather wisdom and the knowledge of God in Christ as the ant gathers diligently the food which it needs (Prov. 6:6-8; 30:25; 10:5 Jer. 8:20). Let us be reminded of our work when the hot sun of summer shines and we see the busy ants. When we diligently seek and grow in our knowledge of God in the preaching, reading, and through all of our experiences in life, we find peace and happiness.

Fall is the time of harvest and a picture of the day of judgment when the believers will be declared righteous in Christ and gathered into glory (Matt. 13:24ff.). When you see the signs of fall, rake the leaves from your yard, gather in the fruits of your garden, or combine fields of grain, be reminded of the day when the fruit of Christ will be harvested. Then those who are righteous in Him will be separated from the chaff and gathered into everlasting glory.

Though Scripture does not directly use winter as a picture of death, winter is a time in colder climates when the trees appear to be dead. Winter can be a rather gloomy time. Yet in winter we see the glory of God in the sparkling snow and in the the beautiful fall colors of the leaves before they wither and fall to the ground leaving the trees looking lifeless. We know that death has been defeated in Christ, and we know that winter is followed by spring. Then the warm breezes of spring awaken the earth and trees and they send forth new living leaves reminding us of the resurrection from the dead.

The changing seasons also govern the life of the creatures on earth. Each spring the birds which have migrated from the cold come back to build their nests and raise young. Some regions of the earth have annual rainy seasons which enliven the dry, parched earth. The animals then engage in their work of raising young, revealing the wisdom of God who governs all life on the earth with the repeating cycle of the year.

God created the year on the fourth day of creation when He created the sun, moon, and stars. God created the year to govern life on the earth, and also to reveal His glory. The word for "year" in Genesis 1:15 has as its root meaning "to repeat." Our minds are such that repetition strengthens our memory. Repetition is a basic learning strategy, and God uses this learning strategy in the year to teach us the truth of our salvation and joy in that salvation. Each year God's wisdom and sovereign power is manifest in the care and maintenance of life on the earth. Once each year, on New Year's Day, we pause to think upon the year as a whole and consider the handiwork of God. It is a time to recall the lesson of salvation taught by the seasons and heard by the preaching of the Word from the pulpits. This is also a time when we remember God's promise to preserve the earth year by year, through each cycle of seasons, until Christ comes on the last day (Gen. 8:21, 22).

May this year be a year of spiritual growth for you. When an old tree is cut down and the cross section of the trunk is examined we find rings that reflect the growth of the tree each year. A thin ring indicate a year of poor growing conditions, and a thick ring indicates a year of good growing conditions. A happy year for the child of God is a year of much spiritual growth. May your spiritual growth ring for this year be thick and strong. ❖

Persecution in Sudan

by Lori Baldwin

A gunshot startled John from turbulent sleep. Heart pounding in his ears, he immediately ran to his parents' side. Where were they? Confused and trembling, John hurried outside where he saw his parents standing in front of two soldiers wearing the hateful colors of North Sudan. In the dim light, John saw blood dripping down his father's leg.

"That was a warning," the taller soldier stated. "Now convert to Islam or you shall both be bleeding. I will aim higher this time." John could hear the contempt that filled the man's voice. He stood there, numb. What were his mother and father thinking? All they had to say was that they believed that Islam was the true religion and that Allah was god. What held them back?

Wide eyed, John watched in terror as his father released his hand that had clutched his bloody leg. He stood tall, as he faithfully responded, "Never. You can kill me and take away my life. I have freedom in Christ. You cannot take that away." John clamped his teeth down on the side of his cheek to keep from crying out. Another loud gunshot rang out. His father crumpled to the ground, dead.

John wanted to run to his side, but he couldn't make his legs move. Instead, he darted out the back of the hut, into the forest.

Unaware of the eerie noises that surrounded him, he thought of his father. Tears streamed down his dark face. He hated his father for what he had said, he hated the soldiers, and he hated himself for just standing there and not saying a word.

Something in the brush nearby rustled. If it was a lion, ready to pounce, John didn't care. He might as well die now. He closed his eyes and sank to the ground. He was startled by a hand on his shoulder. Looking up, he met the dark eyes of a young boy. He beckoned with his hand, and John got up. In the moonlight, John studied the other boy. He looked to be about 11, his own age, and certainly no richer than himself. Dressed in ragged clothes that hung on his emaciated frame, the boy looked as if he hadn't had a meal in months. John sighed, neither had he.

Suddenly, the boy began running. Not sure why, John followed. They stopped suddenly and John looked up to

see himself in a large crowd of boys. Their haunted eyes pierced him.

Many exhausting days later on the dusty road, John was ready to give up. The hate he held inside ate at him like leprosy. He despised everything and everyone he encountered. He looked at the world through angry eyes.

"Here, eat this," a voice interrupted John's bitter thoughts. He looked up into the face of James, the boy who had led him on this hateful trail. John grabbed the few berries that lay in his open hand. Eagerly, he gobbled them down, his hunger worsened by the scrap of nourishment.

The sun beat down on his burnt skin. He wiped his cracked hand across his face to rid it of the salty sweat. His feet were pierced by sharp rocks and blistered by ceaseless walking. Would they ever reach Ethiopia?

A cry pierced the air. John looked up, startled. He ran over to the young man who had shouted out. Tears were streaming down the boy's filthy face. "Mummy brother. He's not here anymore...he went to find berries. I was going to look for them, but he insisted he could..." The boy's voice trailed off as heart wracking sobs tore through his body. John peered over someone's head to see blood staining the rocky ground. A single scrap of cloth lay there.

"Lions." James' face was grim. He breathed deep and addressed the crowd. Faces turned expectantly towards their leader. "We must keep going. Who knows if the whole pack is still around? Help the boy up and carry him. Let's keep going."

John looked at James with horror. The boy had just lost his brother and he was going to keep walking? Without taking any proper time to mourn? He was about to tell him just that, when James looked him squarely in the eye. "We must keep going," he said as if reading his mind. "One life is lost, and I don't want to waste others. It hurts me just as much as it hurts you every time someone dies. But with every life lost, we must continue to save the rest. We need to rely on our Lord for deliverance, and He will save us. It was His will to have this one die, as well as the others. We have no way of knowing why, but it was. Now, please," the boy was seemingly pleading for John to agree, "we must go."

John shook his head in anger; he had no choice but to follow. Without warning, the image of his father's limp body flashed in his head. Closing his eyes in pain, he shook the image away and began to walk. He joined James and they trudged in silence.

John's eyes didn't see the harsh land surrounding him. He ignored the fact that tiny rocks were slicing his feet. He didn't watch the vultures circling around. He took no notice of the stifling heat. His ears did not hear-ken to the distant cry of a howler monkey. All he could think of was the dead boy.

Without any notice John turned to James and shouted. "Why did your God make this happen? It's not right or fair. If he is so merciful then why are we still on this hateful road walking on? Why did He make my par-ents die? They lived their whole life devoted to him and then he kills them with the gun of a soldier. I will not serve one who is as cruel as that." John emitted a harsh laugh, "You'll probably wind up like my parents did. Dead."

James looked at him, with sadness. "You have no peace in what your father did, do you? He gave up his life here on earth, but now he is with our Lord. He is filled with joy and does not have the troubles of this world. He really didn't give much up compared to the life which he will live in eternity. My God is merciful, but he is also just." James stopped walking and evenly met John's gaze. "We all deserve to die. But we don't all go to the same place afterwards. If you are one of his chosen, you shall one day understand. Until that day, I pray for you."

John shook his head. James looked as if he had such peace when he said those words. How could he be at peace with a God who is so cruel? *But we don't all go to the same place afterwards.* Those words sent a shiver down his spine. He felt cold all over. His parents had taught him about God, and for a while he had thought he believed them. But now only hatred ruled his world.

Many days later, James voice was heard praising God, "Oh Lord thank you, thank you." John ran to where James stood, although he guessed what James had found. The group of boys stood at the edge of a sparkling river. "Water." The magical word was murmured by the crowd. The moment seemed too wonderful to be true. After almost a month of eating mud to get liquid, a whole river of water was miraculous.

John couldn't believe it. He sank under the water time and time again, delighting in the feel of the cool-ness around him. He tilted his head back; no longer mind-ing the harsh sun, for the water provided cool relief.

Something rough brushed against the back of his legs. Stunned, John raised his head expecting to see one of the other boys. He propelled his body around in circles. No one. He felt it again. In the water he saw a dark shadow rising to the surface. It was a few inches from John's face before he realized what it was. Screaming, he tried to swim away, but couldn't go fast enough.

A searing pain ripped through his leg as his muscles were ripped from the bone. He felt the blood gushing from his leg. John began to splash wildly around in the water causing the other boys to turn his way. All he could think about was escape.

Without warning, his head plunged under the water. He tried to propel himself to the surface, his lungs burn-ing. He surfaced just as he realized that he could no longer use his left leg, as it was barely attached to his body. Blood filled the water around him.

It's no use. I might as well die now, John thought. Resigned, he allowed himself to slip under the water's deathly grasp. Blackness surrounded him.

Harsh sunlight awakened John from his deep sleep. His eyes groaning in protest, he shielded them with his hand as he looked up into the face of James. Confused he looked down at where his leg should be. It was no longer there. His brain registered the fact, and he clamped his teeth down on his lip to keep from crying out in pain. Voice trembling he asked, "What happened? Why am I alive?" His memory slowly returned, "I should be dead..." his voice drifted. He had no strength to talk.

James' eyes filled with compassion as he kneeled beside John. "There was a croc in the water. You fought as hard as you could, and lost. You should have died out there, but as soon as I saw you slip under..." James' voice trailed off.

"Yes?"

I knew you had given up. I couldn't let that happen, knowing where you would be going." James paused to look John in the eyes. "You would have been in hell."

James' words stunned John. Never before had some-one been that abrupt with him. But there was still some-thing missing. "I don't understand. Why am I here?"

"I swam out as fast as I could," continued James, "...when I reached where you sank under, the croc was gone. I had seen it, I was sure of it, but for some reason, he left." James shrugged his shoulders, "I pulled you up onto the shore, and here you are. I have no doubt, God saved you."

John was about to protest, but James held up his hand to silence him. "There is no way that you would still be here if the croc hadn't left you. He had no reason

to leave. But you are here! Only someone as powerful as God could have intervened. You cannot deny it.”

John looked down at his wet shirt. He fingered the cloth around the edges, and then looked at the area where his leg should have been. He squeezed his eyes to shut out the pain. *God saved you.* He thought of James’ words. *He must be right. The croc should have taken me and eaten me, and yet he didn’t. God must have intervened, but if he is real, then why are my parents not here anymore?* His thoughts darted, never resting on a logical

explanation. The hate he felt still burned inside him, though not as strong.

He raised up his eyes to see James still standing over him. “I...I’m not sure what happened. I am convinced that a merciful God would not have let my parents die, but on the other hand I am still here. I don’t know how to stop hating,” he admitted, “though if what you say is true, then maybe I will listen.”

As James spoke there was a smile in his voice, “If you will listen, then I will speak. C’mon, let me carry you,” James extended his hand. “We will get there someday.” ❖

Consider the Creation

Grandma’s Roses

by Deanne Wassink

The roses around the foundation of my house were diseased and bedraggled. The leaves were stunted and insect eaten. One spring I saw a few scraggly pink blooms that weren’t much to look at. I almost tore out the plants by the roots. They were a professional embarrassment to me, a beginning landscaper and flower grower. I even tried to kill them all at once by spraying them with a plant killer. But, they came back stronger the next year. That time they had many beautiful flowers in the spring—old fashioned double blooms, light pink with a delicate sweet aroma, about the size of a daisy.

Out of curiosity, I transplanted some of them to a more sunny, watered place. Wow! Did they love it there! They multiplied like crazy and dazzled us with a tremendous show of blooms in June. Then they were done. Since then I have divided and transplanted them many more places around the yard and given a few away. They seem to spread quite easily from runners that shoot out from the mother plant. The bushes grow to be about three to four feet tall. Every year I take out a few of the older shoots to prevent disease and stimulate new shoots to develop. They seem to bloom on second year growth, unlike ornamental tea roses and the new breeds of hardy roses that bloom on new growth during the summer and fall months.

I don’t know what their name is. I do hope to find out. I have been studying heirloom roses in a search for

an answer. In fact the interest that they stimulated in me has resulted in a rather extensive collection of hardy roses coloring every corner of my landscape. I suspect that my dear sweet grandmother transplanted them from somewhere else to brighten up the yard in those days of struggle, sweat and toil when the work on the farm consumed all of their time and energy. Maybe, she carried them with her from Iowa as a loving reminder of her family there. I can picture her stooped over, carefully planting them under the eaves of the house where they would get the most water. That is where I found them.

Now and then I find other heirloom roses growing in the woods and meadows near the Lake Michigan shoreline. They are reminders of a family that once live there and have since moved on. One of my favorites is a pink climbing rose that grows its blooms in clusters of seven. Its name is, “Seven Sisters.”

There are also native roses that grow in the meadows and in the dunes adding a splash of color to the landscape there. Often they are low growing with delicate, dark pink single blooms. They are very tough and hardy. There is a tall delicate shrub rose with a strong sweet scent called a “smooth rose” (*rosa blanda*). Another rose found among the dunes is the short and prickly “wild rose,” (*rosa acicularis*). A third rose is not particular to the dunes, called the “pasture rose,” (*rosa carolina*). They are not as showy as their cultivated and refined cousins, however, they play a special part in the ecosys-

tem holding the soil and hosting a variety of insects.

We are to care for the roses God has given us in His garden. As parents we are to nurture the children we are given, carefully cultivating them to reflect the beauty of their Maker.

A congregation, a church, the body of Christ, is to nurture one another so that she grows together as a sturdy rose plant blooming in rich praises to her Gardener. May we be given that grace.

Grandma's Roses

*Grandma made the rose her care,
Digging and watering there.
Carefully pruning the heads.
Daily watering the beds.*

*She counted each dewy bud.
She pulled off each wiggly bug.
The scent wafting on the air,
Told her that a bloom was there.*

*Growing her children, each one,
Including my dad, her son,
She nurtured them as they grew,
Until from home they withdrew.*

*Me let her example teach,
To nurture each child, yes, each!
Until they bloom on their own,
Scented with their Father's home. ❖*

*Deane is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church
in Holland, Michigan.*

The Reader Asks

Our Good Works and Degrees of Reward and Punishment (3)

by Rev. James Laning

In the previous two articles, I have begun to respond to a letter from Laurel Lotterman in which she asked the following questions:

- If our good works profit us nothing, then why do we believe that there will be different levels in heaven?
- What kind of levels are the levels of heaven? If heaven is perfect and we are perfectly happy, will the people in levels higher than us be *more* happy, or *more* perfect?
- If all sins are equal, why are there different levels of hell? (or aren't there?)

In my answers thus far, I have pointed out that even though we are not saved because of our good works, our good works do profit us. Although God does not reward us *on the basis of* our works, He does reward us *according to* our works. This means that God gives to us His blessings in a way that relates to the good works we perform. The more good works we do, the more blessings we receive.

In my last article, I spoke about the gracious reward we will receive at the final judgment. The fact that on that day God will reward us according to our works, in-

dicates that there will be different degrees of reward in heaven. In heaven each of God's people will be a vessel filled with God's glory, so that each person will be perfectly happy and content. But some vessels will have more capacity than others, so that there will be different degrees of glory in heaven. The more good works we do in this life, the greater our capacity will be to shine forth God's glory everlastingly in heaven.

This idea of different degrees of glory is illustrated for us every night in the stars. The Scriptures take the truth that "one star differeth from another star in glory" (I Cor. 15:41) and apply it to the resurrection from the dead. Believers will shine as the stars. Some stars will be brighter than others, but each will perfectly radiate the light of God. Especially bright will be those who diligently strive to grow in spiritual wisdom, and faithfully witness to bring others to the way of truth.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever (Dan. 12:3).

That brings us now to the third question, “If all sins are equal, why are there different levels of hell? (or aren’t there?)”

Ways in Which All Sin is the Same

The third question assumes that all sins are equal, and then asks about why there would be different degrees of punishment in hell. Before answering the second part of the question, we must first consider whether it really is the case that all sins are equal.

There are certain things that are the same about all sins. First of all, every sin, no matter how small in our eyes, deserves everlasting punishment in hell. As Question 11 of the Heidelberg Catechism states, since sin is committed “against the most high majesty of God” it must “also be punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul.”

Secondly, Scripture states that when one sins against any of the commandments he sins against them all.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law (James 2:10, 11).

The law of God is one. So whoever violates any of the commandments is guilty of all. Knowing this, the obedient child of God strives to keep, not only some, but all of the commandments, even though he knows that he will always fall far short of doing this perfectly in this life.

Greater Punishment for Greater Sins

But Scripture also speaks to us about differences among sins, and warns us that some sins are indeed worse than others. For example, a sin is worse when the one committing it has been instructed in the truth, and is conscious of the fact that what he is doing is evil. Our Lord made this truth very clear. After warning the people about laying up treasures on earth instead of laying up treasures in heaven, He went on to speak about the final judgment:

And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:47, 48).

To whom much is given, much is required. So one who has been taught the truth of the Word of God, and yet gives himself over to the pursuit of the lusts of the flesh, will receive a worse punishment in hell than those who did not receive this sound instruction.

This truth is also taught in connection with the crucifixion of our Lord. Against God’s holy Child “both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together” (Acts 4:27). They were all guilty of crucifying our Savior. Yet Jesus Himself said that when they did this, the sin of some of them was greater than that of the others. While standing before Pontius Pilate, our Lord said to him “he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:11). The unbelieving Jews, and especially their leaders, had received the Scriptures that spoke of the coming Messiah, and yet they were crucifying Him. Therefore, Christ says that their sin was greater than that of Pontius Pilate.

Similarly, when God raises up faithful men of God to preach the truth of Scripture, those who reject this Word are worse than the people of Sodom, and will receive a greater punishment. This is what Jesus said when He sent forth His disciples to preach:

But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city (Luke 12:10-12).

When the truth is being preached to people, the kingdom of God is coming nigh to them. If they reject this truth, they commit a sin that is worse than that committed by the abominable people of Sodom, and therefore their punishment will be worse than that of Sodom.

An Application to Believers

We can take the truth that “to whom much is given much is required” and apply it also to ourselves as believers. A true believer knows that if he decides to play around with sin for awhile, he will experience God’s chastening rod. And the older he becomes, and the more he “knows better” than to do what he is doing, the more severe God’s heavy hand will come down upon him. Our heavenly Father is a just God, who sees everything we do, hears everything we say, and even knows everything we think, and rewards or chastens us according to our works.

This truth is actually a great comfort to us. As believing sheep we do not desire to go astray and walk in sin, and we are thankful that we know that, if we do, God will chasten us and bring us back into the sheepfold of Christ. Of course, we do not desire to have to learn this way. Rather we long to please our God and Savior, thinking on the great love and mercy that He has shown us in saving us from sin through the death of His only

begotten Son. Furthermore, the thought of radiating more of our Savior's glory encourages us to strive ever more so to deny ourselves and to do the works that bring honor and glory to His great and holy name.

I am very thankful for your questions, Laurel. Should you or anyone else desire to hear more on this subject, or on any other, please write and let me know. ❖

Church Family

Stewardship (2)

by Darren Vink

STEWARDSHIP AND MONEY: SPENDING GOD'S WAY

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, nearly 70% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. As Americans we have no problem spending money. We are the richest society in the history of the world. We are also the most marketed to society in the history of the world.

You can't open a newspaper without seeing advertisements. You can't drive down the road without seeing billboards. You can't brush your teeth without noticing the type of toothpaste. You can't cook a meal, get a snack, or even refer to a snack without marketing. Marketing is everywhere you look, it is on everything you touch, when you smell something you think of a brand name, when tasting you think of a company, you even recognize different tunes and associate them with products.

We are very good at ignoring all this marketing. We tend to overlook it. We don't see it or just throw it in the trash.

This marketing is successful. The proof is all the money that is spent on it. It is successful because it tends to take our money a dollar or two at a time. We spend, spend, spend, and before you know it some marketing firm teams up with the *Wall Street Journal* to point out that 70% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck!

This is just one piece of evidence that tells us that as a society we spend too much. As Christians we live in this society and are subject to its same pressures. We too can easily get into the unconscious habit of spending money.

As stewards we are managers of God's money. We need to be conscious of the pressures society places on us. We also need to be proactive in taking steps to ensure that when we spend our God given money, it is for his use and the advancement of his kingdom.

When a steward spends too much, this is due to mismanagement. The single most common type of mismanagement is of our resources.

Before we look at mismanagement, we should look at a unique case. There are those who manage properly but still need to spend more than they can earn. Those individuals can point to circumstances that could include a long history of poor health or lack of employment. To those people God gave the helping hands of their family and their church. God always provides for his own.

It is good to point out here that those who find themselves in a pinch financially have the church. God has given those who need relief the ministry of the diaconate. God, through his church, will make sure those that need support will get it. (On the other hand, if you are acting like a lazy schlub, they will make you get your act together!)

Mismanagement of resources and spending are often the same thing. Part of the reason there is so much spending today is due to marketing. Another part of the reason there is so much spending today is addiction to stuff. You could call this a spiritual disease called "stuffitis." Stuffitis is the condition where you want more stuff, you think you need more stuff, you want bigger and better stuff, you want the latest and greatest stuff, you just can't get enough stuff.

Stuffitis is a spiritual condition linked with covetousness. Covetousness is a spiritual disease running rampant in our affluent society today. Stuffitis is a physical manifestation of a spiritual reality.

The process is this. People are shown some stuff through marketing. People perceive this stuff as a “need.” Being constantly bombarded with this marketing, people cave in to this want and buy stuff. This stuff makes them feel good both because they own it and because they can show it off to their friends. The next week they perceive another “need.” They go buy more stuff. The cycle continues. There is no end to the spending.

This spiritual condition plagues our society today. Another statistic is that the savings rate in 2000 was -2.2%. People just can’t wait to spend all that they have and then some more! They are spending on things that are not necessities. Very few of the luxuries are helping out God’s kingdom. How can most people say, “I loved God and my neighbor with all my heart, and soul, and strength when I bought that”?

Stuffitis is a lack of contentment. When we see something we wish to have for our own, we borrow to buy it and justify it by saying, “I deserve a break every once in a while.” But we are instructed in 1 Timothy 6:6, “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” The covetous man forgets the fact that the money is not his! The covetous man forgets that he is a steward.

Everywhere we turn we are mercilessly hit with marketing. We all have a weak spot. What can we do? How can we control our spending? There are a few practical things that we can do to manage our spending.

The first thing we can do is care. Remember Joseph; it took a lot of effort to manage the whole land of Egypt. Now, obviously God has not called us to manage a whole country, but we each do have an individual responsibility. If we do not show ourselves worthy in managing a few things, how can God trust us in the managing of greater things?

Look at the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. Those stewards were given talents (money) just as we have. Some were given a little, some more, and some much. They, knowing their master, did not just spend all the money. There is no principle difference in the stewards of that parable and us. They had in their head who their master was and how he dealt with those who were unfaithful. We too, once we get in our head who our master is, will not find it difficult to stop spending all our money.

It should be pointed out that knowing our master

gives us incentive. Knowing our master gives us motivation to care. We need to learn who the master is. We need to understand him. Once we know who he is—sovereign, creator, ruler, sustainer, good, loving, caring, and giving—we have no problem being motivated to obey. When we are filled with knowledge of him, we are filled with the knowledge both of our own shortcomings and how much he has done for us. With this knowledge it is easy to care because we are so thankful.

How can we show our thankfulness? As a steward we can show our thankfulness by doing a budget.

A budget is a tool used to help us manage what we own. Just like a carpenter uses tools to build a home, we need financial tools. You wouldn’t think of eating soup without a tool called a spoon, would you? So too, we should not think of managing God’s possessions without using a tool called a budget. A budget helps us figure out what a need is and a want is.

A budget is the essence of planning with money. Stewards need to plan.

Jesus advocated good long-term planning in Luke 14:28-30. Count the cost of being a disciple of his. Be a steward who plans the future. He gives a very practical earthly example of a heavenly truth. When anticipating what may happen in the future, we would be foolish to not count the cost ahead of time.

We can prove to God that we are stewards who care by doing a budget. A budget will help us to understand our money. We will understand how much we make. We will understand how much we spend. We will also understand where we are spending. A budget is a means to an end. A budget takes work. It doesn’t come automatically. Money is fluid, and marketing is rampant; a budget takes work.

A budget is not a bad thing. It is good. There are rewards for budgeting. There are rewards for sticking to a budget.

The first reward for sticking to a budget is that managed money goes further. I experienced this myself. When I started budgeting I immediately felt like I received a 10% raise. When you budget you realize where your money is going. When you actively manage it you control where it goes. You apply it to where it needs to be most.

The second reward of budgeting is communication. When you do a budget you are placing your priorities on paper. It has been said, “Show me your checkbook, and I will show you what your priorities are.” You tell me where you spend your money, and I will tell you what

the most important things in your life are. You write everything down. You think about the future. What bills are we going to have next month? It shows you how much you have coming in and going out, and it helps you manage what you have, making it go farther.

A budget is a great communication tool for those who are married. Both the husband and the wife get together and agree on the next month's spending. By so doing they come into agreement on common goals. When they talk about these goals they are talking about the future. They end up communicating about their hopes, their goals, their fears, and their dreams.

The third reward of budgeting is accountability. Do you overspend? If you had every receipt for every purchase you made in the last year, could you take all of them and spread them out across the table for others to look at? God sees. It also creates accountability in the sense that when we have a written budget, it is then "in stone." We are accountable to it, and if married, to each other.

The fourth reward of budgeting is giving. As our money is managed well, we can give more. Many times in the Old Testament we read of "tithes and offerings." The tithe is a good standard to go by. As we manage our money well we are going to be able to take some of the extra and be financially able to offer it for the use of the kingdom.

To do a budget you need to figure out how much you really spend. Take away all the luxuries and get down to the basics. Start by asking yourself, "How little could I live on?" Although it is not my intent to show all the particulars on how a budget works, I will include the budget basics. (To look at any particulars of budgeting pick up a copy of one of the works cited books.) A budget has many parts.

Tithe. We start with the tithe. Remember, have faith in God. Place him first. He has proved himself faithful and deserves our firstfruits. "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:19).

Food. Before you do anything else, buy food. Not Mc-Burgers, not fancy eating out, but food. Take care of this first. Eating out is not wrong, but before we spend luxuriously on ourselves we need to take care of first things first. We need to know how much we really need so we can do an accurate tally of how far our money will really go.

Shelter. You need someplace to sleep: a house or an apartment. No one, even in the USA, needs a 4,000 square

foot house. Again, it is not wrong to have that, but it can't be justified as a necessity.

Transportation. You need reliable transportation. Notice that I did not say a \$38,000 SUV. In most cases, for most people, that would be an extreme luxury.

Utilities. Part of the basic necessities of life is having running water, having the electric bill paid, and having the trash picked up each week.

When we spend money on the tithe, food, shelter, transportation, and utilities, a lot of what we do is the same as those in society around us. So what's the difference? Attitude. Why you do it. It comes from the heart. We are told to work for the LORD and not for men (Eph. 6:7). That includes our spending: when we shop for food, when we cook the food, when we buy a home or a car, and when we pay our utility bills. Why are we doing it?

God cares about what house you buy, he cares about why you bought that car, and he cares about how you do it. All things must be toward God's glory. God cares about your attitude when you spend money. He cares about your motive in spending money. This is what makes our spending different from that of the world. When we buy groceries or cook a meal we can be conscious of doing those things out of love for our family.

So think about why you are buying your next car. Are you doing it to look cool? Are you just sick of your old one (and not content)? Are you only looking at the payment and not the sticker price? Or do you need something safe and reliable?

When we spend God's way we manage money wisely. We know what we are spending: God's money. We know how much we are spending: enough to cover necessities. We know why we are spending: we are spending thankfully and out of love for those around us. ❖

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Watching Daily At My Gates

Beacon Lights now begins its 14th year of publishing devotionals for our readers. We hope that many of you have found them to be a profitable tool in your spiritual growth. The series began with the theme “Watching Daily At My Gates” taken from Proverbs 8:34-35 “Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.” Such a devotional life is essential in our covenant walk with God. Jesus often sought a quiet place to meditate and pray.

Mr. Hunter began the series and continues to contribute willingly. According to the introduction in the January, 1993 issue of Beacon Lights, Mr. Hunter was in his 15th year of teaching at Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School in Doon. He continues to work there as teacher and principal. I would like to thank him for the hours and hours of his spare time writing wonderful devotional material. Along the way, others have labored to provide new material for meditation. Everyone’s help has been much appreciated.

Eight years ago, we began a series of devotionals that used the Psalter as a theme and guide, and I plan to reprint this series in the months ahead. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, we sing the Psalms on the Lord’s Day and throughout the week and our hope was that meditating on the words would help us to sing with better understanding and love for this treasure. Secondly, this will give our writers a break from their diligent and faithful work in this area.

Psalter-Psalm Devotional

by John Huizenga

The Blessedness of the Godly

January 1 Psalm 1:1

The man who is blessed is filled with joy and happiness. Look around you. Do you see many happy people? Don’t be deceived by all the laughter. Often laughter is a mask to cover fear, insecurity, and despair. Psalm 1 tells you how to find those who are filled with joy and happiness. Look for one who avoids the activities and company of the ungodly. Look for one who refuses to participate in activities that lead one into temptation and sin. Look for one who flees from those who openly mock the Christian faith. That man is blessed. He does not flee from sin in order to seek happiness, no, he already has a happiness that is so deep and overpowering that he sees only misery in all the sinful attempts of man to find happiness. The happiness that he has is rooted in his knowledge of God’s love for him in Christ. Hence we sing “who fearing God” and “who loves God’s

precepts.” Do you have that happiness? Sing Psalter Number 1:1 and 2:1

January 2 Psalm 1:2

One who is blessed does not only shun all man centered, sinful, attempts to find happiness; he also is actively pursuing the source of his happiness: God. God puts a new heart in him so that he becomes alive spiritually and knows his God as a loving and merciful Father who reveals the way of heavenly blessedness. He therefore seeks to know every detail about that way: the law of Jehovah. The law is the whole of God’s word. King David had this blessedness. He meditated on that word day and night, in prosperity and despair, and his blessedness is expressed by divine inspiration in the psalms. Let us also make the Psalms our expression of blessedness. Sing Psalter Number 1:2 and 2:2.

January 3 Psalm 1:3

The one who lives in blessedness is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. He has been chosen by God and is carefully cultivated to grow and produce spiritual fruit. The flowing river is a picture of the abundance of God’s Word that causes him to grow in his knowledge of God. A cultivated tree must also be pruned to cut away that which is dead and unfruitful, but its leaf is ever green and it will bear fruit in due season. God will never forsake His people, but will finish the work which He has begun in them. Sing Psalter Number 1:3 and 2:3 (you may want to try the second tune).

January 4 Psalm 1:4

Psalm 1 expresses in clear language the basic theme found in the whole book of Psalms: the blessedness of the godly in contrast with the misery of the ungodly. The Psalms express in song the response to the good news (gospel) of salvation in Jesus Christ from the misery of sin and death. God is pleased, for the sake of His glory, to elect and reprobate. The wickedness of the ungodly and God’s wrath against them continually reminds the blessed of the wonder and power of God’s grace. In contrast to the tree well planted and cared for, the wicked are like the unwanted chaff that is carried away by the wind. If it were not for God’s mercy, we too would be the wicked and fit only to be destroyed. Sing Psalm 1:4

January 5 Psalm 1:5

You have noticed that stanza 4 of Psalms 1 and 2 includes Psalm 1:5 also. Jesus taught the truth of this verse in the parable of the wheat and the tares. While we live on this earth, we must live among the wicked, but in the day of harvest, the wheat is gathered into the barns while the tares are separated and cast into the fire. The wicked are also compared to the chaff which serves the wheat as it grows, but is separated and destroyed in

the harvest. Those who know that their sins are washed away by the blood of Christ do not fear the judgment and are therefore free and most blessed in life on this earth. Sing Psalter 2:4.

January 6 Psalm 1:6

The way of the righteous is Christ. It is the way of justice and mercy in the forgiveness of sins. It is the way of knowing God as Christ leads us in green pastures and through deep valleys. Christ walked the way Himself. Jehovah our covenant God knows every detail of the way we must walk and guards us all along. The way of sinners far from God is the way of seeking happiness apart from God. It is the way of serving Satan and believing his lies. The way of the wicked is directly opposite the way of the righteous and it will be destroyed along with all its travelers who have departed far from God. Sing Psalter Number 1:5 and 2:5

January 7 Psalm 2

Like the first psalm, Psalm 2 gives instruction about the book of the Psalms as a whole. David was a type of Christ, and Psalm 2 makes it clear that his inspired songs in the whole book of the Psalms are all about Christ and His victory. We sing Psalm 2 in the Psalter under the titles "The Kingship of Jesus Christ" and "Christ's Inheritance." Christ reigns in the way of destroying His enemies, and the peoples from every nation are His inheritance. Zion is redeemed through judgment. The beautiful oratorio by George Frideric Handel "The Messiah" includes a section from Psalm 2 which concludes with the Hallelujah Chorus from Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16. "Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of lords. Hallelujah!" Read Psalm 2; listen to or sing "The Messiah."

January 8 Psalm 2:1

The question in this verse is asked in angry interrogation, not ignorance. All the peoples of the earth, the creatures of God, are raging against their Creator! What a striking description of the effect of sin and display of the totally depraved nature of man! They "vainly dream that in triumph they can wage war against the King supreme" (Psalter 3:1). By nature we all foolishly wage war against God with Satan as our captain. But God graciously opens our eyes and gives us new hearts and wisdom to see the truth. Sing Psalter 4:1.

January 9 Psalm 2:2-3

As a type of Christ, David experienced throughout his life the plotting not only of many in Israel, but also kings all around who tried desperately to dethrone him. Acts 4:27, 28 reveals how the nations took counsel against Jesus. The plotting of nations and rulers against David was not against David as an earthly power, but out of hatred for God, they "wage war against the King supreme," God's anointed. They say "let us break free from the law of God, be our own gods, and do what we want." Do you hear these war-cries today? Our own sinful nature tempts us to join them. Some would criticize the Psalms for their endless bloody war language of days gone by and unfit for the modern Christian, but every believer who knows his

sinful nature knows about spiritual warfare. Sing Psalter Number 3:1.

January 10 Psalm 2:4

We turn now from the wicked counsel chamber and raging of man to the sovereign counsel of God. Acts 4:28 reveals that the wicked who gathered in order to destroy God's anointed and cast his yoke away did not succeed, but even in this they did "whatsoever thy counsel determined before to be done." When David speaks to his enemies he uses vivid language to make clear how foolish they are to imagine war against God. God laughs at them. We sing "the Lord will scorn them all, Calm He sits enthroned on high." Those who are washed of sin, sheltered in Christ from God's holy wrath against sin, and called the children of God can never give Him enough thanks and praise. Sing Psalter Number 3:2.

January 11 Psalm 2:5, 6

God does not need to exert Himself in battle against the wicked. He speaks His sovereign counsel and they know that all their own plans are vain. God has determined from eternity to place His Son on the throne of heaven and earth. Adam's fall into sin and every act of rebellion thereafter did nothing to frustrate those plans, but rather were a part of God's plan all along. No effort of man could be more vain than to dethrone Christ. The vain struggles of man are turned into their own punishment as they vex themselves day and night. Psalter Number 4:2 reads "He speaks and judgments fall on them who tempt His wrath and scorn His love." We rightly sing these words when we understand that the love which the wicked scorn is not a general love for all men, but the love and mercy which God reveals in Christ to the elect. Sing Psalter Number 4:2.

January 12 Psalm 2:7

We have been to the counsel chamber of the wicked, and to the throne of God, now we hear the voice of our risen Redeemer Himself declaring the eternal counsel of Jehovah (Acts 13:33). When David at last sat upon the throne, he made manifest to the world that God had eternally decreed his kingship as a picture of Christ. When Christ arose, He revealed clearly that He was indeed the eternal and only begotten Son of God. Let us sing this verse with Christ's resurrection in power in mind. Sing Psalter Number 3:3.

January 13 Psalm 2:8-9

Essential to the decree of Jehovah concerning His Son is the good news that Christ will gather His church from all the nations of the world. This is the gospel! In the way of nations raging against Christ, Christ saves His people from those nations in such a way that His people see His great love and sovereign rule. God also reveals His justice and wrath by destroying the wicked as a smashed clay pot. Our forefathers were from nations that raged and continue to rage against Jehovah's anointed, but God has chosen us in mercy from them to be His people. Let us also be diligent in the work of spreading the gospel by our walk in life and support of the mission work of the church. Sing Psalter 4:3.

January 14 Psalm 2:10-12

Having declared the truth of God's sovereign counsel, the psalm preaches the gospel to the nations. It is a message that goes out with urgency, like the preaching of John the Baptist "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Even the kings and rulers who lead nations against Christ are commanded. It is a command, not a pleading request. The preaching of the gospel to the nations serves to deliver the children of God and condemn the wicked. Those who do repent and put their trust in God enter into the blessed fellowship of God. They are the blessed who now walk not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stand in the way of sinners nor sit in the seat of the scornful. Sing Psalter Number 3:4 & 1:1.

January 15 Psalm 3:1-2

This is a psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son. Absalom had persuaded most of Israel to rise up with him against king David to overthrow him. In addition to the great sorrow of having a rebellious son, there were those who reminded David of his sins and told him that even God had forsaken him. We have noticed in the two introductory Psalms that the blessed salvation which God gives to His people comes in the way of much spiritual warfare for the people of God. Isaiah sums up this truth with the words "Zion is redeemed with judgment" (Isa. 1:17). David's life was filled with troubles, and being delivered, he sang beautiful praises to God. Let us also learn to seek God as David did. Sing Psalter Number 5:1.

January 16 Psalm 3:3, 4

Though his enemies taunt David saying God would not even help such a bloody sinner as he, David knows that Jehovah his faithful covenant God is a shield over him. The word for "shield" means a buckler round about protecting him on every side. David certainly has no earthly glory being chased as a wild animal, but his glory is in Christ and the office of king which he has of God. May God also lift up your head to see Christ when your sin and guilt brings you low. Cry out to the Lord with your voice, He will hear you. Sing Psalter Number 5:2.

January 17 Psalm 3:5, 6

Perhaps as a child you prayed before bed, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee Lord my soul to keep, if I should die before I wake, I pray thee Lord my soul to take. Amen." This was David's prayer. His trust in God brought peace to his soul and rest in sleep. Awaking he is renewed in strength and courage. He is not ignorant of the great power of the enemy, but proclaims that he is ready to fight ten thousands of enemies. We also must know the power of the enemy. Does the world and its development in sin frighten you? Trust in the Lord and your heart will be unmoved as David's. Sing Psalter Number 5:3.

January 18 Psalm 4:7

David knows well that he can not fight ten thousands of enemies by himself. When he awakes and considers his predicament, he turns immediately to God. His faithful covenant God has never failed to destroy those who oppose David because David's enemies are God's enemies. The devil goes round about

like a roaring lion to attack and kill the people of God, but David knows that the victory is God's who has already broken the jaw and teeth of the devil with His eternal decree of Christ. Sing Psalter Number 5:7.

January 19 Psalm 4:8

Salvation belongs to Jehovah our covenant God. It does not depend upon man's will or decision for Christ. Man does not contribute to his salvation. God chooses His people, calls them by grace, and saves them. As king of Israel David does not merely think about himself as he struggles and prays to God. He is thinking about the people of God over whom he has been anointed to reign. David knows God will not abandon His people and plan of salvation. Sing Psalter Number 5:8.

January 20 Psalm 4

We can sing this Psalm using three different Psalter numbers. Number 6, entitled "A Trustful Appeal to God" includes all the verses of the Psalm. Number 7 is entitled "Quieting Thoughts" and includes verses 3-8. Number 8 is entitled "Faith and Peace" and includes verses 3, 4, 6 and 8. The heading of this psalm indicates that it was sung to the accompaniment of hand instruments. It is a psalm about joy and peace in the midst of great trials and tribulation. David is yet being vexed by his enemies. He is either being pursued by his son Absalom or Saul when he is inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this psalm. Hum the tunes of these Psalter numbers.

January 21 Psalm 4:1

In the first verse of this psalm David mediates upon God's salvation, covenant, and faithfulness in the past. He addresses God as the God who is the author, judge, and rewarder of his righteousness. Psalter Number 6 does not indicate the idea of our righteousness, but gets at the source of our righteousness which is in our "righteous God." Righteous never originates in ourselves. This confession of faith is David's shield which he takes up before confronting the enemy. God is also merciful and ready to hear the prayers of those in distress. Let us also take up this confession upon our lips before we continue our day and sing Psalter Number 6:1.

January 22 Psalm 4:2

David now rebukes his enemies in verses 2-5. He tells them that they love making up lies about him to make him look bad and themselves good. In doing so they drag the name of God in the dirt. David has just prayed to the God who is righteous and imputed righteousness to David in Christ. Those who scorn David are not interested in truth at all but continuously make up lies and stir up the crowds to ridicule him. At the heart of such foolishness is man's sinful nature and hatred against God. The wicked never do seem to realize that they can not fight God so David asks "how long?" Unless God takes out their heart of stone, and regenerates them, they will never cease their folly. Praise God for his mercy toward us! Sing Psalter Number 6:2.

January 23 Psalm 4:3

Those who walk in foolish lies never do learn the wisdom of God, yet they must be told the truth. They must know that the godly are those who have been chosen by God. They were not

chosen because they were godly, but they are godly because they were chosen. The ungodly have been reprobated. The doctrine of election and reprobation is hated by the ungodly because they hate the doctrine of God's sovereignty over all things. God's sovereignty is a comfort, however, and an assurance for the child of God that God will hear his prayer. When people blaspheme God to your face, they must know that they foolishly fight the sovereign God. Sing Psalm 6:3.

January 24 Psalm 4:4-5

We must also exhort the ungodly to repentance. The passionate anger and madness stirred up by lies must cease and they must be quiet and tremble before God. They must put away the lies and consider the truth. While David was away from Jerusalem, sacrifices continued in the temple and those who opposed David claimed a false and hypocritical righteousness, but they must repent and find true spiritual righteousness in the sacrifice of Christ. Psalter Number 7:2 speaks of "good and loving deeds" as our sacrifice, but that is incorrect. Psalter Number 6 captures the sense of Psalm 4 beautifully. Perhaps Psalm 7:2 could be changed to "Turn from outward worship, Sacrifice in truth." Sing Psalter Number 7:2 with these words, and sing Number 6:4.

January 25 Psalm 4:6

David ends his rebuke and exhortation and gives expression to his own contentment and peace. Those who complain "who will show us good" could be either those who are very weak in faith among the men of David, or the ungodly who never find satisfaction in earthly goods. Psalter Number 6 calls them "the faithless multitude." David prays that the weak in faith might see that that joy and contentment is found only in the love of God revealed in the face of Christ. Can you confess the goodness of God in your circumstances in life. Pray for His enlightening Spirit and the true knowledge of God in Christ. Sing Psalter Number 6:5.

January 26 Psalm 4:7-8

David confesses here that God has put more joy and peace in his heart than the best of earthly prosperity could ever give. When our wealth increases, we may experience some sense of security, but along with it comes the fear of losing what we have. God's love is altogether different. The believer who knows God has graciously chosen him, knows that God will never forsake him. The strong in faith also are able to sleep in peace knowing that God will care for him. Though no man is able to help you, may your trust in God alone be your comfort. These are the treasures which moth and rust can not corrupt. Pray for faith that you can sing the last verse of Psalters Number 6, 7 and 8 as David did.

January 27 Psalm 5

This psalm is a morning prayer before going to the house of God. The first seven verses consist of David's plea to be heard by God. Then David prays for guidance as he seeks to walk in righteousness among wicked men. He concludes the prayer with a petition for joy and peace to all who put their trust in God. The Psalter numbers based on Psalm 5 are entitled "An Entreaty for Guidance," "Confident Access to God," and "Prayer

for Protection." Jesus also offered up such prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears. Let us also learn from this instruction. Read through the psalm and become familiar with the tunes of Psalter Numbers 7, 8 and 9.

January 28 Psalm 5:1

David first addresses God as "Jehovah." In the KJV we read "LORD" in all upper case letters. "Jehovah" is the name of God held in such awe and respect that the translators of the KJV felt it better simply to write "LORD." The leaders of the Old Testament people of God also used this name with such reverence that they refrained from writing the vowel sounds in the Hebrew language. "Jehovah" is the name of God by which He is known as our covenant God. David addresses God on the basis of the covenant. The covenant is God's loving bond of friendship with His people in Christ. This is the name dearest to the child of God. Sing Psalter 11:1.

January 29 Psalm 5:2

David then addresses God as his God and his King. He knows God as the Ruler in his life. To Him who is exalted over all things as the sovereign creator and provider, David humbles himself and cries out loud with tears. Because David belongs to God as His servant and child, he is confident that God will hear his cries. We also must address God with such close and personal language. Closeness with God is not manifest in the shallow flippant prayers of many today who address God as they would a buddy on the street. God is God and King, but he is my personal God and personal King. Let us strive to pray with proper awe and reverence for our covenant God. Sing Psalter Number 9:1

January 30 Psalm 5:3

David prays first thing in the morning. The covenant fellowship of Jehovah with His people is so close that David thinks of his God first thing in the morning and speaks with Him in prayer. The language of this prayer is the same as the language used when the priests made the morning sacrifice and looked for the answer of God's grace and favor. The relation to sacrifice is noted in Psalter Number 11:2. Like the sacrifice, David's prayer is carefully presented with meditation and without haste. Let us also set aside time in the morning for prayer with our faithful covenant God. Sing Psalter Number 11:2.

January 31 Psalm 5:4-6

Do you welcome murderers, robbers, and foul mouthed liars to live in your house with your family? Neither does God. God is holy, free from every evil, set distinctly apart from sin. God hates all who sin and rebel against Him. God drives them far from His house - His sphere of perfect covenant fellowship and happiness. "Evil shall not dwell with [Him]" Psalter 9:2. God would drive you and me away too, but He has chosen a people from every tribe, tongue and nation that is cleansed from sin in the blood of Christ. The wicked hate God's people just as they hate God. Do the wicked tempt you, mock you, persecute you? Does your own sinful nature afflict your new man in Christ? Cry out as David does to your covenant Friend in prayer. Sing Psalter Number 9:2; read the *Standard Bearer* Vol. 2, 167; 16, 86 for further meditation.

Happiness

*H*appy is that man whose God is the Lord:
 The most perfect gift that life can afford.
 Without this great treasure, our lives would be bleak:
 No focus, no purpose, no value to seek.

*H*ow rich is the life with God's praise its goal;
 With songs in the heart and joy in the soul;
 The hope of eternity: living for aye
 In God's holy presence—Oh glorious day!

*T*he carnal man seeks his pleasure in **things**,
 Deceiving himself that wealth gladness brings.
 He wants more possessions, amusements and fame;
 For people to recognize his face and name.

*H*e revels in sin, convinced it is fun!
 And ignores thoughts of God, the thrice holy One.
 But God is not mocked; the wicked can't win.
 Their lot's utter ruin: the reward of their sin.

*G*od's people, take heed: we don't earn our place;
 God has chosen us only through mercy and grace.
 So come with thanksgiving; destroy sinful pride.
 At the foot of the cross, in humility hide.

Thelma Westra

Rev. C. Hanko

Chapter 8

The Synod of 1924

edited by Karen Van Baren

Editor's Note: The churches had won a great victory with the deposition of Prof. Janssen. Rev. Hoeksema had played a leading role in this victory. But in doing so he had gained some powerful enemies. In this next chapter, Rev. Hanko describes how these enemies set out to ruin the young and brilliant minister.

Now that he had been suspended from his office as professor of theology at Calvin Seminary, Prof. Janssen and his supporters turned and attacked their chief opponent, Rev. Hoeksema, on his denial of common grace. Although Rev. Hoeksema had publicly written about this subject back in 1918, at that time not a single voice of objection was raised. But now his enemies told him that he should first remove the beam (his denial of common grace) from his own eye before he sought the sliver (Prof. Janssen's higher critical views of Scripture) in his brother's eye. The result was that various brochures were written by his opponents and in turn answered by him and by Rev. Henry Danhof, who was known to agree with him in his denial of common grace.¹

Across from the parsonage on Eastern Avenue were two stores. The one was a hardware store where ardent defenders of their pastor met, discussing the ecclesiastical problems of the day. Next door was a shoe shop owned by Wobko Hoeksema, where he entertained his brother, Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema and other opponents of Rev. Herman Hoeksema.

In the early part of 1924 there arose out of these meetings in the shoe store a protest against Eastern Avenue's pastor, signed by three members of the congregation, including Wobko Hoeksema. When this protest appeared at the consistory the protestants were asked whether they had talked to their pastor personally about their disagreement. When they responded that they had not, they were told to do so. Rev. Hoeksema offered to

meet with each protestant separately but only one accepted the invitation. It soon became evident that he did not even understand the contents of his own protest. When therefore their protest was rejected by the consistory they still proceeded to bring it to the May meeting of Classis Grand Rapids East.

In this protest they accused their pastor of committing a public sin by his denial of the theory of common grace. This charge of heresy was a serious accusation presented without proof. Therefore, the consistory demanded that they either prove their charges on the basis of Scripture and the Reformed Confessions or retract them. Since they refused to do either, they were placed under censure. Against this censure they also protested at the classis.

Although it was not according to good order to treat a matter that was not finished at the level of the local consistory, the classis nevertheless entered into the contents of the protest of these three members. At this classis meeting there were also other protests against Rev. H. Hoeksema, one from Rev. M. M. Schans and one from Rev. J. K. Van Baalen. In the discussion Rev. Schans remarked that Rev. Hoeksem had a different view of providence than the rest of them maintained. Rev. Vander Mey, a member of the Eastern Avenue CRC, also spoke against his pastor, accusing him of having a different God from the rest of them.² Although the classis was shocked at this statement, there was more truth to this than they realized.

As an aside, I might mention that Rev. Vander Mey no longer served in his office as minister, but had become a collector of money for Calvin College, particularly in the midwest. He had stopped at the home of the great, great grandmother of Prof. Barry Gritters and sizing up her books in the bookcase remarked, "Mother, I don't see one single book of Dr. Abraham Kuyper here." Now Mrs. Gritters was a staunch defender of the Seces-

sion of 1834, so her reaction was, “That name is not mentioned in this house. Get out of here.” When Rev. Hoeksema first came to Eastern Avenue, Rev. Vander Mey sent him a card, saying, “Of all your sermons the last one I heard crowns them all.” But not long after he also joined the opposition against his pastor.

The meeting of synod was scheduled for the latter part of June and early July. These protests were hastily sent to this gathering. A lengthy debate was held at synod on the subject of common grace. It became quite evident, as one delegate later admitted, that most of the delegates failed to understand the issue at hand, but simply assumed that common grace had always been an accepted doctrine of the churches.

Rev. Henry Danhof was a delegate and availed himself of the opportunity to defend his convictions. On one occasion he remarked that he considered himself to be a spiritual son of Prof. Ten Hoor. This professor, who was also present, responded, “I never knew that I had given birth to any spiritual sons.” Rev. Hoeksema was refused the right to speak, because he was not a delegate. Since this issue deeply involved him, he felt that he should have the right to defend his stand. Finally he was allowed one evening, in which he might state his convictions. He spoke for about two hours, and from that time on was forbidden to speak.

At this synod, the well-known Three Points of Common Grace were formulated and adopted. Briefly summarized, these state that God has a favorable attitude toward all men, revealed in the preaching which proclaims that God loves all who hear the gospel and earnestly desires their salvation; that God, by the working of the Spirit restrains sin in the hearts of wicked men; and that the wicked are able to perform civic good.

But the synod also did not fail to add that the Reverends Danhof and Hoeksema were basically Reformed in their teachings with a tendency toward one-sidedness. Nor did the synod demand that the censure be lifted from the three protestants of the Eastern Avenue congregation, who had accused their minister of public sin. They also expressed that a more thorough study of the matter of common grace should be made. Finally, they issued a testimony in which they warned the churches that a wrong and one-sided presentation of the theory of common grace could lead to worldly-mindedness.

If, when traveling on the freeway one deliberately turns off on a wrong exit because it looks so appealing to him, the result will be that unless he back-tracks, he will find himself going farther and farther from the right

road. Little did the delegates of Synod realize how far this pernicious doctrine would lead the church astray, not only into worldly-mindedness, but also into rank Pelagianism and Arminianism, as well as into Liberalism and Modernism. They would one day lose their Reformed heritage completely.

This assembly had made a significant and ecclesiastically destructive decision by adopting the Three Points of Common Grace. All that had been gained by condemning the views of Prof. Janssen, which were based on the common grace theory, was lost by this unhappy decision.

Before taking up the events that followed upon the decision of the 1924 Synod, I wish to make a few brief remarks about the Three Points. The first point states: “Touching the favorable attitude of God toward mankind in general and not only toward the elect, Synod declares...that besides the saving grace of God shown only to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor of God which He shows *to His Creatures in general*.” That is misleading to say the least. No one denies that God is good to *all* His creation or handiwork, as we read in Psalm 145:9, but this Psalm also adds: “But all the wicked will he destroy (vs. 20).”

As innocuous as this theory might seem to be, it is a significant world and life view which determines our conception of God, of the antithesis, of our attitude toward the world round about us, and even much more.

It was also maintained that common grace has nothing in common with special grace. Yet the first point speaks of “a general offer of the gospel.” From this eventually followed a denial of all five points of Calvinism, a general love of God for all mankind with an eagerness on His part to save all.

The second point speaks of “the restraint of sin in the life of the individual and off society in general...” This does not refer to an outward restraint whereby God in His providence upholds and governs all things, but refers rather to an inner restraint which checks sin in the heart of the reprobate so that he is no longer totally depraved. This also opens the way for the third point that speaks of the good that sinners do.

The third point teaches that “the unregenerate though incapable of doing any spiritual good are able to perform civil good.” This is very flattering view of the world in general, but also appeals to our sinful flesh. We like to think that this world and we ourselves are not so bad after all. But read Romans 3:9-18. Many evils, such as

questioning the infallibility of the Scriptures have followed out of the heresy of the third point.

At the conclusion of each point synod writes, “That our Reformed fathers from of old maintained this view.” That is not true. The fathers did indeed speak of “common grace,” but, as Wilhelmus a Brakel³ points out, common grace was generally understood to mean nothing more than that God gives good gifts such as rain and sunshine to the elect and reprobate alike.

As to the general, well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God to all mankind, Wilhelmus a Brakel states that this would be a contradiction in God, for God cannot will to save only the elect and also will to save all men. Moreover he points out that this must necessarily be a denial of total depravity, and a denial of particular atonement (“Redelijke Godsdienst” or “Reasonable Service,” pp. 180-183).

* * *

The summer of 1924 found me, as in previous summers painting houses with my dad and brother. Although we were somewhat shocked by the fact that the synod

made common grace an official doctrine of the church by adopting the Three Points, we were comforted in the fact that the Reverends Hoeksema and Danhof were declared to be fundamentally Reformed, even though tending toward one-sidedness. We thought the matter would be brought to rest by these decisions. ❖

Footnotes

¹ At this point, the author quotes pp. 14-16 of *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America* by Herman Hoeksema, 1947. We will not include them here, but will let the reader look up this passage.

² The author refers to the fact that the god of common grace is a “different God” from the God of sovereign and particular grace.

³ Wilhelmus a Brakel was a 17th century Dutch theologian.

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

From the Pastor's Study

The Church, The Pillar and Ground of the Truth (1)

by Rev. Angus Stewart



Previously, we considered the relationship between Scripture and tradition. Now we shall consider the relationship between Scripture and the church, which I Timothy 3:15 calls “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Does the church authorize Scripture, so that the Bible has no authority without the church’s say-so? Does the church produce the Word or does the Word produce the church? or both? and in what senses?

First, we need to identify the church in I Timothy 3:15: “the house of God, which is the church of the living God.” The church here is the church institute with

her office bearers, sacraments and worship. Thus I Timothy 2 tells us that only men should pray in her assemblies (8) and that women must dress modestly (9) and must not teach nor usurp authority over men (12). Also it is the institute church which has deacons and elders (3:1-13), including teaching and ruling elders (5:17).

Faithful institute churches are “the pillar and ground of the truth.” A “pillar” is a vertical column. The “ground” here is the band around the top of the pillar. Thus the church is the bulwark or stay which supports and upholds the truth taught in the Scriptures before the world.

Rome appeals to I Timothy 3:15 in support of her claims. “We are *the* church, possessing the fulness of salvation. We are founded on Peter. We have the pope, tradition, the seven sacraments, etc. We are indefectible; our church can never apostatize.” In effect, they read, “the [Roman] church” is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” “Since we are the church, what we teach must be truth. Therefore all our doctrines are true: the mass, prayers for the dead, Mary’s bodily assumption into heaven, clerical celibacy, etc.” Thus Rome claims that to assail her is to attack God’s church and truth.

The context, as well as the whole Word of God, forbids us to identify Rome as the true church. Just before our text, the offices of the church are set forth: bishops (elders) and deacons (3:1-13). Popes, cardinals, archbishops, etc., are not biblical offices. After our text, we read of the doctrines of devils and seducing spirits in the

“latter times” (the period between the first and second comings of Christ): “forbidding to marry [think of priests, monks and nuns], and commanding to abstain from meats [think of Rome’s laws on fasting]” (4:1-3).

I Timothy was written to Timothy when he was in Ephesus (1:3). Faithful institute churches, wherever they are, which hold up the truth in the world are “the pillar and ground of the truth.” A congregation or denomination has a right to the name “church” if (and only if) it holds up the truth revealed in God-breathed Scripture.



Rev. Stewart is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches to the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland. This series is being reprinted with permission from the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship website, <http://www.cprf.co.uk/> Volume X, Issues 4.

Our Young People’s Federation

Fed Board: What Is It?

by Dan Holstege

As with most organizations loosely knit together by a common bond, the young peoples’ societies of the Protestant Reformed Churches need central guidance and coordination. Central guidance is in fact imperative to the long term success of many organizations. Denominations have synods; congregations have councils; and individual societies have leaders. These central guides and coordinators unify the interests of the organization and create the possibility of common work and activities. In the case of the young peoples’ societies, this central coordinator is the Federation Board.

The Federation Board, as its name implies, is the executive board over the federation of Protestant Reformed young peoples’ societies. As such, it is the one central group that guides and coordinates all the affairs which the young peoples’ societies have in common. Which affairs are those? These affairs include the summer young peoples’ convention, the biannual mass meetings, the singspirations, the *Beacon Lights* publication,

and the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee.¹ At each monthly meeting, the members of the board discuss these and other issues and come to decisions based on the pertinent information. In this way Fed Board officers guide and coordinate the young peoples’ affairs.

As a board made up of diverse members, the Fed Board ensures the wise and proper method of dealing with the young people. The wise Solomon said, “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 11:14). The constitution of the federation recognizes and implements this principle in the election of board members. It calls for seven officers from among the young people themselves, one youth coordinator from the adult members of the PRC, and two spiritual advisors from among the ministers of the PRC. Thus, decisions are not based on the feeling or bias of a few. Rather, the officers with their experience as young people, the youth coordinator with his “real world” experience, and the spiritual advisors



The Federation Board, pictured from left to right. Standing: Mr. Greg Van Overloop, Eric Pols, Emily Hoekstra, Denise Kooienga, Rev. Rodney Kleyn. Seated: Kyle Thompson, Eric Gritters, Dan Holstege, Rachel Dykstra.

with their godly guidance all work together for the well-being of the Protestant Reformed young people. It is our hope and prayer that God will use this “multitude of counselors” to carry out His will in these matters.

As the president of this year’s board, I am pleased to say that the board consists of a solid group. The officers this year include the following: Eric Gritters at treasurer, Rachel Dykstra at secretary, Denise Kooienga at librarian, Kyle Thompson at vice president, Eric Pols at vice treasurer and Emily Hoekstra at vice secretary. If you know any of these young people then you too can attest to their good work! They have shown themselves to be interested in the good of the young people and dedicated in reaching that goal. Furthermore, Mr. Greg Van Overloop at youth coordinator has been very helpful in bringing up and tackling pertinent issues. His knowledge of finance and administration have encouraged and guided us through various issues. Finally, Rev. Rodney Kleyn and Prof. David Engelsma have by their presence and wise words encouraged us to be spiritually-minded also in business affairs. Taken together, the current members of the Fed Board are interested in doing what is right with respect to the Protestant Reformed young people.

Moreover, it will be reassuring for you to know that the Fed Board views its work as “kingdom work” in the sphere of the young people. Seeking to be guided by the wisdom of our Father, we opened our first few meetings by reading from the book of Proverbs, chapter one. Along with Solomon, we made it our desire “to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity,” and we recognized “the fear of the LORD” as the beginning of this instruction. We prayed that God would be our guide as we guide the youth. We acknowledge the importance of wisdom in handling affairs which touch the lives of Christian youth, and we hope our work demonstrates that wisdom and is seen to be profitable for the church of Christ. ❖

Footnotes

¹ The *Beacon Lights* and Scholarship Committee are labors which the Fed Board oversees. The main work is done by the separate committees.

Dan is a member of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

2006 Winter Conference

Justification, the Heart of the Gospel

A Winter Conference defending the basic doctrine of the Holy Scriptures

Presented by First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan.

January 13: Justification by Faith Alone (Speaker: Rev. Ronald Van Overloop)

January 20: Justification and Good Works (Speaker: Prof. David Engelsma)

January 27: Justification and the Believer (Speaker: Rev. William Langerak)

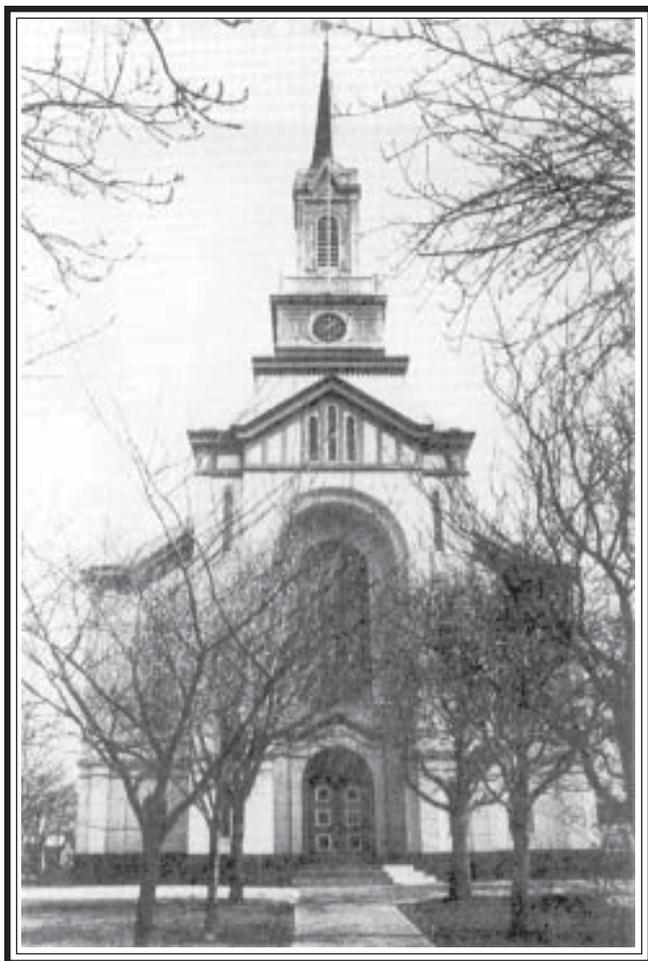
*Sponsored by: The Evangelism Committee of
First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan.
3641 104th Avenue
Zeeland, MI 49464*

All three speeches are on Friday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

Tapes of the conference will be available upon request.

The Church of Wolphaartsdijk

by J. P. deKlerk



This State Reformed Church in the former island-town of Wolphaartsdijk (part of the Dutch province of Zeeland) is different from all the others.

It has become a special attraction for the many tourists that come here for sailing or fishing. Thanks to a big enclosing dam, there is now a great lake close by.

There had been a church once on this spot (1350 A.D.) but that had to be broken down in 1805 because it was in such a deplorable state. The Session decided to offer a prize of 250 Guilders for the best drawing for a

The Organ of the State Reformed Church in Bierum

by J. P. deKlerk

This gift of the lords of the “Luingaborg” (castle) is still in all its glory, more than two centuries old.

Since 1605 there have been quite a few ministers of the church, and amongst them names also known in the USA: in 1700 Ludolfus Huizinga, in 1718 Gerhardus Kleijn, in 1811 G. van den Broek, 1859 R. Pabus Cleveringa.

On the wall this poem (translated):
*The lamb, slaughtered for us on earth,
Is eternally worthy to receive:
Wisdom, riches, honor, and power,
And grateful hymns of praise.*

There has been an Abby of the Benedictines close by before the church was built. The word “Bierum” comes out of the old Celtic language; the part “um” means house or birthplace. Bishop Herbertus of Utrecht came from Bierum sometime in the Middle Ages. ❖

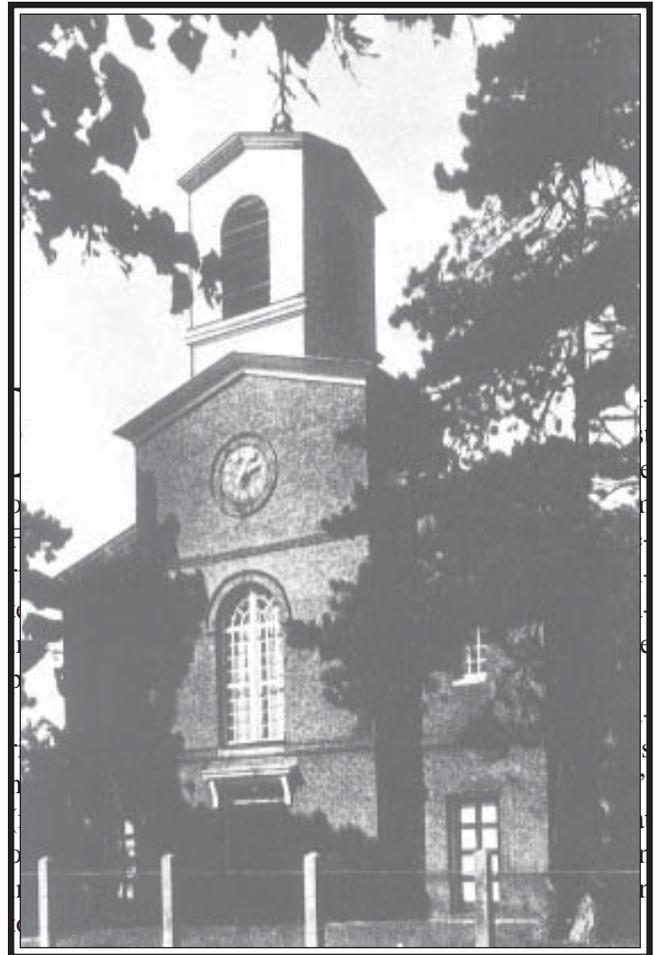
new, bigger church. A design of two architects from Amsterdam, Messrs. Hana and Smits, was chosen as the best plan. On May 13, 1862 the first stone was laid by a young boy, Egbert Petrus Lenshoek.

On Sunday September 21, 1862, the doors of the new white building in pure Byzantine style were opened for the first service of the large congregation.

The church is now part of the Samen Op Weg union (“together on our way”) of the State Reformed, Synodal Reformed and Lutheran churches in The Netherlands. ❖

The Church of Wilhelminadorp

by J. P. de Klerk



In the Dutch province of Zeeland the greatest number of churches has been built since 1100 A.D, first of wood, but later replaced by buildings of hewn stone or hard-baked bricks. The builders usually came from Flanders, led by monks. After the Reformation the interior of all those churches were changed, so that the center of attention was no longer the beginning of the building, where the altar was, but to the middle where the pulpit came.

On the island of Zuid-Beveland, over eight centuries, land was reclaimed from the sea and numerous dikes were made. In the western part in 1809 a big new “polder” (from Wolphartsdijk till Kattendijke) was ready and at once a State Reformed church was built, which is shown in the picture. It was made of small bricks with a wooden tower on top. ❖

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: Kodie James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Klamer—Byron Center, MI

Artorius Eleazer, son of Mr. & Mrs. Randy Scott—Byron Center, MI

Connor William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Lubbers—Byron Center, MI

Anna Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. William Smit—Faith, MI

Danielle Joy and Carli Marie, twin daughters of Mr. & Mrs. Dowie VanderSchaaf—Faith, MI

Rylee James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Moelker—Grace, MI

Annica Dale, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jason Engelsma—Grandville, MI

Brendan Jeremiah, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Venlet—Hudsonville, MI

James Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Andringa—Hull, IA

Maesa Elaine, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chris Cleveringa—Hull, IA

Kyle Jordan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Boonstra—Hull, IA

Leanne Michelle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ross Wassink—Holland, MI

Elaine Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chuck Doezema—Holland, MI

Samuel Douglas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Linker—Immanuel, Lacombe Alberta, Canada

Allison Lyn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Mooy—Loveland, CO

Paityn Mae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Poortinga—Peace, IL

Kelsey LeAnn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian TenBrock—Southwest, MI

Claire Elise, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Lathrop—Spokane WA/Loveland, CO

Michael John, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff DeVries—Trinity, MI

Emily Christina, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David Guichelaar—Wingham, Ontario, Canada

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:

Alison Baan—Balleymena, N Ireland/Hudsonville, MI

Melanie Haak—Georgetown, MI

Joel Bodbyl—Grandville, MI

Derek Kuiper—Grandville, MI

Jordan Dykstra—Hope, MI

Stephanie VanUffelen—Loveland, CO

Joseph Dykshorn—Peace, IL

Joe Petron—Pittsburgh/Southwest, MI

Katie VanderVeen—Southwest, MI

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. Steve Faber and Miss Brenda Bekkering—Georgetown, MI

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer



Proverbs 3:1-6

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments;

For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Find all of the above underlined words in the puzzle on the right, and circle them. After all of the words have been found, take the letters that are left uncircled in the puzzle and arrange them to discover another word:

U	P	O	N	T	E	G	R	O	F	N	O	S
L	N	O	T	H	I	N	E	C	K	M	O	T
A	H	D	H	H	I	I	Y	S	I	G	H	T
W	T	C	E	R	I	D	C	T	L	I	S	A
R	U	A	E	R	N	N	R	N	N	E	Y	C
I	R	L	B	O	S	A	E	E	D	D	A	K
T	T	O	T	L	E	T	M	M	B	W	D	N
E	R	N	R	H	E	S	A	D	I	N	W	O
L	U	G	U	E	E	R	H	N	N	E	H	W
F	O	R	S	A	K	E	L	A	D	F	T	L
O	V	Y	T	R	E	D	L	M	L	I	G	E
R	A	L	E	T	E	N	A	M	S	L	N	D
W	F	I	N	D	P	U	G	O	O	D	E	G
O	S	H	T	A	P	E	A	C	E	D	L	E

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

(Hint: This word can be found in Proverbs 2:6.) ❖



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