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As a true Christian, one must have fully experienced conversion to be able to write about or discuss it. I am grateful to be able to write a few words about this important part of the life of a Christian.

In speaking of conversion it is necessary to think of its relation to regeneration. The great distinction between a regenerate and a natural man is this:—Christ is the end of the one and self the end of the other. If the end of Christ's death and resurrection is not accomplished for us, the fruits of it shall not be enjoyed by us.

Regeneration is difficult to describe because of its very nature. It is a mighty and powerful change wrought in the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit, wherein a vital principle, a new habit, the law of God, and a Divine nature are put into and framed in the heart. This enables the regenerated person to act holily and pleasingly to God and to grow up to eternal life and glory.

According to Webster's Dictionary, conversion is defined as: (1) a change from one state to another, as conversion of coal to ashes; (2) substitution of one thing for another, as conversion of bonds into cash; (3) a spiritual experience involving a drastic change in belief. Our Heidelberg Catechism teaches that the true conversion of man consists of two parts, the mortification of the old and the quickening of the new man.

Conversion is that work of God by which the regenerated sinner through the Spirit and Word is turned about from the way of sin to the way of truth and righteousness, from serving the devil to serving the Lord, the fruit being that converted sinner hates sin, turns from it and walks in the way of God's law. It differs from regeneration. Conversion is the effect, regeneration is the cause. Regeneration is a spiritual change, conversion is motion. In regeneration man is passive, in conversion he is active. Regeneration is the motion of God in the creature, conversion is the response, of the creature, to God.

Now it is readily seen, this change in man is not due to anything of himself, it is entirely motivated by God without the aid or even any activity of man.

In Jeremiah 31:18 we read: “Turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.” and in verse 19: “Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed I wrote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded because I did bear the reproach of my youth.” Again we are
impressed with the fact that conversion is a work of God’s grace in the heart of His regenerated people. Sinners that we are, wanting to go about our own willful way, we are stopped and turned about from this way. Looking at our inmost heart we find by nature we are liars, haters of righteousness, lustful, envious, back-biters, proud, at enmity with God and the neighbor.

Now man was formed after the image of God, but turning from God, he forfeited all the excellent gifts, and brought upon himself blindness of mind, darkness, vanity, and became wicked, rebellious and contrary to God in mind and will.

This new life or conversion of the regenerated man does not begin or come forth in conscious action by its own power, but only through the Holy Spirit: John 6:44 “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”

As Rev. Hoeksema clearly states in his work on the Heidelberg Catechism: In regeneration the sinner is principally converted; but it is not true that after regeneration the sinner converts himself. In our day we read and hear by means of radio, books, newspaper, magazines, etc., the admonition to convert ourselves, that God is waiting and longing, even begging man to turn to Him. It is extremely necessary for young people to be on their guard especially as they mingle with the people of the world in school, recreation and as employee. Too soon we accept the teaching of the evangelists as something that is true and scriptural just because he says so.

We become conscious of our true conversion by the preaching of the Word which assures, confirms and strengthens us in the faith that has been given us.

The call to conversion comes to all, elect and reprobate alike. Man is responsible for this call whether he heeds or rejects it.

Many have the idea that conversion is leaving one religion for another, or that one surrenders himself to the Lord after hearing an emotional sermon. Now this is true according to the definition by Webster, but this may be but a temporary conversion and may have for a time the appearance of true conversion. It is possible that true conversion may have a sudden beginning, one being able to point to a certain time in his life when God turned him from the way of sin; or it may be gradual, so much a part of the early years of training and instruction that one cannot at all remember if he ever was converted. True conversion is that act of God whereby He causes the regenerated, in their conscious life, to turn to Him in faith and repentance and to acknowledge Him as the God of his salvation.

You who have had the gospel preached to you from infancy and have received the instruction of the Word in catechist classes, have heard about regeneration and conversion, though you are not regenerated or converted thereby, you are confirmed and assured of your conversion by these means. How am I to know then whether I am truly converted? Only by the Spirit of God through His Word will I find my assurance.

The question is not how or when you were converted, or, whether conversion was gradual or sudden, but are you converted today? Surely the beginning of conversion is only the start of a new life which must continue throughout your whole life. And this conversion is not stagnant. It will continue to grow as you pray to God beseeching His guidance in all your activities and desiring to be used in His service. It is God who works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure, knowing the work which He has begun will surely be accomplished.

Mrs. Gerrit Agnes Pië
Concerning Bible Outlines

Since there have been many complaints that the Bible Outlines are too far ahead of the study in the Societies, the Federation Board has been trying to solve the problem. To find out just how many societies are behind the outlines in Beacon Lights, the Board conducted a poll of the societies. The results of that poll are as follows:

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<th>Number of Societies</th>
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The last Bible outlines were printed in December at which time Rev. Hoeksema outlined Acts 11:19-30. The Board feels that it continues to print the outlines at the present time would be wasting both the outlines and the work done in preparing them. Judging from the results of our poll, 11 societies are at least 2 chapters or 50 verses behind the pace set by Beacon Lights and 8 societies are more than 3 chapters or 80 verses behind. Since the only other society studying Acts is ahead of the outline already, no one will be deprived of the outlines if they are not printed for a while. The Board has therefore decided to ask Rev. Hoeksema to resume writing the outlines in time for the first issue after the summer vacation which will be October.

The Board appreciates the fine cooperation of Rev. Hoeksema thus far, and hopes that, by this action, his outlines will become more valuable and profitable for all the members of the Federation.
Your Hands Tell A Story

Have you ever stopped to look at the hands of a baby? They tell a story: a story of a wonderful Creator who molds each tiny perfectly-shaped finger; who implants strength in those little muscles. Essentially all that those hands will ever be is present when we get our first glimpse of them after birth.

Now look at those same hands after a lapse of threescore years. They tell a story: a story of what the person is. Take the gnarled hands of a man who works with pick and shovel, the steady skillful fingers of a surgeon, the "dishpan hands" of a scrubwoman, the neat accurate fingers of a business man or woman, the grease-stained hands of a mechanic, the pianist's long agile fingers, or even hands whose fingers have been lost while working with machinery. Each pair of hands tells its own story — a story which took many years to write — a story which usually indicates years and years of hard work. All of these may be beautiful hands. Beautiful hands are not limp and smooth and useless; they are those which have seen honest toil, those which have willingly performed their God-given tasks.

Do you have beautiful hands?

Are they generous, or grasping? Do they give generously to poor collections and other kingdom causes? Or must they save out so much for bowling, skating, school parties, snacks, etc., that the church collections receive a nickel or a dime?

Speaking of giving — to whom are your gifts on Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, etc. given? Certainly to those you love, to your own families and special friends. But don't you have some neighbor or friend who may be needy: someone to whom you may GIVE a present, rather than our common custom of exchanging gifts?

Are your hands more apt to administer a pat on the back than a slap in the face? When someone prepares an essay for your society (which possibly you had refused to do because you "lacked time") do you take time out to pat him on the back for a job well done? Or do you say (probably only in your mind without speaking a word) that you could have done much better. "He should have been more diplomatic about it." "He should have covered the other side more thoroughly." "He isn't much of a public speaker." "He certainly murders the king's English!" And other remarks which you know as well as I.

How willing are your hands? Are they happy to work in the causes for which you will receive the glory, but too busy to participate in the lowly manual labor requested by school or church? Don't say, "Let those with lesser talents take part in those work bees!" Get in there and help — you'll be surprised at the enjoyment you acquire from humble tasks such as pulling weeds, refinishing school desks, cooking or serving for classis, synod, or banquets. These things accomplish more than work — they also provide vital Christian fellowship. Also along this line is committee work. When

(Continued on page 11)
Having discussed the question of corporate responsibility, and the implications for the members of a particular organization, we asked the question, What are the basic principles of the labor movement? For, to these principles a member must turn in order to determine for what he is responsible. We noticed that the goal of labor unions was the betterment of laboring conditions for the working force. And we noticed that in the striving to attain their goals, they have been in past years very successful. They have achieved all their aims and even much more. They have succeeded even in gaining from the government legislation which recognizes them, protects them and helps them to insure their achievements.

We may ask first of all whether or not their goals are goals which should be sought by the Christian. May a child of God conscientiously demand of management the things for which the labor unions have been organized and for which they have so successfully banded together? In general, may we say that the improvement of working conditions is a legitimate goal of the worker? Certainly it is not out of harmony with the principles of the Word of God to improve the conditions of working, and to demand these improvements. When management demands of its help the last ounce of strength, pays it so poorly that the worker can hardly keep his family alive; when it forces men to work in squalid conditions detrimental to health, forces and condones child labor, then the working man has a right to lift his voice in protest. It would appear therefore, that the goals of the union are certainly compatible with Christian life and conduct.

But the fact remains that the union has constantly increased these goals and laid down new demands as time goes on. Each time an end is achieved, another is thought up by the leaders of labor and demanded by the forces of unions from the management. And it is highly questionable, to say the least, whether the demands which labor now extorts from management are in harmony with the obligations which bosses have toward their help. The one who owns the shop certainly has responsibilities before God with respect to those who work for him. But I doubt very much whether it is the responsibility of management to provide for the men under its authority with all kinds of "fringe benefits" such as hospitalization, insurance, guaranteed annual wage, means within the shop for recreation, facilities for banqueting and partying, and all the many other delightful things which labor enjoys at the expense of management. Surely the God-given obligation of those who are in authority by virtue of their position of hiring help is to provide the necessary money so that the man who works for them may live comfortably and without fear of economic difficulties. He must see to it that the man who works has enough money to eat his daily bread, to have a roof over himself and his family, to clothe his wife and children sufficiently,
and to provide the necessities of life. But it is another question, when management is forced to provide means of recreation and diversion, sufficient insurance to care for unforeseen hospital expenses or other expenses that may possibly be incurred in the unknown future by death or inability to work. I am not saying that those who manage factories and shops may not give these things to their help if they so desire, but I am saying that they are unjust demands of labor, for no obligation is involved. Certainly the management has responsibility for the immediate needs of labor, but not for needs certainly which may or may not exist several years hence. And if those who manage the shop are forced to curtail their labor force through inability for a time to make sufficient money to pay their help, the boss is not obligated to provide a guaranteed annual wage whether or not the men work.

Furthermore, I have read that the next aim of labor is to cut down the working week to 30 or 35 hours and still maintain the same rate of pay. Certainly 75 or 80 hours in a week are too many hours for the average man to work and still fill the obligations of church and home. But the fact remains that man is called in this creation to work. He must work in order that he may not be idle. If the hours that he does not work are filled by work of other types — work with his family and work in the church, all is well and good. But the inevitable consequence of a lowering of the working hours in a world of sin is that man is going to spend his time in idleness. He will have more time to devote his attention to the satisfaction and gratification of the lusts of the flesh. He will not have enough work to keep himself busy, and the consequence will be that sin will increase as he has time to make life enjoyable for himself. Certainly God has called man to work. It is not possible to determine a set number of hours that a man should spend on the job, but it goes without saying that the demands of labor are certainly invalid in this respect. 30 or 35 hours are not enough. I do not hesitate to predict that labor will gain also this objective. With the increase in technical development, with the advance in modern machinery when man-made tools do much of the work, when the labor force grows daily, the result will undoubtedly be that labor will again be successful. But I do not hesitate also to predict that the result of a shorter working week will be a tremendous increase in sin in the world. How much even now, as the demands of labor are met, does not the awfulness of the sin of the human heart reveal itself? In spite of all men may say, crime rapidly increases, moral standards are lowered, and the men of our time become entertainment crazy, supporting vast enterprises with billions of dollars just to divert their minds by all means of enjoyment. One need only think of professional sports, the theatre, the gambling industry, the tremendous amounts of money spent for television sets. Men have time for all these things because they do not work very many hours. And they have opportunity and money to gratify all the carnal desires within them, because time weighs heavily on their hands. They must be occupied, their minds must be diverted, they have the money to spend, and the sin which is within their depraved hearts, but which could not henceforth reveal itself now has opportunity to gush forth as a foul stream flowing from a foul fountain. And the result is that crime and immorality increase tremendously.

The conclusion is that although the demands of labor are sometimes just in themselves, the labor unions carry their demands too far, so that they are no longer just and warranted. Man was created to work. And he no longer works. From this point of view, labor should (Continued on page 16)
Four significant things are mentioned in Article 7 of our Confession in connection with the matter of “The Sufficiency Of The Holy Scriptures.” These matters are:

(1) All that is necessary to believe unto salvation is clearly and sufficiently revealed in the Bible. The Bible is not obscure but a lucid revelation of the plan of redemption.

(2) The whole manner of worship, which God requires of us, is likewise clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures at large.

(3) This being the case, no one — though he be an angel from heaven — has the right to teach anything contrary to these Holy Scriptures. Since its doctrine is perfect and complete, it is gross evil to add unto or take from the Word of God.

(4) Because all of the foregoing is so, it is unlawful to regard any writing of mere men, or custom, or tradition, or decrees and decisions of Synods, etc. as of equal value with the Holy Bible.

In connection with these four things, the Article of our Confession concludes with this interesting statement: “Therefore, we reject with all our hearts, whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule, which the apostles have taught us, saying, Try the spirits whether they be of God. Likewise, if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.”

“With all our hearts, we reject . . . .”

Do we?

Credo! Yes, indeed, I believe . . . . but what harmony is there between my faith and my practice? Let’s see once!

In the last part of this article two passages of Scripture are cited. The latter of these we wish to consider in the present essay. It is found in I John 10 and to the part quoted in the confession there should be added, “neither bid him Godspeed for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

In a practical way, young people, let’s ask what this passage of the Word of God means for you and me. To what extent must this matter be carried out? Must we literally exclude from our houses those who do not agree with us doctrinally? Must we insist also that our parents do likewise and that they, in refusing to permit us to keep company with “outsiders,” practice a degree of consistency when they extend invitations to the “company” they receive into the parlor? Don’t we leave an impression of conceited, bigoted, denominational isolationism by literally executing this word of the apostle John? What is the “truth” and “error” of this matter?

In commenting upon this we would have you take note of the following elements in the text: (1) What is meant by “this doctrine?”

(2) Specifically, what is denoted by the expression, “to receive one into your house?”

(3) What is the connection or relation between this and “bidding one Godspeed?”

In the light of these three questions we will discuss this passage with you and, meanwhile, suggest that the text in
question should provide interesting material for a discussion in your society. There you can enter more detail than we can in our Truth vs. Error department as you consider some of the practical aspects of this matter in connection with the question: "Just how far must we go in carrying out the command of this text?"

Before we write more fully on the three questions proposed above, we wish to point out that there are various interpretations given of this passage as may also be expected. On the one hand is the extreme view that rejects any teaching that would make the Christian assume a harsh or positively intolerant attitude toward heretics. This view expresses, and now we quote Nicoll's "Expositor's Greek Testament": "If so, it (i.e. intolerance of heretics) is certainly an unchristian counsel, contrary to the spirit and teaching of our Lord. Heretics are our fellow-creatures; Jesus died for them also, and our office is to win them. If we close our doors and our hearts against them, we lose our opportunity of winning them and harden them in their opposition."

This view then proceeds to tell us of a Jewish fable according to which Abraham is supposed to have cast out a wayfarer from his tent at one time because he asked no blessing for his food and avowed himself a fire-worshipper. The Lord is then supposed to have shown Abraham that this conduct of his was wrong for he said to Abraham, "I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonored Me; and couldst not thou endure him for one night?"

We hasten to add that this view is "Error." It would indeed be a very strange way for the Word of God and the apostle John to tell us to "open our doors and hearts to win heretics" by stating that we are "not to receive them into our houses nor bid them Godspeed."

Neither can we be satisfied with the explanation that applies these words to local circumstances of that time, thus leaving the impression that they have no meaning for us today and may just as well be elided from the Bible. The church in those days frequently met in the homes. Itinerant apostles and prophets went from church to church or from house to house. Many of these were false teachers and the text is then supposed to be a warning against receiving these heretics into a position of leadership where they are afforded opportunity to unsettle the faith of the whole church. Neither was such a church to recommend such a teacher to a neighboring church for to do so made her guilty of his evil work.

Although there are elements in this interpretation that are true and may also be applied today, we do not feel it is a complete explanation of the text. The text has a personal as well as ecclesiastical application. This we will come to bit later.

Another view which favors the positive and complete exclusion of all heretics from Christian fellowship tells of an incident that was supposed to have occurred in the experience of St. John himself. He was, on a certain occasion, at Ephesus where he visited the public baths and while there he saw Cerinthus within. Now Cerinthus was a heretic whose errors the apostle strenuously controverted. On the occasion of visiting the baths, John is supposed to have hastened out of the building crying out, "Let us flee, lest the building fall since Cerinthus, the foe of the Truth is within it." Polycarp, one of the early church fathers is supposed to have told this story.

Whether it is true or not, we have no way of knowing but we may say that the text we are discussing does not teach or mean to express that we are to literally flee from any building in which there may

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God's Great Universe

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." So spoke the sweet-singer of Israel many years now gone by. He undoubtedly composed those words of the 19th Psalm either as he lay under the star-studded heavens of Judea or as he sat in retrospect and thought about the meaning of the creation of God and magnified God for His great creation in which He reveals Himself so powerfully and magnificently.

Who of us has not stood out at night and scanned the heavens trying to locate with our meager but believing astronomical knowledge, some of the galaxies, and other principle bodies of the heaven and has not exclaimed with the Psalmist that the heavens do declare the glory of God.

Many theories have been advanced concerning the origin of the world and the universe by those who do not want to believe the record of sacred history, that God created everything in six days and that when He was finished He saw all that He had made and behold it was very good. But we believe and are indeed thankful that God has put into our hearts the will to believe that all things are His and that He has made them with His own inscrutable power and majesty. Therefore all things reflect His handiwork and we return all praise to God who made them.

The term astronomy is derived from the Greek astron which when defined means a star and from nomos, a Greek form, meaning a law or a rule. It is the science which treats the celestial bodies, their nature, magnitudes, motions, distances, and periods of revolution.

In contrast to astronomy there is the pseudo-science (false science) which also is a word derived from the Greek. This "science" is astrology. Astrology is a Greek word which consists of astron, a star, and logos, a theory or discourse. This is the pseudo-science which pretends to enable men to discover the effects and the influences of the heavenly bodies on human and other mundane affairs and to foretell the future.

Note:—(I do not want my readers to conclude from this that I believe that God never foretold and announced special events by celestial wonders. There are several events in the Bible which teach that God did announce these events by signs in the heavens. The Star in the East is just one of these well-known events. I simply mean to state that all events can not be foretold by man through the means of some astrological [magical] wizardry.)

The sun, the other stars, and all the other heavenly bodies are in an enormous vacuum called space. The extent of space is too great to be comprehended by the human mind. It is undoubtedly as impossible to comprehend the greatness of space as it is to comprehend the greatness of our God who upholds all things. (See Psalm 103:11, 12)

A few facts, however, may help us to understand the immensity of space. Astronomers estimate that if an express train would leave the sun and would travel without stopping toward the planet
nearest the sun, Mercury, it could not reach Mercury for nearly seventy years. We can also arrive at some conception of the enormous distance in space in another way. Light travels at the immense speed of 186,000 miles per second. It therefore travels fast enough to go around the world at the equator more than seven times in one second. Astronomers estimate that it takes the light and heat from our sun about eight minutes to travel from the sun to the earth. Therefore the sun is estimated to be about 93,000,000 miles away from the earth. The star nearest the earth, Alpha Centauri, is about 4 light years away. A light year is the distance light can travel in one year at the rate of 186,000 miles per second.

Astronomers believe that our sun belongs to a galaxy of stars known as the Milky Way. We have all seen the Milky Way on a clear night when the moon was not shining. It appeared as a broad band of dim light stretching across the heavens. Astronomers speak often of the stars and the sun synonymously but the scriptures, of course, do not speak this language. They present God’s creation with the earth as the center of the universe and that God created the sun to rule the day and the stars and the moon as the lesser lights to rule the night. It must be remembered in this respect that the moon and the stars are very much different. The moon is a non-luminous body (satellite) of the earth which reflects the light that it receives from the sun toward the earth. The stars are luminous bodies and do not depend on the sun for their light but shed light like the sun does.

The great English scientist Newton is famous for many things and among these many things he is also famous for the discovery that motion in the heavens is due to gravitational attraction. Just as the earth attracts by gravity all bodies on or near it so the heavenly bodies attract each other. All the stars in the Galaxy are moving in response to the gravitation of other stars in the group. They are traveling in various directions somewhat like a swarm of insects.

What is the solar system?
The solar system consists of the sun and all the heavenly bodies of various kinds that revolve around it. It was once believed, as we all know and as I have already mentioned, that not the sun was the center of the solar system but that the earth was the center of the solar system. This would mean that the sun revolved around the earth once every 365½ days. It was Copernicus, a great Polish astronomer, who theorized in the 15th century that not the earth was the center of the universe but that sun was the center of the solar system. Ptolemy was the astronomer who had advanced the theory that the earth was the center of the universe. This seems to be implied in the writings of Moses in Genesis but we wish to believe with Calvin as follows: “Moses wrote in the popular style which without instruction, all ordinary persons endowed with common sense are able to understand. . . . He does not call us up to heaven; but only proposes the things that lie open before our eyes.”

Some of the heavenly bodies that revolve around the sun are the nine planets, their satellites (moons), the asteroids, sometimes called planetoids, the meteors and meteorites, and the comets. Each of these heavenly bodies revolves around the sun in its own set orbit.

It is a fact that God causes all these heavenly bodies to remain in their own orbits. He did not create the world and then leave it to run by itself as the Deists believe. He created the world and still continues to control all things. But God also created certain laws which man can find out and using these laws God directs the affairs of his great universe.
One of these laws is the law of centrifugal force and another is the law of gravitation attraction. These laws God uses to keep the bodies of the solar system in their orbits. As the planet whirls it has centrifugal force much like a heavy object on the end of a string. If the planet were only affected by its centrifugal force, however, it would fly off into space. The balancing factor is the tremendous gravitational attraction of the sun. If the sun exerted gravitational attraction and there were no centrifugal force then of course the planets would be drawn into the sun. But because the centrifugal force of the whirling planets is balanced by the gravitational attraction of the sun therefore the bodies in the solar system remain in their orbits.

The heavens in their splendor declare The might and the glory of God; For day unto day speaks his praise, And night tells His wisdom abroad.

They speak not with audible word, Yet clear is the message they send; Their witness goes out through the earth, Their word to the world's farthest end.

A. Lubbers

(To be continued)

OPEN FORUM

Dear Editor:

I feel constrained to write you in regard to your editorial as found in the January issue re Our Stand on Music.

Upon reading your first paragraph I held my breath and thought, Oh! Oh! Now what? Such high expressions of praise, and bold reasons for pride. They, verily, recall to me the hate Hoeksema campaign of the De Wolf faction. They, too, addressed the innocent, trusting soul, whom they meant to victimize with high sounding words of praise for the Rev. H. Hoeksema, and then proceed to upbraid him with all kinds of wicked, malicious slander, to the intent, that that soul be converted from Rev. H. Hoeksema.

But wait! Do we pride ourselves in that our belief is logical and free of emotional influences of man? Not so me. Rather, I find, in myself at least, humble thanksgiving to God for the truth that He has revealed to us through the Rev. H. Hoeksema.

In your second paragraph you assert boldly to the effect that we may not sing any other songs than those of the Psalter. This to my mind is not so. The Sunday Schools and Choral Societies of our denomination and the Radio Choir in the past, have rendered many a program with music other than from the Psalter. No, we certainly are not belligerent to the good music that may be found outside the Psalter, as, to my mind, might be gathered from your editorial.

That the regulation of Article 69 of our Church Order is so illogical I fail to see. For, (1) The Book of Psalms, from which our Psalter is made up, is comprised of songs, hymns and prayers. All are divinely inspired by God, given us through different authors. What other book of the Bible can claim this distinction? None, of course, (2) Is the content of the Psalms different from the rest of

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Is It True? Necessary? Kind?

THREE GATES OF GOLD
by Beth Day

If you are tempted to reveal
A tale to you someone has told
About another, make it pass
Before you speak, three gates of gold;
These narrow gates, First “Is it true?”
Then, “Is it needful?” In your mind
Give truthful answer. And the next
Is last and narrowest, “Is it kind?”

One of the commonest, yet most easily
overlooked forms of sin is gossip. It
takes many forms and manifests itself in
many ways even in the church. In Web-
ster’s dictionary, gossip is defined as a
groundless rumor. Yet under the general
topic of gossip one might discuss such
closely related sins as backbiting, and per-
haps, even slander. Backbiting is defined
by Webster as speaking evil of an ab-
sent person, while slander refers to a
false report given with intent to damage
a person’s reputation.

It is entirely possible that information
passed on in idle gossip is true. Some
persons even try to justify their gossip-
ing by saying, “Well, it’s true,” or “I
know it to be a fact.” Such persons might
later admit, as so often is the case, that
it was only half the story; but never-
theless, true! No, the truth of a state-
ment does not justify its being used as
gossip.

It often proves quite interesting and
“informative” to sit and listen to people
talking over their coffee cups—or to
eavesdrop while riding the bus—or to
get in on the latest during recess time at
a society meeting. The subject of conver-
sation turns easily from things to people.
People love to talk about people! And
if many of the conversations to which we
have listened or joined in, could be played
back, I am sure we would be shocked to
find how little good was said about the
person under discussion, how little was
said in love and in kindness and in low-
liness of heart, and how much was said
in envy and judgment, in criticism and
complaint.

Perhaps we are trying to put forth on
honest effort to break ourselves of the
habit of talking about others. We find
that after we have been visiting and con-
versing freely on every topic, we have a
vague uneasy feeling that some unfounded
untruths or some unnecessarily half-truths
have slipped from our mouths. This is our
conscience speaking to us. We determine
that next time we shall be more on guard.

We also should be aware of the fact
that almost unconsciously our bias against
a person influences the way we speak
and think about him. And it is easy in
such a case to pick out of the conversa-
Looking into the Future

(Concerning some Supernormal Practices by Man)

Have you ever wondered about the supernormal powers claimed by certain people? As to whether anyone had the power to tell fortunes or any of the powers claimed by the telepathist, spiritualist, mystics, seers, fakirs, yogis or dervishes?

Probably the most fascinating example of supposedly super powers practiced is witchcraft. This is the art whereby a witch christens a voodoo doll in the name of the intended victim. Then needles are driven into the stomach of the doll or a thread is bound around the neck of the doll and the victim dies of pain in the stomach or shortness of breath respectively. There are medical records of such incidents, where no explanation for death could be given by the best doctors or medical authorities. This is an example of black witchcraft but there is also white witchcraft. Today we have "The Grotto at Lourdes" in France where people by merely looking at the plaster doll of the Virgin Mary have been miraculously cured after all medical help had failed.

Now let us come back to the main title. If we went into a library and looked for information about fortune telling, there would be nothing listed in the indexes or Reader's Guide. Therefore the only way to get information about the topic would be to do research in the supernatural practices. Because of this I have found it necessary to include much of the latter to explain fortune telling.

First I think it necessary to explain what types of people practice these supernatural arts. Frequently they are wealthy and well educated or scholars in church
history and the Bible. They almost always belong to some cult such as, Goat Worshipper, Cult of the Horrible, Mummy Worship of Satanist. An example of the celebration of the Satanist is the Black Mass. It is performed by an apostate priest, a consecrated host, a prostitute, and a virgin. The purpose is to blaspheme and defile holy objects. The mass is said backwards in dog Latin, the word “evil” and “satan” are substituted for “good and “Lord,” respectively and finally the wafer is debused and defiled. The object is to hasten the Archangel Lucifer to the throne of the universe. The Satanist have spent nights trying to evoke the presence of Beelzebub or Ashtoreth. So much for the Satanist, but it is this type of people who attempt to foretell the future.

There are various methods used for "precognition" or fortune telling but all seem to be aided by prolonged fatigue and some strain. The basis of each method is to detach the mind from the senses. It is commonly accepted that when someone becomes blind, his other senses become more highly developed. Thus these fortune tellers believe that if the mind is detached from the regular five senses so the ability of precognition becomes more acute.

The most modern way is to have a custom fitted mask of glace kid. The only opening being for the mouth, the other senses of smell, sight, hearing, tactile touch of cheek are completely blanked. After becoming accustomed to this, it is like being in total darkness on an open plain. You can yell, scream, claw yourself, run, fall, but always you are by yourself. Becoming better adjusted to it, you must imagine there is a door in front of you. You concentrate upon that door and shut out every other thought from your mind only desiring to pass through that door. If you pass through the door you enter a world of fantasies where precognition is supposed to take place.

Another method is to hang a strap from the ceiling and put your arm or arms through it and twist until the right amount of pressure is obtained at which time you again concentrate on the door.

There are some extremely strong-willed people who can with effort and strain detach their senses from their mind without any aids.

The main fault with all this is that there is more of a tendency to slide into recognition than precognition. Even when precognition does take place the events are of no important value. The person doesn't have the ability to foresee what they would like to, such as seeing what the stock market will be tomorrow.

To these people it is no improbable thing that the Bible has cases of prophecy or of Ezekiel seeing the wheel, or of Paul entering the third heaven.

This class of precognitionists or fortune tellers are quite different from those found in the circus or carnival. Those found in the latter places exploit people for a living and generally are not considered to be precognitists.

I think the Bible has given all that is necessary for us concerning this subject when in Deut. 18:18-22 it speaks about tellers of the future.

Herm Woudenberg

GOD OUR ADVOCATE AND JUDGE

Unrighteous witnesses have stood
And told of crimes beyond belief;
Returning evil for my good,
They overwhelm my soul with grief.
When in affliction they were sad,
I wept and made their grief my own;
But in my trouble they are glad
And strive that I may be o'erthrown.

Psalm 2
The word reverence is so familiar to all of us, yet it implies so much that we very seldom contemplate its full meaning. Psalm 33 so beautifully describes for us and exhorts us to Godly fear. A small portion of this Psalm is given to us in one of our well-known Psalter numbers—

Let all the earth Jehovah fear,
Let all that dwell both far and near
In awe before Him stand;
For, lo, He spake and it was done,
And all with sov'reign pow'r begun
Stood fast at His command.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He, the I am that I am, called into being the things that were not as though they were. The triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, united in most intimate fellowship and friendship, called forth man, creating him in His image. Not only has He determined and created all, but He also upholds and causes them to fulfill the purpose whereunto He has called them. This is our Father and it is no wonder that we cry unto Him, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

We, sinful creatures of the dust who of ourselves are so undeserving of His great blessings, by nature rebel against God, hate God, hate our neighbor, serve the devil, and delight in sin and unrighteousness. It is the grace of God alone which has called us out of the world of darkness into His marvelous light and then as children of Him, we worship before Him with fear and adoration. In the life of the Old Testament patriarch, Moses, we have a very clear and true picture of reverence — man realizing his nothingness and unable to fathom the greatness of God. Moses beheld a bush burning but not being consumed. God spoke to Moses out of the midst of that bush and commanded him to take his shoes from off his feet for he was standing on holy ground and then we read that Moses "hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

God has given unto His people, the elect, His covenant and has established that covenant in the line of continued generations. The center of that covenant, of course, is Christ and through His blood we have been redeemed. He has taken from us the burden of our sins so that now we may appear righteous before Him.

Apart from this redemption, we would be lost and would suffer the torments of sin for all eternity. It is by God's grace that we have come to know Him. He has revealed Himself to us by His Word and Spirit and has given Himself to be our Lord and Saviour. Oh, truly we have so much to be grateful for. The result of this covenant relationship is that we, the elect children of God, may experience communion and fellowship with Him. Let us think on this — may experience communion — may experience fellowship — yes, indeed it is a privilege, but it also is a calling and not just for certain times and certain occasions but for each moment of every day of all the years of our lives — fellowship with the Most High God, ruler of heaven and earth!

The Christian has communion with God in prayer when he pours out his soul before the Lord confessing all his sins and acknowledging that all good and all righteousness proceeds only from God. Unto Him all praise and adoration is due. Sublime, sacred; and solemn object awaken awe within us, they cause the beholder to stop and consider whether he is worthy to approach them any nearer; they rivet his mind and body to a spot and make him cautious lest by his presence he should contaminate that which is hallow-
ed. Before Him we bow with reverence and awe. When calling upon God, we must remember that we are calling upon Him who is Holy and Just. Unto Him we owe our all. When we commit our way unto Him and walk in that way, the fruit necessarily is that we honor Him in all things. We will then experience His nearness and whatever cares and troubles may arise, none will be too great, for He is leading us. When we pray unto God with our whole heart, we will also experience that God hears our prayer for He comforts us in time of trouble and sorrow. He gives grace to suffer in times of illness and He leads us every step of the way.

God has also privileged us to congregate with His people in holy worship. God is the exalted one. Exalted and arrayed in glory He awakens reverence which leads to every outward mark of obeisance and humiliation which is possible for man to express. When the creature places himself in the presence of the Creator—when he contemplates the immeasurable distance which separates himself, a frail and finite mortal, from his infinitely perfect Maker—he approaches with awe; even the sanctuary where he is accustomed to bow before the Almighty acquires the power of awakening the same emotions in his mind. When we enter into the house of the Lord, we must put aside all things of the flesh and pray that the Lord will speak His Word unto our hearts that we may grow up spiritually and increase in wisdom. This requires that each one discipline himself anew for we are so prone to evil that our minds easily wander and we find ourselves busy with unimportant things. Only by the grace of God shall we have the victory.

As God leads us along, we have blessed fellowship with Him not only when we congregate on the Sabbath day but all the time. Whatever our daily work may be, when we perform it diligently and faithfully for Him, we work to His honor and glory. Whomsoever we may come in contact with, in the school, in the shop, or in the office, when our speech is a witness of the hope which is within us, we have the assurance that He is near us and has given unto us those words to speak.

Reverence for God and communion with Him will reflect in our attitude toward our fellow men. To the aged we will show respect and consideration. To those in authority, we will want to be instructed and obey as long as the demands are in accordance with the Word of God. To our neighbor we will be kind and thoughtful. All these things and many more emanate from a true love for God.

May God thus give us grace that we may crucify the old man which dwells within us, always denying ourselves, and put on the new man, striving earnestly for that which is pleasing in His sight.

Jeannette Faber
the Bible? No, rather, they sing and pray of the truths that the other sixty-five books of the Bible, teach by historical account, prophecy, fulfillment of prophecy and disputation and logic. And that, too, very simply. How else could babes and sucklings understand, which they certainly do; therefore not by a complicated series of associated doctrines — this sounds like the wise and prudent — solemnly, and where appropriate with joyful gladness, not in any wise obscured by muted tones. I'm talking about Psalms, not New Testament songs. (3) I am confident, that, if the Old Testament Psalms were not entirely sufficient, which they are, God could have and would have added a book of New Testament Psalms. John, while on the Isle of Patmos, or Paul in his imprisonment, could have conveniently been inspired to this work it seems to me. God cares for, and in every respect fulfils His peoples every need abundantly. (Also see James 5:13). (4) Whenever we hear a discussion of Christ's birth, death, resurrection or ascension, or of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, we are always reminded of the striking simplicity of the biblical account of these events. Why is it so simply told? Because, that no event should overshadow another, but rather, that each should serve to reveal the truth of God and His plan of salvation to His people. Article 69 is very logical, even more so today than when it was adopted.

Why is the Radio Choir confined to the Psalter in its broadcasts? (1) It was by direction of Classis—that should be sufficient. Classis has its own reasons and it is not the part or right of Beacon Lights, editorially or otherwise, to jeer or ridicule that body. Nor to present the church officers responsible for the musical portion of the broadcast as fanatics. That takes one wonder whether this editorial was really written in a spirit of love, as I would like to believe.

Should it be illogical, which it is not, as I have shown, to officially be limited to the Psalter, what other single song book could we, as Protestant Reformed, officially adopt? There is none. What then? Go through several different song books and list the approved songs in each? What a babel of confusion that would be, leading of course, to endless hairsplitting, of which we are-falsely-accused by our enemies frequently. Quite unwittingly they do the hairsplitting—how else does one draw the line between untruth and untruth? We abide by the Truth wherein together with the Psalms, we enjoy the highest freedom that can be attained to here below. But there is one other alternative. A new song book. That would be a tremendous expense, for in my mind, an insignificant gain.

No! Rather, dear editor, much rather, had you used your high office to instill into our young people a keen desire to learn the Psalms as found in the Psalter by heart. That first. They all, without exception can do that very profitably, that is Scriptural. Second: They could organize into men, women and mixed groups with the sole intent that they learn to sing them, as written—not adapting them to different tunes—harmoniously. — Hope Protestant Reformed of Grand Rapids and the Radio Choir has shown that it can be done—fittingly and with good diction. This, I am sure, would vastly improve the congregational singing. And what better thing could they be busied with than their spiritual upbuilding? Give our young people editorials that have that goal so tending to establish the peace of the Church, abiding by decency and order. Not that they be a law unto themselves as this editorial might tend to teach.

Sincerely,

Jim Dykstra.
LET'S ALL GO TO THE BEACON LIGHTS

SINGSPIRATION

Good Idea! If you are planning to entertain guests for the evening of Sunday, March 17, invite them to join you at the Singspiration first. There'll be plenty of time for "coffee and kletzing" afterwards. You will enjoy the singing and so will your guests. Just ask 'em.

- SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 9 P. M.
- FIRST CHURCH
- SPECIAL MUSIC

DON'T MISS IT!