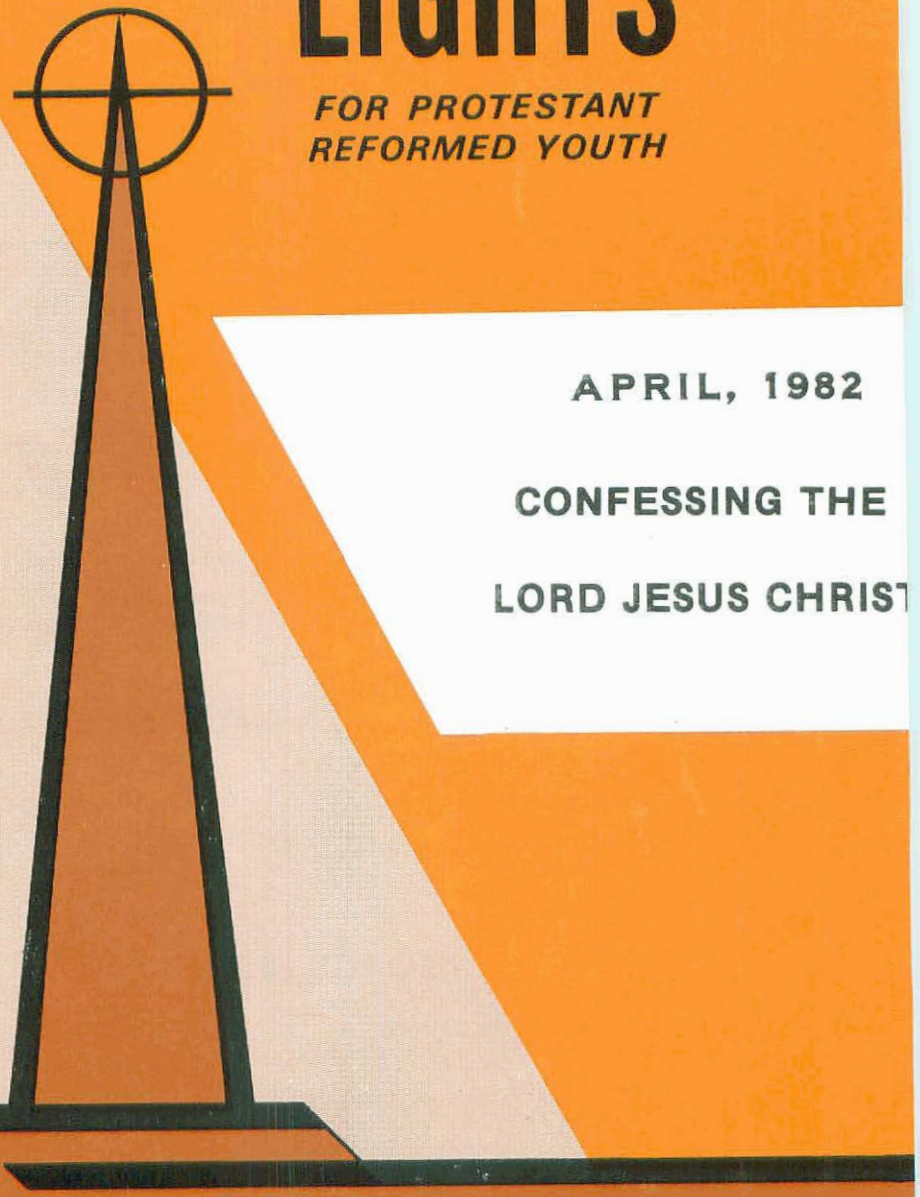
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



APRIL, 1982

CONFESSING THE

LORD JESUS CHRIST

BEACON LIGHTS

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Editorial

PROVERBS FOR YOUNG PILGRIMS: THE BOUNDARY

by Ed Lotterman

Prov. 22:28 "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."

The Pilgrim passing through this strange land in which we live cannot help but see social unrest. Certain evils prevail and out of them we see multiplied corruption. The natives of this land would continually tempt the Pilgrim to end his Pilgrimage, and to set up residence in the community. They make the settlement so appealing. The Pilgrim, weary in his journey, often will pause in his Pilgrimage in order to be tempted.

By God's grace, rather than being tempted, he sees the prevailing evils and places them in proper perspective: there are no boundaries! There are no limits to the evils which are readily accepted by the natives. The border of morality is broken down. Immorality has invaded the enclosure of decency. Not only is modesty absent, but immodesty and its instigation is promoted.

The Young Pilgrim could easily become confused by such contradiction. The ways of the natives are contrary to the way Young Pilgrims have been taught. Thanks be to God that the fathers have set ancient landmarks!

Landmarks tell all who pass by exactly where the boundaries are. The natives have ignored the landmarks for so long that they scarce can recognize them anymore. The Pilgrims, on the other hand, not only recognize the landmarks, but also familiarize themselves with them. The landmark stands as a symbol, a memorial, dear to the Pilgrim's heart. He loves it!

In the proverb which we are considering, the landmark has been set by the fathers. One may think that the landmark, which sets the boundaries of our lives, is the Law of God. In a certain sense this is true. The established Law of God certainly must be the rule for the Pilgrim's life of Thankfulness. But the landmark in our Proverb is the setting forth of principles of God's Word. These principles are given to us by our fathers and we must take heed to what the fathers have said.

From old time, from yesteryear, the well established landmark stands, never to be removed. O, yes, the landmark is in the way of the native! He stumbles around it. He would have it torn down and destroyed. He would eliminate it, he would cut a new path so to bypass it. But being firmly set, the landmark has stood the test of time. The native can choose to ignore it, attempt to avoid it, yet it is not removed. It remains!

But what about us? Have we Young Pilgrims made ourselves familiar with the landmarks our fathers have set? And if we are familiar with them, would

we attempt to have them removed? Do we cut new paths in order to bypass them? Are we also guilty of ignoring or avoiding the landmarks?

Perhaps we should have our consciences pricked while we recall some of the landmarks. We know them well, they are familiar to us. Do we hold them dear to our hearts?

There is the landmark of the place of movies and drama in our lives. Have we not nearly eliminated this landmark from our lives? Movies are a prevailing evil in this strange land of our pilgrimage. There is no limit to the corruption and immorality which this evil has caused. Do we look lovingly at the landmark which our fathers have set? Do we know and embrace the boundaries marked out?

There is the landmark, which our fathers have set, called work. Yes, good old fashioned, dirt under-the-fingernails, work! The natives seem to scorn work. Unemployment and welfare is practically preferred. Part of the curse due to man for sin is that "in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread all the days of thy life." Work. Hard work. Do we join in with the natives in their attempt to bypass the curse?

There is the landmark of discipline. This landmark involves the teaching of proper conduct. How easy it is to pause in our pilgrimage and to participate in some type of mischief. How easy to compromise! "Nothing really wrong with it," we say. How easy it is to ignore, and thereby remove, the landmark.

There is the landmark of the place women have in the home. "Women's lib" has attempted to break down the boundaries. Sometimes I am even concerned that the curriculum in our schools is geared to teach our daughters some other career than that of being a wife and mother in Israel! Do we tend to avoid this landmark?

Landmarks which our fathers have set. The list can go on. Landmarks of music, Christian liberty, the place of recreation in our lives, materialism. We are familiar with the landmarks.

Young Pilgrim, embrace the landmarks, hold them dear to you. Surround yourself with the boundaries which they mark out. There is a feeling of security on the inside of these boundaries. A certain peace prevails inside these bounds because they provide the way of life which leads to the Pilgrim's goal: the journey ends in eternal life.

The Scholarship Fund Committee is offering scholarships for the 1982-1983 school year. An essay of 300 words written on the tipic, "My responsibility to Christian education or my responsibility to the Christian ministry in perilous times in the light of II Timothy 3", is required. An application must also be filled out. If you are interested in an application contact:

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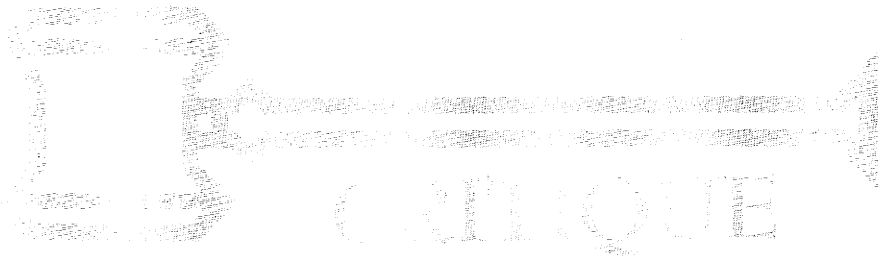

THOUGHTS ON EUTHANASIA

by Ben Wigger

It wasn't that long ago that I come across an article in the Detroit Free Press which dealt with the question of a person's "right" to take his or her own life. The article dealt with a group which calls itself Hemlock. A group which, as its name suggests, advocates a person's "right" to take his or her own life. The name comes from the poison the Greek philosopher Socrates chose to drink rather than face being exiled for his political views.

One morning six years ago, in an English country house, Derek Humphry, the founder of Hemlock, served his wife a lethal potion of drugs mixed with coffee. Jean Humphry was dying of bone cancer. She was determined not to die in a hospital. As her husband tells it, she was far calmer than he was as she drank the coffee, knowing it would kill her.

Questioned by the police after his wife's death, Humphry confessed to aiding and abetting a suicide, a crime in England and the United States. But Humphry said the police were swayed by public opinion and decided not to prosecute.

"A lot of people said I just killed her," Humphry said. "Other people said it was a supreme act of love." And that, young people, is the question we are faced with. How do we view the entire question of euthanasia? Is it just plain murder, or is it a supreme act of love? Or, from a spiritual view point, how does this question fit in with the Law of God?

Groups advocating euthanasia - helping the terminally ill to die painlessly - have been around for a long time. But relatively recent medical technology that prolongs life has made euthanasia a public issue.

You can read with a great deal of regularity accounts of people helping take the life of someone they are close to, and doing so for all kinds of worthwhile and humane reasons. They reason that there is no reason to continue with their present life, if that life will be filled with pain and misery. The suffering which seems to loom on the horizon seems to justify the decision

that they reach. It is better to die now while in relative good health, and free from pain, than to face the trials that will come. When, from all of their observations, there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel, no hope or promise, the decision is made - let's not go down that tunnel.

Now the Word of God describes our walk here on this earth as a walk through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23). It is the result of Adam's fall in Paradise. And we soon find that this life is exactly that. Our pilgrimage here on earth, no matter for how long, will be surrounded by death.

Speaking from my own personal experience, God has seen fit to place my wife's grandmother in a rest home until the time of her death three years ago; and now all of my grandparents are in rest homes. By today's standards, some such as Hemlock would advocate the wisdom of suicide rather than spending any length of time in a rest home. Why not just end it for them? After all, there can no longer be any realistic hope of them ever coming home again.

And to be quite honest, I sometimes ask myself, why does God allow such as this to continue? Wouldn't it be better for all concerned if they were delivered from this life and exalted to glory?

It is at this point, when one begins to question the purpose of God in all things, that he has to come back to the Word of God for the answer. With the Word as his guide, he quickly realizes that our loved ones, and maybe ourselves, could possibly experience these things because God, in His Sovereign Counsel, has determined what is good for us.

I thank God for the Christian witness that I have experienced while at the bedside of one of my grandparents. The spiritual things have become the most important things in their lives. They speak of the peace that they have in Jesus Christ in a manner that no one else can.

To hear a person that you have loved all of your life say with all the surety of faith that what she is going through now is good for her is a very moving thing to witness. Their life does have meaning for them, and without a doubt, for us.

It is very important for all of us to remember that we must look to God for our help and strength. The world puts all of its trust in its technology, and we could be tempted to do the same. Granted, God does give us means and medicine, and doctors have their place in our lives. But we must never put our hope and belief in the world or what it has to offer by way of medical help.

The Lord has determined whan you and I shall die; it is not the other way around. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; and we should be thankful for that very fact. It is according to His divine decree that all things happen. If for a moment man says that he himself holds the choice of life or death in his hands, he is in effect playing God.

Finally, I am afraid that this whole problem will become more and more difficult for the Church. The world will not only attempt to give a person the "right" to take his own life if he so wishes, but it will also attempt to carry this whole idea steps further. It is quite possible that there will be attempts to have laws passed which would demand that retarded or defective people be either

sterilized or put to death. There could quite possibly be laws which would allow only certain individuals, who were approved by the state, to have children. And there could be laws which would require that any person over a certain age be put to death.

There are some doubts and fears which quite naturally enter into our minds and hearts. What would happen in your family if the entire question of terminal illness became an actuality rather than something just talked about; would you feel differently?

These questions will have to be faced by all of us. We do suffer in this life, some more than others. God of course does not punish us for our sins. He did that by the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. According to God's will, we will all face suffering; but it is not ours to determine how much. Man in his rebellious state of sin wants to say how much, but not the believer. God's wisdom is above question. We can rest assured that He will give us grace to bear whatever He sends our way. After all, what is our suffering in this world? It is but for a moment when compared to the suffering that our Lord Jesus Christ experienced on the cross on our behalf.

Reply of John Kalsbeek

by John Kalsbeek, Jr.

It seems that my article on "Our Calling to Give as We are Blessed" has generated some negative reactions. In the hopes that we can arrive at a better understanding of this important matter, I will do my best to clarify my position and answer the objections raised.

The first item that is of concern deals with my statements regarding the practice of writing checks for the church budget. Let me quote from the brother's letter:

> "First of all, Mr. Kalsbeek stated his disapproval of the practice of writing checks for the church budget. However, if we condemn this practice, we should also object to the use of numbered budget envelopes by some of our churches and schools. Since the organization involved obviously has a record of the numbers and the people to which they are assigned and also keeps a yearly total of the amounts given by each, this is just as questionable as writing a check every week."

It's true that I have serious reservations about the whole matter of the envelope system as it is presently used in some of our churches and schools. I

think it can be coersive and that it does not develop a Godly attitude toward giving.

As far as the matter of writing checks for the church budget is concerned, I personally have changed my own giving habits as a result of my thoughts as expressed in this article. I used to write checks each month for the budget and often also for some of the special collections. I do not do that anymore. I think the change has been a good one for me, but especially for my children. My children now are given an opportunity to give each week and not just once a month. Furthermore, they are putting *money* in the collection plate and not a piece of paper called a check which is certainly meaningless to younger children.

If any of you who read this article is comfortable with writing checks and using the envelope system, I certainly respect your right to your opinion. I, however, upon thoughtful consideration, have had to change my method of giving.

In the second place, the brother objected to the last three paragraphs of my article. Again let me quote this section of his letter.

> "We have the greatest objection, however, to the final 3 paragraphs of the article. One of the points made by Mr. Kalsbeek is that our giving must be done in secret, that we must not even let our left hand know what our right hand is doing. Even though this is a very good point, he completely contradicts himself by revealing the amount given to our schools by 2 families while he was on a drive. He mentions no names, but gives graphic descriptions of each, which could give many people a pretty good idea whom he is writing about. He then calls upon us to judge which family was blessed in its giving. It is not the business of Mr. Kalsbeek nor anyone else how much these people could or did give. Neither is it our place to judge on the matter. God alone can do that and those who do not give as they should will answer to Him.
>
> "Doesn't this raise serious doubts in your mind about the use of drives in our churches? Can we honestly say we are following the command of God to give in secret when we conduct a drive? Will each man who collected for a drive this year print in future issues of the Beacon Lights how much money a particular family gives? Each one of us must consider our own motives, not those of others, and with true love give as we are blessed."

I really believe in this regard that the brother has entirely missed the point that I was trying to make in this illustration.

It was not my intent to stir up endless speculation as to who each of these families were. That would certainly be uncalled for and unprofitable to say the least. Besides, the *exact* size of the families and the *exact* amounts given, I have long forgotten. The point that did stick with me was the large contrast concerning giving as the families were blessed. I took the liberty to use this

illustration because I'm sure no one would know who was whom.

The whole purpose of the illustration was obviously designed to reinforce the point I was trying to make: that we should give as we are blessed. The one was blessed with much materially and gave little. The other, though struggling at a subsistence level just trying to supply the needs of his family, the blessed heritage of the Lord, gave with a liberal hand. The one obviously gave grudgingly, while the other gave gladly.

I would like to know how it is possible not to judge? I certainly believe we have to judge. Jesus, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, asks at the conclusion, "Which now of these, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?" Luke 10:36. Just as the lawyer was asked to judge in this matter and also judged correctly when he answered, "He that sheweth mercy," so also we can and must judge in this case. The judgment is not as to the eternal destiny of each, but rather as to which was blessed in his giving and which was not blessed in his giving. It certainly was not my intention to judge the one to eternal bliss in heaven and the other to everlasting torment in hell. God alone can and does judge in *that* way.

I, for one, would hesitate to say that financial drives are wrong. I do question, however, the way in which drives are conducted. If we weren't so concerned with keeping a record of our giving for internal revenue purposes, and instead each put in a sealed envelope the amount of money that we felt we could contribute, we would be giving in secret and no one but God would know what we gave.

Certainly we must consider our own motives when we give. But then let us also consider giving as we are blessed.

CONFESSING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Pete is a member of Faith Prot. Ref. Church and a teacher at Covenant Chr. High School, Walker, Michigan.

by Pete Vander Schaaf

Every believer confesses his Lord Jesus Christ. He does this in the things that he says and in the way that he lives. If the believer is one in truth, and not a believer in name only, confessing Christ is the most important part of his life.

It is his basic concern. Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ is something that the believer learns as he grows and matures. As a small child he understands that Jesus is his Savior, and that he must love God. As the child of God grows older, he learns that he must say "no" to sin and "yes" to God in every part of his life, that is, at school, at home, at play, and in things that have to do with the life of the church. Eventually the young believer reaches what is called the "age of discretion." That is the age at which the child of God realized that his faith must be a conscious and purposeful faith. He must of himself believe all of the truths given in the Scriptures and of himself pray daily. He must of himself confess the Lord Jesus Christ in all of his life. The young believer does that no longer because his parents have told him that he must, but because that faith of his parents is now his own faith. It is at that time in his life when the believer stands up before the congregation and makes the profession of his faith. That is an important part of the believer's confession of his Lord Jesus Christ. It is that particular aspect of confessing Christ, the profession of faith, that I want to discuss with you in this article.

Do you know why it is that our church requires you to make a public profession of faith? Why not simply allow you to partake of the Lord's Supper whenever you feel ready without a public ceremony? The reason is to be found in the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Article 61 of the Church Order reads:

> None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who according to the usage of the church with which they unite themselves have made a confession of the Reformed religion, besides being reputed to be of a Godly life. . . .

It is the responsibility of the elders of each congregation to oversee the Lord's table. In other words, the elders must be as sure as possible that when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, each participant takes Communion out of a sincere faith and is free of outward or public sin. If the elders did not do that, the congregation as a whole would be guilty of desecrating the Lord's Supper. That is a great sin. The elder requires a public profession of faith, then, so that they may examine the young believer who aspires to take part of the Lord's Table. The elders must know that as you begin to share the churches' life in Christ at the Communion table, you do so with a heart-felt faith, and with a sincere resolve to live a godly life. You will stand up before your congregation so that all may see as you take your vows before God. All will be assured of your sincerity, and believe that as you take your full part in the life of the congregation, you will do so for the good of the church and not for her detriment.

The entire process by which confession of faith is made is designed to serve that end. Often, after a young man or woman has announced his desire to profess his faith, he must take a pre-confession class. This pre-confession class may give an overview of one of the Reformed creeds and is meant to assure a basic aquaintance with the Reformed religion on the part of those who profess their faith. Then the young person must appear before the elders in order to

give a testimony of his faith and his life. The elders will ask questions to assure themselves that the person does honestly believe the Reformed truth. They will also want to know that the young man or woman already lives as a member of the party of the living God, and is aware of how important a Godly life is to a sincere confession of Christ. Probably the most important question they will ask will be, "Do you love God?" and "Do you know that God loves you?"

After that the name of the person who wants to profess his faith must be announced to the congregation. This is done two weeks before profession of faith is made. The purpose is so that any member of the congregation who feels it is necessary will be able to go to the elders and explain why the young person should not be allowed to make profession of faith. Again, it is absolutely necessary that every person who partakes of the Lord's Supper be free of public sin. If any member of the congregation knows that such a sin exists, that sin must be repented of before the young believer can be allowed to the Lord's Table.

Then the profession of faith is made before God's people. The young person is asked to stand up and answer the three questions that are found in the back of the Psalter. The intent of the questions is something like this. "Do you sincerely believe the Truth that is given to us in the Old and New Testaments and as it is taught in the congregation of which you are a member?" and "Do you intend, by God's grace, to hold to the Truth, to reject all unbiblical lies, and to live by the Word of Salvation?" and finally "If you should fall into sin, will you heed the elders, who, as Christ's representatives, bring God's Word, "Repent and be saved?" When the young person answers yes to those questions, he has taken his vows before God. He has assured God's people that as he takes his part in the life of the congregation, he will not introduce any strange doctrine or cause sin to arise. The young believer has acknowledged what was signified in his baptism: that he has been washed clean of his sin by the blood of Christ, that, by God's election, he is and shall remain a member of Christ's church.

I am afraid that many young people put off the profession of their faith because they do not understand what it is all about. Some think that they cannot profess their faith because their faith is weak, as if, when a person confesses his faith, he is saying that he has a great faith, and is no longer troubled by temptations and doubts as other people are. If that is the case with you, you must realize that those who confess their faith are not claiming to have great faith. Instead they testify that Christ is all of their strength. Weakness of faith plagues believers, old and young. To confess Christ is to acknowledge that when you are troubled by sin you will throw that trouble on Christ and look to Him for your help.

Other young people think of professing faith as "joining the church," as if they were not members of the church before. They are now going to accept church membership with all of its obligations. Often, the young people who feel this way also have a sin that they want to hold on to for a while yet. Perhaps they listen to rock-and-roll, dance, attend movies, or drink illegally. Whatever

the sin is, they are not ready to give it up. They think that as long as they have not professed their faith, they are still classified as "kids" and are allowed a good deal of license in their behavior. The full obligations of membership in the church do not fall on them yet, and they do not intend to accept those obligations until the time of life for having fun has passed. Young people, you must know that God will not be dealt with that way. God will not be mocked, even by those whom He loves. He will not have it that His young people live purposely in sin and then profess their faith only because it is a matter of social course. God will visit a chastisement on you if that is the attitude that you take. He will chastise us, your elders, if we allow that to happen among the covenant seed. Confession of faith is not a boast of great faith, not is it "joining the church." It is a humble testimony of you dependence on God. It is an assurance to God's people of your deep sincerity.

The Old Testament gives us a beautiful picture of what it is to confess Jesus Christ. I am thinking now of Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

> And it shall be, what thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein;
> That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there.
> And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us.
> And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord Thy God.
> And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down unto Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:
> And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:
> And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:
> And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:
> And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.
> And now, behold I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God:
> And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.

Notice that the text is describing the offering of the firstfruits that the men of Israel made each year, right after the harvest. The offering was a thanksgiving offering, but with it every Israelite man made a profession of his faith.

We see, first of all, that each man brought a basket containing the first,

and best, part of the harvest. Before any of the fruits of the harvest were stored or eaten, acknowledgement was first made of God's saving mercy. When the New Testament believer confesses his Lord, in particular, when he professes his faith, he brings to God a most pleasing sacrifice. The child of God presents a contrite and a sincere heart, and he brings the testimony of his mouth. He takes hold of the promise given by the Word of God in Romans 10:9-10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

At the offering of the firstfruits, the Hebrew confessed that God was the salvation of His people. God has taken a people of no significance and made them a great people, delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, and brought them into the promised land that flowed with milk and honey. When the New Testament believer confesses his faith, he acknowledges what was signified and sealed unto him in his baptism. That is, that he was washed clean of his sin by the blood of Christ, delivered from the bondage of sin and given a new and sanctified heart.

Finally, the Old Testament saint received the promise of God that he would enjoy all of the good things that the Lord would give him in the promised land—plenty, and abundant harvests. As the New Testament believer confesses his Savior, he receives the promise that he will enjoy all of the blessings of citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. These blessings are the forgiveness of sins, communion with God in Christ and with His people, freedom from the bondage of sin, and justification. The believer has the assurance within himself that as he confesses Christ before men on earth, so Christ will confess him before the Father Who is in Heaven. That is what making the profession of your faith is all about. It is not to declare that your faith is now unshakable, nor is it a social ceremony in which you graduate from a fun-filled adolesence into a dreary adulthood. To profess your faith before God's people is to give public testimony to the fact that you have consciously laid hold of that salvation that was prepared for you in eternity, and that you now intend purposefully to live a new and godly life.

There is no specific age at which all covenant young people ought to make profession of their faith. Certainly, though, by the time a Christian young man or woman has reached high school he sould be asking himself very seriously if he is ready to profess his faith. It is not something that can be done lightly. Preparation is necessary. Young people, you should read your Bibles daily, alone, and examine yourselves to see if you do sincerely believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God and that Christ is your salvation. Just as important, you must pray to God in order to find out His will for you in this matter. And you must ask Him to prepare you to profess your faith before the congregation. In that way, you will mature in your faith, and you will not be afraid to take your full share in the life of the church as God's people live out of Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN HANDLING ANGER

by Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

"The Lord approved of Abel and his offering, but He did not approve of Cain and his offering. Then Cain's anger grew hot, and his face fell. The Lord asked Cain: Why are you angry, and why is your face downcast? If you do right, will there not be a lifting [of it] up? But if you misbehave, sin is crouching at the door; its intention is toward you, and you must master it."

—Gen. 4:5-7, Berkley.

Do you ever get angry? It's crowded in the hall or auditorium at school when someone gives you a sudden shove from behind. You've often reacted in anger to that experience, haven't you? I'm not from ("Show me") Missouri; I'm from Philadelphia. You know the meaning of the name, but we used to call it "the city of brotherly *shove*," especially in reference to the subways jam-packed with masses of humanity returning home from work. Everybody shoved everybody else, it seemed. How would you feel if someone stood on your foot and shoved you at the same time? Angry! Right? But, you say, no problem! That's just life. (As the Germans say, *So gehts im leben!*) Usually, at school I can't get my locker open; not even after kicking it a half dozen times in anger. Mostly, my "cool" chum comes along and opens it for me with his little finger. Yeah, I get mad plenty times. But that's only human. Right? (Sound familiar?)

At this point you probably think that I'm going to use the *supportive* technique in reply, Welcome to the human race; right? Wrong. Because I will not support you in your sin, nor do I want you to get the idea that emotions (we're specifically thinking of anger) are neutral, in themselves neither good

nor bad, and that rather it all depends on how you handle them. Such a neutrality idea you are probably right off the bat ready to admit is not correct. It isn't, for it expresses a concept that is not biblical. For where the Bible lists the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19ff), you find hatred, jealousy, strife and wrath included. (Berkeley Version has: animosities, strife, jealousy and bad temper). Wouldn't you say these emotions are bad, wrong in themselves? Surely we cannot claim that there is a neutral (much less a good) animosity, or a neutral bad temperedness! Bad temper is a manifestation of sin.

True, there is a holy anger, as God's. There is a divine wrath, which is the reaction of God's holiness against sin. But there is also a sinful anger; and that is what we have in this case of Cain. He was guilty of a double sin in that he became hot with rash anger, and, as well, mishandled his anger. Now this sort of anger is bad because God curses it. Gen. 49:7. Also because "grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1), what is stirred up is something bad in itself, not something in itself neutral. Also since "discretion deferreth anger" (Prov. 19:11), then doing this it puts off a distinctly evil thing. In fact, the gospel commands us, "put off anger, wrath, malice" (Col. 3:8; Eph. 4:26, 31). On the basis of this, we are safe in saying that anger and wrath are forms of *malice*. And who will say that malice is neutral; that it only depends on how we deal with it? So it comes to this, that "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools" (Eccl. 7:9). The right way to handle this wrong is to admit what fools we have been, confess our sin of anger, ask forgiveness for the sin, repent of it with a godly sorrow, turn from it, putting it all off in the grace of forgiveness, and put on kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. (Col. 3:8, 12-14). That's how you handle anger.

Also the holy Lord God pointed Cain to the right way. Because Cain had done badly, he felt badly. With his sinful anger his face fell. That is, he began to be depressed. But aren't you *sure* that when Jesus showed anger, Luke 3:5, that His countenance did not drop, His mouth did not turn down, nor did He have "a long face," since it was suffered with a holy ardor, and because zeal for God's house and cause consumed His entire being? Nevertheless, it is always different from this with our sinful anger. Hence the Lord had said to Cain, If you do right, won't that lift up your face, change your whole attitude? In other words, If you *do* right, you will *feel* right. So we must not be *feeling*-oriented, but *obedience*-oriented. "Ye be obedient in all things" (2Cor. 2:9). We are to be obedient to our Master, even when we don't *feel* like it. Rather than to always indulge our feelings, we are always to practice obedience. The philosophy of this modern age is, If it *feels* good, *do* it! But the Bible is full of the idea, *Do* good and eventually you will feel good (in the highest sense of *good*). "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). To put it another way, "Since ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* (practice) them" (John 13:17). "This *do* ye!" (1Cor. 11:25). *Do* as Christ Jesus commands you and leave your feelings

to spring out of faith and the evidence of faith, namely, obedience. For if you misbehave, persist in a faulty behavior-pattern, sin crouches like a lion just outside your door, ready to pounce on you and devour you. The intention of the lion of sin is to mangle you as soon as you step out of your house. But you must master it. That's your responsibility before God. As a regenerated child of God, *you* CAN *do it*, too. (Phil. 4:13; 2:12, 13). So,

Go forth in His service
And strong in His might
To conquer all evil
And stand for the right!

But to further clarify this point, that we are really dealing with *sin* here, let us consider the question, What is the nature of anger? Jesus answers this question in Matt. 5:22, where He deals with heart sin against the Sixth Commandment, and shows that in God's sight anger is heart-murder, which makes us worthy of hell. The Apostle John taught the same. Whoever *hates* his brother is a *murderer*. (I John 3:15). How often I've wished that we had an edition of our Three Forms of Unity bound up with the Westminster Confession and Catechisms! The Larger Catechism asks, Q. 136, What are the sins forbidden in the Sixth Commandment? The answer includes: "sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge, all excessive passions" (feelings). More positively, Q. 135 asks, What are the duties required in the Sixth Commandment? These duties include: "Subduing all passions (feelings) . . . patient bearing of the hand of God . . . sober use (right proportion and proper balance of) meat (food), drink, physic (medicine, the physician), sleep, labor and recreation . . . love . . . meekness, gentleness, kindness . . . readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil . . . ." The same truth is taught in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 40. So both of these great Reformed catechisms beautifully teach us how to handle anger.

There is yet another passage which teaches that sinful anger is heart-murder, — Jonah, Chapter Four. There we find that Jonah became displeased with the will of God (which had been to sovereignly convert and save that generation of heathen Ninevites). Jonah 4:1. To be displeased with God's will is the first turn and decline in a downward spiral. Jonah was exceedingly displeased; he went to an extreme about it, becoming *very* anger. Terrible sin! The next would be to question God's will, Jonah 4:2, then to mope over God's will. In v. 5, Jonah "had the mopes" (sulks!). The next step downward would be to gripe against God's will. Jonah's gripes were so bitter he wanted (willed) to die! V. 3, 8. Going on downward one gets *angry* at God's will. "God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry . . . ? And he said, I do well to be angry!" Jonah tried to justify his sinful anger, as though it were a holy anger, holier than God's own righteous anger. But worse, he said, "I do well to be angry, even unto death," v. 9. Here he flies in the face of God, hurling himself against the thick bosses of His buckler (Job 15:26), deliberately making an assault on God. He was saying, I have a right to be angry, even if it

kills me! To defend and exert his anger, Jonah would bash his brains out smashing his head against God's holy will and omnipotence. He was saying, I have reason to be angry, even up to the point of bursting a blood vessel in death! Yet he gave no reason for his anger. There were reasons, of course, for here are the feelings and griefs of a godly man who was concerned, in the wrong way, with the dishonor that might come to God's name and the end of his own usefulness as God's prophet. But he does not state any reasons for his bad conduct. He was guilty of both "venting" and "internalizing" his anger. It all reveals more of the principle that sinful anger is heart-murder. Finally, the next turn in the downward spiral of hate is to reach "the point of 'no return.' " in rejection of the will of God. We don't believe that Jonah went quite that far, as Cain did. True, there is no account of Jonah's final repentance and recovery (as there is of Solomon's: Neh. 13:26). But we may believe that Jonah did repent and come to reconciliation with God and His will. The heathen Ninevites repented of their sin. Would not covenant minded Jonah? So then we have this dangerous downward trend of sinful anger developing thus:

1. Displeased with God's will
2. Questions God's will
3. Mopes over God's will
4. Gripes against God's will
5. Anger at God's will
6. Rejection of God's will

These steps in apostasy are fearful enough, but the situation can worsen. It can proceed to indifference to God's Word, deteriorating to resentment against God's Word, to finally end in hateful unbelief and total detestation of God's Word. One more directive in how Christians are to handle anger: Humanism does not have a way of solving the problem pleasing to the Lord. Humanism does not instruct in how to overcome anger God's way, because it knows nothing of God's power operating in a renewed heart. Shouldn't we avoid anger? Really, we cannot, without going altogether out of this world. 1 Cor. 5:9, 10. For what if brother or sister makes you angry? What if anger is occasioned by your father (Eph. 6:4), your mother, neighbor, schoolmates, or maybe by your minister, or planet earth itself (as it was with Jonah)? Anger is inescapable. What to do? Do this: see as God sees that your rancid anger is sin. (Excuse your anger, and you're sunk!). Well, you say, I have a Dutch temper. SO? I have a German and English temper, which is pretty hard to beat. But so what? We must nowhere be supportive of this evil, nor mitigate it, nor regard it as normal, nor inevitable, not inherited from great-grandpa's Uncle Julius. All this injects hopelessness into the picture, which is definitely not the outlook of the gospel. Calling it sin the gospel presents hope, the prospect of forgiveness, amendment of life, victory, peace and fruitful happy living. So, on the basis of I John 1:9, confess this sin. Pray for grace to forsake it and to replace the habit pattern of Anger (Lgr Cat. 136) with the positive virtues of the gospel (L. C. 135) Then *thank* God for His mercy, grace and power which He *will* give to bring it to pass!

VI. PERFORMERS

by Terri Garvelink

The following is the full correct sentence of an erroneously abbreviated one in the February issue. The typesetter regrets the omission and bears full responsibility. The sentence was on page 11, 9th paragraph, 8th line.

"Parents should know that the examples in this book aren't the worst ones. Some top hits are so lewd that the lyrics can't be printed for fear of having this book classified as pornography."

In previous articles on rock music, we have considered the term, the origin, the beat, "Christian" rock, and lyrics. In this article, we want to consider the performers - including in this performances, rock concerts and festivals, and the lives (and deaths) of the performers. It is with a sigh of relief that we come to this final aspect of rock music: the subject is a distasteful and difficult one for the Christian to write about, especially in a publication for Christian youth, such as the *Beacon Lights*. Once again, there is much that we cannot convey to you because of the gross evil involved.

1.Performance

"Those dirty white boys keep the pulse rate pounding". 1)

Everything about rock performance shouts blatant sexual exhibitionism:

Lewd movements and postures are a trademark of rock music. Elvis Presley set the trend with his pelvic gyrations which he copied from a black rhythm and blues singer, Bo Diddely. Today, we can even read about Angus Young of AC/DC doing a striptease while the audience screams with delight.

Skin-tight clothing and what this reveals, something which we cannot elaborate on; uncleanness of which Paul says "let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." "Not since James Dean have I seen a pair of jeans so intentionally revealing", wrote one reviewer in the Detroit News concerning a rock singer. Some clothing reflects perversities: homosexuality, bisexuality, men made up and dressed as women; sado-masochism, chains and leather.

Suggestive groans and murmurs are a part of many a rock song.

The handling of instruments and microphones is often obscenely suggestive.

Some *simulated actions* on stage and (openly admitted) *performers' reactions to the music* are so obscene that decency forbids us to describe them.

In addition, there is the gross violence and ugliness of biting off the heads of animals, chopping up lifelike dolls, vomiting blood and the senseless

destruction of thousands of dollars' worth of instruments and equipment.

2.Rock concerts and festivals.

Violence, as shown by some recent headlines:

"7 Stabbed at End of Rock Show"

"Gunfire Hurts 4 in Crowd at Rock Concert"

"2 Shot, 2 Stabbed in Panic, Fights at Rock Concert"

"Rock Star's Fans Irate at No Show in Toronto" - Fans pelted police with bottles, smashed stage equipment, leaving 14 injured. Most of them were drunk.

"Young Woman Raped by Gang of Youths at Concert in Chicago". - An 18 year old woman was stripped, robbed, beaten and sexually abused by a gang of youths in a theater aisle during a rock concert while the band played on and hundreds of people in the audience ignored her pleas for help. Even the security guard refused to help. He had headphones on and just kept snapping his fingers to the music. "They were just like animals. Everybody was smoking marijuana." Grand Rapids Press, December 3, 1981.

A group of Hell's Angels hired by the Rolling Stones to "protect them from the audience" beat to death a listener while the Stones were playing "Sympathy for the Devil". During Alice Cooper concerts . . . once a man charged the stage and tried to kill Alice . . . on another occasion an M80 explosion onstage . . . darts were hurled by the audience.

The Altamont Rock Festival, December, 1969, left 4 dead, many others shaken up by brawling and bad trips. It was according to one commentator, a nightmare of drug casualities, stench from toilets, fires, food and vomit, and brutal violence.

As one of the spokesmen on "The Roots of Rock" aired last summer on TV Channel 8 said, "increasing in rock (are) violence, despair, anarchy and destruction."

Use of drugs and alcohol by both performers and audience.

"The average rock concert is a law-free zone of drug abuse. The atmosphere is so saturated with euphoric odors that one deep breath is sometimes enough to get high. . . . Getting stoned on dope is the norm at most rock fests and concerts . . . . To arrest any number of drug offenders would start a riot with serious injuries. Anyway, what do you do with 5000 kids after you've arrested them?" 2)

". . . the atmosphere . . . a 'grass' fire out of control . . . . With clenched fists high and shaking to the beat, the members of the audience responded wildly." Grand Rapids Press, Bill Marsh, Review of Ted Nugent concert.

The use of drugs and alcohol to promote an uninhibited performance is common, and openly admitted by rock performers. In a recent article in the Grand Rapids Press about the rock group The Grateful Dead, the members of the band said they were "enamored with LSD" which they freely admitted they

took "like a communal sacrament at each concert".

3. Performers' Lives (and Deaths).

Sexual immorality and perversion.

"Creem, a hard-rock fan magazine, published a devasting article that captures the rotten essence of the sex-rock scene in its October, 1975 issue. Lisa Robinson wrote: "There's (here she mentions every possible venereal disease, TG) . . . I mean, you'd be simply amazed at the number of times one has to shlep to the VD clinic; it's almost a regular stop for some groups on the way to or from a gig . . . . The intrigue, . . . the wallowing thru the muck and mire of SLEEZE is all part of it. It's all part of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle, isn't it?" 3)

"The sexual conduct (of rock performers) . . . is not only un-christian fornication and adultery, it almost invariably includes perversion and cynical sexual exploitation." 4)

An inevitable part of the rock scene are "groupies" - women who indiscriminately dispense sexual favors to rock musicians and associates; rock prostitutes. (After performance) "the band hurries back to the hotel with a newly acquired set of groupies . . . smoking, drinking from a flask of liquor. Many of the groupies encourage . . . sadomasochism . . . . Band members claim to dislike groupies and pass them around like cigarettes." 5)

Recently in the Ann Landers column, there appeared a horrifying story of what happened to a young girl who joined a punk rock as a groupie, the details of which we shall not here recount. She came back home, a physical and emotional wreck.

Many rock performers openly admit to being homosexual or bisexual; a number of them have been in the headlines for morals charges; most of them employ fiilthy language both on stage and off.

Drug and alcohol abuse.

"Drug abuse runs rampant within the rock set." Marianne Faithful (an es of Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones)

"Steve, 17, (a member of the rock group Rhinoceros) has had more experience with sex, drugs and alcohol than many men have in a lifetime . . . marijuana, speed, LSD, barbiturates, mescaline, opium and hashish . . . ." 6)

By his own admission, the well-known rockabilly star, Jerry Lee Lewis, for years consumed incredible amounts of both drugs and alcohol. (This past June he almost died, having to undergo emergency surgery for a stomach perforation and developing complications because of "a multitude of abcesses in the abdominal cavity" plus a lung ailment).

Traces of 14 drugs were found in the body of the King of Rock 'n' Roll, Elvis Presley, during an autopsy, including ten times the recommended dosage of codeine. His doctor prescribed about 19,000 uppers, downers and assorted other drugs for Presley during the last 31 months of the entertainer's life; supposedly to wean him away from drugs! One doctor testified that never in his

career had he found so many drugs in a body as he discovered in the remains of Elvis.

John Lennon and wife Yoko Ono used heroin and other drugs "in celebration", says Yoko.

"Worship"

Rock stars "worship" a variety of "gods" - Hindu, mammon, drugs, self, Satan, to name some. As for the true God, they utter blasphemies and curses, some of which are too terrible to print. "I Am an Anti-Christ", sang one punk rock star. Derek Taylor, when press-officer of the Beatles, said of them, "They're *completely anti-Christ*. I mean, I'm anti-Christ as well, but they're so anti-Christ they shock me, which isn't an easy thing." Saturday Evening Post, August 8, 1964.

Ozzy Osbourne, once the lead singer of Black Sabbath, is said to have wildly dashed through hotelrooms, ripping up all the copies of the Gideon Bible.

Rock lyrics abound with spine-chilling blasphemy, distortion of the gospel, the occult, Satan-worship, mysticism, worship of oriental "gods" and philosophy as we showed to some extent in previous articles.

Death and near-death.

In our research alone, we came across well over 20 cases of early deaths of rock stars; in most of these death was due to multiple overdoses of pot, cocaine, barbiturates and alcohol. A number of rock performers have have drowned while high on drugs, some have died in fast cars, some after all-night drinking binges, some have suffocated in their own vomit. One punk rock star overdosed on heroin 4 months after murdering his girlfriend. In addition, there have been many cases of near-death resulting from the accumulated effects of enormous amounts of drugs and/or alcohol.

And what shall we say of all this?

Indeed, in rock performers and performances, the works of the flesh are manifest . . . adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like (Gal 5:19-21)

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: WHO BEING PAST FEELING HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER UNTO LASCIVIOUSNESS TO WORK ALL UNCLEANNESS WITH GREEDINESS." (Eph. 4:18, 19)

Next time, the Lord willing, Conclusion.

1) Detroit News, "Pop", Michael McWilliams
2) Bob Larson, "Rock"
3) Rev. Ray Allen, "They're Out to Steal Your Children"
4) Rev. Ray Allen, Op. Cit.
5) Sara Davidson, "Real Property"
6) Sara Davidson, Op. Cit.

NEWS from, for and about our churches

by Marcia Hanko

BIRTHS

—Mr. & Mrs. Mark Jurries, members of First, were blessed with the birth of a son, Mark Jr., on January 3.

—Mr. & Mrs. Joe Van Baren, members of South Holland, rejoice in the birth of a son, Ross Michael.

—Mr. & Mrs. Houwie Hoekstra, of South Holland, rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Caroline.

—Mr. & Mrs. Don DeJong, members of South Holland, were blessed with the birth of a daughter on January 10.

—Mr. & Mrs. Bob Lenting of South Holland were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Amy Lynn.

—Mr. & Mrs. Vernon Maas, of Lynden, were blessed with the birth of a son, on January 28.

—Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Brummel, of Hull, rejoice in the birth of a son, Evan Dean on January 11.

—Mr. & Mrs. Norm Vogel, of Hull, were blessed with a daughter, Kimberly Sue on January 24.

—Mr. & Mrs. Dave Kregel, members of Hope, rejoice in the birth of a son, Brent David on January 5.

—Mr. & Mrs. Jim Huizenga, of Hope, rejoice in the birth of a son Thomas James on January 6.

—Mr. & Mrs. David Tanis, of Hope, were blessed with a son, Brent David on January 12.

—Mr. & Mrs. Mike Richards, of Hope, rejoice in the birth of a son, Chad Michael, on January 15.

—Mr. & Mrs. Jon Smith, members of Hope, rejoice in the birth of a daughter Monica Ann, on January 18.

—Mr. & Mrs. Mark Engelsma, of Hudsonville were blessed with a son, Nathan Mark on December 28.

—Mr. & Mrs. Daryl Kuiper of Hudsonville, were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Katie Lynn on January 6.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

—On January 17, Gord Bonzelaar and Cindy Van Kampen, members of Holland, made public confession of their faith.

MEMBERSHIPS

—Hudsonville received Mr. & Mrs. Earl Mulder & their son John from Beaverdam Ref. Church, as confessing members.

ACTIVITIES

—Adams St. School Mother's Club sponsored a soup supper in 1st Church on Thursday, February 11.

—A Choir Concert was held in Hudsonville Church on January 31, given by the Vocal Music Dept. of Covenant Christian.

—A lecture was sponsored by Kalamazoo Church, given by Prof. Decker, on the theme "Assurance of Salvation - What is it?"

—The Federation Board of Young People sponsored a sliding party at Johnson Park on February 4. Refreshments were served at Hope School afterwards.

—The saints in Singapore organized as a congregation, the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore on January 24. We pray for God's blessing upon this church and her labor.

—The Young People's Society of South Holland sponsored a downhill ski trip on January 16.

—The Ladies Auxiliary sponsored a Spelling Bee on January 22.

—February 26, the Chamber Choir of Covenant Christian gave a concert in South Holland.

—The Young People of Lynden sponsored a Christmas party on December 22.

—A soup supper was held on January 29 sponsored by the Loveland congregation.

—A soup supper, sponsored by the Young People of Hull, was held on February 17.

ACTIVITIES

The words listed are taken from a Psalter number. Some of the unused letters will tell the number of the Psalm. Words are across, up, down, diagonal, and backwards.

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

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II Peter 3:11

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