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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: PEACE

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Editorial

Proverbs for Young Pilgrims

EYES FIXED ON WISDOM

by Ed Lotterman

Prov. 3:7 "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD and depart from evil."

This Proverb, Young Pilgrim, immediately follows the familiar "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him." If in fact there is total trust and acknowledgement of Him, then it is also impossible that we are wise in ourselves. The promise is that "He shall direct thy paths." So there is the fear of the LORD and the departure from evil as we understand this Proverb.

Without delay the matter of sin is held before us. Young Pilgrim, we must tangle with our natural spiritual condition! And why not? A lack of understanding our sins only subtracts from our understanding of the glorious salvation God has given. Then too, lost is the urgency to walk sanctified lives.

"Be not wise in thine own eyes." "O, no," we say, "that isn't me, that is so and so!" We recognize immediately that such an attitude of applying this proverb to another person makes the other person a little less in our own eyes and makes a little more of ourselves.

Then there is the "I'm alright, everybody else is all wrong" type of attitude. Those dumb parents, they don't know nothin'! Why don't they let me do it? I know how, besides I gotta learn sometime. And those crazy teachers, honestly, they treat us like little kids. Don't they know we are practically grown up now? And where am I gonna git that money I need? There ain't no fun if there ain't no money! That tight-wad boss of mine. (Honk! Honk!) That idiot driver, what's he switchin' lanes like that for? Don't he know this is my lane when I'm in it? There sure are a bunch of goofs out there! Why can't people be more like me?"

"Be not wise. . . ." As we contradict this exhortation we touch many lives. But are we ashamed? Perhaps when we realize the type of characters we are we proceed to make excuses. "Well, it has been a bad day - nothin' went right for me." (This basically means "I didn't get my way.") Sometimes we reflect on these attitudes with a smile: "I must be going crazy or something." Seldom do we allow ourselves to call this sin.

Ah, yes, Young Pilgrim, our smart, self-centered, self-righteous selves! Sounds like the Pharisees, does it not? And how does Jesus Christ address this? ". . . except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20.

Christ had perfect, righteous fear of Jehovah. He fulfilled all righteousness, that is, He make us "right" with God.

He did this in His earthly sojourn,

as He touched many lives. He spoke with the woman of Samaria (John 4). He ate with publicans and sinners (Matt. 9). He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, made the deaf to hear, the lame to walk and raised the dead. All this did He, not being wise in His own eyes, but in perfect righteousness, fearing the LORD. In perfect obedience to God, He did all that the Father gave Him to do. Finally on the accursed tree - for earth rejected Him, and Heaven would not receive Him - He hung in perfect obedience.

"Be not wise. . . ." Fear and depart! Imperative, Young Pilgrim.

You say that you are not wise in your own eyes? You say the fear of the LORD is in you? Illustrate that then! Depart from evil!

This involves a certain awareness of our own evil. We must be instant to identify and confess and turn from our evil ways. In order to do this we must see ourselves not wise in our own eyes, but rather in the light of God's Law as fulfilled in Christ. This is a humbling experience. But remember, Christ, in fulfilling righteousness, humbled Himself unto death. (Phil. 2:8)

And this humility will touch many lives. With humble honor we obey our parents who know something after all. With humble respect of our teachers we find that respect is reciprocated. With humble courtesy extended toward our peers we discover a mutual relationship of caring and sharing.

Young Pilgrim, fear the LORD and depart from evil. In doing this you will not be wise in your own eyes. Rather, your eye of faith will be fixed on One greater, the Most High God!

Seek and Ye Shall Find

Who asked these questions?

1. _____ asked, "Doth my father yet live?" (Genesis 45:3)
2. _____ said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (II Kings 2:9).
3. _____ asked, "Art thou my very son Esau?" (Genesis 27:24).
4. _____ asked, "Am I not better to thee than ten sons?" (I Samuel 1:8).
5. _____ asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:1, 2).
6. _____ said, "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth" (Judges 16:6).
7. The mother and brother of _____ asked, "Wilt thou go with this man?" (Genesis 24:55-58).
8. _____ asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" (John 3:4).
9. _____ asked, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:7).
10. _____ asked the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?" (Ruth 2:5).
11. _____ asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5, 6).
12. _____ asked his father about David: "Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?" (I Samuel 20:32).

The Fruit of the Spirit
PEACE

by Marybeth Lubbers

> Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. Mark 16:9

Without a doubt, the decade in which we live will be remembered as the era in which the greatest advances for women were made since the Women's Suffrage Amendment of 1920. Today, women have fought for and achieved "rights" in nearly every area of life. Often they have left the fray battered and bloodied, but, in their estimation, the new freedoms gained after years of subjugation and repression have been judged as worth the struggle.

The cry of women is liberation, and magazines, newspapers, television, banners, and picket lines have touted their cause. Aggressive and out-spoken, women have slugged their way into every sphere of society. Once the shackles of the home have been shaken loose, there is no longer any place into which a woman cannot infiltrate. Admittedly restless and astir with their successes, they have, nevertheless, boldly and confidently strode into every type of business and industry. They have even been catapulted into the highest political offices in the country. There is no place, no position, sacrosanct to men. Never again will women be regarded as second class citizens. But they are not satisfied yet. Even in the church, women are vocal and unhappy and are making strong claims on the offices of deacon, elder, and, yes, even Minister of the Gospel! Subjugation? Expunge it from the vocabulary! Liberation? Ah! It is their rallying cry!

And so, I want to tell you my story. It is a story of subjugation—subjugation to sin. It is also a story of liberation—liberation from sin.

I am a woman. My name is Mary Magdalene. I know all about servitude of women, for I lived in a time when women were regarded as second-rate creatures. Every man (and woman, too) prayed for sons. Daughters were of little account. Sons were trained and tutored and honored. Daughters rarely left the home—their duty was to care for men. Even in the synagogue, the women sat separately. Yet for all this, it was a servitude which seemed but light compared with the slavery to Satan that I was soon to endure.

Many books have been written about me and much speculation persists as to my looks, my character, my background, and my importance in the gospel narratives.

> A woman in her late twenties, she is not the sinful beauty that tradition describes. More than beautiful, she is compelling, a woman who carries destiny with more charm than drama. Although of heroic temperament. . .she is well controlled, calm, her smile has a touch of melancholy, her voice a timbre of the sensual. Her skin is white, and she has red hair, of course: It would be an irreverence against our heritage to give her hair any other color. . . . (Fodor, Ladislas. **The Vigil**. p. 72)

Although there is no accusation of me in Scripture as being a "fallen woman"—a harlot, a prostitute—history has associated my name with that of sinner-prostitute, now penitent. To be a Mary Magdalene is to be the whore (restored), nevertheless, repulsive to God and even more abominable to the unforgiving eye of men. History has relegated me to this humbling category, and all its time-honored pages can never revoke those implications. I can only say in my own defense that I became one of the group of holy women who ministered to Christ and His disciples during Christ's short ministry on earth, and in this connection, my name is usually mentioned first. Would Christ want such a woman as I have been depicted to be in such close communion with Him? Whenever Christ forgave the sins of women of ill repute, of which I have been accused, He sent them away. Forgiven? Yes. And with the austere command to sin no more; nevertheless, He sent them away. But I—I was permitted to take care of the physical needs and concerns of this blest band of men. History has unfairly libeled and labeled me.

I was born and grew up in the town of Magdala (hence, also my name) which is situated on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. From these shores and neighboring environs Jesus gathered many of His faithful followers and all His apostles with the exception of Judas Iscariot. Here, too, was the scene of many of the mighty works of the Savior—Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida on the north and Cana on the south. Magdala was a lovely town and it was well known for its dyeworks and for the manufacture of fine woolen textiles. It was a town of industry; subsequently, it was a wealthy town.

My early childhood in Magdala was happy and comfortable. The economics of my home were such that after Jesus healed me, when I was permitted to provide loving service to Christ and His disciples, I was able to give of my **substance**. "And certain women (were with Him), which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance." (Luke 8:2, 3). Nor was I always a devil-inhabited creature. As a young girl, I was trained in the womanly arts and social requirements just as all Israelite maidens. How necessary this was for my future work of caring for Jesus and His disciples! I would have to meet many different people and adjust to many different circumstances. My mother had prepared me well during those early untroubled years. And after my healing, I did not have to work for a living in order to provide this ministry to Jesus. From the comparative affluence of my family, I was able to purchase expensive spices to anoint the body of Jesus after His death (Mark 16:1).

Nevertheless, near to Magadala was also the land of the Gadarenes. And it was in this bleak and harsh country that Satan had marshalled his malignant forces in a special way to combat Christ during those few years of His public ministy on earth. The Prince of Darkness, frustrated and foiled since his first attack in Eden, knowing his time was running out, had rallied all his fearsome friends to challenge Christ and His followers once and for all. The country of the Gadarenes became the center for his

demonic host to unleash their malicious attack on their victims, of which I was one. And so, let us enter this dark phase of my life.

Scripture opens its narrative about me with this introduction, Luke 8:2, "Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils. . . ." and Scripture closes its account of me, Mark 16:9, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." This is Scripture's own unequivocal assessment of me. I was a devil-infested woman. Seven devils resided within me causing me ceaseless torment and anguish. Seven devils—I was completely **dominated** by Satan. He had achieved his Satanic fullness in me!

How did those hellish foes come to reside in me? What was my condition which made my body and soul so suitable for their habitation? I cannot say with certainty. Suffice it to say that my heart and life were open to sin; my soul, in a state of decline, was easily accessible for occupancy by Satan and his minions. There were many holes in my armour. ("Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against he wiles of the devil" Ephesians 6:11). I admit it freely, knowing better than most that a heart which is not Spirit-filled must by necessity be filled with someone else; but also being assured that, II Timothy 2:26, the devil snares his captives at will. At any rate, Satan desired to have me, taking along seven cohorts to occupy my body, my mind, my soul—not to tempt me, but to **possess** me! And I was willing captive.

I don't think most of you know what this was like. I was completely indwelt with demons from whom I longed to be free, and at the same time, I did not want them to leave me—because in some sense they were ME. My will and Satan's were inextricably entwined.

How wretched and miserable I was. Life held no joy, no peace, no meaning for me. Every new day was only a cause for more unhappiness, restlessness, and despondency. I was racked with torment and despair. Truly, I was a woman in subjection! Some days were better than others, but no day was ever a happy one. Many times I contemplated taking my own life. I was like the demoniac who tried to throw himself into the fire (Matthew 17:15). There was this screaming within me which I longed to hush once and forever. The violence which drove the demonized swine into the sea was the same violence which tore at me day and night. I soon became dirty, ragged, and unkempt. Everyone in our small, but prosperous village, tried to avoid me, and I rarely left the village. Even little children scurried to the side of road when they saw me coming. At times, this hurt me; but mostly I was too preoccupied with my own distress, too miserable to notice. I was a daily sorrow to my family, a brooding fear to my friends, and an abject terror to society. I was worse then useless. Nor did I care. I ate. I slept. Oh, how I longed for sleep! Sleep was the one effective tranquilizer. Sleep provided the temporary respite from all this agitation and tumult within me. But all the other wonderful human experiences escaped me—loving, caring, giving, laughing, enjoying.

For some time, I lived this way. Then, in my darkest hour, hopelessly mad, when I no longer even wondered whether I was animal or woman, a Stranger walked along the dusty roads

of Galilee, and as I scrabbled in the dirt, He looked on me with His eyes of compassion. In the supreme power of His Name, He cast out those seven devils. He flung them out of me by His efficacious Word!

Now Jesus healed many afflicted ones during those few years that He was on earth and I was witness to many of them. Most of these afflicted ones pressed through crowds to reach Him, some cried by the roadside for Him to have mercy upon them, still others carried their loved ones to Jesus for healing and restoration. These all **came** to Him for deliverance; but, in my experience, no demoniac ever came to Jesus for healing mercies. The possessed could not come! I never saw it happen in all my years with the Master. Those in a wretched and vexed state, such as I, could not come to Him! They could not even reach out to Him! I, for one, did not even know who He was. How could I come to Him? How foolish to even think thus. Like the demoniac in the tombs of Gadara, I could only cry out, "Let us alone, art thou come to destroy us? What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?" (Mark 5:7) I did not seek Him for healing, but He sought me! I did not find Him in the extremity of my darkness, but He found me! I did not draw nigh to Him on that memorable day, but He drew near to me with the strong encircling cords of His love! I could never have broken those chains in which Satan had bound me—and truth to tell, I had no desire to become unfettered. But the express purpose of the coming of Jesus into the world was "that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8). And again in Romans 16:20, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." That purpose He accomplished as I, and all those who have experienced the horror of sin, can attest. No longer are we women (or men) in servitude to sin. No longer does Satan have dominion over us. Christ has freed us from the bondage of sin and the unrest of soul. He has given us the sweet peace of His liberating love.

As you can well imagine, this Stranger of Galilee means everything to me. He's my life, my joy, my ALL. He granted me the peace which no physician, no friend, no rabbi, no philosophy of Greece or Rome could ever have given me. I owed Him everything and there was nothing I could give Him in return.

Freed from seven devils, I never left the Master, nor did He send me away as He did so many others whom He healed. I became energetic for Him. I was one of several women who walked and talked with Him whithersoever He went—through the countryside, along the shores of the sea, over mountainsides, across lush valleys, and into the congested cities. And when His time was come, I walked with Him to the cross. I waited, although afar off, while they took Him down from the cross, bloody and lifeless, and I followed after when they took Him to the tomb. When they buried my Lord, I beheld where and how His body was laid. Although I could not comprehend His suffering and death, how I loved Him! He, who could have felled all His adversaries with one brief word and come down from the cross by His own power, had seemingly permitted His enemies to accomplish the final coup de grace.

When my Lord was nailed to the cross on that dark and grim Friday, it seemed as if all the evil in my life was

about to return. The peace which he had so freely given me had scuttled to the darkest corners of my spirit, and the forces of hell seemed once again to hurl themselves relentlessly upon me. Without the Master I was so vulnerable. He was the buffer between me and Satan's assailants.

Then, along with all my hopes and comfort, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Him in the tomb. Now for sure with the Master sealed inside the tomb, the forces of darkness could rage against me and inveigh my soul. Behind Him had closed the yawning gates of hell; before me gaped the horrible jaws of enslavement and death.

Yet my love for Him compelled me to the garden in the gray dawn of that Sunday morning. Throughout His ministry, Jesus had given us His followers many signs and even had told us plainly that He would arise, yet I came to His tomb with my costly burial spices intended to ward off corruption. How blind and slow of understanding I was. There in the garden beholding His empty tomb, I waited and wept alone, Peter and John and the other women having returned to Jerusalem. I alone could not be satisfied with the empty tomb. I was not even afraid when, peering into it for one last look, I saw two angels so bright. Nor was I alarmed or surprised when they spoke to me. The desire of my heart was only for Him, "Oh, where have they laid my Lord?"

And then, I turned, and in accents inexpressibly beautiful, He called me by my name. Mary. What a world of import in that one word. No combination of letters can accurately convey the tone, the tenderness, the SALVATION in that one word. Now my liberation was complete. I fell at His nail-scarred feet. Rabboni. His glorious body I did not immediately recognize, but there is no mistaking His voice! Whether His voice comes to us in the eloquent message of the gospel or in the agonizing disturbances of our life while we seek Him in prayer, when He calls us by our name there is only knowledge and recognition (John 10:27).

Are you plagued with your sins, horrible, despicable, unmentionable ones? Well, women, and men, too, flee to His cross and then to His empty tomb where He meets you at the break of day, calling you by name with His sweet words of forgiveness and healing and peace.

And so, I, a woman, walked with Him in the garden on that joyful Easter morn. I, a woman, the first witness to the resurrection! To me He gave the command, "Go and tell my disciples . . . ." I, a woman, given the honor of bringing the news of the resurrected Jesus to all mankind. I, a woman, a herald to the very apostles themselves. I, a woman, an ambassador to all His church down through the ages. Commissioned by Christ Himself!

I sped from the garden for I brought good news. My heart burned within me impelling me from house to house and from door to door. Jesus is risen! I saw Him with my own eyes! I saw Him standing over against His own tomb! I bring good news! I bring the full Gospel! I bring words of comfort and peace! There is no death, no despair, no hellish fiends anymore! Death was snuffed out forever early this Sunday morning! What a liberation! What freedom! Now there is only life! Life Everlasting! And, oh, now there is PEACE!

The Fruit of the Spirit
"Why Are Ye So Fearful?"

by Don Doezema

Late on Christmas eve last year a pickup truck, having gone out of control on a snow-covered and slippery stretch of M-50, slid off the highway and overturned in the ditch. No one witnessed the accident. A few cars did pass that way during the next quarter of an hour of so, but, with nothing to draw their attention to the wreck in the darkness off the side of the road, the passersby were unaware of the plight of the young couple trapped inside the truck. At length however a motorist happened to see skid marks in the snow, and then turned his head in time to catch a glimpse of the truck's taillights in the ditch below. If he had not decided to stop and investigate, the occupants of the truck may not have survived the accident. For he found them both trapped in their vehicle — the driver unconscious and the passenger with her head stuck between the roof and the door. Within a short time, however, they were both in an ambulance on their way to the hospital.

Both the rescuer and the rescued, according to the newspaper account, later allowed that God must have "played a major role in the rescue."

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Many years ago there was a small boat caught in a fierce storm on the Sea of Tiberias in Palestine. The men who manned the oars were veterans of the sea, being fishermen by trade. They were therefore no strangers to the sudden squalls which were common on that lake. It lay in a deep basin, surrounded by hills which, particularly on the western side, were intersected by narrow gorges. Through those gorges the wind would sometimes sweep toward the sea, raising the waters very quickly into a violent storm. The fishermen were therefore not immediately alarmed when, in the darkness of this particular night, they found it necessary to contend with the sea. But the storm gradually intensified, to the point where it was anything but an ordinary squall. The fishermen struggled valiantly to maintain some kind of control of the vessel, but it began to appear that the cause was lost. Towering waters were beating into the ship, and the men had all they could do simply to hold on. At any moment, they feared, the waters would close over them. Death therefore stared them in the face, and their hearts were gripped with cold terror

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What is "peace"? More particularly, what is the "peace" which is part of the fruit of the Spirit of which Galatians 5 speaks? John Calvin, in commenting on this passage, contrasts this peace with quarrels and contentions. It is the peace, therefore, which should characterize our relationships with one another. We must, as the apostle Paul admonishes elsewhere, "be of one mind" and "live in peace" (II Cor. 13:11). "Be at peace among yourselves," Paul says in II Thessalonians 5:13.

There is, however, also the peace

of which Isaiah speaks, in chapter 26, verse 3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusted in thee." Jesus must have had in mind something similar when He said to His disciples, "My peace I give unto you" (John 14:27); and, again, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace" (John 16:33). It is a "peace of God, which passeth understanding" (Phil. 4:7). A peace it is, therefore, which leaves no place for anxiety or fear or distrust of divine provision.

Both are fruits of the Spirit. Both belong to those gifts which we are encouraged to covet. And both are exemplified clearly by Christ Himself. For our purposes in this article, however, let's concentrate on the latter, on the peace of mind which can be contrasted with an anxious, troubled spirit. Christ, we say, exemplified that peace. To see that, let's return to that storm on the Sea of Tiberius (also known as the Sea of Galilee). Interestingly Jesus was **in that boat** that was being pitched about on the waves. We are able therefore to see how **He** carried Himself in the very circumstances which, as we have just seen, brought terror to the disciples. We notice, to begin with, that while the disciples were striving mightily to keep their vessel afloat, Jesus lay **sleeping**, unmindful of the raging storm which, to the practiced eye of the seamen, threatened the very lives of those who were overtaken by it. Prior to His entering that boat, Jesus had been preaching all day, and, because He possessed a weakened human nature (like unto ours in all things save one), he was, to put it simply, exhausted. He made Himself as comfortable as He could in the boat therefore, and before the rhythmic rowing of the disciples had gotten them very far from shore, our Lord must have fallen fast asleep.

It was to the liking of the disciples, of course, that Jesus' rest was not immediately disturbed by the rising of the storm, for they wished to spare Him whatever trouble they could. But as time went on they could only have been dumbfounded that such an uproar as this had not yet awakened Him. And, as it became apparent that their heroic efforts to ride out the fury of this storm were to no avail, their **wonder** must have changed to **consternation** that Christ could be so apparently unmoved by their common peril. "Master, master," they finally cried, "carest thou not that we perish?

With that, Jesus awoke of course; but His disciples were in for further surprises. The first must have come even before Jesus opened His mouth to utter a single word. It was in His **bearing**. Where they would have expected a look of startled surprise at what they perceived to be a terrible danger, they saw not so much as a trace of anxiety. Christ was totally unruffled by that which had struck terror into their own hearts. Further, and perhaps at the moment far more profound surprise, came for the disciples when, by a word to the wind and to the waves, Jesus effected an immediate calm. Very likely the disciples wondered about the connection between the two — that is, between His power over the waves on the one hand, and His quiet serenity on the other. The former, they would conclude, is the **cause** of the latter. Knowing as He did that the wind and the waves were subject to His command, He had never felt **threatened** by the storm. That they

had been alarmed, however, was to be expected, for **they** were at the mercy of the waves. So might they have reasoned. But then came the biggest surprise of all. For, after Jesus had stilled the storm (see Mark 4:39, 40), He turned to His disciples and asked, "Why are **ye** so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

More faith they should have had in **Christ**, of course. He had, prior to this time, plainly laid claim to divine Sonship. That He had dominion over the "powers of nature" should therefore have come as no surprise at all to them. Besides, they had surely believed that He was the Christ, the anointed of God. Was it even remotely possible that He, and they, who constituted His church at that time, be swallowed up by the sea? Where was their **faith**?

But there's more. The question was not, "Why were ye so fearful. . . when you knew that I was right here with you in your boat?" Simply this: "Why are ye so fearful?" The truth of the matter is that they had no reason to be fearful. . .whether Jesus was in that boat or not. The same sort of calm repose which they had seen in their Master should have been **theirs**. "Be like **Me**" — that is what Jesus was telling them. They should take Him as their model. To be sure, they knew that they were in the care of their heavenly Father. And surely they would have been quick to agree that every circumstance of their lives is determined in God's counsel and will serve their good. Nevertheless they were afraid, or, more accurately, panic-striken in this time of "danger". And to be that was to **deny** what they would otherwise profess with their mouths. Their faith failed; and by their unbelief they were depriving themselves of the peace, the perfect peace, which ought to characterize the life of the child of God.

How like us! Are we ever anxious about our daily bread — i.e., about our employment, our health, our wages, the rent or mortgage, the economy, money. . .? The Master strictly, imperatively, urgently requires **trust**. Do we ever fear impending catastrophes? The Lord says, **trust**.

No child of God need pass beyond the door of his own house to find abundant reason for an all-encompassing peace in the confidence of divine provision for all his needs. But, if we do look beyond that door, let's consider the Master's own illustrations. When you read these lines, the miracle of spring will be upon us. But think of those long cold winter months which are past. The birds of the air, on an earth covered with a mantle of snow, by the providence of God somehow managed to find their garments and their food and their songs. Today they make melody in a world fragrant and beautiful with flowers. And the fragrance, the beauty, and the melody all combine to rebuke us — "O ye of little faith."

Do we think perhaps that the disciples had **less reason** to fear than do **we**, because **they**, after all, had Jesus with them in the boat? But. . .are we not convinced of the sincerity of Christ in one of the last of His words of comfort to the disciples, and therefore to the church: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the ends of the world" (Matt. 28:20). Or do we, by our anxiety in time of trouble, call into question Jesus' **control** of the elements, and of the storms of life? His own testimony, however, is this: "**All** power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Do we ever

wonder about His readiness to use that power on **our** behalf, wretched sinners that we are? But, we need only read the word of God to His church already in the old dispensation. To a people who had been given over into the hands of their enemies because "they would not walk in his ways" (Is. 42:24), God declared, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. . . . When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Is. 43:1, 2). And what does it all mean? Simply this: We have **no** reason to fear. If we had faith as the grain of a mustard seed we would have the peace which comes from the knowledge of **perfect security**.

To the ungodly there is no consolation in the knowledge that the future is in God's keeping. Nor is there much comfort in allowing, as did the occupants of that pickup truck, that God plays "a major role" in important events in our lives — for that leaves room for a whole lot of anxiety for the part, be it ever so little, which is **not** played by God. But for the child of God, who has learned to place **all** of his trust in his heavenly Father, no other solace is needed. Neither life's storms nor it petty problems will unsettle the childlike confidence of one who has found blessed peace in **abiding** under the shadow of the almighty. The **Lord** is **our** God. In Him we find an ever present help in every time of need — barring **none**.

Scholarships

The Scholarship Fund Committee is taking applications for future teachers/ministers for the 1985-86 school year. If you are interested, please contact Gerald Van Baren, 5101 Beechtree, Hudsonville, MI 49426, for application forms. An essay of 300 words or more is also required on the topic "My part as minister/teacher in God's covenant (Deut. 6:4-7)." Deadline for applications to be received is June 1, 1985.

1985 SINGSPIRATION CALENDAR

May 19	Hope	November 17	Faith
August	Pre Convention	December 15	Hudsonville
September 15	Southwest		

The Fruit of the Spirit
DEVELOPING PEACE

by Rev. R. Van Overloop

Peace of mind is found only in the Christian who has learned to trust in God. God keeps only "him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because He trusteth in Thee" (Isa. 26:3).

When we confess sinfulness, turn from our sins, and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, then we have "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

God desires His children to have this perfect peace, for He knows the necessity of it for our well-being. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . ." We often fail to avail ourselves of this gracious gift, letting our hearts be troubled and afraid (John 14:27).

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The three greatest enemies of peace are envy, fear, and guilt.

1. Envy is "the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30). It, along with covetousness and jealousy eat up ones insides. Envy comes from a failure to put first things first. Envy is caused by placing too much importance on material possessions, prestige, or position. There can be no peace in the mind of those who constantly scheme and plan to acquire the next thing.

2. A chronic fear can be very harmful, sometimes even producing physical illness. This can be anything from a vague uneasiness to a great anxiety. This can be a fear which is either real or imaginary. It can be a fear of powers greater than we or a fear of losing something which contributes to our safety or comfort or general well-being. In any case, this tormenting kind of fear is the result of our failure to trust God, to take Him at His Word, or to claim His promises. "Whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe" (Prov. 29:25).

3. God sent Jesus to take upon Himself the guilt for our sins, to satisfy God's just demands for our every sin, and thus to remove all of our guilt. But at various times and to varying degrees some Christians fail to understand Christ's perfect work and all its precious implications.

Sometimes we suffer from the guilt of sins of the past. We fail to understand that God has removed our sins from us as far as east is from west, that He has cast them into the sea of utter forgetfulness (Ps. 103:12). This lack of faith in the perfect work of God in Christ is sinful and a drain on our emotional strength. We must ask God to forgive our refusal to receive the reality of His mercy and grace. And we must prayerfully resolve to look at our sins in the light of Christ's cross.

More often our guilt is caused by unrepented sin. This results in troubled minds and a "guilt complex". Adam was afraid and hid after he sinned. Unconfessed sin can often make us afraid of what is really our own imagination (Prov. 28:1). The result is a lack of peace.

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What is the answer to these three

enemies of true peace?

God works in us a wonderful cleansing of these terrible foes of peace. He does this in the way of the admission of our sinfulness and the dependency which results, the confession to God of specific sins, and the looking to and trusting in the power of the redeeming blood of Christ. Also the desire for and the striving after obedience to God's commands always accompanies true sorrow. "Great peace have they which love Thy law"; "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Ps. 119:165; 37:37).

This is the only way the guilt-troubled mind, the fearful and the envious find rest.

This solution is simple, but it is not easy. It is not complicated, but it is difficult for our flesh. Worrying is so much easier than trusting in God. This solution is made difficult by the fact that we are entrenched in the mind-set of envy or guilt or fear, and we are only released from them slowly.

We may be confessing our sinfulness and repenting of specific sins, but still failing to trust God for ALL our needs. If we are anxious and care-filled and full of fears, we simply have not learned to trust God, for "whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he" (Prov. 16:20). It is so easy to trust in ourselves, our family, friends, doctors, homes, jobs - anything we can see or feel. The only thing we can really find to be a solid rock for our trust is the One Whose promises are sure.

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What is the way in which God gives us peace of mind?

Man's mind is a wonderful creation. It is wise if we remember that it is always functioning. If we, as redeemed believers, do not prayerfully discipline ourselves in habits of wholesome thinking, it is our nature to become the victims of undesirable thought patterns. These latter most often produce negative attitudes. These negative attitudes can adversely affect the quality of our judgments and activities, and if they are severe enough, they can even make one physically and emotionally ill. By the grace of God Christians can effectively control their thoughts. In general this is done by closing out negative, suspicious, envious, jealous, pessimistic, self-glorifying, impure, foolish, and anxious thoughts.

Allow me to give some suggestions, based on either commands or thoughts given in the Scriptures. One or more of these suggestions can be applied to almost any situation which is causing problems in our thinking. If consistently exercised, these suggestions can be very helpful in restoring peace of mind.

1. Taking no thought.

There are some things over which we have no control. Sometimes we can do a lot of worrying about them. "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"(Matt. 6:27). Such anxious thinking is a foolish waste of mental energy and is a drain on our spiritual strength. Learn to know what things you cannot change.

2. Controlling the imagination.

God gave us the imagination as a wonderful tool to help us be more creative and useful. However, we do some of our most outstanding worrying when we allow our imagination to run wild, creating frightening possibilities. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the

obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5). It is true that we cannot keep certain thoughts from entering into our minds, but we do not need to entertain them. Because we are able to "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" us, we can control and direct our imaginations. It is not to be our master; God is!

3. Thinking positively.

In Philippians 4:8 Paul lists six thing upon which we are commanded to think, i.e. meditate: whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report. Thinking upon these positive things is a great antidote for the suspicious, critical, jealous, or impure thoughts which so quickly undermine peace of mind. Also, while thinking on these things, the peace-removing thoughts will find little room to dwell in our minds.

4. Praising.

A critical, complaining, negative, and pessimistic spirit fills the vacuum left by a lack of thankfulness. Quickly a mind-set of negative thinking develops and makes itself at home. Confess this sin of self-centeredness and pour praise and thanks to God. Think of all the aspects of God's work in Jesus Christ and be filled with praise (Rev. 5:9-14).

5. Forgetting.

Satan can plague us with regrets of the past, causing us to dwell unduly upon them. This weakens us in our present duties. The apostle Paul knew that his apostleship had many weaknesses, but he said, "this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind. . . ." It is commendable to learn from past mistakes. It is useless and unhealthy to grieve endlessly over them.

6. Expecting.

Read Psalm 103 and make a list of the things for which you should be thankful. Remembering this list, cultivate an attitude of anticipation of blessings from the Lord. Have no expectations from anyone else! We may and should expect God to bless us, for He has promised that He will and He does abundantly (Eph. 3:20). This attitude assumes that God will bless, though we might not know exactly how.

7. Refuging in comforts.

Jesus did not leave His Church comfortless, but sent the Holy Spirit as our Comforter. Also God gives an uncountable number of promises in the Scriptures which serve to comfort His people. When we dwell upon the "God of all comfort" (II Cor. 1:3) and upon all He has done for us spiritually and physically, then our minds should not only be at ease, but also filled with joy.

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It is almost impossible for even the most mature Christian to be completely free from anxious thoughts, especially during times of trials. When decisions must be made, then it is necessary to have thoughts about our problems. But God would not have His people sink into hopelessness and frustration due to great anxiety. Trusting Him as the Almighty, all-wise, and eternally loving Savior, we can claim the peace which only He can give.

God promises His peace, which passeth all understanding. Ask for God to fulfill that promise in the way of your being careful for nothing and your laying all your needs at His feet.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26:3,4).

Truth vs. Error

APOSTASY IN THE LAST DAYS

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

"Jude. . .to them that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." —Jude 1.

THE ADDRESSEES. After reading the New Testament Greek texts the least influenced by the German critical school, we translate the original as follows: "to those having been sanctified in God the Father, and having been kept for Jesus Christ, (and) called." It is true that Jude addresses his readers in general terms, as the sanctified, kept and called, without connecting them with any town or country and without giving any definite account of them. Yet we may assume that Jude addresses the same readers as Paul and Peter had addressed when they warned believers of the apostasy, as in Second Thessalonians 2, First Thessalonians 4:1, and in Second Timothy and Second Peter. When these epistles were written the apostasy was yet to come, while in Jude it had already set in. These apostles earlier had prophesied of the apostasy as follows: "in the latter times some **shall** depart from the faith. . .This know also, that in the last days perilous times **shall** come. . .there **shall** be false teachers among you, who privily **shall** bring in damnable heresies. . .and many **shall** follow their pernicious ways." But now, already in Jude's day, this had come to pass, "for there **are** certain men crept in unawares. . .**turning** the grace of God into lasciviousness, and **denying**. . .our Lord Jesus Christ." They, at this moment, "**defile** the flesh, **despise** dominion, and **speak** evil of dignities." (Note the present tense.) What else are they now doing? "**Feeding** themselves without fear. . . **foaming** out their own shame. . .**walking** after their own lusts. . .These are murmurers. . .Remember. . .the apostles. . .how. . .they told you there **should** be mockers in the last time, who **should** walk after their own ungodly lusts. . .These **are**. . .sensual. . ." So these apostles recorded prophecies of apostasy, while Jude records the fulfilment of the prophecies. Referring to Peter's prophecy that false teachers would privily bring in damnable heresies, Jude now points out to his readers that some of these heretics already did covertly creep in among them (v. 4).

ELECT IDENTIFIED. Logically first, they are the **called**. For it is the called who are sanctified, and the sanctified who are kept in sanctification. We are the called according to His (eternal) purpose of predestination. "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called. . ." Therefore, this is that divine creative calling whereby God calls the things not being as (already) being, and who by His calling makes alive the dead. Rom. 4:17. The called, then, are not persons who are merely invited, as though calling equals invitation, and the invitation to be effectual must be accepted. No, the called, are elect, regenerated sinners, those who are first called out of the womb of the sovereign decree and counsel of God, then irresistibly called out of the world, out of darkness.

Its being an effectual calling means that it brings about the results God intended, that is, all the **called** out actually **come** out into His marvelous light. Just as Lazarus was called by Christ out of the grave, and he that had been dead and buried came forth. Then this calling could not be an offer of Christ and of His grace and salvation. Offers are not in the power of preachers to give, not within the ability of dead sinners to receive. To be sure, God by the preaching calls and commands all men everywhere to repent, believe, read the Word of God and attend the means of grace. For God calls men through the proclamation of the gospel by men called to preach it. But that proclamation becomes effectual by sovereign, invincible grace only in the life of the elect. "When Scripture says, "They that are with Him are called **and** chosen" (Rev. 17:14), the meaning is that they are called **because** chosen! The believer reasons and prays this way: God "hath **called** us to glory" (II Pet. 1:3), so then, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive (**take**) me to glory" (Psm. 73:24). We who are elect and called, and profess to be, do labor to make our calling and election sure by giving evidence and proof of them by godly conduct in a life of thanksgiving, so to walk worthily of the calling in which we are called. For the elect will have it no other way.

FURTHER IDENTIFIED. Next, Jude addresses them that are **sanctified**. As to the reading, "them that are **beloved** by God the Father," we agree with Thomas Manton that it is "a mistake, and in few Greek copies" of the Scriptures. So "let us keep to our own reading" in our King James Bible. After all, we have the same reading in Acts 20:32, "them which are sanctified," also in 26:18 and in I Cor. 1:2. Well then, what does "sanctified by God the Father mean? We may be inclined to understand "the sanctified" as referring to "the saints," those inwardly cleansed by a progressively purifying work of the Holy Spirit. But this sanctification is actually election (so Manton), a work peculiar to God the Father. In this sense, Christ maintained that Him "the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world" (Jn. 10:36). That is, God in His decree of election had set apart His Son and dedicated and ordained Him to the office of Mediator. In the same sense, men are ordained and appointed to salvation, life and service, as Jehovah had said to Jeremiah, "before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified (chose) thee, and ordained thee a prophet" (1:5). The meaning is, the elect are by God the Father sanctified, set apart and dedicated to use and service in His act of election from all eternity. The elect are separated, first unto God, to His worship and service, then from the world and its sin. This makes the elect a particular people. They are elect through sanctification of the Spirit, chosen in Christ to holiness. Therefore the contention that the effect of this doctrine of election is that it makes men careless and profane does not fit with the truth that (eternal) sanctification is election and election is unto (practical) sanctification.

What effect should this truth of objective, perfect, positional sanctification have upon us? It should make us happy. "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!" (Deut. 33:29), already saved in

God's eternal counsel, chosen in eternal justification, ordained in decreed sanctification unto eternal life, having been predestinated unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself; then in time regenerated to know the blessedness of redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins! No wonder God's people are a happy people, or ought to be, especially when reminded of all this salvation!

But there is further effect this truth should have upon us, as that it makes us happy in the realization that sanctification is entirely the work of God in us which He began, continues and consummates. Just appreciating the passive tenses of the verbs should make us happy—having been and still are being sanctified! and having been and still are being kept! The passive form implies it is God's work, realized by the Father. The creature cannot make itself to exist and does not cooperate (no synergism) in its own creation; neither can we dedicate ourselves to God, separate ourselves from the world, or cleanse ourselves without that first this work of God be accomplished in us. The sheep can go astray of itself but can never return to the fold without the Shepherd's help and care. Fleshly lusts are too much for us, so also our calling to all holy obedience is too hard for us. God who made man in His image must renew us in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. We cannot do this work since it is a product of the Divine Artisan: "we are His workmanship" (Eph. 2:10). God the Father speaks, "I am the Lord that sanctifieth thee" (Lev. 21:8). He who hath begun this good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:6. The sanctified experience the eternal and continuous work of God through the Holy Spirit whereby He delivers the elect, justified and regenerated sinner from the power, dominion and, ultimately, from the presence of sin, renewing his whole nature in the image of God and enabling him to walk in all good works.

KEPT. The word occurs 75 times in the New Testament (5 times in Jude), and 58 times is translated **keep**; only twice, here and in I Thess. 5:23, is it rendered **preserve**. The thrust of the perfect tense is, "having been and are continually being **kept**." Here is the eternal safekeeping of the elect. The word **kept** means to be cared for and guarded as a precious possession. Hold this along with the exact translation, "kept for Jesus Christ." We agree with Spurgeon that "this is a most delightful truth; it makes my eyes sparkle to think of our being kept for Jesus Christ, as jewels that He alone must wear." We are treasure kept just for Him. Therefore, hands off, O Diabolos! Hands off, Madam Bubble! We are kept for Jesus. We belong to Him.

This early apostasy continues in the church world to our day. Never was there such troubles as afflict the church today. Evil men and women have been admitted covertly into church membership to the detriment of the gospel and its pure preaching. It began with Gnosticism and other evil errors of the era. The church's high spirituality and deep sanctity of Christian life was corrupted by apostates, issuing in the Dark Ages. Even now, in this age of enlightenment, the times are getting darker and darker. Many have become defiled. Hence the sanctified must wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Hold fast that which thou hast; let no man take thy crown!

ATTENTION

All young people are
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Protestant Reformed
Young People's Convention
of 1985
hosted by the Hudsonville
Young People's Society