BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

NOVEMBER 1990

Now we give thanks to Thee, O Lord, Who art the God
Of our salvation. Give us grace each day to say
That we rejoice, for we are saved through Jesus' blood!
No matter what may lie ahead, we'll always pray
That Thou wilt show us mercies great, and flood
Our hearts with thankfulness and joy along the way.

VOLUME XLIX NUMBER 9

Published monthly (Except June-July and August-September are combined) by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

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EDITOR'S NOTES NOVEMBER 1990

by David Harbach

Friends are a blessing from God. We need friends, the right God fearing friends. Gramps provides us a look at friendship and what we can do to be a true friend in his article "A Friendly Letter To My Grandchildren."

Why should we remember the Pilgrims on Thanksgiving Day? The fact that some of them were Calvinists might surprise some of you. Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema writes In "One Small Candle, A Tribute to God's Goodness," about the history surrounding Thanksgiving Day and what that history means to us today. We thank Mrs. Hoeksema for providing us with a very interesting and informative article on the history of the church. We hope to receive more articles from her ready pen in the future.

Mrs. Hoeksema has also provided us with a Thanksgiving poem "I Will Rejoice." Read and enjoy this timely poem that brings to mind the need to trust in God and give Him thanks for what He gives us each day.

From the Pastor's Study, Rev. Heys gives us an encouraging article on "Singing A New Song."Why do you sing? Why do you listen to other people sing? What songs to you listen to on the radio? These questions and others are answered by a beloved pastor of many years.

Prof. Hanko's series on "To Lose The Battle And Win The War: Chapter III - The Issues In The Battle (3)," reveals the fact that a

denial of many of the basic truths of Scripture results from a wrong view inspiration. What Dr. Janssen taught denied that the Bible was wholly God's Word. We hope our readers are enjoying the development of this series on the history that led to the formation of our Protestant Reformed Churches.

Mrs. Brands provides us with Letter #8 Ecclesiastes 2:24-26, "God Gives Joyful Meaning to Labor." Solomon teaches us that we labor diligently because we love God. But there are those who teach other reasons for labor. Why not compare your reasons to Solomon's?

Brad Brower writes about the Cult of True Womanhood in an article by the same name. We want to thank Brad for a brief look at this cult. That reminds me of the fact that the R.F.P.A. is considering gathering together materials on the subject of The Woman Blessed of the Lord. Look for this publication in the future.

In anticipation of Christmas, we have asked Mrs. Vivian Haney to provide us with a look at Advent and its meaning. She also provides a four week schedule your family could follow in the celebration of the birth of God's Son. Read and enjoy.

When we receive all the speeches and convention impressions from the convention we will be able to provide those who attended with a special convention issue.

Grant Almighty God, that as Thou deignest so far to condescend as to sustain the care of this life, and to supply us with whatever is needful for our pilgrimage, - O grant that we may learn also to rely on Thee and so trust to Thy blessing as to abstain not only from all plunder and all other evil deeds, but also from every unlawful coveting; and to continue in Thy fear, and so to learn also to bear our poverty on the earth, that being content with those spiritual riches, which Thou revealest to us in Thy Gospel, and of which Thou makest us now partakers, we may ever cheerfully aspire after that fullness of all blessings, which we shall enjoy when at length we shall reach the celestial kingdom and be perfectly united to Thee through Christ our Lord. Amen.

John Calvin

Editorial

A FRIENDLY LETTER TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

by John M. Faber

All of you have friends, I know. But some may have but one close friend, and have many just-plain-friendly friends. I can remember back to when I was your age that I had two close friends;we three did things together, we went places together; we simply enjoyed each other's fellowship in any circumstance and at all times. We three bosom friends each had other friends which we did not share in the threesome. I bet there are some of you who find themselves in that same situation. I am assuming that the threesome friendship you are enjoying are all fellow believers; or, better yet, that you are also fellow church members, Sunday School class and catechism call buddies. Fine, that is as it should be.

But in the broader concept of friendship you would include neighborhood boys and girls. Such friendships might be good, or might be injurious, or it might even be very bad for you We all know that friends have influence over one another; be it in the realm of hairstyling (long hair in the back of the neck of you boys or fuzzy hair hanging over half of your faces, girls), or it might be wearing of faded, torn pants you boys wear, or you girls copying the boys in their unkempt long sleeved shirts worn over your jeans; or untied shoe laces of your poor fitting tennis shoes, or, or...

Such influences are meaningless as far as character molding is concerned. But, oh, there are "friendly" influences that affect us which are not so innocent, and about which I'd like to warn you. I can imagine you girls have friends which say," Why cannot we be Deacons, Elders and Ministers in our churches?" And some will whisper behind their hands with a smirk, saying "just wait a few years and we, as well as the men, will be able to function in those offices. Look about you, in other good churches they have already ordained qualified women in those offices." Then I can hear the boys, in their swaggering contempt of girls say, "Just hear those gals. Do they think we will let them do that? Why, we are bigger and stronger than they are. That will never happen."

Both of those boastful utterances are dead wrong! Why? Because the Bible clearly lays down rules for the roles of men and women in the church. I am sure you know what those Scriptures teach us. The headship of man does not lie in their being bigger and stronger, but in the creation of Adam and Eve, and the

ordinance laid down therein by God.

Some of the influences of "friends" upon friends is in the form of downright temptation.That word means provoking to sin against another friend, or against your parents, or against God. Did you notice the quotation marks about that first word, friend, above? Thereby I am stressing that he, or she, is not your friend when tempting you. No, a true friend seeks your welfare, physically as well as spiritually. Spiritual temptation comes in hundreds of ways. In your Gramps' day such a "friend" might tempt us to attend a movie theater. But in your day that form of temptation is installed in your television sets. Then there is a new temptation, of which your old Gramps is not at all acquainted, you may be invited to a friend's house to enjoy the latest VCR presentation. I am told that some of that music and words can be quite raw and smutty! If any"friend"gives you a second invitation ditch him or her immediately! Tell your parents why you no longer keep that friendship. Maybe your parents will visit their parents to help them with such wayward children.

Temptations that can influence you in a physical way are varied, of course. One which you will almost surely meet is that a friend has taken up smoking (which is harmful to the body) and will offer you a fag, saying, "come on, it won't hurt you to try one". Or perish the thought, maybe they have a small flask of some potent potables in their room and invite you to try a sip or two. Or, no, your friends would not, but worldly friends might tempt a buddy to "try drugs". If you should happen to run across such a situation, say, "no" and immediately absent yourself from such a "friend" which has turned enemy.

By now I can hear you say, "There he goes again. Gramps' letters always turn into small sermons". So be it, but you don't have to take my word of warning, though it is based on a text in the Bible, in a Book written by the wisest grandpa that ever lived in the whole world. In the Book of Proverbs we find this gem: "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly, and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

So, if you want a true friend, be one!

Love, Gramps.

Unbelief says that God helps those who help themselves. Faith says, "Without Thee I can do nothing . . . I can do all things through Christ who empowers me." Only through faith can we learn to "love, fear and glorify Him!" Only then can we learn to pray . . . Only then do we walk with God in the confidence that, "Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

Standard Bearer, September 1985

ECCLESIASTES 2:24-26

LETTER #8

God Gives Joyful Meaning To Labor

by Mrs. H. Brands

Sometimes we mothers (I speak of myself mainly) weary of the constant task of raising our children. It seems all day long we have to be organizing our tasks and theirs, getting after them to do their tasks, and disciplining them when they fail to do their tasks or else do them grudgingly.

So when we are studying the book of ECCLESIASTES and when Solomon describes the wearisomeness of our labor, as he did in our last study, I can well identify. Like him, I wonder what will be the final results of all this labor: will the children grow up to love God? To be honest, hard workers? To be wise?

As Christians, we don't labor apart from God, like those people whom Solomon has so far described. As Christians, we love God and love His Word and desire His blessing. So our whole attitude as we approach our work is far different from the worldly person.

Notice how selfish that man's goals are! He seeks the reward of his work in personal prestige or else in the earthly continuance of his labors. Then, if he fails to gain that prestige or else his work is forgotten, it all becomes of no avail to him.

How different are our goals! We labor because we love God! We labor for the reward of God's love for us! It doesn't matter what people think or what earthly results we see...just as long as we know God approves us!

And then, in Him our work does also have eternal value. Even if we fail to see His purposes now in our lives, it yet will last forever. "Only what's done for Christ will last. For me, to live is Christ."

This long introduction brings us into the short section of ECCLESIASTES which we are considering today, the last three verses of chapter 2. Because it is short, we'll simply quote these three verses one at a time and observe their main thoughts.

(verse 24) "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God."

Here Solomon makes a simple statement of fact for the godly person. Given a heart that loves God, then the best way to live is to do everything for the sake of God, enjoying our work. It hurts to admit this but it is actually sin to dislike our work! I as a mother must raise my children loving my task and teaching my children also to love their tasks!

That isn't natural. The natural thing to do is to become discour-

aged and to want to escape work. So Solomon adds that this is "from the hand of God." We must pray for God to help us and then seek earnestly to enjoy our work as we do it for Him.

(verse 25) "For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?"

There are two widely accepted interpretations of this verse and, to my mind, either is acceptable and I don't know which is correct.

The first view sees this text as it appears here and applies the verse to Solomon. He is saying that he can state the truth of verse 24 because he knows from experience that it is true. He personally has sought delight in labor more than any other man and he has found fulfillment in labor more than any other man. He knows its futility apart from God and also its satisfaction if done in faith.

The other interpretation claims that the last three words are mistranslated and should read "without him", meaning "without God". Then the text would read:

"Who can eat or who can hasten hereunto without God?"

I also like this idea, perhaps the better of the two! This way the verse refers to everyone and reinforces the idea of verse 24 that we can labour only as God makes it possible.

(verse 26) "For God giveth to a man
that is good in his sight
wisdom, and knowledge, and joy;
but to the sinner he giveth travail,
to gather and heap up,
that he may give to him that is good before God.
This also is vanity and vexation of spirit."

What a lot of thought is in this summary verse! There's the whole contrast between the godly man and the ungodly man. To the godly man God gives not only wisdom and knowledge but also joy in his work. But to the man who labors apart from godliness, these judgments accompany his work:

#1 Work is not a pleasure but "travail", that is, hard and difficult and tiresome labor.

#2. His only "reward" is the short-lived reward of accumulation of things. How useless!

#3. Even this so-called reward will finally be lost as God takes it all from him and gives it to those who are godly. Often we see this already in this life, as, for example, when Laban's greedy riches were given to Jacob, or as when the treacherous riches of Egypt were given to the Israelites before they left Egypt. But always, always this will be true in eternity: then the ungodly lose all their labor and the righteous are given the honor even of the persecution they endured here on earth.

May God bless you as you faithfully labor for Him by giving you His reward of true wisdom, knowledge and joy.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do verses 24-26 belong with Chapter 3 rather than Chapter 2 in the outline?

2. According to 2:24, what is the best way for the godly man to live? How is this possible?

3. What are the two interpretations of 2:25? [which interpretation best fits the main theme of ECCLESIASTES?

4. Notice in verse 26 that to a godly man God gives both the ability to labor profitably and also the reward of joy in the labor. By contrast, what does God give to the ungodly man?

ONE SMALL CANDLE
A Tribute to God's Goodness

by Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema

As often happens in the history of the church on earth, God uses the events of the past to teach His people in the present time, even though these historical events may have happened hundreds of years ago.

One of these events in church history which we Americans still celebrate had its beginning across the seas nearly four hundred years ago, while the Protestant Reformation was still spreading over Europe. This special event had its setting in England, where the Reformation was not as strong a movement as it was in continental Europe. King Henry VII, who ruled at that time, was not a true Protestant. On the other hand, he hated the pope and wanted to escape from his authority. At the same time he was happy to have his country remain basically Roman Catholic. In the upheavals of doctrinal struggles, the king saw to it that the new church which emerged in England after the Reformation — the Anglican Church was a state church, under the control of the government. The liturgy and system of church government in the Anglican Church resembled that of the Romish Church, but the theology, which the church stated in the Thirty-nine Articles, was mildly Calvinistic.

What about those Protestants in Great Britain who wanted a more pure reformation — a true return to the doctrines of the Scriptures? They could not and did not attend the State Church.

Their name came naturally. They were call Separatists. They were also called Puritans because they left the State Church and tried to live pure and spiritual lives. Rather than unite themselves into a denomination, these dissenters, as they were also called, were congregationalists, or separatists, with no common or denominational ties to one another.

Weary of their persecution by the State Church of England, many of them decided to leave the country; and by it they gained another name: the Pilgrims. In the year 1620 a group of them left in the small Mayflower, under the leadership of William Bradford. They left on September 6, and arrived at Plymouth, Massachusetts on December 6, 1620.

After bidding their families, relatives, and friends good-bye (God-be-with-you) they had sailed into the unknown of a long, dangerous voyage through the wintery Atlantic into the snow and cold of a North American winter; and

when they landed, they also experienced the fear of withstanding savage attacks by the American natives.

At last spring came, followed by growing plants and a plentiful harvest; and after their harvest — still in sadness and hardships — these Pilgrims made a celebration of thanks to God. They never realized that this event would start a tradition.

Why not? Because these people were humble children of God, who were seeking religious freedom. Their Bibles were their most precious possessions. They were ready, with hearts filled with praise and thanksgiving, to say, "That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works," Psalm 26:7;and "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Psalm 116:7.

These Pilgrims were also Calvinists, who praised their Father in heaven as the God of sovereign, free grace by saying, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him," Psalm 34:8. They humbly trusted their God and never realized they would be recognized in future history.

What does this history mean to <u>us?</u> Why write about it in <u>Beacon Lights?</u> Does it — should it — affect us? Should we celebrate just because they had a special thanksgiving? Although the Puritans were not in the line of the Reformation as far as church <u>structure</u> is concerned (for they were separatists) they <u>did</u> show that they were not only Bible believers, but also Calvinists. William Bradford, after describing their sad and desolate condition in the new land, commented on their lives as follows: "Thus out of small beginnings great things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone to many, yea in some sort to our whole nation: let the glorious name of Jehovah have all the praise.*

It is true, of course, that the history of God's church after the time of His revelation to the apostle John at Patmos is no longer inspired history. That does not mean that we stop celebrating God's goodness in our own geographical and historical settings. As in the springtime we ask our Father to care for us through the season of the growing crops, we also thank Him at harvest time, according to His instructions to one of the Old Testament saints, to "come again with rejoicing, bringing in his sheaves with him," Psalm 126.

How about our sister churches and the churches in other lands whom we have gotten to know and with whom we have contact? These churches do not share our historical background. Possibly they have never heard of our Thanksgiving celebration at the end of harvest: those in Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, or the British Isles. Although their celebration of thanksgiving could not be the same as ours, for they have different cultures and historical backgrounds, it may be profitable for them also to set aside a day for thanksgiving, to praise our Father's goodness in His providence and in His grace.

*Eerdman's Handbook to Christianity in America, 1983, p. 29

We, as the Protestant Reformed Churches of America, remember the Pilgrims on Thanksgiving Day. However, in obedience to God's Word, we celebrate not merely a day, but we celebrate His continued goodness in seed time and harvest, as did our spiritual ancestors both in the Old and New Testament times. We remember and celebrate because "the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting;and his truth endureth to all generations," Psalm 100:5.

To Lose the Battle and Win The War
The Janssen Case
Chapter III
The Issues In The Battle (3)

by Prof. H. Hanko

(In the article of last month we talked about how Dr. Ralph Janssen denied the doctrine of infallible inspiration. By denying this doctrine, he made room for the theory of evolution as an explanation of how the world came into being. In this article we are going to look at some other ways in which Janssen denied inspiration.)

When Dr. Janssen denied that the Bible was wholly and in all its parts the infallible Word of God, he taught not only that parts of the Bible came from the thoughts and ideas of men, but that parts even came from pagan and heathen sources.

Janssen taught that parts of Psalms and the law showed Babylonian influences; that the creation narrative in Scripture may very well have come from Babylonian myths, though through inspiration it was purged of these mythological elements. He thought that especially the prophets Amos and Joel drew from their own experiences in their visions and from mythological conceptions originating in the Orient. The law of Moses may have come from the Code of Hammurabi, an ancient Babylonian ruler and lawgiver. Even the name "Jehovah" could very well have come from Babylon. The Pentateuch may have been written in Babylon before Moses.

So Scripture contained material from other literary and oral sources and included writings from authors who were from other religions and cultures and were not even worshippers of God.

But all of this had other effects upon Scripture as well.

Janssen believed that the book of Ecclesiastes was not authored by the Holy Spirit as God's Word, but was the work of a skeptical philosopher plagued by moments of doubt which he expressed in his writings.

He believed that a kind of semi-monotheism (Monotheism means: Belief in one God, pre-

vailed in Israel until the time of the prophets, and that what monotheism they did possess was taught them by Jethro while on their way to Canaan.

He believed that Abraham's call to leave Ur was not a divine call, but that his departure from the land of his birth was to be explained in terms of religious conditions which affected his life.

He taught that the disagreement between David and Nathan over building the temple was to be explained in terms of David's more progressive views and Nathan's conservatism which manifested itself in a contentment with the status quo.

All this was possible because, as Janssen maintained, God revealed Himself in creation and in history as well as in special ways. In support of his position, therefore, Janssen made a great deal of the distinction between general and special revelation. Special revelation would include God's revelations to His people in the types and shadows of the law in the Old Testament, but in Christ Jesus in the New Testament. General revelation is then, God's speech concerning Himself to the pagan world through trees and flowers, sunshine and rain, stars and rivers. It is God's speech to man through history and the events of history.

By this general revelation, man can and does come to know things about God and about God's truth. Though this truth about God is often mixed with various pagan elements and is sometimes colored with pagan notions, ideas, and superstitions, there is always that truth there, hidden like a kernel of wheat in the husks of the straw. So when Scripture was written, the authors of Scripture took a great deal from pagan cultures and practices, from pagan thinking and beliefs, and included these things in God's Word.

It is important to remember this, for here is one of the places in which Janssen connected his views of Scripture with common grace. While we shall come back to that later, it is interesting to note now already that general revelation was, in Janssen's thinking, a gift of God's common grace. And so common grace, operating in the pagan world, produced through general revelation a great deal of truth. This could, because it was the fruit of God's grace, be rightly included in Scripture.

But what interests us now is the fact that Janssen took a wrong view of inspiration, and the result was a denial of many of the basic truths of Scripture. He emphasized what is sometimes called "the human element" in Scripture; and he taught that Scripture was a sort of combined work of various human authors and of the Holy Spirit. But he was far more interested in the human element than he was in what the Holy Spirit did. And so he spent a great deal of time trying to explain this human element in Scripture. In explaining that human element, he introduced into Scripture all the rather silly and obviously wrong ideas which we mentioned above.

In fact, some of the conclusions to which he came flatly contradicted the Biblical narrative. You need only compare his ideas as we described them to realize how easily he could contradict what Scripture taught.

Just to give one example. Janssen said that Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees for various social and religious reasons. The Bible

says: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8).

This is the heresy to which a denial of Scripture's inspiration leads one.

The Cult of True Womanhood

by Brad Brower

In the middle to late 1300"s, a widely accepted view about women was the Cult of True Womanhood, This was a middle class ideology which put women on a pedestal away from the filth of the world. Women were also viewed as pure and uplifting creatures, who should stay home and take care of the home front.

Many of you might find this view quite appealing. Yet it put a lot of restrictions on women, including dress, Language, and sexual matters. It restricted them from jobs since motherhood was about the only acceptable job in this "cult".

In this "cult" women only had three acceptable roles. One was of course motherhood. Children needed someone pure and caring, and women were the right upbringers. Secondly, women were to bring purity to society. They were less dominated by cultural badness, and were not supposed to show sexuality. They could also help men from their carnal wills in this role. A third role for women was to bring piety to society. Women were viewed as more spiritual than men, because men had no time for church matters. In fact, women changed the view towards God at this time. Before, the view was of the harsh Puritan God, but during this time women smoothed this view over and made God more loving and understanding.

Does this picture of women in the Cult of True Womanhood seem better than today's picture? Should we push for a revival towards the cult's way, or should we stick with the equality of today's world? I think it is safe to say that both views are wrong.

The Cult of True Womanhood has many flaws. It limits women in their career choices, by allowing them only to be mothers. We all know that women make fine doctors, teachers, business people etc. It also makes men very non-religious, leaving church matters to women, This is obviously a wrong and corrupt idea.

Today's view of equality is also not flawless. Men and women are not equal, and as Christians we should not think so.

To find the proper place for women, one must only look to Scripture. There we can find the proper place that God has placed women, as He shows us this in

many places. This place, I feel, is not found in "today's women", nor in the women of the "Cult Of True Womanhood"

ADVENT

by Vivian Haney

"Are you ready for Christmas?" This question often conjures up visions of shopping for gifts, gift wrapping, decorating the house lavishly in red and green, gold and silver, baking all sorts of goodies, family get togethers, concerts, programs, parties and more. At the end one may be exhausted and resentful of the season. There is nothing wrong with any of the above but for the Christian there can be another way to prepare, to celebrate the advent of our Saviour, for a truer meaning of the season.

Romans 14 verses 5 and 6 states "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." There are many different ways that this time of the year can be celebrated. This passage states that celebration is not wrong but must be done unto the Lord. The purpose of this article is to share with you an alternate, or for some, an additional way to celebrate the Christmas season with the focus being on Christ.

This celebration is advent and it begins four Sundays before Christmas Day. This celebration involves devotions that cover in brief the biblical history from Genesis to Christ's birth and can conclude with our waiting for Christ's second coming. (Advent means coming) This celebration can also include the ritual of candles and evergreens, the Jesse tree and keeping the red and green and typical holiday flurry to a minimum.

The history of advent celebration is uncertain. The earliest reference to it in the references used, occurs in AD 380 at the Council of Sargossa. Church attendance and fasting were emphasized at this time.

What does it mean to celebrate? A celebration means to honor in a special way. The use of candles, evergreens, certain colors, or a Jesse tree help children relate to the seriousness of the celebration. Children are visual and kinesthetic learners. At the end of this article is one of many Scripture schedules that can be used. A few of the songs of advent are: "Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes", "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates", "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel", "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry", "The King of Glory".

Where is our sense of joy?, of celebration?, of deep peace?, awareness of God's love? Let it be in our worship of Him! Use the

wisdom of centuries of Christian heritage and tradition. Begin Christmas with advent. Focus on Christ's coming in the past, in the present, and in the future. Prepare for this coming. We, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ should celebrate and teach our children to celebrate the Christian festivals.

The following are some sources that can be used to prepare for advent. They are not without fault. Use your own judgment and creativity in preparing an advent celebration.

Our Family Shares Advent by Mary Ylvisaker Nilsen

The Christian Family Prepares For Christmas by Charles S. Mueller

Celebrate While We Wait by The Schroeder Family

The Jesse Tree by Raymond and Georgene Anderson

Family Nights by Terri and Mimi Reilly

Advent by Paul M. Lindberg

Family Celebration Around The Church Year by Mrs. Carol Myers

Family Worship Experiences by Carol Myers

Helpful Resources and Suggestions For Family Celebration by Carol Myers

Celebrations by Robert J. Myers (Hallmark)

The Banner November 28, December 5, 12, 19, 1983.

Scripture schedule for Advent 1990

FIRST WEEK

Sunday - In The Beginning - Genesis 1:1-2:4

Monday - A Trust Broken - Genesis 2:8-3:24

Tuesday - God Saves Noah - Genesis 6:1-22 - 7:1-24

Wednesday - A New Beginning - Genesis 8:1-22 - 9:1-29

Thursday - God Leads Abram - Genesis 12:1-20

Friday - God's Covenant- Genesis 18:11-33; 21:1-34

Saturday - Come to Egypt - Genesis 24-50

SECOND WEEK

Sunday - Moses - Exodus 1-2

Monday - Let My People Go! - Exodus 3-14

Tuesday - Ten Commandments - Exodus 20:1-17; 24:1-3

Wednesday - Deborah:Brave Judge - Judges 4

Thursday - Israel's Last Judge - I Samuel 1-7

Friday - Samuel Anoints Saul - I Samuel 8-16

Saturday - The Story of Ruth - Ruth

THIRD WEEK

Sunday - David Is Chosen - I Samuel 16

Monday - A Promise to David - II Samuel

Tuesday - David's Songs - Psalm 18:1-3; Psalm 132:10-12, 17

Wednesday - God Sends Prophets - I Kings

Thursday - Elijah The Prophet - I & II Kings

Friday - A Messenger of Hope - Micah

Saturday - Josiah & Jeremiah - II Chronicles 34-35; Jeremiah 7:1-15; 23:5-6; 31:31-34

FOURTH WEEK

Sunday - The King To Come - Isaiah 40:10-11; 42:6; 43:19; 52:13-14; 53:4, 12

Monday - Return to Jerusalem - Daniel 3; Ezra 1:1-3, 7; Zechariah 9:9-10

Tuesday - Christ's Birth - Luke 2

From the Pastor's Study
SINGING A NEW SONG

by Rev. J. A. Heys

It is not until we come to Genesis 31 that we find the word song or singing in Scripture. There Laban used the word song in his rebuke against Jacob. Jacob had fled away from Laban with his two wives,who were daughters of Laban. Laban had treated Jacob shamefully and unjustly, and that moved Jacob to flee and go back to Canaan. Laban was infuriated and caught up with Jacob, rebuked him for his flight and said to him, "Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?"

Quite plainly that is the first time that in Scripture we read of singing. And it is usually when one's heart is full of joy that one sings. When something hurts us bodily or psychologically we weep and have tears, not singing. And the last time that we in Scripture read of singing is in Revelation 15:3,4, where we read, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways. Who shall not fear Thee, 0 Lord, and glorify Thy name?" Singing then is glorifying God; and that should be our singing. Is it yours, Young People?

It is interesting, is it not, Young People, that we read of singing in the first and last books of the Bible? We do by the way, also read of it in the books in between, songs of praise to God. Psalm 96 begins with these words, "0 come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." Then in Psalm 96 we find the psalmist beginning with these words, "0 sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord,all the earth." A further explanation we find in Psalm 98, which begins thus: "0 sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvelous things: His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory."

Singing, however, is very often deceptive. Men sing because they like the music, not the words of truth mentioned in that song. In my childhood days we were taught in a Christian School to sing a Dutch Psalm. We did at a program; but we did not know what we were singing. Sometimes we hear men or women singing over the radio that which utters words of a foreign language. Often what is called a church Choir or Choral Society sings muffled words that are difficult, if not often impossi-

ple, for us to understand. Some of the world will sing to make money, and even sing the songs of the Messiah, wherein we have literal quotations from the Word of God. Some singing will produce clapping of hands because of the melody with its rich harmony; not because of the Word of God being sung. And we should not clap our hands and praise the singers. It is God Who should be praised and thanked for the truth sung, and for the gift and talents of singing. We must praise God from Whom all blessings flow. And He does not need or want clapping as praise to men. As we do sing, "All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom, Lord, has fashioned me; I give my Maker thankful praise, Whose wondrous works my soul amaze" Psalter number 383 and its first stanza. Be sure that if you clap, you are doing it to praise God and not men to whom He has given talents and abilities. And praise Him for the truth that was sung, not for the music, which the unbelievers also can enthusiastically use.

A very important question, therefore, also is about our worship services and singing during them. We are called to sing several times in our worship services. But so often, even though we do sing, the truth is not in our minds and hearts, and we "sing" the words without enthusiasm, without thought even of what we are singing. The lips hardly open. The singing is far from enthusiastic and we are glad when it is all over and we can go home. Our lips sing but not our hearts. And so often when we do sing enthusiastically, it is because of the music, not the words. Hymns that sing false doctrines, doctrinal untruths are for many favorite songs. And Satan uses men to produce songs that do express certain truths in order to get us to sing them with those elements of untruth. He is clever, Young People, and he is trying to get us to adopt these false doctrines because we enjoy singing and hearing the music of them.

There is an awesome truth which we ought to bear in mind, and ought to control all our singing. We should sing God's praises and sing unto HIM. Yes we may sing before other people, even as we may in public prayer lead others before God's throne of grace. God made us in His own image in order that we might be able to sing unto Him. He also caused us to be born again so that we would be able and willing to praise Him. He finds delight in the praise of man.

Animals and plants, the whole earthly creation, were made to serve us. All the needs of life for us are in these plants and animals as far as the food we need is concerned. Rain and sunshine are also necessary as well as the power of gravity that keeps us on this earth, and darkness that gives us refreshing sleep, all this gives us reason to praise God. But especially the gift of His own Son, and the cross with its reward are for His praise.

God Himself declares through Isaiah: "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." Isaiah 43:21. Get that, Young People. The profound, the deep purpose of man being brought into existence, and especially his being raised to be like Christ through His cross and Spirit, is that God may be praised. Surely then, having been saved from our guilt, having been saved through the death of the Son of

God for us to become new men in Christ, calls for His praise in song as well as in prayer and speech.

The serious question therefore is, "What do you young people listen to on your automobile's radio or the radio or television set at home? What songs appeal the most to you, and to what programs do you run for hearing singing?

We live in a very wicked world today. Even as this world has developed in sin with the amazing inventions of man, Satan has developed sin in the hearts and lives of mankind. And the serious question is how much we fall into them. We who are senior citizens can see so clearly how much more wicked the world is than when we were young people. It is awesome and sad to see how much the church world has fallen farther away from the truth and into allowing and manifesting itself as walking even as the children of the devil are walking.

What many churches sing today, what can be heard in their programs, and over their radio programs, reveals that we are rushing toward the day of the antichrist, and that God will soon come with His holy wrath upon the whole human race that denies Him, hates His church, and will not even let us buy or sell pretty soon, unless we have the mark of the beast. And we should be careful that we are not brought over to the false doctrines not only, but also the worldly singing. Some of the singing, of what calls itself church is today with banging and appeal to our flesh, rather than to our souls which have been born again.

Listen, Young People, to what Paul tells us —No, let us put it this way, Listen to what God says through the apostle Paul— in II Corinthians 6: 17 There we read, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you." Listen also to what our God said through Isaiah in chapter 52:11 namely, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.

"Touch no unclean thing" means that with your ears you will not let the false doctrines and the carnal music enter into your soul. Hear them delightfully with your ears and you are bringing them to touch your souls and to corrupt them. It must not be music that thrills your flesh. It must be music that makes your heart rejoice because God is being praised, as is our calling.

Remember that Jesus—to Whom we must listen—taught us to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." He concluded the prayer with the words "For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Let these truths be that which you sing and want to sing as well as pray.

And let us hear you young people sing in our church worship services. Not because we want to hear music and singing. This is written to you because our desire is to see and hear you spiritually enthusiastic, and see you spiritually strengthened. Your singing reveals a great deal to us; but it should also serve greatly for your spiritual well being.

Striking is it not? that because these Scriptural truths are remembered more quickly and taken with

us more surely when they are set to music, that David also said," I will sing of mercy and of judgment: unto Thee, O Lord will I sing." Psalm 101:1. We remember more passages from Holy Writ that are set to song than that which we simply read now and then.

Here is a beautiful example. Sing it from the heart:

Sing a new song to Jehovah For the wonders He has wrought; His right hand and arm most holy Triumph to His cause have brought. In His love and tender mercy He has made salvation known, In the sight of ev'ry nation He His righteousness hath shown. Psalter #261:1.

I WILL REJOICE

by Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.
Habakkuk 3:17,18

I will rejoice at this Thanksgiving time and say,
"To God the Lord, Who is my God eternally,
The blessed God of my salvation, I will pray
In perfect confidence that He will give to me
The eyes to see and heart to know that — come what may
Whate'er He sends I will receive contentedly."

Although the fig tree shall not bloom with fruits to eat
And we shall find no clustered grapes upon the vine,
The harvest of the barren fields will yield no meat,
The olive tree, that labored hard all year, shall pine
And die, and flocks and herds from field and stall retreat
In death in days of drought before Thy breath divine;

Although the wheels of industry grow slack and slow
And giant factories can give no work to men,
And when inflation's mighty power seems to grow,
When economic answers are beyond man's ken,
When funds are tight and usury has stopped their flow,
Still we rejoice in God and turn to Him again.

When social unrest seems to be a way of life
And men rebel and stop their work to gain their ends,
When greed is glory, bringing crime and hateful strife,
When man and wife are no more married, but are friends,
Or live in lustful unions, all their actions rife
With evil, we rejoice, to Thee our prayers ascend.

Oh Lord, we do not joy in all these dreadful things
As such: in famine and in drought in all the earth;
For though the fig tree all her blossoms never brings
And though the vines and olives fail because of dearth,
We joy because they come from Thee. Our spirit sings,
Our heart rejoices in Thy work, with thankful mirth.

We joy not in calamities of industry,
In sordid poverty and strife on ev'ry hand;
It grieves us sore, O Lord, to hear the prophecy
Of war, and fears of mighty men in ev'ry land.
Our only hope is that we know it comes from Thee
And then, with thanks, we take all things as from Thy hand.

Now we give thanks to Thee, O Lord, Who art the God
Of our salvation. Give us grace each day to say
That we rejoice, for we are saved through Jesus' blood!
No matter what may lie ahead, we'll always pray
That Thou wilt show us mercies great-and flood
Our hearts with thankfulness and joy along the way.