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 hath made salvation known,
In the sight of ev'ry nation
He His righteousness hath shown.

Psalter Number 261
based on Psalm 98.

BEACON LIGHTS

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Table of Contents

EDITORIAL

1 **Mind Your Business**
by Daniel Kleyn

What response do you give when asked your occupation?

WINDS OF DOCTRINE

3 **Erasmus of Rotterdam**
by Nathan Brummel

Find out who Erasmus was by tracing his life from his birth to his death

GUEST ARTICLE

7 **Supermarket of False Religions**
by Agatha Lubbers

A informative article about the Second Parliament of World Religions which was held in 1993.

BOOK REVIEW

10 **Song of Triumph**
Reviewed by Sharon Kleyn

ORDER OF SALVATION

11 **Sanctification: A Taste of Heaven**
by John Huizenga

LITTLE LIGHTS - Kid's Page

13 **Nothing**
by Connie Meyer

Doreen finds something good in a morning gone wrong

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Mind Your Business!

by John Huizenga

What do you do; what is your occupation? "I am a plumber." "I am an accountant." "I go to school and play with my friends." "I am a farmer, . . . a teacher, . . . a housewife, . . . a student, . . . a pastor." This is typically the way we respond to one who inquires into our occupation. We tell them what occupies most of our time and what we consider our business to do. But suppose upon asking someone who they were and what they did, you received this answer: "I am a Christian. God's purpose for me is to walk with Him in fellowship. Once I was lost and walking in darkness, but God found me and sent His Son to die and restore me to His fellowship. He even promised me eternal life. For this reason, I am very thankful and do all I can to please Him and work as His servant in every way I can to gather His people into His kingdom." Perhaps you would think, "well, of course, I am a Christian too, but it is not such a big deal, I don't need to explain that to everybody."

But being a Christian is a big deal, and we ought to let it be known that our most important business is that of being a Christian. No matter what our earthy occupation is, in all our work and play, we are first of all Christians. If we as Christians are minding our business, our first thoughts when asked who we are and what we do will be thoughts relating to our faith. These thoughts should be "on your mind," so to speak.

Our thoughts are very important. Even though we may be able to hide them from everyone else, they are very important because they define who we are (Prov. 23:7). In other words, you are what you think.

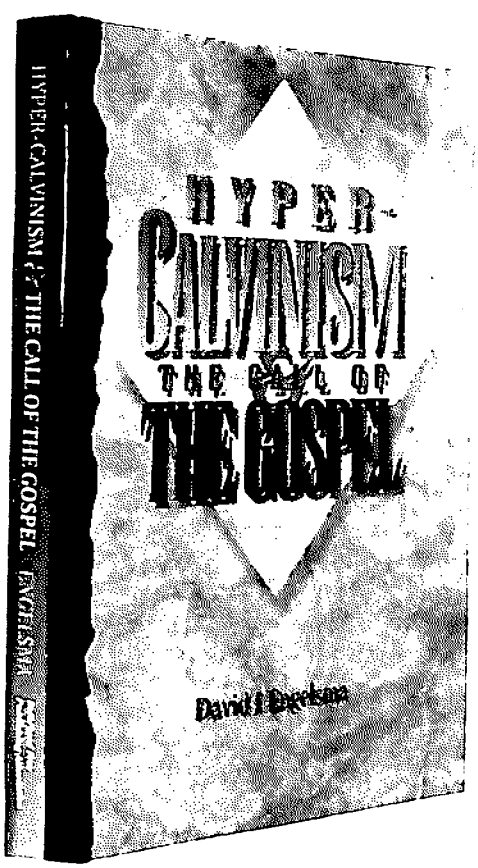
We noticed two responses. Clearly the second response comes from a spiritually minded person. The first response may also very well come from a spiritually minded person, but it suggests that there is a tendency towards worldly mindedness. We claim to be Christians. We are not our own but belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. Our business is the kingdom of God. We must, therefore, be spiritually minded "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

This is no easy task, not even for students in seminary, or ministers, or even the Apostle Paul. Paul expresses this difficulty with these words: "that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do." Peter had the same trouble; so much so that Jesus called him "Satan" when Peter insisted on thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom (Matt. 16:23).

We must expect the same frustrations. Spiritual struggle is a part of being spiritually minded. Each day we will wake up to the struggle in varying degrees, but we can rejoice knowing that our soul is alive and we can look forward to the day when sin will be banished from our life. As we struggle we must pray that in all the things we encounter, our minds will be turned by the Spirit towards God for guidance. We have assurance from God that these prayers will be answered and that God will give us spiritual minds. We read in the Belgic Confession that "the Holy Ghost kindleth in our hearts an upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ, with all his merits, appropriates him, and seeks nothing more besides him." (A. 22.)

Thankfulness to God is the fruit of this gift of salvation and faith, and is the manifestation

of spiritual mindedness. This thankfulness can be expressed in many ways and ought to be the first thing that shows up when someone wants to know something about you. The next time someone asks what you do, may your first thoughts be related to your faith. Practice giving a response that reveals these thoughts. Perhaps you could respond: "I thank the Lord that . . . ." or "God has given me the task of . . . ," or "My work for the kingdom is . . . ." May God come to mind in all your conversation. Here are some more examples: "I'll see you tomorrow, the Lord willing." "The Lord has blessed me with a good mark on my test . . . ." "May God be with you . . . ." In all things give thanks to God.



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Erasmus of Rotterdam

by Nathan Brummel

Erasmus of Rotterdam was one of the most brilliant thinkers of his time. Although in our day his books lie on bookshelves collecting dust, in his time he was internationally famous. It is questionable, says his biographer, Stefan Zweig, whether Erasmus was a man of first-class intelligence, but what we can be sure of is that he was a man of unbelievably wide knowledge who published books in almost every field of human thought.

Erasmus was probably born in the mid 1460's. His biographers do not have much material to go on about his earlier years. This is perhaps because Erasmus did not look back with fond memories on his younger years. He had a very difficult childhood. Erasmus began life as the illegitimate son of a Catholic priest. Tragically, both his father and mother died when he was at a young age. Some relation then took the young orphan into their household. But they probably did not care for the boy very much, and their sending him away to school at the young age of nine probably shows that they did not care particularly about him. At the least his adopted family probably wanted to raise him as cheaply as possible. The priests were always looking for bright young minds to educate, and apparently they thought that Erasmus had possibilities. About the only place where one could get educated in the fifteenth century was in schools that the Roman Catholic church operated, and that was where Erasmus' young and eager mind began to explore the world of literature.

The schooling and ascetic life that was forced on the students in the medieval ages goes beyond anything that we experience in P.R. schools. The students had to endure fasts, eat bad food, sleep in cold quarters, get beat by teachers, and wear uncomfortable monkish habits. In 1487 Erasmus went to the Augustinian monastery at Steyn, probably not for religious reasons, but because it had the best classical literature library in the country. Erasmus endured the ascetic life that was lived in the monastery until he was 26 years old, and then he managed to escape from his monastery, never to return.

The young man began to devote his life to learning. He read and read and traveled all over Europe gathering knowledge. He became the most famous of the group of intellectual leaders in Europe who became called humanists. The humanists were rediscovering knowledge that had been hid during the middle ages. They all wrote in

Latin, which that that time became the universal language of all scientists throughout Europe. Thinkers all over Europe could put their minds together to solve problems in the various disciplines. The humanists would have looked a little peculiar to us since most of them dressed up in black robes and only spoke in cultured Latin. They felt it beneath them to speak in the vernacular. Their separateness from the general population probably was the reason why they were not as influential as they might have been.

Luther was radical and wanted to split up the church. Erasmus on the other hand wanted the church to stay together because he knew that it would be for the peace of Europe for them to stay together - it would avoid religious wars. But Erasmus also had a vision of a Europe where disagreements were put aside and where all the different countries and ethnic groups truly understood the nature of Christianity and the wrong of them fighting against each other.

Erasmus began publishing books, which during his lifetime would turn into hundreds of volumes, but his first step into the international scene did not come with a scholarly writing, rather it came from a "fun" book that he published. He first became famous when he edited a book of famous quotes from the original Latin. This book became popular because the cultured people all needed to have neat Latin quotes in their letters to each other. Remember this was a time before telephones, and letter writing was truly an art in this time.

The book that really made him famous was the only one that is still widely read in the 20th century, called In Praise of Folly. This book was written as a satirical attack on the Roman Catholic Church, and more specifically on the priests and the pope. Erasmus had visited Rome and seen the terrible state of the church there. Erasmus saw the spiritual weakness of the leaders in the church, realizing that the pope was more interested in warfare and gaining of territory than in spiritual things. The bishops and priests were immoral and more interested in their financial welfare than in the spiritual aspect of religion.

In this book he used a woman named 'Folly' who brags about how she is the reason why human cultures can function. She claims that it is because of the evil traits in humans that society can continue to function. Without these traits all governments would fall, the poor would rebel against their rich abusers, and among other things the priests would go hungry. By using a woman named 'Folly' to satirically attack the Church, Erasmus got the book by the censors, who in his time were very strict about what got published and what did not. He could always say that the positions of 'Folly' were not his own, and that they were ridiculous and that no one would hold them.

This book was one of the precursors of the Reformation. Erasmus wrote other books which were also critical of the established Church. He thought that the Catholic church had lost the focus of what true Christianity should be like. There was a love/hate relationship between Martin Luther, another staunch critic of the Church, and Erasmus, because they both wanted reform in the church, but they wanted to do different things and in different ways.

Luther was radical and wanted to split up the church. Erasmus on the other hand wanted the church to stay together because he knew that it would be for the peace of Europe for them to stay together - it would avoid religious wars. But Erasmus also had a vision of a Europe where disagreements were put aside and where all the different countries and ethnic groups truly understood the nature of Christianity and the wrong of them fighting against each other. He was a pacifist before pacifism was popular. He was anti-war while Europe disrupted into terrible religious conflicts.

The question comes up, what can we learn from Erasmus? One of the most important things that we can learn from him is that rational argumentation and disputation must take place in a Christian manner. Erasmus was a steady and rational mind in a time of brute force and radical disputation. One example of this is the dispute that took place between him and Martin Luther about the nature of human freedom.

As the Lutheran Reformation began, Erasmus tried to keep both sides from becoming too radical. He had enough respect and eminence that both sides of the Reformation wanted and tried to get his support for their side. In fact at various points in his life he could have greatly impeded the Reformation. The first time would have been when the elector Frederick, the protector of Martin Luther, asked Erasmus' position on Luther's doctrine. This was before the diet of Worms and Frederick was not yet convinced of Luther's doctrines. Erasmus carried enough weight that if he had gone against Luther as a heretic (and he might have sensed by this time that Luther was teaching doctrines heretical to the orthodox faith) then Frederick might not have been moved to protect Luther, and this would have probably been Luther's downfall. But Erasmus would not respond in a straightforward way to Frederick.

He also did not show up at the diet of Worms where his viewpoint could have possibly shifted the way that things happened. The problem was that Erasmus was a chicken. He simply was afraid of his influence. He felt that the issues were so important and dangerous that he did not want to get involved.

Later at the Augsberg disputations, when Melanchton, as leader of the Lutheran delegation was discussing reunification with the Roman Catholic Church, Erasmus again did not show his face. The Augsberg conference was very important in that it made the separation between the Lutherans and Catholics permanent. Both sides were very civil towards each other and were trying to play down the differences in order to possibly work towards compromise. Once again, if Erasmus might have been there, his influence might have changed matters.

In his most famous disputation with Luther, Erasmus as always tried to argue in a fair and unemotional way. But Luther reacted against Erasmus in strong words and terrible language, as only Luther could do. He called Erasmus every bad word. In fact, a large portion of Erasmus' reply has to do with hurt feelings and his unhappiness with Luther's vehement attack on him. Erasmus spent his life trying to get people to be rational and not to use ad hominem attacks (attacks on the person, rather than on his ideas) or bigotism in their argumentation. Remember that he grew up in the Roman Catholic Church around priests who each thought that they knew truth and were bigoted, unscholarly, and loudmouthed in their critique of anybody who disagreed with them. Erasmus wanted people to think things through clearly. And he correctly realized that people did not rationally resolve issues when they argued in these evil ways.

Erasmus emphasized that as Christians we should argue respectfully with each other. We must respect the persons with whom we disagree. This is not only Christian, but it is also an important apologetical tool. It is self-evident that a person who is level-headed and argues fairly is going to bring about people's respect of him. On the other hand if someone is loud-noised, obnoxious, and irrational, then they will probably turn off the audience. Christ Jesus calls us to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. And this is the example that Erasmus has left not only for scholars, but for all Christians who disagree with each other. Christians must argue in love.

Erasmus is famous for his defense of the Arminian or libertarian view of freedom. Of course he lived before Jacobus Arminius ever came along, but he was defending the theology of free-will over against orthodox Augustinian (later called Calvinism) thought.

Erasmus is famous for his defense of the Arminian or libertarian view of freedom. Of course he lived before Jacobus Arminius ever came along, but he was defending the theology of free-will over against orthodox Augustinian (later called Calvinism) thought.

There had always been various traditions within the Roman Catholic Church that differed on the doctrines of grace. There was on the one hand the Augustinian tradition that was furthered and defended by the greatest mind that Roman Catholicism produced - Thomas Aquinas. The Dominican order which was started by Aquinas defended and promoted this view at Erasmus' time. But there was another tradition that followed some sort of semi-Pelagianism and claimed that God was not sovereign in such a way that He determined the free choices of humans. Erasmus accepted this viewpoint, albeit rather cautiously. Erasmus was convinced by the argument that

Augustinian determinism could only mean that there was no human responsibility and that everything happened by fate. This objection to Augustinian theology has never been answered sufficiently by any theologian to stop this perennial objection from always being brought up in discussions between Calvinists and Arminians.

The controversy between Luther and Erasmus about human freedom was slow in coming. This was precisely because Erasmus wanted to stay out of controversy. He did not want to come down strongly on either side of the Reformation. He was at heart a chicken and even openly admitted this. He realized that if he came out on either side of the Reformation he would be persecuted. If he lived in a Protestant city, then he would be kicked out if he argued against Lutheranism, and he wanted a retirement that was quiet and peaceful where he could work on publishing books. He was now coming to the end of publishing his volumes on the ancient church fathers, and this was the quiet work that delighted him.

But Luther forced his hand by attacking him and drawing a response out of him. Erasmus replied to Luther in On the Freedom of the Will. In this discourse he argues extensively for the biblical support of his position. The argument is convincing only if the reader is convinced that necessity and human freedom (whatever that might involve) cannot co-exist. Erasmus quotes passages which talk about the need for believers to choose to turn from sin or others that speak of the need to choose righteousness. His argument is that these passages must imply that the will is free in the libertarian sense because if the choices were not free in this sense, then the choices were deterministically caused and there can be no real freedom or responsibility.

Luther maintained that the will of a reprobate person is under bondage to sin and necessarily can only choose sin. Luther taught that either man was like a beast that either Satan or God rode. If Satan rode the beast then the person could only choose evil. But if God rode the person, then he could choose good. Luther believed that God predestines everything that occurs and that humans are not the first cause of their choices. He also used the argument that if God has perfect foreknowledge of what free creatures will choose in the future, then those choices will necessarily occur, because otherwise God's foreknowledge would have been false.

Erasmus thought that there could be no responsibility if humans were really deterministically caused by God to make choices. He thought that if there was necessity attached to free choices, then they cannot really be free choices, instead they are determined choices, and choices that the agent cannot be responsible for. Therefore, one way to refute Erasmus' argumentation is to come up with a plausible explanation of how determinism is compatible with human responsibility. And this is what Calvinism apologists have tried to do throughout the centuries.

Luther replied to Erasmus in On the Bondage of the Will. This book caused a triumph in the Protestant camp of Augustinian thought over against Erasmian free-will. This book has remained a classic critique of Pelagian/Arminian theology. Erasmus' fame slowly declined after his controversy with Luther. He no longer had the respect of the intelligentsia and spent some few unhappy years until his death at the age of 70. He saw his world going crazy as terrible persecutions and wars took place all over Europe. He who had argued for pacifism, peace, and brotherhood, saw his theories and hopes give way before the madness and bigotry of the Roman Catholic countries against the Protestant and the Protestants against the Anabaptists. He who had so delighted in learning and complex argumentation saw that humanism had failed to be successful. For there was no time for the pleasantries of the study of literature and the sciences in the face of the terrible struggles for existence that were going on in Europe. So Erasmus died in his old age, unhappy, not having achieved his most important goals.

Nathan Brummel is going to be a first year seminary student. He attends Grandville Prot. Ref. Church.

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Supermarket of False Religions

by Agatha Lubbers

The Second Parliament of World Religion convened in the robust city of Chicago, Illinois, August 28-September 5, 1993, the centennial year of the First Parliament of World Religions. The 1893 meeting of the World Parliament of Religions convened in Chicago at the same time as the Columbian Exposition (World's Fair in Chicago).

James Stephens, director of the Sonrise Center for Buddhist studies in Sierra Madre, California, stated that "the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago was the event that was most responsible for introducing Buddhism and other non-Christian religions into the United States." [cf. National & International Religion Report, Sept. 6, 1993,-hereafter NIRR] Stephens opined that a study of Buddhist documents reveals that Eastern philosophies and even the architecture accompanying the Columbian Exposition profoundly affected many who attended the Exposition. David Neff writing in Christianity Today, Sept. 13, 1993, described the 1893 Parliament as "a landmark in interfaith dialogue, and in the view of many, the first-wave of invasions on these shores by Eastern mystical religions."

John Zipperer describes the 1893 gathering as follows: "The first parliament featured representatives of 41 denominations and religious traditions gathering at Chicago's World's Fair in 1893. That meeting introduced Victorian-era America to Eastern religions and helped establish Roman Catholicism and Judaism as important American religious movements." (Christianity Today, October 4, 1993)

Noteworthy is the fact that although the 1893 Convention was largely a Protestant operation, it was opposed by evangelist Dwight L. Moody and his followers.

> Zipperer also indicates that this year's gathering was dominated less by any one group and seemed to concentrate more on a search for harmony. The search for truth took a back seat to a quest for interreligous peace.

The editors of the NIRR report that "Paul Carus, owner of Open Court Publishers became so enamored with Buddhist teachings at the 1893

Parliament that he wrote The Gospel According to Buddha." It is reported that religious scholars assert that this book was a major factor that contributed to the spread of Buddhist philosophy in America. Carus also funded the writings of D.T. Suzuki, a famous Zen scholar, to help propogate Buddhism in America.

• • • • • •

Six thousand persons from 150 divergent world religions converged on Chicago for the 1993 convocation. John Zipperer writes that "Evangelicals were divided over whether to embrace such interfaith gatherings or to condemn interreligious dialogue outside of mission work." (cf. Christianity Today, Oct. 4, 1993.) Zipperer also indicates that this year's gathering was dominated less by any one group and seemed to concentrate more on a search for harmony. The search for truth took a back seat to a quest for interreligous peace.

I believe it is proof that the Gnostic Empire has never really died. All men in the world of any religious stripe can coexistence and work together except the man who is truly committed to the cause of Jesus Christ. Christ said concerning himself that he was a "rock of offence" and the "stone of stumbling."

The agenda of 1993 Parliament of World's Religions upset some evangelicals. Hoping to bridge gaps between faiths, the parliament's council released a nine-page manifesto, "A Global Ethic," calling for a consensus on essential ethical principles. The difficulty of formulating a statement acceptable to members of the group called COVENANT OF THE GODDESS as well as to lifelong BAPTISTS resulted in a document that calls for more peace and less intolerance. The document contains vague terms that avoid such examples as abortion and euthanasia, which might undercut support.

Peter Jones, professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, in Escondido California said sessions by politicians and technocrats made it clear that the pre-programmed agenda of the organizers was "to create liberal-humanistic unity".

The September 20, 1993, NIRR reported that one of the prime demonstrations was the approval of THE DECLARATION OF GLOBAL ETHIC, which outlined core values and beliefs common to many faiths.

Peter Jones indicated that "facilitators were primed to ensure that nothing, including substantive theological issues, would stop the parliament from realizing its unstated goal: a mystical experience of pluralism." Jones affirmed that the "apostle Paul would doubtless have called the pagan interfaith celebrations fellowship with demons."

The focus of the parliament was not on theology but was largely on the environment. Jones stated, "That's the new source of revelation - science and the earth."

Traditional Christianity and Christian missions were implicitly and sometimes explicitly criticized by the parliament's delegates. David Steindl-Rast noted that "he could not use Scriptures mentioning Jesus or God because use of those words would offend some faiths and cause disunity."

Peter Jones, when quoted in Christianity Today (Oct. 4, 1993), noted the recurrent complaints about abuses perpetrated by Christians during the last 2000 years. He said, "The only thing that's not mentioned about Christianity so far is Jesus Christ."

We ought to be struck by the significance of this omission. The identity of Jesus Christ is the only issue of real significance that separates the Christian religion from all other religions.

Christianity Today (Oct. 4, 1993) reported that an agreement against proselytizing at the parliament was not enforced but that some evangelical Christians were uncomfortable with a conference in which Christian and nonchristian religious leaders would come together to find common ground and to confirm each other.

Ruth Tucker of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, said "Something like that in some respects almost flies in the face of biblical Christianity, which is a missionary, evangelistic religion. Typically at a gathering like this, they're not really welcoming people who would affirm a strong missionary zeal."

This did not deter Charles Colson. In his September 2 speech he said that Jesus Christ is the living God, and is the way, the truth and the life. Colson also spoke critically of the four illusory horsemen of the present apocalypse, i.e., 1/ that man is innately good, 2/ that utopia is around the

corner, 3/ that truth is relative, 4/ that man is autonomous.

NIRR (Sept. 20, 1993) quoting Peter Jones said that "the Parliament of the World's Religions was proof that the Gnostic Empire will strike back."

I believe it is proof that the Gnostic Empire has never really died. All men in the world of any religious stripe can coexistence and work together except the man who is truly committed to the cause of Jesus Christ. Christ said concerning himself that he was a "rock of offence" and the "stone of stumbling."

Writing in his book THE GNOSTIC EMPIRE STRIKES BACK Peter Jones correctly analyzes the situation, "Only one religious option will not be allowed to live life in peace, namely, biblical Christianity." (p.4).

Thus the 1993 Parliament of World Religions, an assembly of demons and a convocation of idolators was not an appropriate place for orthodox Protestants because it was a conference that included Roman Catholics, native Americans, self-described neopagans, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists.

We live in a time of strange events. We ought to be able see these as the signs of Christ's coming. Now more than ever we should be able to comprehend and understand the interpretation of these events by the Scriptures. Chapter 17 in the book of Revelation speaks of the woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names. This woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and was bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, and in her hand she held a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication. On her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations." And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

The false church is pictured by the harlot who revels in her abominations and impurities. It is this false church and the members of the false church that make allegiance with the anti-christian religions of this world. Against this believers in Christ must stand.

We who live in the last years of the Twentieth Century are in the same situation as Paul was when he visited Mars Hill and was surrounded by a host of unfamiliar and doubtless false gods. In these wicked days marking the end of the Twentieth Century members of church need to be spiritually discerning.

It is this false church and the members of the false church that make allegiance with the anti-christian religions of this world. Against this believers in Christ must stand.

The church needs discerning and dedicated leaders who will say with Paul, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8-9)."

Paul's exhortation to the church is as true now as it was many years ago, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:10-11.

Agatha Lubbers is the administrator at Covenant Christian High School. She is a member of First Prot. Ref. Church.

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Song of Triumph

Reviewed by

Sharon Kleyn

Eleanor Veldman Grotenhuis
Song of Triumph
Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992
123 pps. Paper

Death! How do we as Christians deal with this great enemy? Song of Triumph was written by a mother who lost a 27 year old son who was a talented and gifted musician on whom his family had set many hopes.

The author brings the grieving person to his only hope and comfort, his faith in a sovereign Lord, Who is all wise and does all things for our good. Grounded in this strong theological basis, the author, as one who has personally experienced grief, is also practical in dealing with the feelings of grieving ones: shock, inability to concentrate and perform day to day duties, questioning, bitterness and anger. An example of her practicality is seen in that she shows that in a close family or marriage there has to be room made for how each person deals differently with his grief. She does this by showing that she and her husband both reacted differently and had different needs at the time of their son's death.

The chapters are short and each ends with a Scriptural text to give guidance and comfort. This chapter format is very suitable. Those who are dealing with grief can read a chapter a day and the main thought of the chapter and the verse at the end can be easily recalled throughout the day and can, in this way, bring comfort.

The book is also valuable, however, for those who can and must comfort the grieving. In Chapter 27 entitled "Begging for Comfort" the author gives a list of suggestions to those who come in contact with the grieving. A sample of these are: "5) Don't ask us how we are doing and go on talking about something else before we can answer." and "12) Do call us and assure us of your thoughts and prayers."

So, I recommend the book for everyone. For all of us at some time in our lives will either personally experience grief or encounter it when someone else has lost a loved one. Those who purchase and read this book will benefit spiritually from it.

Sanctification: A Taste of Heaven

by John Huizenga

"And Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:24). "And Noah walked with God" (6:9). David's heart was "perfect with the LORD his God" (1 Kings 1:14, 9:4). Walking with God with a perfect heart; what a beautiful picture. Our hearts are glad when we read of men who walked with God and kings who did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. As we read the history of Israel in the Scriptures, it is so plain that the people enjoyed peace and prosperity when they and their king walked with God, and were miserable when they turned away from God. Sometimes we wonder why the Children of Israel could not see this obvious pattern and continue to walk in obedience to God. But we must understand that a sanctified life is a sovereign work of God in the hearts of men and is not something that man of himself decides to do in order to attain blessings from God. Sanctification is a difficult, life long process that grows out from the seed of regeneration and is based on justification in Christ. It is that stage in the order of salvation in which we begin to bear spiritual fruit and have a small taste of that heavenly glory which God prepares for us.

You will recall that regeneration is that first implanting of the new life of Christ in the heart, that the Holy Spirit calls the regenerated sinner into that new life, that God ingrafts him through faith into Christ, the only source of life, and that justification is that gracious act of God whereby He graciously imputes the perfect righteousness of God in Christ to the elect sinner. After these things are mightily worked by God in our hearts, God graciously, gently, continually and persistently turns our hearts away from sin so that our hearts are changed and we desire to obey God and walk with Him in the way of obedience. God draws us into a relationship of friendship and we desire to please Him by obeying His will. God pours His love into our hearts and we are then able to love our neighbor and do works that are pleasing to God (1 John 5:2-3; 1 Cor. 13; Canons of Dordt 3/4 A. 11 &16). What a marvelous thing: walking in friendship with the Sovereign God of the universe. It brings that peace that passes all understanding.

But this walk is not easy. We are still sinful by nature and our new man in Christ continually battles against the old man of sin (Col. 3:5; Gal. 5:16-22; Rom. 8:12-13, 7:14-23). We will never be able to walk with God perfectly on this earth. We repeatedly fall into sin and displease our God (I John 1:8). But God is faithful and will finish that work which He has begun in us. We need not despair.

God is sovereign in our salvation, but this does not mean that we stand passively with no action on our part. God commands us to work out our own salvation and present our bodies as living sacrifices (Phil. 2:12; Rom. 12:1-2). We walk with God. He does not push us in a baby buggy. Our walk with God requires daily conversion (see the Heidelberg Catechism LD 44; Canons V 1,2,4; Belgic Conf. A. 24). We must also listen to God when He speaks to us in His Word and the preaching, and we must speak to Him in our prayers: praising Him, confessing our sins, and asking for our daily needs.

There have been and always seem to be those who do not like the way God walks with His Children. They think that man should have some credit for this blessed walk with God. Some imagine that God waits for man to begin the walk and

then God helps when man falters. But they ignore the sovereign work of God in regeneration, faith, and justification, and then say that the fruits of sanctification come from man himself. This idea is called "Pelagianism." It is unbiblical and leaves us hopeless and full of despair.

Others imagine that the children of God are never willing to walk with God and God has to drag them along. This idea is called "antinomianism." But the child of God knows this is not true because he desires to walk with God and he experiences the struggle within him between the old man of sin and the new man in Christ. God works in our hearts so that we willingly and freely walk with Him, yet there are times when we would like to go our own way and God chastises us and makes us see our foolishness.

Sometimes we are brought very low, but God is faithful, and when we pray for help, God will forgive us, cleanse us, and restore us to His side (I John 1:9). As we walk with God and grow in love and knowledge of Him, we receive a taste of that heavenly glory for which God is preparing us, and long for the time when we can walk with Him perfectly. Praise God for that sovereign work of salvation in our rebellious hearts.

John Huizenga is going to be a 2nd year seminary student. He attends Southeast Prot. Ref. Church.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Steven Lotterman (Maria Kleyn) who were joined in marriage on June 11, 1994 in Burnie, Tasmania, Australia. Steve is a son of Don and Berdina Lotterman of the Hope PRC, Grand Rapids, Maria is a daughter of Nick and Ina Kleyn of the Burnie Congregation of the EPC, in Australia.

The marriage of Kelvin Ten Broeke and Lisa Boer took place on May 27, 1994 at Faith Prot. Ref. Church, Jenison, MI. The parents are Duane and Harriet Ten Broeke and Peter and Eunice Boer; both of Borculo, MI.

Congratulations!

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"LITTLE LIGHTS"

. . . let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

"Nothing"

As Doreen awoke, she looked at the rain hitting her bedroom window and sighed. It seemed as though nothing was going well for her lately. Her grandfather was sick, she couldn't go to summer camp, and her best friend was gone on vacation for two whole weeks. Now the rain would cancel today's picnic plans too. Slowly, she got out of bed

"Good Morning", said her mother cheerfully as Doreen came into the kitchen.

"What's good about it?" Doreen thought as she sat down.

Mother began to hum as she set the table, when suddenly the phone rang.

"This is an odd time to call," her mother said as she hurried to answer it.

"Hello? . . . Yes . . . Oh no! No, we're all up. We'll be right over. Bye.

"Grandpa is worse. We have to go to him right away. Quick grab your coat, put on your shoes, and I'll call Dad."

Soon the whole family was on their way to Grandpa's house. Doreen was so worried about him. She thought to herself, "It definitely is not a good morning."

As they came into the room where their grandfather was resting, Doreen heard the words of their pastor who had arrived earlier. He was reading to Grandpa from the Bible, and telling him that nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God.

Doreen gulped and felt her eyes starting to fill with tears. Nothing? Not even death? Doreen saw her grandpa, who was so sick, nod in agreement with what the pastor had said.

Mother put her arm around Doreen, and Doreen thought about those words. Everything seemed to be going wrong, yet she knew that God loved her, and her grandpa. How could she complain about anything again, knowing that not even those things can separate us from God's love?

Maybe it was a good morning after all.

P	L	O	V	E	H	I	A	S	P
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A	N	T	O	N	E	H	P	T	O
E	F	I	L	G	A	D	F	E	G
D	P	E	R	S	U	A	D	E	D
T	S	N	A	R	V	N	O	S	T

angels
creature
death
depth
height
life
love
neither
persuaded
power
separate

Do you know, or can you find the 2 verses in the Bible that the pastor in the story was reading? All of the words in the puzzle are taken from those verses too.
Answer: _____

(Hint: A concordance will help you find the answer!)

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