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# Sharing the Burden

by John Huizenga



Every reader of these words has a part in the training of covenant children. You do not need to be married. You do not need to have children of your own. You don't need to be a teacher. You are a member of the body of Christ, and the body of Christ works together to rear the next generation in the fear of the Lord. Some have a greater part in the training of covenant children than others, but we all have some part.

The parents who bring forth children of the covenant must be at the heart of raising their children. Godly parents are present at all times to care for the needs of the child. They hold them, comfort them, and keep them from danger. Above all, they work toward bringing that child to a full and living understanding of God and the salvation by which He gathers His people into covenant friendship with Himself. Godly parents bathe their children in God's Word. The children hear it read at every meal and are taught to block out the thoughts and busy activity of daily life in order to enter into fellowship with God in prayer. Parents must teach their children what God has said to His people in His Word, demonstrate a walk of faith and righteousness, and manifest the love of God.

If children are left to wander in a home where God is remote, cold, and abstract, then the child will shiver and be spiritually cold. If children are left to find food for their soul on their own, they will grow gaunt and scavenge for food in the gutters of society. The cravings of their sinful nature will draw them to the rotting carcasses of spiritually dead men who gorge on material wealth, power, and self-glory. They will soon despise the scraps of sound spiritual food which are tossed now and then from their parents. Parents must keep the table of God's fellowship piled high with hot nourishing food.

Parents are at the heart of child rearing, but just as the physical heart in a body needs the rest of the body to function; parents need the rest of the body of Christ, not an ungodly neighbor or daycare center. Do not place your children in the red hot arms of Molech to be consumed by ungodly instruction and examples (Lev. 20:1-4). Children need the parents first of all, and when help is needed, it must come from other members of the body of Christ. Those of us who are not parents taking care of young children must offer our help and be willing to help.

The church itself is called to bring the Word of God in the preaching and catechism. The elders and deacons also are given to the church to help parents, answering questions and bringing God's word. Parents who are unable to make ends meet financially, must not abandon the children sending the mother out to work. Parents must come to the deacons for help and they will receive spiritual blessings upon the family and children that are lost when the mother works. Children and the needs of their parents must never be overlooked by the church institute.

Other family members are also called to help the parents. Grandma and Grandpa ought to relieve the parents of their work now and then if possible. Older brothers and sisters must be willing to help with the work and be godly examples to the younger. They must be willing to talk about their struggles and weaknesses with the family. They must demonstrate a hunger and thirst for God's Word by preparing well for catechism and young peoples society. They must show the younger members what it means to flee temptation and suffer ridicule for Christ's sake.

Young people, and especially those who have made confession of faith, you have a calling to act as a brother or sister to the younger members of the church. View yourself as a role model for the younger

instead of one who needs to prove yourself to your peers. You will not find true respect in “daring” explorations of sin. Lasting and true respect from your peers will come by standing firm in obedience to God’s Word. Your godly leadership will also be a powerful influence upon the little ones of the congregation.

Godly teachers functioning as the extension of the home devote their lives to the children of the covenant. They turn down the higher salaries offered in public schools in order to press their gifts into the service of covenant parents. They recognize the importance of children in the church. The concept of God saving His people in the line of continued generations is in the foreground of their minds. They pray that they may see the blessing of God upon their labors as they watch spiritually mature young men and women take up the work of God’s kingdom in the church. God gives to the children many gifts of understanding and talents which the teacher desires to bring to fullest development that they might be profitable servants of God.

As with parents, the teachers need full support from the whole church. The importance of a teacher’s position must be emphasized. The world knows the value of education and seeks to attract good teachers with good wages. The world sends its teachers through rigorous training to equip them with the best tools available for teaching children. They labor hard to educate the children of a perishing world; how much more then ought we to labor to rear children of the covenant!

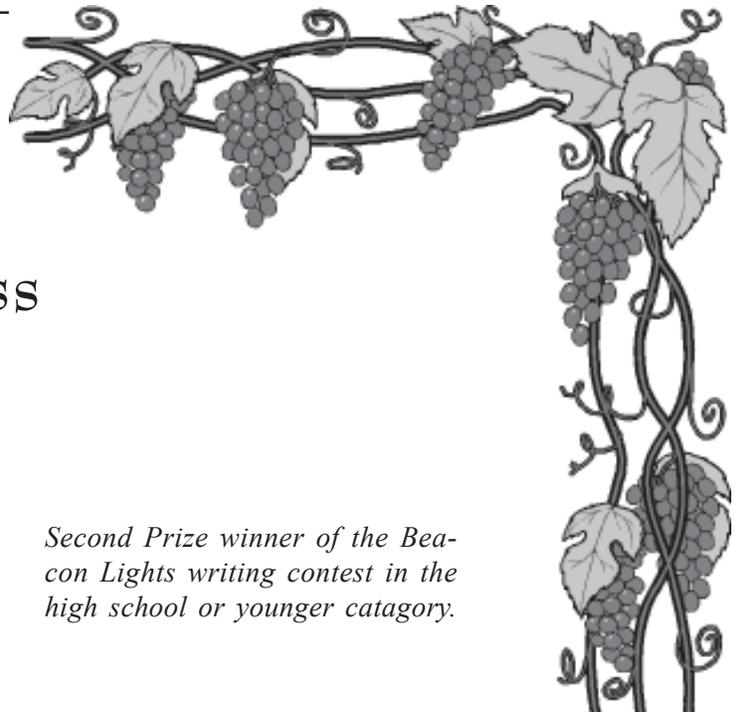
The people of the church must encourage young people to consider the calling of teacher. They must encourage young men to consider teaching as a profession and life long career. They must be willing to equip teachers with the best teaching tools available and provide for their needs as they begin their work with the children. When the children are in school, everyone in the church ought to take an interest in what goes on in the school. Single adults may consider visiting the school to see if there is any way to help. If that is not possible, just call a teacher or administrator to offer your help. Above all, those who rear covenant youth must be remembered in prayer. Everyone ought to pray for the parents and teachers that they may have wisdom to train up the children in the fear of the Lord. ❖

Fruitful Branches

# To Be Brought Forth From Darkness

by Mindy Steenholdt

**A**lthough the afternoon sunshine rested its rays upon the back of a young man as he sat outside on his front steps, he simply cringed and remained determined to keep a scowl on his face. When the soft breeze ruffled through his hair, he would lift his hand and force it back down. Nothing seemed to be able to change the attitude of this bitter young man.



*Second Prize winner of the Beacon Lights writing contest in the high school or younger category.*

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It seemed to Philip that there was no one in the world who had a life as horrible as his own. Consumed with self-pity, he had come to the point where he asked his loved ones to just leave him alone. Sure he would have his good days, but whenever he thought everything was going o.k., it would all blow up in his face. Bills, health concerns, depression, all these things overwhelmed him and always put him on edge. How would his life ever get back on track? He hadn't realized how hard it was really going to be.

Philip had grown up in church. As a child he would sing his little heart out during the congregational singing, and he even begged to be in the church choir when he was only 10 years old. At the age of 18, he made confession of faith and became a Sunday School teacher. His parents were so grateful to the Lord for his unfailing guidance in their son's life as well as their own.

The college years approached, and Philip decided to go to a college nearby but rent a room in a large house where other college kids were living. He wanted to experience life with all its responsibilities and no parents watching his every move. Philip failed to realize how great temptation becomes when freedom is at hand. He was going to be tried and tested like he'd never been before.

Well, around the time of the winter semester of his Freshman year, Philip began to hang out with his roommates. They were all a year or two older than Philip and were always trying to sway him in the wrong direction. Philip knew better, but he finally gave in and said he wouldn't mind going to a party with them to see what all the hype was about.

At first everything seemed cool; the lights were dim and people were standing throughout the house talking and eating. As they moved through other rooms of the house, the sights became more strange and amiss. Philip's heart began to beat faster and faster as they went from one area to another. The first room was full of people moving to loud, almost unbearable music; the second room had a few kegs of beer on a table and everyone around them was either laughing hysterically, sleeping on the floor, or slurring as they talked to themselves or someone nearby; the last room was dark, only candles lit up the area. In the center of the room there was a circle of people, each of them had a glass plate and razor blade in front of them, a few rolling papers and some weedy-looking plant, or little glass containers with some sort of liquid in them. The aroma in the room was so sweet it almost took Philip's breath away. He'd never

seen anything like this before. Everything was quiet until someone stormed out of the closet screaming and yelling at someone or something that wasn't even there. One of Philip's roommates saw the look of confusion and fear on his face, so he explained, "Oh, don't worry about him. He's just having a trip. It's really weird what some of this stuff can do to you. It really plays on your mind, but at the same time it's really cool because it helps you escape the realities of life for a little."

"Hey, come on, guys! Have a seat and join us—we're just getting started."

It wasn't long and Philip and the guys were on the floor with the others. Philip's "best friend" sat beside him and showed him how it was done.

Throughout the rest of his college career, Philip attended the same kind of parties every weekend and rarely made visits home. His parents were beginning to worry about him; even when they did see him, he was always quite distant, very moody, and extremely tired. They would confront him about his lack of devotion to church and the family, but he would simply shrug them off and head back to his roommates.

Lost amidst the wickedness and corruption of this sinful world, Philip only got himself deeper and deeper into the darkness. It wasn't until he was at the very edge of the cliff, that he finally realized how close he was to falling over and under. Philip was at a party one Saturday night with his friends. They were all participating in the usual drug-related activities. Philip was sitting beside his best friend, who was participating a little more than usual. Philip didn't say anything, but he was starting to get a little scared when everyone else stopped and his friend kept going. That night, Philip and his friend got in the car and headed home. His roommate insisted on driving because he didn't want anyone's hands on his shiny, new Camaro but his own.

Philip lost his best friend that night. He turned in front of a car going over 50 mph, and his side of the car was crushed, and he died almost instantly. Philip spent the next few days in the hospital recovering from minor injuries, but the pain in his heart wasn't going to heal very easily. He was placed in rehab and when he was released, he thought his life would be great. He only had one semester of college left and after that he could pursue a career. Philip knew he had to move on and leave his past behind him. He knew the memories would always remain vivid in his mind, but he learned to lean on the Lord in his times of heartache and trouble. He began to study the Scriptures again and attend church regu-

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larly. He had wasted 3 years of his life. The Lord had touched his heart. Philip knew that through God-given strength, he would make it.

The sun began to set in the distance. Philip stood up and walked inside the front door of his home. He sat at the kitchen table and began to read the 23rd Psalm from the Bible:

*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside still waters, he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

It wasn't going to be easy living with the consequences of his youth, but Philip knew he was going to have to face the responsibility. His real comfort came in knowing that the Lord would be with him every step of the way...he wouldn't have to make the journey alone.

Philip folded his hands in prayer as the sun's fading rays rested on his face for a mere moment, then disappeared below the trees.

**“Lord, remember not the sins of my youth...”**



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*Mindy is a member of Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.*

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## Story Time

# Jeremy the News Boy

by J.P. de Klerk

All the inhabitants knew that Jeremy Jackson was the newsboy who would bring you the local newspaper at home, come rain come shine. You could rely on him. Six days of the week. If anyone wanted a newspaper on the Lord's Day, he or she had to go to the Dairy. But there were not many people in the village of Warham.

So, every school day at four o'clock Jeremy jumped on his bike, went to the grocery of Mr. Potts and picked up his first bunch of newspapers ("The Warham Standard," with colored pictures at the front-page). Jeremy had divided the village in four regions, so he had not too many papers at once to handle on his bike. Mr. Potts knew exactly how many papers he needed to serve all the clients.

It was not always easy for Jeremy. Much depended on the weather. When there was a strong wind, Jeremy had to push the pedals very hard, going against it, to reach the farms on the outskirts. If there was snow, he had sometimes to walk a fair distance. In summertime it was

the opposite and he did the job with a happy smile, sometimes singing or whistling all the way. Jeremy's sly face and spontaneous laugh mollified many elderly people, when he spoke with them. If they asked him to lend a helping hand, to cut a piece of grass, to plant a young tree, to trim a hedge or to pick up some medicines from the chemist, he was quite willing to do so. But, at home Jeremy had a *problem*.

After his mother had died in a traffic accident, his father married a woman he had never seen before. Only eleven months later his father died of a heart attack. That was quite a shock for Jeremy. He had no brothers or sisters, and he noticed that his stepmother did not believe in God, stopped going to the Church, removed the Bible from the mantelpiece, the photographs of his father and mother from the sideboard in the living room, and so on. Only in his room she did not touch anything. In fact she said he had to keep his room clean himself. Records and cassettes with Christian music she laid in front of his door. He tried to talk with her and wanted to



know why she behaved like this, but she laughed in his face.

From that day Jeremy read every evening a chapter in the Bible before he went to bed, like his father had done at the table after dinner. Of his own money, that he earned with the delivery of newspapers, he bought Christian books and he subscribed to a Christian monthly.

It was clear to Jeremy how important Jesus Christ was in his life. One day he went to his stepmother and tried to explain this to her, but she became very angry and she said she did not want him anymore in the living room and he had to eat his dinner in his own room. Jeremy asked her what was wrong with the Christian faith, in her view, but she gave no answer. Jeremy asked God every evening to give him wisdom and strength to handle the situation.

Every morning he left the house with a bright smile. He did not want to be discouraged because his stepmother was inaccessible, whatever the reason might be. "You don't get me under," he said.

The day came that Jeremy with the Bible in his hand went to his stepmother and refused to leave the room; he said he was not to be intimidated. He felt a bit amazed by

himself, but he knew God gave him the strength to deliver a whole sermon. "I tell you the truth. It is not yet too late" he said. "Don't be beyond reason or help, please." He begged her to go once every Sunday with him to the Church.

His stepmother listened and did not move. She looked at him in a dazed sort of way. She had not expected, that a boy would ever have the brutality to defy her and teach her from the Bible. She grew up with two younger brothers and she had known to bend them to her will.

Now she got into a black temper; she could no longer control herself. She exploded, "Jeremy! Stop that immediately! I will never hear about this again! Do you understand? Never again! That Book of yours is all nonsense. I have thrown out Christianity, out of my life. I don't want you to waste your time with these things, and you must no longer go to the Church. I have been silent long enough. You are a fool. Behave like a normal boy!"

Jeremy shook his head and stammered, "If my father heard you now... I want to be a Christian, like him. You do not have the right to forbid that."

"I'll show you. If you refuse to obey me, you have to leave this house. I do not want to see you again. Look somewhere else where you can stay, I give you one day to make up your mind. Nothing more." She ran to the corridor, put on a coat, and left.

It was Saturday. Jeremy had the newspapers delivered already. He went sobbing upstairs to his room. He looked at the pictures he had of his parents and a little native tree in a pot which his father had given to him shortly before he died. He understood now what his father had meant, when he said, that you had to set your standards high or else your life would become like an empty spectacle.

On his knees he prayed and asked God to protect him. That night he did not sleep very well. The following morning he left the house early through the back door and walked a long way before he went to the Church. The sexton just opened the doors. Jeremy greeted him and took a seat at the back. The organ was not yet playing. The sexton noticed the confusion on Jeremy's face and the sadness in his eyes. It was obvious something had happened...

During the service he gave him two peppermints. The sermon was about being more obedient to God than to man, and Jeremy hung on the minister's lips. It was the food he needed...

Back home Jeremy went straight away to his stepmother, who was sitting in a rocking-chair, with a lap-dog,

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and a cup of coffee in her right hand. Without turning her face in his direction she asked, "Have you decided, what you will do?"

Jeremy looked hard at her and answered, "Mother, you know what I have said. I stick to that."

She picked up a magazine and said, "Well, that is settled. You have now to leave this house, forever."

Jeremy felt a lump rise in his throat, took to his heels and went to his room. He put his money in his wallet, put his clothes in a small box, together with anything else that he found important, and went down the stairs.

In the Church-bulletin he had seen the address of a well known minister and he wanted to ask him for work and shelter. Warham would have to live without the services of this newsboy...

He went to the living room and asked, "Before I go, may I yet play the organ for a while?"

His stepmother stared in front of her with a gruff face and nodded. Jeremy went through all the psalms and hymns he knew, playing and singing. Praising, praying, thanking, jubilant or full of sorrow. The last one was, "I want to be like Jesus."

Then it happened. He could barely believe it. This was the "impossible," and yet, the hands of his stepmother were on his shoulders and with a dry sob she said, "Jeremy, I don't know what is the matter with me, but please,

forgive me all the nasty things I have said to you. I have treated you badly. Don't go away. Help me. Tell me everything about Jesus, and what else there is in the Bible. Jeremy, I know I can never replace your father and your mother, but I will do my best. Give me one more chance."

Jeremy slowly put the organ-stops back and turned himself to her. "All right," he said. With a smile he picked up his small box, left the room and went back upstairs.

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Jeremy told nobody in the village what had happened at home. But the neighbors saw, that suddenly he started together with his stepmother to take care of the flower-garden in front of the house. It became a wealth of dahlias, with a fountain in the middle and a pole with a bird feeder. On both sides of the path to the front door they planted spruce-firs, Jeremy had received from the forester near Warham. And, finally, every Sunday the two of them came together to *the Church*. No, there was nobody who came with questions. They all were friendly and pleased with some civil conversation. God's goodness remains forever. ❖

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*J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from the Protestant Reformed Church in New Zealand.*

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## Letters to the Editor

# God, Marriage and Sex

by Fred Iwema

After reading the December and February issues of the *Beacon Lights* entitled, "Augustine on Sex and Marriage," and "Child-bearing, Not Child Prevention," by Mr. Steve Spencer and Mr. Ken DeJong respectively, I am compelled to submit the following response. My response follows considerable meditation and prayer on my part.

First, I believe the proper, although uncommon term should be "conception control," that in lieu of "birth con-

trol." The term "birth control" can be misleading in that the term implies control over the outcome of an existing pregnancy. Therefore abortion is implied, and that is no less than legalized murder. I am speaking, as I believe the above mentioned writers were, strictly of the attempt to alter the time and frequency of conception.

Secondly, it is my firm conviction that conception control, (the use or lack thereof), is a matter best decided between God and the married couple. It is not the

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place of the church, nor the brethren in the pews to judge the validity of the motive, in the case of any God-fearing couple. This same principle holds true in many areas of life. Though not as 'hot' an issue, the question of alcohol is a similar situation. Wine is spoken of in Scripture as both a blessing and as the instrument of drunkenness. Many Christians decide to abstain completely, while others choose a moderate use of the substance and avoid drunkenness. Can the "tea-totaller" judge the action of the moderate user? I do not dispute that children are always spoken of in a positive light, never in a negative way as in the example of wine, yet neither does Scripture ever place a number or frequency on the gift of children. There is no limit given, neither on the high side, nor the low side. Yet Scriptural principles are clear in that we are not to use the good gifts of God in an irresponsible and thoughtless manner. For one couple this may mean 6 children, for another 14. The point is that a couple makes this decision as a unit before God, not before men. Would it not also be true then that those who claim to have a "headache" or are "too tired" for sexual union are also guilty of "conception control?" If so, is the church prepared, or even permitted, to "police the bedrooms" of its parishioners?

Mr. DeJong stated in his letter that "we should not allow ourselves to be conned into thinking we can enjoy the pleasures of the sexual relationship in marriage, a wonderful gift of God, and at the same time avoid the normal responsibilities connected with that." God himself has given us this blessed sexual relationship with our spouses to express the unity of the flesh as a way of picturing the unity of Christ with the church. A married couple may engage in sexual union without fear that it degrades the purpose, whether or not a child is the result of a given union. In the normal course of events, a child or children will be the God given result of a small portion of the sexual unions between husband and wife. However, a couple can practice "conception control," for the purposes of limiting or spacing children, and still maintain all of the normal responsibilities associated with sexual union and married life. My wife and I have three covenant children and our responsibilities on their behalf have been no different than if we had had seven. The number would be different, the responsibilities the same.

The couple involved may have legitimate, Godly reasons for using "conception control." It is their job, before God, to judge the legitimacy of those reasons. Not mine. Not yours. These reasons need not be explained to those who might point a finger, nor even to the church office-

bearers. The reasons and justification for a use of "conception control," as in many of life's decisions, must be reached by way of prayer and meditation of God's Word as applied to that specific couple. Let me make it clear, I am not espousing situation ethics. If God's Word does not forbid "conception control," then neither might we. (Genesis 38 is not a condemnation of "conception control" just as Leviticus 10 is not a condemnation of burning incense. Onan broke the command to fulfill the Levite law, Nadab and Abihu broke the command to come to worship according the instruction of God.)

Mr. DeJong also states in his article "In my younger days, if someone would have promoted birth control they would have been strongly warned that this was a form of murder." Is then Mr. DeJong saying that we commit murder if use "conception control?" Would that not suggest that we had thwarted the sovereign purpose of God to bring forth a specific child? Can we do that? Of course not! It denies sovereignty, and suggests that God is not able to bring forth each of those for whom He planned before the foundation of the world.

We read in God's Word, I Cor. 7:2, "Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband," and in verse 9 of the same chapter, "but if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." In these passages, the apostle Paul states an additional reason for marriage, namely the sexual union, for the mutual satisfaction and avoidance of immorality of husband and wife. (Young People, let's remember the above). Based on these and other passages, I agreed with Augustine as reported by Mr. Spencer in his article, namely that there are two purposes for sexual union in marriage.

My wife and I have also struggled deeply in the past regarding the issue of "conception control." We have spent numerous hours discussing various passages in the Word of God and then taken those concerns to our Lord in prayer. As a result, we have been led of God to a path that is different than that of Mr. and Mrs. DeJong's. Our reasoning, and the resulting decisions are where they rightfully belong, between ourselves and God. For conscience sake, what may be wrong for one, is not for another.

I therefore cannot sit in judgment of those who decide to use "conception control" for the timing and frequency of children, or those who decide not to use "conception control." Provided that both decisions are arrived at through prayer and a desire to do the will of God. I believe with all my heart, that our conclusions as a couple, were motivated by our desires to serve God in the most

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God-glorifying way we can with all the factors for consideration the Lord has put before us. I trust the same is true of Mr. and Mrs. DeJong. I further believe, that my quiver is full with three arrows, for which I give thanks to God.

I am reminded of another passage in I Corinthians 4:4, 5: “for I know nothing by myself; yet am I not thereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the councils of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God,” and verse 6b: “that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against the other.”

God is pleased to have us living in the midst of a terrible and evil world. Pressures and temptations abound and attack on every side. We also live in an age when

the family unit is severely compromised, the Biblical role of the wife and mother is replaced with independence from man, and the man’s calling as head of the family is all but gone. Let us not impose addition pressures on ourselves, (that of “policing” the personal decisions of God-fearing couples), where God has not imposed them.

Until that time God calls us home, let us live in a way which pleases Him, not our own selfish desires or bending to the world’s pressures. The basis for all our actions, including our sexual unions in marriage, must be Biblical, accompanied by constant reflection and study, seeking His will for our lives. As Romans 12:2 puts it, “and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Respectfully submitted,  
Fred W. Iwema  
Member of Bethel PRC



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## From the Web

# Loving Our Enemies

by Rev. Richard Moore

### Question #18

**H**ow must we understand the words of the Lord when He commands us to love our enemies?

### Answer #18

**T**he one who asked this question is concerned with the false teaching so very common in our day that God is said to “love all men,” and the accompanying teaching that therefore we “must love all men,” with the result that it is taught we must no longer speak of sin, but must find the good in all men, etc. At the same time the questioner is aware that the Psalmist prays, “do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee,” which is spoken of the enemies of God, and which the psalmist counts as his enemies and whom he hates. The questioner is concerned that if we do not understand the Lord’s words to love our enemies in a proper way, the whole of the antithetical walk of the Christian will be destroyed.

In our answer we remark in the first place that we could write volumes on this subject without over doing it. The reason for this is that the Lord’s command to love the enemy is intimately related to the commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” Jesus says in Mark 12: 31 that there is no greater commandments than the commandments to love God, and to so love your neighbor as yourself. Thus we find the principle of the law contained in the answer of the question above.

Nevertheless, we will try to answer the question without a series of sermons, and thus attempt on this page to point out several main points as one considers this question. The first thing we must point out is that we are speaking of the enemy who is our neighbor, that is he is not someone we do not know, but an enemy upon our path, placed there by God for our trial and for His purpose to save or condemn. The very idea that he is our enemy means we know him as such. Jesus indeed teaches us that we must love our enemy, as we read in the sermon on the mount, Matthew 5:43-44 “Ye have heard that

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it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;” Also we read in the companion passage from Luke the following: Luke 6: 27-28 “But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” So we must surely conclude we must love our enemies.

Now in the first place to define this love for the enemy we point out that our enemy is our neighbor and we are to love him as ourselves.

The love for ourselves in the correct and good sense is to keep ourselves right before God. That is, a love for ourselves is, in all of our lives to love God and to serve Him with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength. That love for ourselves is to keep ourselves from all that would prevent this service of God in pure love. So that the love of ourselves is to keep all the commandments of God, and to flee all sin. To hate ourselves in this sense is to separate ourselves from God and His Word and to give ourselves to the walk of iniquity. John says that this is love to keep His commandments, (II John 1:6) This of course is possible only by grace and in the way of prayer and being bound to the Word of God in all of our walk. To love oneself is to seek God in all things, to find our only joy in that which is in harmony with His will, to live out of Christ being led in all of our lives by His blessed rule as He is our Lord, and all that is implied by such delight in the things of God’s kingdom and its righteousness.

So that to love the neighbor also if he is an enemy means that we love Him in the same way we love ourselves. And this means that we are witnesses of the truth before our enemy. It means that we call our enemy’s attention to his sin, and admonish him to repent of it. It means we cannot countenance in our enemy any deviation from the truth of the word of God, and must do all that we can to point out the destruction that will come in the way of disobedience to the word. It means we expend our efforts to bring the gospel to bear upon the heart and soul of our neighbor that he too may come to know the salvation that there is in Christ. It means as we pray for grace to see our sin to flee it, that we pray that if it be God’s will that also our enemy may come to see his sin and repent, that he too may taste the blessedness of belonging to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. It means that we call upon that enemy to come up to the house of God that He may be fed and nourished and led to become not any longer an enemy, but a friend in Christ.

Now to keep all the commandments of God means also if we love ourselves we will do no harm to ourselves, we will not curse ourselves, nor persecute ourselves, etc. We will take care not to do anything to ourselves that would place us in jeopardy of hell fire or judgment. So also are we to behave toward our enemies. This is how we understand also the instruction of our Lord in this connection. When Jesus says in Matthew 5:44 “bless them that curse you,” that is speak well of them that speak evil of you. “Pray for them which despitefully use you,” as we have explained above. And thus we understand when we read the words of Christ in Luke 6:35 “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again;” Two things may take place when we so love the enemy, both for the glory of God. First it may be that by your good works, the works of faith done by grace alone, the enemy may be brought to humility and to inquire of your faith, and be led by grace to know salvation in Christ under the gospel. Thus too he shall become your friend and no longer be an enemy. And the angels of heaven shall rejoice. Or when you give him no ground for his evil against you, and give him no occasion for his sin by unjust acts on your part, he shall be held accountable before God. This is why we are admonished by the apostle Paul in Romans 12:19-21 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but {rather} give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance {is} mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

We conclude to love our enemy serves then the glory of God, it may serve the salvation of our enemy if God is so pleased to use our love to lead His own to repentance and the cross and God’s name shall be glorified. Or it may lead the enemy to harden his heart without excuse unto greater damnation, revealing himself to be an enemy of God, as well as, our enemy. But this too will glorify the Name of our God in His just judgment of the wicked.

May God grant us the grace to love even our enemies as ourselves!! This is really a rather brief study of this love we must have of our neighbor, enemy so if you have further questions, make sure to send them in.

Remember to write your questions to me at [revmo@mtc1.mtcnet.net](mailto:revmo@mtc1.mtcnet.net). ❖

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# The Calling of Young People in the Church and Home

by Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

*“Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.” Proverbs 8:32, 33*

There is nothing more comforting or reassuring than to know that God is our sovereign Friend! God’s covenant friendship in the line of generations is a truth we hold dear. In connection with this truth we often consider the obligations of covenant parents toward their children. God is a God of means who chooses to carry on His covenant from one generation of believers to the next by way of godly instruction and nurture of children in the home and family.

Often overlooked, however, is the covenant calling and obligation children and young people have in the sphere of the home and church as well. Parents are not the only ones with a serious responsibility in the church and covenant where God has placed them. Their children also God holds accountable. Solomon in the passage we quoted above gives the calling of youth within the sphere of the home and church: “hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.”

There is one matter to keep in mind when considering this passage in Proverbs: it is not Solomon speaking to us! He may have penned the words of this passage but someone else is addressing us here. In this entire chapter, it is the virtue of wisdom that is addressing us. Wisdom says to young people: “hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways!” Obviously, Solomon personifies wisdom, that is, gives to this virtue human characteristics. Wisdom is made to sound like a person that is able to speak and instruct us.

Since it is this virtue of wisdom that addresses us as young people it is good to identify her. When we speak

of a wise person then that person, first, is gifted with knowledge. Usually that knowledge is in a certain area of life, but sometimes a person is knowledgeable in many areas of life. A wise person is one who has stored away in his mind all kinds of facts invaluable to solving problems that may arise. But wisdom implies much more than mere intellect. Wisdom is of a very practical nature. It is the ability to put that knowledge of certain facts to use in a skillful way. One who has a head full of knowledge and

is not able to put it to practical use is not wise—smart maybe, but not wise. It is this wisdom that tells us to hearken unto her. She tells us not only to know things, but to be able to put things into practical use in our lives.

The wisdom of our text requires, however, that we know even more about her. In this chapter wisdom identifies herself as a beautiful virtue, one with beauty of truth and righteousness. There is nothing wicked or perverse about the wisdom of this chapter. You see, according to James

there are two kinds of wisdom: an earthly and carnal wisdom geared toward the sensual and even devilish things of this world. This is worldly wisdom that has a knowledge of carnal things and the ability to use that knowledge to fulfill these carnal and often sinful things. Then there is also that wisdom that is from above, from heaven. James tells us this wisdom is pure, peaceable, and without hypocrisy. Obviously, the wisdom that speaks out of Proverbs 8 wants us to identify as the latter of these two wisdoms. She is spiritual wisdom that says to covenant youth: hearken unto me and keep my ways!

To be spiritually wise requires of covenant young people two things. First, it requires that we know the Scriptures. We must know the Scriptures as they teach us concerning God, man, Jesus Christ, salvation, the church and the last things. In short, if we are going to be wise

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young people, we must know our Bibles. The spiritual knowledge we are taught from infancy on must be stored away in our hearts and souls to be able to recall it when necessary. And the knowledge we speak of here is not merely an intellectual knowledge by which we know all the facts but they mean nothing to us. Knowing all about God and Jesus Christ is not enough! Our knowledge must be that of faith, a knowledge by which we know God - know Him, love Him, and fear Him. That knowledge must be ours if we are going to be wise covenant youth. If we do not know God and Jesus Christ in this way then we are really fools and that will show up in what we do with our lives too.

To be wise, however, requires much more than a mere knowledge of our Bibles. Wisdom means we put our knowledge of God, of man, of Christ, of salvation, of the church, of the last things to good use in directing and guiding our lives.

“Hearken unto me—listen to me,” wisdom says to us, “Keep my ways!” We must use the Scriptures to discern between right and wrong and then in wisdom follow in the ways of righteousness. If we cannot do this, or refuse to do this then we are fools. And though fools always enjoy the company of other fools, the fact is: they are fools! If its cool to be a fool, then I guess a young person might laugh about his foolishness, even boast about his foolishness—and, no doubt, he’ll find others to laugh and boast with him—but the fact remains when we do not use our knowledge of the Bible to guide us in the way of righteousness, we are fools!

And this is why we are fools: because wisdom in all reality is Christ! Look closely at the language wisdom uses to describe herself in Proverbs 8. It will not take long to discover that wisdom is really Christ. Christ then declares to us as covenant youth: “hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways.” We turn our backs on our knowledge of God and His Word and ignore it. When we knowing Scripture fail to follow in its ways then we are in reality turning our backs on Jesus Christ Himself. Let no man say: “I am a child of God,” and then go out and walk in the ways of unrighteousness! Let no person say: “I am a Christian (a follower of Christ),” who goes out and lives in licentiousness! A person who walks in rebellion to the truth of the Scriptures is a fool and a fool denies Christ by virtue of his very walk!

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There is a particular way we can keep the ways of wisdom and to hearken to her. Solomon speaks of this in verse 33: “hear instruction and refuse it not.” When we do this then we will be wise. Wisdom makes matters very concrete for us at this point. Here is the key to being wise: hear instruction and refuse it not! It all centers in that word instruction. This term refers to all the training, all the nurture we receive from the mouths of

those whom God has placed over us in our lives for this reason. It refers to the teaching, the admonition, the care, and the example we receive from parents, godly teachers, and ministers in the church. It refers to all the labors that covenant parents and others have vowed to put into the task of teaching us the fear of the Lord. That is the instruction that makes one wise.

But if it is to make us wise, we as covenant young people are called upon

to hear it! From a negative point of view to hear wisdom means we not refuse it! How wise Solomon is to put this command negatively! By doing so he lays a finger on a sore spot. Often young men and women do not think their parents are all that smart or wise. Father and mother may warn them from ways of wickedness; parents may even come right out and say “no” to something a young person desires (in fact, that is the way it ought to be). But it happens more often than not that as young people we think our parents do not know what they are talking about. They are too old to understand the ways of the young. They do not understand what it is to live in the here and now! At least, so we think! When therefore, we are instructed by them and warned by them, we refuse their instruction. We follow in what we believe is right and wrong. We do not even consider whether what they tell us is rooted in the principles of Scripture itself. We simply refuse and walk according to our own hearts. A young person can refuse instruction in other ways too. He can sleep during church or play around during catechism. By doing this we refuse instruction. He can refuse instruction when having received it by parents and others, when placed before a concrete situation and parents and others are not around, then he can choose to ignore what he learned from them and do the opposite. Solomon knows our weaknesses pretty well, does he not? Refuse not instruction! If you refuse it you will walk in ways that lead to rebellion, wantonness, intemperance,

fornication and drunkenness - all sins against which Solomon warns in his proverbs. When we become fools.

Hear instruction! When it is given in the home, church or school we must listen to it carefully! We must take it and tuck it away in our hearts. Then, when it is necessary then take out that instruction again and use it! We must open our ears when we are taught, and we must be ready to put instruction and its warnings into use when we live in this world. Then we will walk in the way of wisdom. It may not always be an easy way, but it is a sure way that leads to heaven.

When we walk in the way of wisdom we will be blessed or happy! I think that we often forget that. At times we can feel very miserable in this life. Nothing seems to go right. Life is rotten and seems to deal us one hard blow after another. When that happens, we can be quick to blame it on others. They are the reason we feel so miserable! They make life so hard on us! We become angry and bitter toward others - usually parents or teachers or ministers. But that we feel miserable is due to one thing: ourselves. We are miserable when we fail to walk in the ways of wisdom. When we do not take time out to know God and to apply His Word in a positive way to our lives, that makes us miserable. When we walk in wisdom's ways, then we are blessed by God. He makes us happy! Do you want true joy in life? It will not be found in the way of sin! God withholds gladness from those who walk in foolishness. He gives it to those who follow Christ. These are wise and these are happy! That in itself is incentive to harken unto wisdom and keep her ways!



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## The Day We Buried Grandpa

*The day we buried Grandpa  
I could not let him go,  
I needed to accept it  
The Lord had told me so.*

*The day we buried Grandpa  
My heart was filled with pain,  
But that soon turned to joy  
For this was Grandpa's gain!*

*The day we buried Grandpa  
I did not understand my tears,  
But this is what he lived for  
To see God after all these years.*

*The day we buried Grandpa  
I remembered times of past,  
The memory of his special sweetness  
Would forever last.*

*The day we buried Grandpa  
Was hard not just for me,  
His family loved him dearly  
With devotion evident to see.*

*The day we buried Grandpa  
It was clear unto us all,  
That though he had not much on earth  
He was the richest man of all!*

*Kara Elizabeth Bol  
October 3, 1996*



by John Huizenga

## A Psalter - Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God

### Using this devotional in the classroom.

*The idea for using the Psalter in connection with the Psalms in these devotionals grew out of my devotions with the children in my classroom. I find that the Psalms are suited well for class devotionals because the vivid picture language of the Psalms quickly capture the attention of children. These pictures are the means whereby God instructs us in deep and profound truths about Himself and man. In my classroom the children take turns twice each day reading a verse from the Psalms. Then they ask questions about words or phrases they do not understand. Often the Psalter helps sort through difficult wording and supplies alternative words. When the class is comfortable with the meaning of words and idea of the verse, we find the verse to sing in the Psalter. When we do it this way, the children pay more attention to the words in the Psalter. My hope is that this devotional may help teachers as they prepare for class devotionals with the Psalms.*

*Recommended method for using these devotionals: read the text, read the words of the Psalter number, read the devotional, sing the Psalter number.*

### May 1 Psalm 18; A Psalm of Gratitude

This month we will meditate upon Psalm 18, the psalm of gratitude. David had suffered many grievous things in his life. Especially difficult were the years of fleeing from king Saul and the rebellion of Israel against him. We become weary with David when we read about his troubles with Saul. In this Psalm David compares this time of trouble to a raging storm in which he is at the verge of drowning at sea. He knows God to be the sovereign author of the storm, yet it is the waves resulting from the storm that are compared to his enemies. From this distressing situation God saves him, and David, thinking back on all the mercies of God, sings this song of gratitude and praise. Read through this Psalm and learn the tunes of Psalter numbers 34, 35, and 36. Read also II Samuel 22 which is nearly identical to Psalm 18.

### May 2 Psalm 18:1, 2 Psalter 34:1

Do you stand immovable upon a high, solid place without fear having confidence that nothing can harm you? When we are young, we do sometimes feel invincible. Yet there are times of trouble when everything quickly disintegrates. Harsh words, insecurity, loneliness, uncertainty, and temptations easily disarm our defenses. The world will show you how to build yourself up temporarily with money, self-esteem, and the deception of alcohol or drugs, but the believer has some-

thing infinitely greater. God Himself, the Creator of the whole world, dwells within His people and takes them to be His children. He delivers from the despair of this world of sin and death, and takes us into His covenant friendship. We sing "I love the Lord." He is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my strength, my buckler, my high tower. With strong horns a mountain goat fends off a roaring lion, so with the salvation we know, we conquer every foe.

### May 3 Psalm 18:3 Psalter 34:2

To "call upon the LORD" means to pray to God. The covenant fellowship we have with God and our salvation is experienced only when we actively pray. The rock, fortress, buckler, and horn are mere words and ideas that bring no true comfort if we do not commune with the God of our salvation. Trouble in our life makes the idea of a rock and fortress very real. In times of trouble we must not look to every other possible help before coming at last to God. No, we must turn to God right away. The Psalter reads "when troubles thick around me close." These words make us think of being attacked by a suffocating swarm of bees. Knowing that God will deliver, we also mingle praise with our prayer for help.

### May 4 Psalm 18:4-6 Psalter 34:3

The word "sorrows" has the idea of being tied up with ropes and squeezed as would happen if you were captured by the enemy in a battle. They "compassed me about." We can imagine the helpless and fearful feeling. The words "death" and "hell" make it clear that this capture will end in certain death without a mighty deliverer. Who is the enemy that has taken such a deadly hold? It is Satan and the power of sin. Like a raging flood, sin quickly surrounds and rushes in to drown. When the guilt and afflictions bring us to our knees, God hears our prayer and in His great love and mercy, lifts us out of our distress. Though God is in sovereign control even of the sin within us, we are responsible and can only confess that we have brought the terrors of sin upon ourselves. In this way of sin and deliverance, God reveals his justice and mercy.

### May 5 Psalm 18:7, 8 Psalter 34:4

God is pleased also to reveal his wrath and anger in the way of the sin and deliverance of His people. Floods can seem mighty and unstoppable but when God hears the prayer of His child in distress, the very foundations of the earth shake. Fierce anger is often described in God's word as fire and smoke coming from the nostrils. Sometimes this picture of anger and power is used in stories about dragons. In the Bible, this is a vivid picture of God's wrath. God comes in sovereign power and righteous anger. He reveals His power and righteousness through all



the earth in the way of saving His people from the clutches of Satan. Never was the anger and power of God against sin revealed more clearly than in the darkness and earthquake at the time of Jesus' death on the cross. Let us remember that this is the salvation worked in our heart.

### **May 6 Psalm 18:9-10 Psalter 34:5**

The black swirling clouds of a thunderstorm also describe the majesty of God and His anger against sin and evil. In the consciousness of our own sin and guilt the holy presence of God bears down with a darkened face. He comes quickly as though riding on the wings of the wind and with great majesty and power as on the wings of a cherub. The darkness of the storm does not prevent His coming, He comes straight through. The wings of the cherub also remind the child of God of the ark of the covenant where God came to His people in covenant mercy. We need not be afraid as we bow humbly in His presence.

### **May 7 Psalm 18:11-12 Psalter 34:6**

The angry face of God is terrible, but far more terrifying it is when God hides his face Psalm 104:29. The "secret place" and "pavilion" of God is a thick veil that separates men from the light of God's presence. In deep distress we may ask "where is God?" Jesus cried out in the darkness "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But God hides his face only to reveal with more brilliance His glory. As the lightning instantly lights up the black sky, so God's glory breaks through with power and majesty. Christ has forever ripped the veil that separates sinful man from the holy God. In Him we see the brightness of His glory as the bright and sunny day.

### **May 8 Psalm 18:13, 14 Psalter 34:7**

Thunder is the voice of God. We can explain thunder scientifically, but we must never suppose that it is produced merely by natural causes independent of the sovereign will of God. God is the supreme governor of all things. In the thunder He speaks of His nearness and power to overthrow the enemies of His children. In the thunder he speaks judgment and anger to the wicked. All the noise, wind, violent hail and lightning of a storm is a picture of God's mighty work of salvation in Christ.

### **May 9 Psalm 18:15 Psalter 34:8**

In verse four David described the presence of ungodly men as a flood surrounding him. When Jehovah God comes, He drives the flood waters away and exposes the river bottoms and even the very sources of all the water. The Psalter does not capture the idea of this verse when it speaks of the torrents of water sweeping the world's foundations bare. No, the windy blast of God drives the water away as at the time when Israel crossed the Red Sea. God cleanses His people from sin and drives the enemy far away.

### **May 10 Psalm 18:16-18 Psalter 34:9**

We have no escape from the power of sin and distress except God comes to deliver. God, having driven away the waters, reaches down in tender mercy to take and pull us out from between walls of water. Those many waters are the strong enemy; an enemy too strong for us and filled with hate, but weak and helpless before God. God comes in sovereign power and strength. He is our "stay" or support. He delivers us from the "whelming waves of bitter hate and sore distress." God delivers us from the power of sin working in our depraved nature, and He daily delivers us from the temptations and sins which would bring us to eternal hell. Christ has taken upon Himself the curse due unto us.

### **May 11 Psalm 18:19, 20 Psalter 34:10**

In contrast to the squeezing death grip and bondage of the enemy, God sets us free and places us in a "large place." From the dungeon of

sin, we are placed in the open prairie of God's grace. Why does God do this for us? Not because of anything we have done of ourselves. God saves us first of all because "he delighted in me." God's love, His free and sovereign grace is at the very heart of all that God does to His children. He loves them and makes them His own in His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. David now sings forth of the blessings which flow out of God's love for His children. Because God loves His children, he imputes righteousness upon them and justly rewards them according to their righteousness. Having been cleansed by the blood of Christ, the wicked can no longer bring our sins before us to ridicule our trust in God.

### **May 12 Psalm 18:21-24 Psalter 35:1**

We now have a new Psalter number to sing which speaks of the blessings we receive in Christ and instruction for the life we must live. We must remember here that David had been falsely accused by his enemies of sin and treachery. We must remember also that David is a type of Christ who was falsely accused. Christ alone could claim perfect righteousness before the holy God in the face of all the accusations of His enemies. In Christ alone, then, we come with a clear conscience. God is pleased to give us in this life a taste of heavenly blessings in the way of a godly walk before Him. Though you know yourself a sinner, may the wicked never have the opportunity to accuse you of an ungodly, dishonest, and rebellious life style.

### **May 13 Psalm 18:25, 26 Psalter 35:2**

God is pleased to use the experiences in our lives in light of His word to reveal His attributes to us. God is merciful. He reveals His mercy in the blood of Christ, by reaching down to take us out of the pit and bondage of sin. We can read God's Word of salvation and hear the gospel proclaimed faithfully from the pulpits, but we do not really know God's mercy if we do not in turn show mercy to the neighbor. If we treat our brother or sister in the Lord as the ungrateful servant treated his fellow servant in the parable Jesus told, then it is clear that we still do not know the mercy of God. If we stubbornly walk in sin, we will not know and find comfort in the righteousness of God in Christ. God is pure, that is, without defilement and holy. Psalm 19:9 says that "the fear of the LORD is clean." The word translated "clean" is the same word translated "pure" in today's devotional. Be assured, that an ungodly walk will meet with chastisement from God.



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## **May 14 Psalm 18:27, 28 Psalter 35:3**

Experience shows that the merciful and upright and pure are often severely afflicted while the wicked strut about in pride. We may wonder whether it is true that God shows mercy to the merciful. Lest our sinful mind quickly conclude that God is not true to His word, we are taught that God is pleased to bring us into affliction in order to show us the greatness of His love by delivering us in the time appointed by God. We are also assured that God will reveal His power and wrath to the proud by casting them down. In the darkness of affliction, wait patiently for the flash of God's grace as He lights a candle to give joy and peace in its soft warm glow.

## **May 15 Psalm 18:29, 30 Psalter 35:4**

David was an expert warrior. He was brave and strong. In this Psalm he thinks upon a time when he had penetrated an enemy army and leaped over a wall to take a city. Even here where it would be easy for David to imagine he had some glory in himself, he attributes everything to God. Remembering what God had done in the past, and understanding that all his trials and difficulties were from the hand of God, David says that God's way is perfect. His word is His word of promise. It is a word that is "tried." His word is not full of conditions, contradictions, and unkept promises, but it is pure like refined gold. He is always faithful. The child of God who knows God by the faith worked in his heart finds great comfort in God. The Lord is a buckler, a shield, and our strength.

## **May 16 Psalm 18:31-34 Psalter 35:5**

For who is God? Who is the creator of all things? Who is almighty? Who is a strong rock to uphold confidence? Who directs the wind and storms? Who has power to turn the heart of kings? Where can the soul find rest? The God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. The God of Israel. Our God is God alone. He is Jehovah, the God of covenant friendship. The God who takes His people into fellowship with Himself. David sings: this God girds me with strength. He gives His strength to me as it were a coat of armor. He makes my way perfect. This means that every part of my life has by God's sovereign grace been made perfectly smooth in that it leads straight to God's purpose and goal for me. David was an extremely powerful and fast warrior. This also he acknowledges to be a gift of God. In the way God prepares for us, he also teaches us to do battle against sin in a way beyond normal human strength.

## **May 17 Psalm 18:35**

What man on earth would say that gentleness and meekness makes one great? Among men a gentle spirit never brings glory and power. If you want to get ahead, you must trample the weak and conquer the strong. Pity for others will keep you forever out of the top ranks. But with God everything is different. He is sovereign and therefore looks down with mercy upon the poor and contrite to exalt them without ever giving up His sovereignty. God came to His people in Christ who humbled Himself even unto the cross. Again we see that God's sovereign good pleasure and love is at the heart of our salvation. God's salvation, not all the benefits of that salvation for David, was the shield that protected David from all evil. God's sovereign election saves, not the work we do.

## **May 18 Psalm 18:36-42 Psalter 36:1**

The verses today describe the bloody and complete warfare of David. The sentence structure reveals the proper relationship between God's sovereign control over His people and their activity in the earth. "Thou hast given ... that I might destroy them that hate me." Christ has said that the wicked will hate us because they first hated Christ. We are the means whereby God destroys the wicked to His own glory and our salvation. The Psalter number brings out the obvious practical

instruction that when God gives of His strength to conquer, we do not forsake the battle to pursue our own goals and pleasures, but rather set out immediately to conquer in His Name. We sin when we forsake our spiritual battle and make friends with the enemy. In all that we do, we must walk the antithesis and give God the glory.

## **May 19 Psalm 18:43-45 Psalter 36:2**

Peace is the goal in the spiritual battle. Peace comes to a nation when the people in that nation cease their striving and the people all around that nation willingly submit and obey the king. When Jacob blessed his son Judah he said that earthly kings would rule in his line until Shiloh come (Genesis 49:10). Shiloh is the name that means "Prince of Peace" and refers to Christ. David was in the line of Judah, and Solomon was the type of Christ as the Prince of Peace. Today the people of God from every nation are being gathered and they humbly submit and obey Christ the head of the church. Christ has conquered the kingdom of Satan and crushed his power. Peace that passes all understanding fills the soul of him who lives daily under the lordship of Christ.

## **May 20 Psalm 18:46-48 Psalter 36:3**

Is God alive for you? Do you experience the work of God in your life strengthening you in your battle against sin, comforting you in your sorrows, speaking to you in His word? Calvin writes "the life which David attributes to God is ... to be understood of the evidence of it deducible from his works, which manifest to us that he liveth. Whenever he withdraws the working of his power from before our eyes, the sense and cognizance of the truth, 'God liveth,' also vanishes from our minds." Pray that God will live before you each day. With thankful obedience in all our life let us praise and exalt God who saves the humble in Christ, and justly punishes the wicked who desire to drag us with them on their way to hell.

## **May 21 Psalm 18:49 Psalter 36:4**

Thanksgiving is the response we have to the love and sovereign good pleasure of God to save us. We give thanks and praise unto Jehovah our covenant God. We are not ashamed to voice our thanks and praise among the nations of the world. Our desire is that all peoples of the earth hear and know the wonderful works of God. David made sure that the name of God was praised and exalted throughout his whole kingdom so that the nations round about knew about the God of Israel. Do your neighbors know that you are a Christian? Do they stand in awe at the work of God in you? For a thorough exposition of this text read the reprint in this issue of Rev. Ophof's work.

## **May 22 Psalm 18:50 Psalter 36:5**

David was God's king. God had chosen him and anointed him to that office. David did not usurp that authority as his enemies falsely charged. Since God had by His sovereign good pleasure chosen David to be king, He gave him the victory over all his enemies. "All who enter on any course without having the call of God, are chargeable with avowedly making war against him" (Calvin). We must humbly submit to God's word and obey if we are to expect the blessing of God. David saw God's mercy and extends God's promise to his seed forevermore. That seed is Solomon as a type, and Christ as the full reality. In Christ we see the mercy of God. Our election also is confirmed in us when we experience the work of God in us to deliver us from sin and death.

## **May 23 Psalm 19:1, 2 Psalter 37:1 & 39:1**

Study of a particular building will tell you something about the architect. Art will tell you about the feelings, ideas, and personality of the artist. God, our heavenly Father, and our Creator has fashioned for us a glorious dwelling place. Paradise surrounded man with everything necessary to satisfy his desires of taste, sight, touch, smell, and hear-

ing. At night the high vaulted blue ceiling of the heavens became studded with lights. There is no place we can turn without seeing the handiwork of God. That handiwork of God tells us something about God: He is glorious beyond measure. But seeing God in his handiwork is not enough for the child of God who desires that God speak to him with words and that He dwell with him in the house He has made. God walked with Adam in the garden of Eden, but we the church long for the day when we live with Christ our husband in the new heavens and earth forever.

### **May 24 Psalm 19:3, 4a Psalter 37:2 & 39:2**

All who dwell in this house of creation, with its high vaulted ceiling, glorious plants, animals, and other gifts see the glory of the Creator. It matters not what language they speak, all observe the same house and hear with understanding the language with which the handiwork of God speaks. Just as a piece of art painted by a Chinese man can tell a Dutch man something about the artist even though he could not understand one syllable of Chinese, so God who has created all things including man who sees it speaks instantly and to all men about His glory. The word "line" is understood by commentators to mean either a measuring string, written line for writing words, or sound. Either way, the point of the text is that the glory of God is manifest to every man, woman and child of the earth. This is a manifestation of God which condemns those who hate God, and thrills the heart of the believer.

### **May 25 Psalm 19:4b, 5 Psalter 37:3 & 39:3**

Of all the features of the creation, the sun is most prominent. From the perspective of man, the heavens form a tabernacle, or tent, for the sun. As the sun approaches its entrance from the east the tabernacle of the starry heavens begins to fade. Without hesitation, with joyful eagerness, the sun quickly mounts up and across the sky. The sun is like a bridegroom who comes out of his chamber. At the time of David, this chamber was a portable canopy supported by four poles held up by four boys under which the bridal pair were married. The bridegroom comes forth with joy. The desire of his heart for a partner is satisfied and he goes forth to enjoy the new day. The sun is a picture of Christ. He is at the center of God's eternal counsel. He is the Bridegroom that will be united with His bride, the church. May the rising sun each morning draw our minds to that day of life eternal with God in heaven.

### **May 26 Psalm 19:6 Psalter 37:4 & 39:4**

The sun rises from one end of heaven and continues across the sky until it sets again at the other end of heaven. Nothing on the earth is untouched by its heat. Declaring the glory of God, nothing on earth is untouched by the penetrating voice of God in creation. Remember, the sun is a picture of Christ. God is pleased not only to manifest his power and glory in the creation, but also to send the gospel of salvation in Christ alone to all peoples of the earth. The preaching of Christ comes forth with joy and strength as a strong man running a race. God sends missionaries and preachers out into the world to gather the church. Let us be mindful of our missionaries and ministers in prayer.

### **May 27 Psalm 19:7 Psalter 38:1; 40:1; 41:1**

Having begun this Psalm with the word of God spoken by means of all creation, the psalmist now launches into a growing crescendo of praise of God's work of salvation. Note the change in names from "God" to "Jehovah." The word of nature declares God to us, the word of Scripture declares Jehovah. Nature declares God's power and glory, the Scriptures declare His counsel and will. The "law" is God's pointing out, instruction, doctrine or teaching. For those redeemed in Christ the law is not a curse, but a revelation of God's mercy and justice and a rule for the direction of our free and willing obedience. God has given a law to all creation so that all living and material things work together in

marvelous harmony, but the law which God has given to man brings him into the very covenant fellowship of God Himself. The "testimony" of Jehovah is the ten commandments which include warnings to guide weak and sinful creatures such as us in the way which is good and true.

### **May 28 Psalm 19:8, 9 Psalter 38:2; 40:2, 3; 41:2, 3**

In verse 8 the law of God is further described as "statutes" and "commandment." These words both refer to God's declarations concerning what man must do. His statutes are right or straight because they proceed from the absolutely good will of God and lead along the straight path of holiness, the only way that leads to heavenly fellowship with God, the only way to contentment and peace of heart. The commandment of Jehovah is pure. No mixture of error defiles it. It is a light that makes the will of God clear to our mind and soul. The "fear of the LORD" is not an act performed but is a precept which God's revelation demands, effects, and maintains. Awe, reverence, and giving glory to God is the revealed way in which God is to be worshipped. The fear of the Lord is the only way to worship God, it endures forever, all other worship carries with it condemnation. May we fear God and know that He is righteous altogether in all that He wills and does.

### **May 29 Psalm 19:10, 11 Psalter 38:3; 40:4; 41:4**

A hand full of pure gold is very beautiful and has in itself value and power to give you the things your flesh desires; but our flesh quickly fades and gold will not bring true peace and joy. The taste of honey, not honey from a store, honey that drips straight from the cells of the honeycomb is unforgettable. It has a refreshing sweetness and wonderful smell. God so works in the heart of His people that the desire for God far exceeds the desire for the greatest earthly pleasures. The words of God which govern every aspect of life endure forever. We are His servants and He warns us of danger and rewards the keeping of His word with eternal life. Though the instruction is clear, we find ourselves so often way off the path and deep into sin. Tomorrow we come to God with the psalmist in prayer for sanctification.

### **May 30 Psalm 19:12, 13 Psalter 38:4; 40:5; 41:5,6**

Since the law of God is perfect, more to be desired than gold, sweeter than honey, perfect and clear instruction for the way which leads to everlasting life, why would anyone depart from that way? It makes no sense. The word "errors" means "strayings." In the original, "strayings" is put first in the sentence for emphasis. When we turn to read God's word, we so often discover that we have once again strayed far from the commandments of God. These strayings, who can understand them! Sin is rooted so deeply in our nature we are dead and unable to obey God by ourselves. When we think we have overcome one sin, we grow more sensitive and discover more sin. We try to hide and cover sin, but it does not work. The only thing to do is cry out to God for his work of justification, cleansing us from sin and making us innocent in Christ. Only by knowing our righteousness in Christ, can we begin to escape the dominion of sinful pride and walk in that path of righteousness.

### **May 31 Psalm 19:14 Psalter 38:5; 40:6; 41:7**

We can speak with our lips, think, and meditate upon God, but even our best works are defiled with sin. We must pray that God cleanse even our prayers that they be acceptable before God's holy and pure eyes. We must not pray to be seen and heard of men. Recognize that we pray to Jehovah, the covenant God who will strengthen us. He is our Redeemer. The word for "redeemer" refers to the kinsman redeemer of the Old Testament who buys back a relatives property as Boaz redeemed Ruth. Redemption is an expression of tender love, compassion, and mercy. We come to God in prayer knowing Him in Christ as our faithful covenant God and Savior.

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# David's Praise Among the Heathen

by Rev. George M. Ophoff \*

*We reprint this exposition of scripture in connection with the May 21 devotional. Ed.*

**I**n grateful awareness that in warfare with the heathen his victories were the Lord's, David vowed that he would give thanks unto the Lord among the heathen. The lines read:

*Therefore I will give thanks unto thee,  
Lord, among the heathen,  
And I will sing praises unto thy name.*

An identical sentiment receives expression in Ps. 96. Here it meets us in the form of an exhortation:

*Sing unto the Lord, bless his name, shew  
forth his salvation from day to day.  
Declare his glory among the heathen, his  
wonders among all people.*

The wonders of the Lord were all His works through which He in His mercy effected the salvation of His people through the ages. Included are the plagues of the Lord upon Egypt, the signs of the period of the wanderings, the victories of Joshua, of the judges, of Saul and of David in all their warfare with the heathen. Being works of God, they were revelatory of His strength and of the beauty of His holiness, in a word, of all His goodness. And to set them forth as His works was to declare His glory; it was equivalent to singing praises unto His name.

That David would do among the heathen. That the prophets in Israel had been doing through the ages—singing praises unto the Lord among the heathen. Not that in the Old Testament dispensation the church through

a called and ordained ministry was engaged in spreading the Gospel among the heathen. David did not live with the heathen of his empire as active in their midst as a missionary minister. David was a man of war in the physical sense, and he dwelt in his house in Jerusalem. The people of Israel through the ages had their prophets, men of God directly called and sent of Him to speak His Word. But with few exceptions their sphere of labor was limited to the house of Israel. Singing praises unto the Lord

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**That God is it  
is the heart and  
core of all his  
songs.**

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was not done by missionary ministers laboring as official organs of the church among the heathen.

The idea of different. It is this. That people of Israel, definitely their prophets, as dwelling in the midst of the nations and in contradistinction of the nations, sang praises unto the Lord, that is, set forth their victories in their warfare with the heathen as given them of God. That was Israel's calling in the midst of the nations, namely, to set forth its history in its right light in order that God's

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name might be declared throughout al the earth. Accordingly, the substance of all of Moses' communications to Pharaoh is that the plagues spoiling his land and people were strokes laid on him by Israel's God. "The lord is a man of war," sang Moses and the children of Israel. "The Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea. . . . Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sendest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the flood stood upright as an heap, and the depths were concealed in the heart of the sea." In voicing this praise, Moses and the people of Israel were giving thanks unto the Lord among the heathen and singing praises unto His name. The one proposition on which all the prophecy of the Scriptures turns is precisely that God is it. And the one proposition on which all false prophecy turns it precisely that man is it. Thus in penning and publishing his Psalms David, too, was giving

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**The salvation of  
Zion is always  
effected through  
the destruction  
of the adversary.**

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thanks unto the Lord among the nations. That God is it is the heart and core of all his songs.

The Scribes and Pharisees of Christ's day were zealous missionaries. They compassed sea and land to make on proselyte. But the trouble is that they were not telling the heathen that God is it. The result was that they made their converts "twofold more the child of hell than themselves" (Matt. 23:15)

The true prophets of the Old Dispensation set forth the works of God as His works, as wonders of His grace. And the report of these works, as rightly construed and extolled by God's people, as set forth by them in their

right light, spread far and wide. They spake, of course, by the infallible guidance of Christ's Spirit. Their constructions originated not in them but in God. They spake His word among the heathen, so that Israel's history, the works of God, the wonders of the Lord, the revelation of God in Christ, was known more or less also to the heathen of Israel's world. It could not well be otherwise. The salvation of Zion is always effected through the destruction of the adversary. And the heathen were that adversary. Over and over they had seen God's wrath and power as operative in their own destruction. They, too, knew of the Lord's works. And the memory of what God had wrought was perpetuated also among them. Said Rahab the harlot, to the spies, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what he did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we did hear these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 11:8-11). And the counsel of the Philistine priests and diviners to their Philistine lords contains also this remarkable word, "Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods. . . . and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go and they departed?" (I Samuel 6:5, 6).

Truly, God was known to the heathen of Israel's world. They had knowledge of the revelation of His mercy to His people. It raises the question of the reaction of the heathen. The great bulk of them, following in the footsteps of the Egyptians and the Canaanites, hardened their hearts. The author of the book of Joshua makes mention of the perverse attitude of the Canaanites, "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings," he writes. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hevites the inhabitants of Gibeon." He adds the reason, "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses."

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But the Scriptures reveal that there were also others. Heathen they were, drawn by the light that penetrated the darkness also of their night into God's kingdom. First to be mentioned is the mixed multitude that followed the children of Israel out of Egypt. Doubtless the Ethiopian, whom Moses married after the death of Zipporah belonged to them. It shows that God had His people among that motley crowd. The Kenites were

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**the eternal  
God folding in  
His arms and  
taking to His  
bosom all  
nations, the  
whole of our  
fallen race.**

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friendly toward Israel. The kindness that they had shown the children of Israel at the time of their departure from Egypt was still being held in grateful remembrance at the time of Saul (I Samuel 15:6). Jethro, Moses father-in-law as a Kenite. His reaction to Moses' report on the glad happenings in Egypt is revealing. He rejoiced. He blessed the Lord. He extolled the Lord above all gods. He sacrificed burnt-offering for God. And Aaron and the elders drew nigh and ate bread with him (Exodus 18). The Gibeonites made peace with Joshua be it by the employment of a subterfuge. They did not harden their hearts by cast themselves on the mercy of Joshua and of the Lord. They said, "And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do." And they said, too, that it had been told them, "how that the Lord thy God commended his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you" (Joshua 11). Under the constraints of the living faith in Jehovah, Rahab, the harlot, hid the spies; and Ruth forsook Moab and joined herself to the commonwealth of Israel.

King David was fervently loved and much befriended by heathen men. During the Sauline persecution he brought his father and mother under the protecting wing of Moab's king; and there they remained until he received the kingdom (I Samuel 22). While he was in hiding in the

cave of Adullam, many warriors attached themselves to him, from whom he recruited his "mighty men" and later his bodyguard. Their names—Keethi and Pelethi—suggest that they were foreigners (II Samuel 8:19). He dwelt a long time in the city of Gath; and there, too, a band of brave Philistine men collected about him, and they were for him in his last great distress brought on by Absalom, "And the king went forth, and all the people after. . . . and all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites (men of Gath), six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king" (II Samuel 15:18). Uriah was a Hittite, that is, a descendant of Heth (II Samuel 11:3). The warriors of David included still other foreigners. There was an Ammorite names Zelek (II Samuel 23:37). It was in the house of a Gittite (man from Gath) that David placed the ark. In the hour of Absalom's revolt, it was foreigners who show him kindness. In his flight an Ammonite provided him with provision (II Samuel 17:27). Hushai, the Archite (from Arke, a city of Phoenicia) did him well by destroying the counsel of the traitor Ahithofel (II Samuel 15:32). Remarkable and touching was the faithfulness of Ittai, the man from Gath. "Wherefore goest thou also with me," said David to him, "return to thy place, and abide with the king, for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? Seeing I go whither I may; return thou, and take back thy brethren; mercy and truth be with thee." But Ittai replied, "As Jehovah liveth, and as the Lord my king liveth, surely in what place the lord my king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

"All the earth sought the face of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his heart" (I Kings 10:24). Having seen Solomon's wisdom, the queen of Sheba blessed the Lord his God, "which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice" (I Kings 10).

The Ninevites repented—and they truly repented—at the preaching of Jonah. Several centuries before the birth of Christ, the Jews were scattered throughout the whole civilized world. And they took with him their Scriptures. This is the solution of the visit of the Magi at the cradle of the Christ-child. They knew the Scriptures.

King Solomon's dedicatory prayer contains lines that should be quoted in this connection, "Moreover," so he prayed, "concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people

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Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; (For thy shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm; when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear thou in heaven from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name."

The law of Moses is much occupied with these "strangers that would come out of a far country for the sake of the Lord's name." If a stranger, sojourning with the people of Israel, desired to keep the passover, his males (including himself) were circumcised, and then he was permitted to come near and keep it; and he was to be as one born in the land (Exodus 12:48; Numbers 9:14). He was allowed to "offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord" (Numbers 15:14). He had to be loved; food and raiment had to be given him, were he in need; and his cause had to be judged righteously (Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:18, 19; Deuteronomy 1:16).

In the light of this date the position that during the centuries inclosed by the calling of Abraham and the ascension of Christ, God was limiting salvation to the Jews so absolutely that not a heathen was saved or that the number of heathen saved was too few to have any meaning or to deserve mention even is seen to be untenable. Moreover, the position is not to be harmonized with the prophetic range of the Psalms and of the discourses of the later prophets. They foretell that the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth His glory (Psalm 102:15); that the Gentiles shall seek to the root of Jesse, that shall stand for an ensign of the people (Isaiah 11:10); that the Gentiles shall bring Zion's sons in their arms, and that her daughters shall be carried on their shoulders (Isaiah 49:50); that her sons shall come from far, and that her daughters shall be nursed at her side; that the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto her, and that to her shall come the forces of the Gentiles (Isaiah 60:50); that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains and that many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the top of the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths (Micah 4:1,2).

Here we listen to the prophets of the 8<sup>th</sup> century before Christ. What we behold in their words is a marvelous thing, namely, the eternal God folding in His arms

and taking to His bosom all nations, the whole of our fallen race.

It raises the question whether these prophets were in any way prepared in their minds for the reception of the revelation of this mighty and glorious thing. Must we not conclude that such was indeed the case—conclude that they were speaking of a thing that through the centuries had been going on right along in their own limited world, to wit: the coming of "the strangers" out of a far country for the sake of the Lord's name—the coming of these strangers to pray toward God's house, in the earthly Canaan, the heaven of the Old Testament church. Besides, let us consider that the proclamations of these 8<sup>th</sup> century prophets of God's purpose to draw all men to Himself through Christ's cross was but an expansion of the gospel as first set forth by God Himself in paradise. "I will set enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed...." is the germ of all prophecy. And through the centuries God had continued to speak with always greater clarity as when he said to Abraham that in him were all the families of the earth destined to be blessed.

In the Old Dispensation the house of God was established in the top of a mountain—Mt. Zion—that is on earth. Accordingly only a few nations came and said, "Come, let us go up to the house of Jacob"—the few nations of Israel's small world, of David's empire. But Christ has come; and He died for our sins. He is exalted. His Spirit is now. And the house of God is exalted above the mountains in the highest heavens. Many nations now come and say, "come, let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob."

As to David, he was priest and prophet as well as king in Israel's throne. For he vowed to give thanks unto the Lord among the nations of his domain. Therein, too, he typified Christ.

*Be Thou, O God, exalted high,  
Yea, far above the starry sky,  
And let Thy glory be displayed  
O'er all the earth Thy hands have made.*



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# The Dawning of His Faithfulness

By Beth De Vries

The eastern sky is filled with shades of pink ranging from very light high overhead to medium pink and gently blending toward the horizon. The colors change constantly. Then, in an instant, a bright orange ball of color shows itself on the horizon. The earth is instantly filled with a bright light and a new day is upon us. The wonder of each new day filled with the beauty of creation is a source of strength for us as we seek to glorify God in it.

Genesis 1:14-19 describes the creation of the sun on the fourth day. Although light itself was created on the first day the formation of the sun which gives our earth light is not present until that fourth day. The light bearers; namely sun, moon, and stars; were created to hold the light that was present from the very beginning. Light was needed to produce heat so that the trees and herbs created on the third day could exist. Light is also a picture of God as is seen in I John 1:5, "This is then the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." There is no life apart from light, whether it be the plants' need for light from the sun or God's peoples' need for His spiritual light to maintain their spiritual lives. Our inner light is a gift of God from which we receive knowledge, as seen in II Corinthians 4:6, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." God is light from the beginning and uses light on this earth to sustain life. The earthly sun, moon, and stars regulate our days and seasons because God is a God of order. Time on this earth is regulated by the sun rising and setting, or the earth's rotation to be specific. These things are also under God's control, and He has power to change them when He sees fit. We are given examples of this in Joshua 10:12-14 when the sun stood still till the battle was won, and again in Isaiah 38:8 when God moved the sun back 10 degrees as a sign to king Hezekiah. God commands the rotation of the earth and the maintenance of the seasons constantly moment by moment. May we ever stand amazed by this.

Light, even as it is present at the beginning of time, is a direct opposite of darkness. God uses light to reveal Himself in a world that fell in Adam into wickedness. This light bears witness of God to all the world that none may be without excuse. The light shines in a wicked world through the creation and through the witness of God's people. Yet, the reprobate can not come to the light as seen in John 1:5 "and the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Each new day dawns on this earth as God causes it to, and we too are renewed with each day. God puts a new spirit in us, and we must be reminded of it moment by moment. The beauty of God's creation is seen by the light of day or the stars as they illuminate the night. The light of sun remains present in the night by its reflection on the moon which adds to our light at night. As the light

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In each new day we have a responsibility to praise God in all we do.

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is never absent from this earth, so also is God always present in the hearts of His people. Even the wicked of this world can not deny the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. Yet, we must always remember to give God the glory for this wonder.

In each new day we have a responsibility to praise God in all we do. It is a comfort that each day we can seek forgiveness of our sins from God, and each morn begin anew to serve Him. Creation continually reminds us of God and may each sunrise and sunset we witness remind us of His faithfulness.

May we daily seek God and recommit ourselves to His way. God grants us the grace to seek Him that some day we may live in the everlasting light of God in heaven. This is foretold in Isaiah 60: 19-20. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall

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no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself:  
for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days  
of they mourning shall be ended.” ❖

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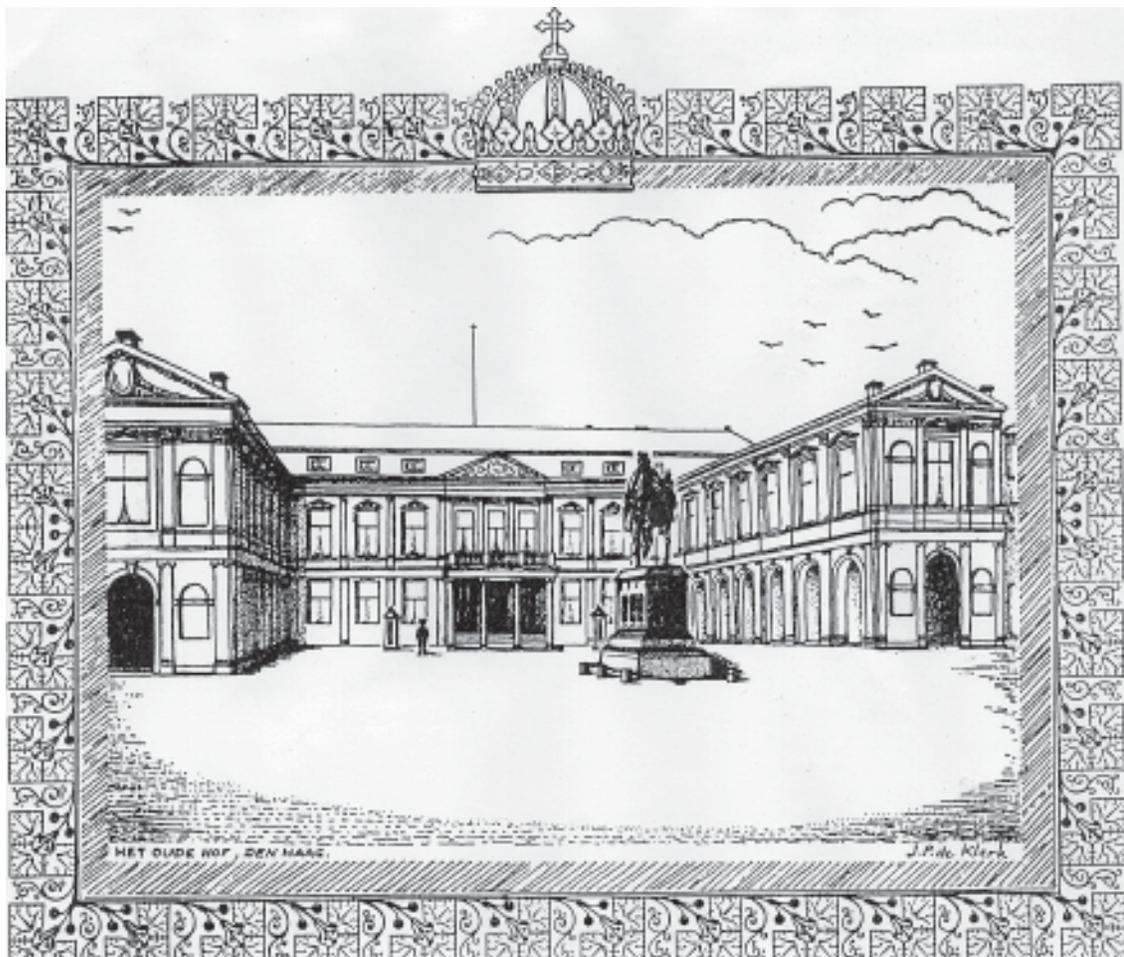
*Beth is a member of Grace Protestant Reformed  
Church in Standale, Michigan.*

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## Church History

# The House of Orange

by J.P. de Klerk



**Y**ou see here the Dutch Royal Palace in the street called “het Noordeinde,” in the center of the city of The Hague (which was founded in the Middle Ages). This Palace was drawn by me in 1940, with my father as a policeman standing in front of it. The doors of the main entrance are of thick

glass, the biggest part of the building is on the other side in the palace garden, with its own entrance. There is also the building of the Royal Files, and a connection with the Royal stables, where horses, cars and carriages are kept in good condition.



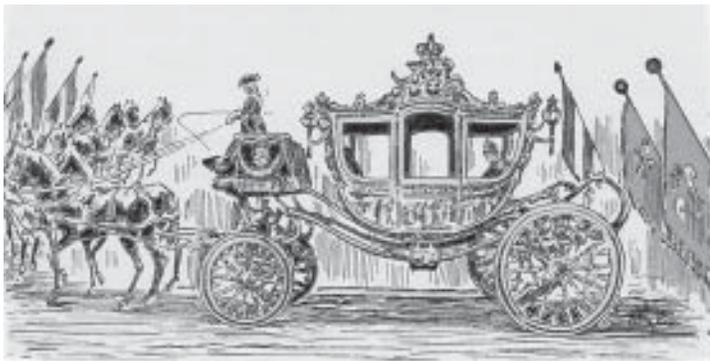
You see the statue of Prince William I of Orange, with whom the Royal family in The Netherlands began. You see the Prince on his horse, as he went with his armies in many battles to save The Netherlands out of the hands of the Roman Catholics from Spain

(King Philips II, who wanted to destroy the Reformation) who killed thousands of people.

Nowadays this side of the palace is closed off by a high fence with gates made of wrought iron, guarded by the royal constabulary in colorful uniforms on special occasions of an official nature. The white plaster has been removed from the walls, so that the original bricks are visible again. The royal family does not live here, but in "Huts ten Bosch," in another part of the city, next to a small wood.

Once a year, on the third Tuesday in September, the Queen opens both the Dutch Upper and Lower House with a speech from the throne in de Ridderzaal (the Knights Hall), the oldest building in The Hague. The speech sets out the policy the government intends to pursue during the coming year of session.

Along the route between the Palace "Noordeinde" and the Knights Hall about 60,000 people are waiting to



see the Golden Coach, with (nowadays) Queen Beatrix, her husband Prince Claus, and her eldest son Prince William-Alexander who is the crown-prince and not yet married. The Coach was once given to the grandmother of queen Beatrix, the late queen Wilhelmina, and is made of Japanese teak gilded with gold leaf. It proceeds with

eight horses in front, footmen next to them, followed by other members of the royal family in the glass carriage, regiments of the cavalry on horseback, the police force, the grenadiers and the yellow riders. All over the city flags with the national colors and orange streamers. Along the route and before the Houses of Parliament there are guards of honor and military bands. The royal procession departs at one o'clock. From that moment salutes ring out every minute to let the people know their Head of State is on her way to the General Assembly of the States General. Also the whole Diplomatic Corps is waiting there.

The history of the House of Orange begins with Prince William I, born at the German castle of Dillenburg, as Count of Nassau, but in 1544 he became also Prince of Orange (a small principality in France, inherited from his uncle René of Châlons).

He was educated as a nobleman at the court of sovereign guardian Margaretha van Parma in Brussels. He married in 1551 with the Dutch countess Anna van Bueren. In 1555 he became commander-in-chief of the army and member of the State Council of King Philips II; after his departure to Spain he became governor ("stadtholder") over most of The Netherlands and Bourgondy. His wife died in 1558. He married in 1561 with Anna van Saksen. The Prince refused to send an army to France against the Huguenots, took up contact with the Protestants in Germany and France (Louis de Conde). He was a wealthy man and had much influence. At New Year's Eve 1564 the Prince delivered a famous speech during a meeting of the State Council. He demanded more power for the Council, a calling together of all the members of the General Assembly of the States General and no more terrorizing of the Protestants by King Philips. On April 11, 1567 he went home, in Dillenburg. The king was furious and called him to appear for the Blood Tribunal. Prince William refused. He decided to liberate The Netherlands. In September 1568 he appeared with 14,000 soldiers near the city of Maastricht, but the following month an army of the Duke of Alva (on behalf of King Philips) defeated him. He went to the frontier with France, where he had to send his troops away because he could not afford them further. With his brothers Henry and Lewis and 1,200 horse-soldiers he went to the Huguenots of admiral de Coligny in Limoges. In October 1569 they were defeated and he had to flee back again to Dillenburg. He sold all the valuables he had. On July 7, 1572 he went with 24,000 soldiers to Bergen in the southern part of The Netherlands of those days, to help his brother Lewis who was

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surrounded by enemies. On July 23, he took the city of Roermond and several smaller cities, but the farmers of the area gave him no support and he had to send his army away (they were hired soldiers). He left for the Northern part of The Netherlands and arrived in



*William of Orange  
(1533-1584), the founder  
of the Royal House*

Enkhuizen where he organized the big Resistance against the Roman-Catholic king in Spain.

Prince William stated that he had no soldiers but all his trust was in the Lord Almighty. He was only willing to negotiate with the enemy if the Reformed Faith was respected. The king of Spain refused to listen; he sent more armies against the Protestants in The Neth-

erlands. However, the Prince got help of the “watergenzen” (freedom-fighters who brought a fleet of small ships together and founded “the marines”). They liberated the city of Middelburg (province of Zeeland) of the Spanish occupation forces, followed by several other towns and cities. In 1575 the Prince married with Charlotte de Bourbon. He went to meetings in all directions of the country, trying to reach a peace accord with freedom of religion. It was very difficult to get enough support, both from friends and enemies, because they had widely different interests and (not without reason) distrust. In July 1580 the king of Spain put Prince William under a ban and offered 25,000 golden “schilden” (one “schild” was seventy cents) to the person who murdered him. The first attack happened on March 18, 1582 by Jean Jaureguy, in Antwerp. The wound was serious and Charlotte spent many days and nights trying to stop the bleeding. The Prince recovered slowly and his wife died. The following year the Prince settled down in his simple palace “de Princenhof” in Delft, and married with Louise de Colig, a widow, daughter of Admiral de Coligny who in Paris was murdered by the Roman Catholics in 1572. In 1584 Prince William was murdered by Balthasar Gerards. His last words were, “My God, have mercy with my soul and with this poor people.” He said it in French, which was the official language in those days. He was buried in the “Nienwe Kerk” in Delft, which was built in 1384 in late gothic style. In a big “royal cellar” almost all the members of the House of Orange are

buried (together with the mortal remains of their spouses). This building has a length of 100 meters and is owned by the State Reformed Church, since 1572. The tower has a beautiful carillon, built in 1660 by Francois Hemony. The organ was installed by Batz in 1839 and has 3,000 pipes...

Prince Maurits followed in his father’s footsteps. He had however permanently a big army and a big fleet at his disposal. He fought meter after meter against the Spaniards, but was also directly involved in defending the Reformed churches against the Remonstrants. He died on April 23, 1625.

His brother Frederik Hendrik continued the fighting and liberating, against armies who wanted to destroy the followers of the Reformed Faith, inside and outside The Netherlands. He made the palace at the Noordeinde in The Hague his residence and did his governmental business in the Ridderzaal. In 1625 he had married with Amalia van Solms. He became feared and admired by all the heads of states of Europe in his days. He died in 1647.

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**Prince William stated that  
he had no soldiers but  
all his trust was in the  
Lord Almighty.**

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Prince William II succeeded his father. He married in 1641 with Maria Stuart, daughter of king Charles I of England. He died in The Hague 1650. A week later his son was born (William III). When William III was 27 years old he married with another Maria Stuart, who was a daughter of King James II of England. In 1672 he had become commander-in-chief of the army and the navy. He liberated England of the Roman Catholics. In 1689 he and his wife became King and Queen of England, but he remained Prince of The Netherlands at the same time.

“Stadtholder” King William III had no children. So, when he died on March 19, 1702 there came a period without Head of State in The Netherlands till 1747 when Prince William IV was asked (he was already since 1718 “Stadtholder” Prince of Orange-Nassau in the provinces Friesland and Groningen). He married in 1734 with Princess Anna, daughter of King George II of England. He became also commander-in-chief of the army and the navy. There were no wars in his days, but he had to solve many problems of administration in several parts

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of the country; that did not go very well, because he disliked straightforward or harsh measures. He was in poor health. However, he was widely respected by the people. He died October 22, 1751 in his palace in The Hague.

His son, who would be known as William V was born in 1748, so he was too young for the throne. His mother was regent (she reigned in his name) till she died in 1759. The job was continued by the Duke of

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**He fought meter after meter against the Spaniards, but was also directly involved in defending the Reformed churches against the Remonstrants.**

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Brunswijk-Wolfenbittel (as his guardian), till he married in 1767 with Wilhelmina van Pruisen (in Berlin). Like his father he was a kind man, but not a leader with sufficient authority. Also it was not clear to him that in the whole of Europe a revolution was brewing, led by French politicians who infiltrated The Netherlands, so that the movement of the “patriotten” came into being. An oligarchy of local governors, mayors and tax officials supported them secretly. When they moved in the direction of a coup d’etat, Princess Wilhelmina called her brother, King Frederik II of Prussia. He came with an army and restored order in The Netherlands. The traitors fled to France. On September 20, 1787 the Prince was fully in power again but as soon as the Prussians had departed, he got problems again December 31, 1791 he departed with family and friends to England. He would never see The Hague again. He died in Germany. In 1958 his body was finally brought to the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft.

After the years of occupation by the French Army (Napoleon) the eldest son of William V came back to The Netherlands and became in 1815 the first King of this country. The ceremony took place in Brussels which belonged yet to The Netherlands (in 1839 Belgium came into existence). He was against the Synodal-Reformed people leaving the State Reformed Churches (1834). On October 7, 1840 he left the throne and went to Berlin, where he married with the Duchess d’Oultremont (second marriage).

His eldest son became in the same year King William II. He was known as a brilliant cavalry general (battles in Spanish Vittoria, and against Napoleon in Quatre-Bras

and Waterloo), the right hand of the British general Wellington. The Government of The Netherlands gave him a palace in Soestdijk, but he went most of the time to Tilburg, in the southern part of the country. He married in 1816 with Anna Paulowna, sister of the Russian Czar Alexander I. He was not against the Syn. Reformed people. He accepted a new Constitution and left the governing to the Ministers of the Crown. He had three children. He died in a small palace in Tilburg in 1849. King William III was at first more autocratic than his father, but later he accommodated, though he disliked the liberals openly. He was confronted with the “Afscheiding” (officially recognizing the Syn. Reformed Church, after lots of conflicts, in 1870). He lived from 1817-1890, married in 1839 with Princess Sophia van Wurtemberg. He had three sons, namely William, Maurits and Alexander, but they all died before their father passed away. In 1879 he married for the second time. That was with Emma van Waldeck-Pyrmont. In 1880 Princess Wilhelmina was born.



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Ten years later she became the Queen, but because she was yet too young, her mother acted in her name as the Regent, till September 5, 1898. Queen Wilhelmina married on February 7, 1901 with Duke Hendrik van Mecklenburg-Schwerin. They lived in the palace Noordeinde in The Hague, where on April 30, 1909 Princess Juliana was born. My father got to know this small royal family very well.

On May 10, 1940, at three o'clock in the night, my father heard the sound, of many planes above him in the air. He stood in the garden of the royal palace, next to the back door, and suddenly he saw military searchlight. The anti-aircraft guns of the Dutch army fired their first shots, bombs fell at the military airfield of Ockenburg, sirens warned the population of the city of The Hague, a lieutenant opened the door of the concrete air-raid shelter. "This is war," he said. Indeed, The Netherlands was attacked by the "Luftwaffe" (air force) of Nazi Germany. Pieces of shrapnel (of exploded grenades) came raining down from the air. The Queen came, soon followed by Princess Juliana, her husband Prince Bernhard, and their first children, Beatrix and Irene (she had married on January 7, 1937), who had arrived from palace Soestdijk to join the Queen. My father ushered them into shelter. The Queen took his arm and

said "Come, you must not remain there outside. Any moment you can be hit"... The Dutch army was already mobilized and trained since September 1939, with defense lines and bunkers along the frontiers. I know the Queen was warned by King Leopold of Belgium, who had come in the possession of the attack plans of Hitler, and she had had discussions with the commander-in-chief and members of the government, but what can two small countries do in a half year against (as it was) a military super-power with planes, parachutists, tanks, flame throwers, heavy artillery, etc. The Queen had actively supported plans and proposals of the general staff, but they were not accepted by the government of the day...

On May 5, 1945 father stood again next to the palace, when he got the message that the Germans had surrendered. Five terrible years of terror and fear had passed. Queen Wilhelmina and the government came back, and Princess Juliana with her family, respectively from England and Canada. In 1948 Princess Juliana became the next Queen. She had four daughters. The eldest, Beatrix, is now the Queen; she has three sons. All of them members of the State Reformed Church. ❖



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# In The “Nieuwe Kerk”

This is the interior of the Nieuwe Kerk (“New Church”) in the old Dutch city of Delft, The Netherlands. A late gothic cruciform basilica, built in the years 1384-1495. The chancel has twelve

pillars (representing the twelve Apostles). The nave of the church has sixteen columns (representing the sixteen prophets in the Bible). In 1536 the tower was partly destroyed but rebuilt, but the bells, the organ and the stained glass of all the windows was lost. When all was restored, in 1654, a powder-magazine close by exploded and another restoration was needed, this time parts of the walls included. In 1572 the church became property of the State Reformed Church. In 1660 a complete new carillon came in the tower. In 1839 a new organ, with three keyboards and 3,000 pipes. Finally in the years 1923-1937 the whole church, inside and outside, was carefully restored including the magnificent mausoleum with angels of black marble remembering Prince William I, which is on the other side of the church next to the entrance to the cellar where the members of the House of Orange are buried (with a few exceptions like Prince William III who was buried with his wife in the Westminster Cathedral in London). ❖



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*J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from the Protestant Reformed Church in New Zealand.*

Church Family

## Godly Gossip

Malichi 3:16-18

Every two years there is a conference held somewhere in the British Isles under the control of the British Reformed Fellowship. Although the majority of the people in attendance are either from Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland or are of your Protestant Reformed churches in America—including Professors Engelsma and Hanko as our two usual guest speakers—many come from other parts of Great Britain, such as England, Scotland, and Wales, as well as Eastern Europe, Australia, Singapore, and the Republic of Ireland.

Not only is there a rich diversity of national and cultural backgrounds, but there are also some differing shades of theological opinion present. At any one time

during the course of the conference it is possible to be involved in a discussion on Bible versions, church government, common grace, baptism or even acting! And yet there is a fundamental agreement as to the nature and necessity of the Christian faith as rediscovered at the Reformation. Apart from the lectures given, the highlight of the conference for many of the young—and not so young—people is the conversation, the stimulating, sweet, heavenly, God-intoxicated conversation, which inevitably saturates the conference during the day... and much of the night.

That such communication is not something incidental or secondary to the faith is proved to us by Malachi. The distinguishing characteristic of these Old Testament

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saints in a corrupt and degenerated age was the fear of God. Fear of God does not mean slavish terror, but healthy reverence and awe before God's power and holiness. This is the root of all true relation in all ages, and is the beginning and end of wisdom. The basis of their religion is the thought of God's name, which means their meditation of and obedience to the revelation of God in His Word, not the traditions and superstitions of corrupt Judaism or the pagan idolatries of neighboring heathendom.

Although there are many fruits of true religion, one is specifically mentioned and emphasized here—they spoke often one to another. This little hint speaks volumes about the lives of those Old Covenant saints, setting an example for us today as young people.

First it tells us about the *company* they kept. Like attracts like, and those that feared the Lord sought others of like mind and faith to converse and commune with. Nothing unexpected here, for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness, or what communion has light with darkness, and what concord has Christ with the devil, or what part has the believer with an infidel?

The company a person keeps reveals much about him or her, especially regarding *aims and interests*. Some-

one will not have the desire to keep company with God's people and talk about the things of God unless that person is of God with God's interests at heart. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. That is, whatever is in the soul will be reflected and reproduced in our speech. This applies not just to the quantity or amount of conversation we make involving God, but equally the shape of our conversation—not just what we say but why and how.

Finally, we are explicitly informed as to the amount of *time* these godly folk spent in conversation. They spoke often one to another. Not just every two years at some sort of Old Testament convention. God was pleased with them for this, as is signified in His hearing and remembering. Using covenant language, Jehovah declares, "They shall be mine." And He gives them and us promises for both this life and that which is to come. In this life, they are promised wisdom and discernment (v. 18), and in the life to come, mercy and favor, such as are only reserved for the closest family bonds and the most precious possessions (v. 17). ❖

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## Church News

# Church News

**BAPTISMS** *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."*

*Mark 16:16*

### BETHEL, IL

Mr. & Mrs. Jens Praestgaard presented their daughter, Sofie Christina, for baptism.

### DOON, IA

Maria Lyn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Floyd VanDenTop, was presented for baptism.

### HUDSONVILLE, MI

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Sadie Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Engelsma.

### SOUTHWEST, MI

Mr. & Mrs. Travis VanBemmel presented their son, Mason Grant, for baptism.

**CONFESSIONS OF FAITH**  
*"...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

*Romans 10:10*

### BYRON CENTER, MI

Public confession of faith in our Lord was made by Jonathan Lubbers.

### FAITH, MI

Kristin Kalsbeek and Kelly Scholten have made public confession of faith in our Saviour.

### HUDSONVILLE, MI

Public confession of faith was made by Anna Kamps.

### REDLANDS, CA

Faith VanMeeteren has made public confession of faith.

**MARRIAGES** *"...and they twain shall be one flesh."*

*Matthew 19:5*

### HOPE, MI

Joined in holy matrimony were Mr. Jim Geerlings and Miss Sara Langerak.

Thank -you to those of you who sent in bulletins this month. Please continue to send them in. We *welcome* more news from the other churches who have not yet sent in their bulletins. You may send your bulletins to:

**Melinda DeMeester**  
**1171 Sunset Hills NW**  
**Grand Rapids, MI 49544**

or e-mail to:

**melindad@juno.com**

## What Is Of Good Report (6)

The school year was almost finished and I could hardly wait for summer vacation to begin. If only we didn't have all these tests! The weather had become perfect for rollerblading, soccer, and basketball—anything except studying. I could hardly stand it! And so began my problems...

"Whatcha doin' tonight, Philip? Why don't you come along with the guys and me to West Court? Bring your basketball and we'll play some three on three."

"No," I sighed as I answered Bill, "I have to study for a test."

"Oh, c'mon, the fresh air will make you do even better on your test. And besides, you have the best basketball."

I knew I needed all the time I could get to study for that test. It would be a hard one and I had to keep my grades up. But I had to play basketball, too, I thought.

"Well, I suppose some fresh air and exercise might help. Maybe a little while wouldn't hurt," I said. "I'll meet you at six."

Bill smiled and gave me a thumbs up.

I frowned and walked away with thumbs down. I brightened, though, as I thought about what fun it would be at West Court. After all, a little while probably wouldn't hurt...

My palms were sweaty as Mr. Turner handed back our tests. I had to admit it—I was worried. Finally mine was on my desk. I gulped. I had never received such a bad grade before! There was a note under the grade: I had to meet with Mr. Turner after class.

"I'm quite disappointed, Philip."

"So am I, Mr. Turner," I said quietly. "I didn't study as much as I intended to."

"Mm-hm. Intentions are important, but whether you act on them or not reveals the real you—and your grade."

"Yes, Sir."

"I've decided to give the class a chance to do some extra credit, though. Hopefully your work this time will reveal the hard working Philip that I thought you were."

And this time, it did.

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"Finally, brethren, . . . whatsoever things are of good report; . . . think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). ❖

*Connie is the mother of 5 children and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.*

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer



**Puzzle:** Here are some words that might describe someone as being "of good report." Can you find these words in the puzzle below? (Do these words describe you?)

|          |           |              |
|----------|-----------|--------------|
| friendly | generous  | hard working |
| helpful  | kind      | obedient     |
| polite   | prayerful | thankful     |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | P | A | K | E | H | T | F | U | L | S |
| B | O | F | D | N | L | E | I | U | D | U |
| Y | L | D | N | E | I | R | F | W | I | O |
| L | I | P | I | A | Y | R | T | L | U | R |
| F | T | O | K | F | E | N | H | T | Y | E |
| K | E | N | S | Y | E | R | A | G | O | N |
| A | G | T | A | I | C | E | N | F | U | E |
| H | A | R | D | W | O | R | K | I | N | G |
| R | P | E | K | A | L | U | F | N | H | T |
| I | B | W | I | H | E | D | U | K | B | I |
| O | A | G | L | U | F | P | L | E | H | N |

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*"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

#### **Camp Miniwanca**

*On the shores of Lake Michigan*

**August 18-22, 1997**

#### **Knowing My God**

**Theme text: John 17:3    Theme song: Psalter #64 vs. 2**

*"Developing your personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ"*

#### **Feature Speakers**

**Rev. Ronald Cammenga: WHO God Is For Me**

**Rev. Douglas Kuiper: What He Has DONE For Me**

**Rev. Carl K. Haak: What I AM DOING To Know Him**

*We're looking forward to seeing you this summer!*

**Registration forms are due May 15.**

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*Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church Young People's Society*

*• Faith • Fellowship • Fun •*

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