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Lights



Purchasing a Degree

by Rev. John A. Heys



The following article was found in the June 1960 issue of the Beacon Lights (Vol. XX, #5). It was written by Rev. John A. Heys, minister of the South Holland, Illinois Protestant Reformed Church at that time. Rev. Heys is now minister emeritus in the PRC.

The time of graduation is here.

There may be a few of our readers who graduate this month from the eighth or ninth grade. More numerous, however, will be the number that graduate from the twelfth grade. This is simply due to the fact that the age group to which *Beacon Lights* is directed is the high school level and higher. Although, of course, we welcome the younger readers and even recommend to our parents that they train their children early in reading the pages of *Beacon Lights*.

But graduation-days are here regardless of who the readers of *Beacon Lights* may be. And therefore we have been requested to write a few lines in connection with graduation.

We have one thing which we wish to say in that connection, and that is this: Congratulations, graduates! Congratulations whether it be from the eighth, ninth, twelfth grade or even college, university or seminary that you graduate.

Another thing which we wish to say about graduation is expressed in our theme. That theme is not as far removed from graduation as it might at first seem. When you consider that gradual means by small steps or degrees, you begin to see that to speak of a degree at graduation time is not so far fetched. And a graduated scale is one that ascends in marked degrees or steps. So also a graduate is one who has reached a certain degree of scholastic attainment. We sometimes speak of a child passing or being promoted to the next grade. Well, actually he has graduated. He has gone up a degree, a step in his formal education. And when one has continued to go forward degree by degree, class by class, course by course, in due time he also is given a degree of Bachelor of Arts, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Law or any of the other degrees conferred by institutions of higher learning. But the kindergarten child who has done his work well also gets the degree of First Grader, the First Grader in process of time receives the degree of Second Grader. And thus it continues as long as he continues his formal education.

But for that very reason our title above may seem out of place. In these days of payola and of underworld rackets, of rigged quiz programs and the like, we are inclined to be suspicious of a title that speaks of purchasing a degree. No, rest assured, we are not advocating "polishing the teacher," bribing the school board, buying one's way into a profession. Such advice would not be a beacon light for covenant young people. It would be sin to recommend this even to the world. Our title, however, is borrowed from Scripture, even though it is not used in the same way and concerning the same thing. Paul writes of it to Timothy when he is speaking of the office of the deacon in I Timothy 3:13. He says, "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." He speaks even of a good degree.

Paul does not teach us here that we can purchase anything from God. Salvation by grace is the theme of all his teachings. And he emphasizes in his epistles that it is not of our works, not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God Who showeth mercy. In that light, what he means is that a man obtains a good degree. And the youth who graduates also obtains a degree.

Whether the graduate obtains a good degree or not depends upon the instruction that he has received and has accepted. Not all are privileged to attend a Christian high school, college or university. And even those who are so privileged do not always appreciate this fact. Intellectual progress seems profitable. To get a degree in respect to knowledge of earthly things is considered worth the effort. The knowledge of the truth, to know God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent, is not placed on the same level with the knowledge of this world and life in this world from a natural viewpoint. Yet the Word of God declares that the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. One does not obtain a good degree without that wisdom. It may seem to be a good degree to mankind in general. It is sought after and deemed essential for many types of work and positions. But without the fear of the Lord this is a foolish degree and not a good one. It is not a degree that God calls good. It is not attaining something that He judges to be worthwhile. To know all the things of creation and not to know the Creator in love is nothing short of folly. And the more one learns of this world without the fear of the Lord in his heart the more he graduates into folly upon folly. Degree by degree he obtains knowledge. But degree by degree he also progresses in folly.

Well, maybe some of our readers have been taught the folly of the world. Some may have put the spiritual in the background and concentrated upon the natural. And let us understand that to obtain a degree and to graduate in our catechetical instruction is more important than our obtaining of a diploma in regard to natural things. We can place so much emphasis upon school and upon graduating from school. But how much do we place upon the catechetical instruction in the truth of God's Word? Let us be concerned, also in the days of our youth, with graduating and obtaining a degree in these things of spiritual instruction. It is too bad that it is our custom to place children in a catechism class according to their ages. They graduate and go a degree higher according to their birthdays and not according to how well they have assimilated the truth. And now especially we have in mind our young people, our *Beacon Lights* readers. Be concerned with a good degree in this catechetical instruction. Apply yourselves faithfully and as before God's face to the memorization of the truth placed before you and listen carefully to the lesson explanation. Be as much, yea more concerned with making progress in these things as you are in making the grade in regard to the earthly things. For without this fear of the Lord there is not even the beginning, the principle of wisdom. And that fear of the Lord He works in us through His truth.

Having that fear of the Lord your graduation from grade school, high school or college will mean that you are purchasing or obtaining a good degree, one pleasing in God's sight and one for your own spiritual good. Otherwise graduation is not an occasion for rejoicing.

If you have neglected these things, let these lines be an admonition to turn from this way. By God's grace resolve to apply yourself so that you obtain a good degree in catechetical instruction. Frequent the house of God faithfully on the Sabbath and listen attentively to the proclamation of His Word. Be an active and faithful member of your Young People's Society, being prepared for the Bible discussion. And apply all this spiritual knowledge to the natural things of which you have learned in school. Then you have purchased to yourself a good degree. You have attained to something worthwhile. And do not stop there. Always we must be graduating. Always we must be going forward in our knowledge of the truth until God calls us home and we obtain the good degree of glory that He has prepared for us in His Son. May you graduate to that glory. ❖

From the Editor

Please note that we have combined the June and July issues. For your convenience, we have included devotionals for both months. Young people, this will be the issue to pack away for the convention because the outlines for discussion are included. These outlines may certainly be read with great profit to all, whether or not

you go to the convention, and the questions and quotes at the end would serve well to inspire discussion even before the convention.

We covet your prayers and welcome your comments, questions, and letters. We hope, the Lord willing, to have the next issue out for August. ❖

Story Time

No Greater Comfort

by Trisha Haak

Second Prize winner in the Beacon Lights writing contest in the High School or Younger category. (Correction: The entry by Mindy Steenholdt published in May was for the Post High School category.)

He sat quietly in the cave. No sound or movement came from him. He had the look on his face of an old man reminiscing of long ago. He was thinking of back then, but they were not happy thoughts. They were thoughts that left scars on his tender heart.

Joey had lost his mother when he was very young. The very example of Christian love had been taken from him, it seemed, when he had needed that love the most. His father, not able to cope with the death of a wife he had loved, had turned bitter towards God and had resisted the outstretched hands of the church. In his blindness from misery, he had forbidden the boy to attend church, he himself not even considering to attend church

anymore. So deeper and deeper he fell into his own misery, and faster and faster he fell into the pit of his own self-destruction. And like a weed, slowly he began to die within himself.

But through this all Joey survived. The love of God strengthened his heart; the Holy Spirit was a comfort to his soul. Like a flower he blossomed, becoming stronger and stronger in the Word of God, bathing in His sunlight.

But his one weakness was his inability to forgive his father. How could he forbid Joey to attend church when he needed it the most? But he had found his sanctuary in a cave. This was where he went to pray his simple yet sincere prayers. This was where he was reassured that no one could separate him from God. This was where he went to renew his strength that could be weakened under the hands of his confused father. And this was where he went to find peace with his soul. No one could find him in this monastic-like dwelling with the wind humming its Gregorian chant. No one but God.

He had gone off to college and had forgotten about the cave. He had found fellow friends who understood the pain he had gone through. And the more friends he found the less communication he had with his father. In

fact, he had hardly heard from anyone back home until today. The minister had called him. His father had just passed away a few minutes ago.

The minister told Joey that before his father had died, he had acknowledged Christ as his Savior. His father had also asked for Joey's forgiveness for being too selfish to see beyond his own grief to that of his son's.

It seemed as though his father was asking for the impossible. How could he forgive him? After all those years! He had survived all the pain, but not because his father had shown love and support. How difficult it had been! The love from his father seemed to have vanished as quickly as a vapor. He had been so alone! His father hadn't even tried to comfort Joey in his grief. He had barely acknowledged the boy and now Joey had to forgive him?

But Joey realized he was not seeing clearly. As a matter of fact, he was surrounded by a cloud of anger and that was not the right way to think. Like he did back then, he went to the cave of his childhood to find peace with his heart that now was in turmoil.

When he went back there he realized something, he had never been alone. Like in the poem, there was one

set of footprints and they were not his. God had carried him through it all. He had given him a comfort greater than any on this earth.

And then he perceived an even greater truth. Like Christ had forgiven him so must he forgive his father. "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors..." For if we can not liken ourselves to Christ, what right have we to call ourselves Christians?

Joey had found peace with his soul and again he felt the love of God surround him and the Holy Spirit reassure him. He would never be alone. The path of a Christian was not one that was taken solo. When he fell into despair, all he had to do was pray, and that heavy burden would be lifted of his shoulders. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

With that knowledge in his mind and that comfort in his heart, he sat back in his monastic-like cave, satisfied, and listened to the chanting of the wind. ❖

Trisha is a student at South Holland Protestant Reformed School.

Guest Article

A Christian View of Sports (1)

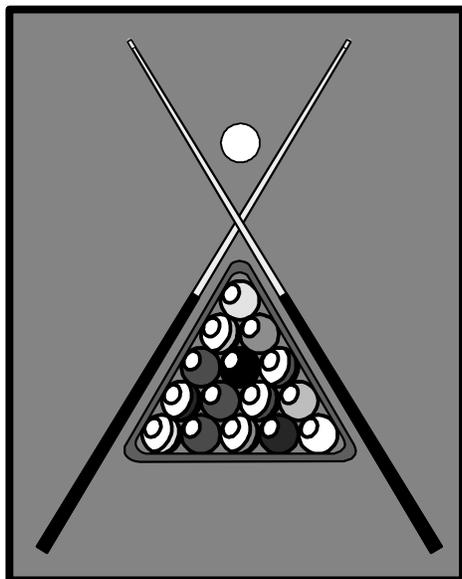
by Allan Baird

Play and sport was an accepted social activity of God's Old Testament people. It was indicative of health, life, and other temporal covenant blessings of God (Zech. 8:5). The Old Testament background for a Christian view of sport lies in its connection with the Israelite emphasis on feasting, dancing, and hospitality. There is no hesitation by the inspired authors of the New Testament to apply analogies drawn from sport to the Christian life. I Timothy 4:8 declares



bodily exercise to be profitable for a little time, and both Philippians 3:14 and I Corinthians 9:24 use the image of a sprinter straining toward the one true prize.

Games can be divided into three sorts. *Firstly*, there are games of wit or industry, which are regulated by human skill, such as physical sports, intellectual board or quiz games, or music. These are to be commended the most, as they promote to the greatest extent the health of the body and mind. *Secondly*, there are games of hazard, in which luck bares the sway and chance orders the game. These are unlawful for the Christian, because they resemble the Old Testament use of lots, which were used



to determine the mind of God when it could not be found by any other means. Also, such games tend to stir up troublesome emotions like fear and sorrow, and covetousness is usually the ground for them. *Thirdly*, there are games which mix these two elements, and which therefore are to be used sparingly if at all, and neither commended or condemned.

The purpose of Christian game and sport is ultimately the same as the chief end of man's existence, sport being a subordinate part of man's life. And the reason for man's existence is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The way in which we play a sport will be determined or conditioned by our aim in playing. If our purpose is spiritual and right, then our attitude while playing will be spiritual and right. More specifically, the main aim of playing

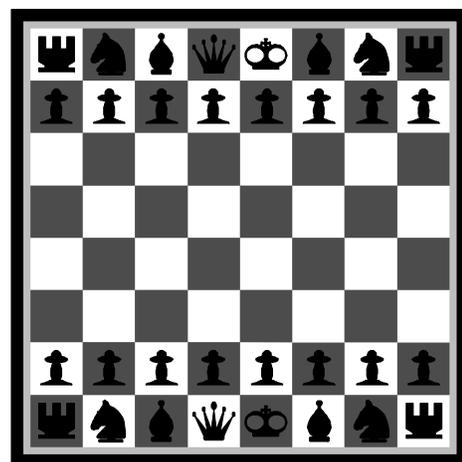
sport ought to be to keep the sixth commandment, which requires us to preserve life and health, and to develop a Christian character and the fruits of the Spirit, particularly joy in fellowship, meekness in defeat, and temperance in victory.



It should be clear from this that our purpose as Christians involved in sport is not primarily to gain physical skill, to grow in social awareness to prepare for adult life, or to gain glory for the school. Our purpose should not at all be to establish personal superiority by winning, to gain admiration for our powers, or to play solely for the sake of competition.

What is the essence or heart of Christian sport and games? In a word, FELLOWSHIP. Sport is therefore a covenant activity, to be engaged in by Christians with Christians. It is about playing with, not against; cooperation, not confrontation. There is a place for competition, but it is to stimulate the best in our opponents so we can admire them and enable them to effectively keep the sixth commandment. Above all, it is about loving our Christian neighbors and doing good to the household of faith. ❖

Allan is a member of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland.



Child Birth—Not Child Prevention

In the May issue of the *Beacon Lights*, our brother Mr. Fred Iwema, of our Bethel PRC, responded to my article entitled, “Child-bearing, Not Child Prevention” of the February issue. He indicates this is a “hot” issue and takes a stand against my view. He states his response “follows considerable meditation and prayer on his part” which I appreciate. Since this has also been true for myself, it may appear that either view may be acceptable after all. But can this be? Let us look a little deeper into this and seek to know what the will of God is for us with this “hot” issue.

Personally, the hatred of this world for large families is not a surprise to me because I come from a covenant family of ten sons and six daughters. Although we often heard many compliments for having such a nice family, there were also those who ridiculed us at times. But when our belief of God’s command to “be fruitful and to multiply” is questioned by members of the same household of faith we want to know for certain whether we are mistaken or if this biblical command is actually no longer in force. We must honestly face this matter in the light of God’s Word and then make our conclusions accordingly. May God give us the grace to do so in the spirit of Christian love for one another.

Our brother writes that this matter must be left up to each couple to decide for themselves and that the church, or anyone else, has no say in the matter. He wants to use the term “conception control” instead of “birth-control” or “child-prevention.” He made no reference to any passage of scripture for support of his position other than the passage of Genesis 38, which really does not support his view at all. He only mentions this passage is not relevant. However, both the position of “conception control” or “birth control” disregard the command of God in Genesis 1:28 and the instruction of God in Psalm 127. Therefore, my convictions on the issue of “birth-control,” “child-prevention” or “conception control” remain unchanged.

To avoid being overly lengthy in my response I will answer the questions he posed and then make a few summary remarks and conclusions.

Our brother asks the question, “*Can the ‘teatotalter’ judge the action of the moderate user?*” My answer is yes but they must judge the actions of the moderate user accurately. If the moderate user is only a moderate user he may not be condemned. However, to place the issue of alcohol consumption on par with our calling as husband and wives to have covenant children does not apply to the issue at hand. You will not become drunk if you have what some call “too many” children!

In the same paragraph, our brother asks: “*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?*” My answer is that I Corinthians 7:5 teaches husbands and wives are not to defraud each other, except it be with consent for a time, to give themselves to fasting and prayer. If one claims to have a “headache,” or to be “too tired” for sexual union for selfish reasons that may well be defrauding one’s mate. My response to the brother’s question whether “*the church is prepared, or even permitted, to ‘police the bedrooms’ of its parishioners*” is yes—if it becomes apparent that sin is going on in the bedroom. Of course, we should not place policemen in bedrooms but the church must not be afraid to begin discipline when sin is brought to their attention. And when sin is kept secret, we ought to remember that our Lord’s all-searching eyes are everywhere present—even in our bedrooms. Perhaps we do not take this as seriously as we ought to.

In a following paragraph, the brother states, “*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 Levirate law, Nadab and Abihu broke the command to come to worship according the instruction*

of God.” My reply here is that his reference to Onan, as simply breaking the Levitical law, misses the point since the very act of Onan was to prevent having seed (vs. 9), that is a child, from being raised up to carry on the name of his brother. Of Onan’s act, we read: “And the thing which he did displeased the Lord: wherefore he slew him also.” (vs. 10) Even though it was likely that Onan’s root sin was hatred, his wicked deed was an act of “conception control” or “prevention.” In this regard one should read chapter 38 of Rev. Harbach’s book, *Studies in the Book of Genesis*. It has excellent instruction for all of us on this subject. (See pgs. 718-719 re Onan’s sin.) Also, the passage in Deut. 25: 5-10 shows an alternate way that Onan could have taken. This alternate means was actually used in Ruth 4:6-10 and the kinsman was not killed!

Concerning the statement of my former 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,” the brother asks and states the following: “*Is then Mr. DeJong saying that we commit murder if we 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.*” My response to the first question is that preventing the life of a child from being born is essentially destroying the life of a child before it even begins to develop. There is life in the sperm and modern technology bears this out as well. In very rare cases, if it can be proved that conception will result in the death of the mother, an exception to such a rule may apply. But one ought to be convinced that this is really the case. (This is similar to one’s duty to shoot and kill the enemy in war at the general’s command. Such is not considered as murder.)

The other question whether “conception control” can “thwart the sovereign purpose of God to bring forth a specific child,” is a misuse of the great truth of the sovereignty of God. It uses the truth of God’s sovereignty to justify doing one’s own will. It is certainly true that our actions will never alter the sovereign, decretive will of God. But that does not allow us to do things contrary to God’s will of command (His preceptive will), and say this will never alter God’s sovereign (decretive) will. That, would be like the true “Hyper-Calvinist.” All our actions must be done in harmony with the command-

ments of God’s Word. I do not know whether the brother actually intends this, but we must not allow such a conception of the sovereignty of God to justify our deeds.

In reality, none of us can ever determine how many children God will give us. All we can do is seek to prevent or abort but we sinful humans can not create life. God alone makes some barren and others fruitful. To “control conception,” “space children” (which naturally eliminates a child—or else what would fill in the space?) or to practice “birth control” are both attempts to do away with a child. Otherwise preventative actions would not even be needed to begin with!

Much more could be said. May what has been said be seen, not simply as a fight between brethren of the church, but as a search for the truth of God’s Word in this matter. May our covenant young people take their calling to seek godly mates to love and cherish in the marriage state seriously. Also, may God give them the courage and strength to raise up all the children that God may be pleased to give them. Then God’s command for us to be fruitful and multiply on the earth will be done. Our quivers will be full according to His will, as commanded for us to obey in His Word. May the arrows He gives not simply stay in our quivers but be shot forward into new generations. Generations which, by the grace of God, continue to give birth to all the covenant children of God until the last elect child is born and our Lord returns upon the clouds of glory.

Let us pray for wisdom and grace, especially for our mothers in Israel, not only to bear all the children God is pleased to give us, but also to raise them up in the fear and admonition of His name. We must not adopt the practice of the world, which not only prevents conception, but also aborts millions of children.

In *The Bible and Birth Control*, by Charles D. Provan, we read, “. . .Some theologians spoke out against the limiting of children by Christians until fairly recent times. And now, opposition to birth control is almost dead. We hope this paper will help to rekindle it, and lead to God bestowing many blessings upon his people: wonderful children.” That is also my desire. Buy the book and read it. You won’t be sorry!

Sincerely,

*Ken De Jong
Member of Peace PRC*

Recommended Reading

Dear Brother in the Lord,

I have followed the articles in the *Beacon Lights* on birth control with great interest. There seems to be a variety of opinions on this issue. I would like to recommend to the readers of the *Beacon Lights* a book which is an excellent discussion of this matter. It is written by Charles D. Provan, entitled *The Bible And Birth Control*, and published by Zimmer Printing.

This book has three chapters. In the first chapter the author takes his reader to many different Bible passages and shows us what the Bible has to say about birth control. In the second chapter, he talks about alternate views and shows how they are incorrect. In the third chapter he quotes a large number of Protestant Theologians with respect to the "Onan incident." Many of the theologians whom he quotes are Reformed in their theology.

This is the best book I have read on birth control and I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in the subject.

*With Christian love and concern,
Rev. Steven Houck, Pastor
Peace Protestant Reformed Church*

Gem of the Month

Wait Patiently

Lord, teach me patience as I plod along,
Help me to understand when I'm not strong
That in whatever way my Savior leads
He's promised to supply my daily needs.

So often I would run ahead impatiently
Instead of following His path for me.
"If I could know what lies ahead
Then I would better know the way to tread."

Lord, help me see the folly of this thought;
For Thou dost know; the path by Thee was wrought!
If I should try my own way to pursue,
I'd stumble blindly just to make it through.

My plans would end in failure, trusting me—
Teach me to wait with patience, Lord, for Thee.

Thelma Westra



The Song of Zion

by John Huizenga

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

June 1 Psalm 20:1-2 Psalter 43:1; 44:1, 2

Do you pray for others? Do you pray on behalf of the church and the kingdom of Christ? David instructed the people how to pray for himself as the king over the people of God, and Christ is teaching us today in this verse how to pray on behalf of the church which Christ presently gathers and preserves. Literally we read and sing “May Jehovah hear thee.” May Jehovah hear David, and today “may Jehovah hear Christ,” the reality of David. “Since Christ our King, being an everlasting priest, never ceases to make intercession with God, the whole body of the Church should unite in prayer with him; and farther, we can have no hope of being heard except he go before us and conduct us to God” (*Calvin’s Commentary*). Let us pray knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ knows the troubles and needs of His Church, and pray to the name of the God of Jacob, “Jehovah,” “our fathers’ God,” our covenant-keeping God,” as the Psalter reads. We can not know His holy essence, but we know Him by His work within our heart and His mighty acts in history.

June 2 Psalm 20:2,3 Psalter 43:2; 44:3

Uniting in prayer with Christ we pray “May Jehovah remember thy sacrifice on the cross.” The idea of “remember” is “to have regard to.” May Jehovah show that the King’s sacrifice is acceptable to Him. Before going out to battle, king David would have sacrifices offered up to God, and God would manifest that He received the sacrifice in the way of victory. Christ offered Himself up once to cleanse the people of God and bring victory forever over death and sin. The “selah” calls us to pause and meditate upon the wonder of the cross of Christ, and lift up our eyes to the glorious fruits of salvation. We pray that Jehovah would grant the desire of Christ’s heart which is in harmony with the eternal counsel of God: to save His people and set Christ over them forever as King. The word of God saying “this is my Son in whom I am well pleased,” and the fact of Christ’s resurrection and ascension come to us as an answer to this prayer. We are saved indeed.

June 3 Psalm 20:5 Psalter 43:3; 44:4

The people of God sang the song of victory in faith, before the battle was won, how much more ought we who live in the day of victory sing the song of triumph! The song of Zion, though often a song of sorrow, is always sung in faith and ends in joy and triumph. Do you rejoice in God’s salvation? There are many who imagine

they can rejoice in their “decision for Christ.” There are others who come to church with a long face of boredom because they do not engage in the spiritual battle and therefore do not know the joy of victory in Christ. God is pleased to lift His people up in joy in the way of continuous warfare and battles against sin within our own lives, as well as within the church. In this way, the name of God receives all the praise and glory in Christ.

June 4 Psalm 20:6 Psalter 43:4

“Now I know.” These are the bold words of an assured confidence. The church united as one body says “now I know that Jehovah saveth His anointed.” How does she know? God works it in His people by the power of His Spirit in the way of earnest prayer and opening their eyes to His word and faithfulness to His people in the past. The people of God, knowing that God has been faithful in the past, and seeing that God has anointed one to be King, knows that God will complete His kingdom. The church, with Paul, is “confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). Do you know that the LORD saveth his anointed? Come to His house, pray with the saints, and He will work that confidence in your heart.

June 5 Psalm 20:7 Psalter 43:5

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who trust in human help and those who trust in God. There is no such thing as getting some help from men, and some help from God. Either you put all your trust in God, or all your trust in men. You are either an unbeliever, or a believer. The believer understands that he needs help from fellow men and the inventions of men in order to fulfill his calling to work in this earth, and he recognizes that these things are limited to this earth. When it comes to knowing how he must use these things and conduct his life, he puts all his trust in God’s word. God’s word directs him in all things toward the goal of eternal life with God. “How vain their ev’ry confidence who on mere human help rely.”

June 6 Psalm 20:8, 9 Psalter 43:6

Those who trust in man may seem at first to stand and prosper well while those who trust in God may be afflicted with suffering and poverty. But our King reigns and all things in this world are serving His people in that all things work together for their salvation. In the judgment day, those who trust in men and stand tall in

this earth will be sent to hell, while those who lay humbly before God will be lifted up and exalted to everlasting glory. Jesus, our exalted Lord and King will be in the judgment seat. Let us come to our King who has been given all power and authority to bring the people of God into heaven and pray for deliverance from the sin and misery of this life.

June 7 Psalm 21

Notice the titles of the next few numbers in the Psalter. They speak of Christ, the cross, the spreading of the gospel, the dominion of Christ, and in number 58, the ascension of Christ. At the time the Holy Spirit inspired David to write these Psalms, the words of Psalm 20 and 21 express the people of God as they come before God with matters that concern the welfare of their king. They pray for victory in war, they praise God with thanksgiving and hope in victory. The people rally around their king and look to him for deliverance from the enemy nations that surround them. The people are united under their king. As we noticed in the previous Psalm, the kinship of David is a type of Christ's kingship. Read Psalm 21 and think of Christ each time you read "king." Think of Christ during the time of His temptation in the wilderness. Hum the tunes of Psalter 45 and 46 and scan the words.

June 8 Psalm 21:1 Psalter 46:1

Just as David was overwhelmed with joy when God so strengthened him that he was able to conquer the enemies and bring peace to the people of God, so Jesus our Lord and King rejoiced greatly when Jehovah God strengthened Him to defeat Satan in the wilderness and conquer death on the cross. Notice the emphasis on the strength given by God. David lived in close fellowship with God, knowing that God was using him as a mere instrument to give peace to His people. David gave God all the glory. Though Jesus is God, He needed to be strengthened by God in His human nature. David was close to God, but Jesus is God and man in one person. Jesus needed to be very man and very God "that he might, by the power of his Godhead, sustain in his human nature the burden of God's wrath; and might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life" (HC LD 6).

June 9 Psalm 21:2 Psalter 45:1

The king was filled with joy because God had "filled his heart's desire" (Psalter). Christ's desire is directed only to God's glory in the way of the salvation of His people. We, the people of God, must pay close attention to the work of Christ our king just as the people gathered around David to hear him pray to God and speak to them of God. We must see that we do not stand alone as individuals praying to God, but we stand as a body united in Christ our King. We must hear the word together, and our prayers united in Christ who intercedes for us. "We may gather hence the very profitable doctrine, that we need entertain no apprehension that God will reject our prayers in behalf of the church, since our heavenly King has gone before us in making intercession for her, so that in praying for her we are only endeavouring to follow his example" (Calvin Commentary).

June 10 Psalm 21:3 Psalter 46:2

To "prevent" in this verse means "to give prior to the request in anticipation of the request, and to give more abundantly than the request." Psalter 46:2 reads "Thy blessings meet Him on His ways." The idea is that when one sets out down a road to get something he

wants, that thing comes to meet him before he covers the whole distance. We find an example of this in Solomon who asked for wisdom and was given riches, wealth, and honor in addition to wisdom. Christ Himself is wisdom, and He, living in perfect harmony with the will of God, receives all His desire, even the salvation of God's people, because all these things have been forever in the eternal counsel of God. Christ does not make Himself king, but He is anointed and crowned by God. His rule and dominion is the fulfillment of God's eternal counsel. Pray that Christ would rule in your heart to make you obedient today.

June 11 Psalm 21:4 Psalter 45:2

Life is dear to the living creature. Life brings us into fellowship with the living God. David prayed that God would spare his life in the battle, and God gave him length of days for ever and ever. This life forever is not limited only to David and his eternal life of salvation, but this life is the continuing royal generations of David that end in the birth of Jesus. In Christ the continued earthly life in generations was fulfilled in the eternal life earned on the cross. Note how in this verse also, God receives all the glory. He is the only source of life. God gave eternal life to His Son, and it is in Christ alone that we receive eternal life.

June 12 Psalm 21:5 Psalter 46:3

The earthly king and kingdom receives its glory, riches, treasures, glamour and glitter from his own wisdom, resources, and conquests. Borneo is an extremely wealthy nation in the east which glitters with gold and wealth gotten from rich oil resources. The earthly glory of Solomon's kingdom was beyond comprehension. Yet the people, watching the kingdom grow in glory, did not say "look at what David is doing," but rather confessed that the glory of David was great in the salvation and deliverance which God had given. The believing Israelites "set more value upon this, that God graciously showed himself favorable towards their king, than upon all the triumphs of the world" (Calvin). Do you value God's favor upon His only begotten Son more than earthly gains?

June 13 Psalm 21:6 Psalter 45:3

The King, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is filled with joy as He reigns over all things and draws His people as lost sheep into the fold. He has joy because God, His heavenly Father looks upon Him in favor. The word "gladden" comes from a word the nomads used meaning "to cheer the beasts of burden with a song and urge them on to a quicker pace." In general it means "to cheer, enliven." There is no more desirable state than to cheerful and at peace. May we be encouraged in this life of sin and sorrow knowing that Christ rules in joyful victory bringing the children of God to know and love God in this life, and preserving them to the end.

June 14 Psalm 21:7 Psalter 45:4; 46:4

Trust in Jehovah, our covenant God, is an essential ingredient to joy and peace. David was a mighty king, but he did not put his trust in his own strength and imagine himself to be the greatest. Within the intimate, joyful fellowship of the triune God, Christ the King who reigns supreme finds the source of His strength in the faithful covenant promise of God to save His people in mercy. Our God is a faithful God. May we ever put our trust in Him. Though God's plan for our life appear at times to be so confusing, strange, or difficult, we must remember that God is merciful and faithful. We can not

begin to fathom the depth of His wisdom and counsel. May we find comfort in Christ who took upon Him the sins of His people and now stands in joyous victory before the favorable countenance of God.

June 15 Psalm 21:8-11 Psalter 45:5

Christ reigns victorious, but He continues to deliver His people from the enemy. As we daily struggle against sin and the attacks of Satan to make us doubt and grow weak in faith, we are assured that the hand of our King will “find out those that hate thee.” Those who hate us hate Christ. God does not bring complete destruction now, but waits for the day appointed when all the elect are born and drawn into fellowship with God. Then God will destroy with fire every being that stands opposed to His holy will. Until then we lay our eyes upon Christ through the reading of the Word, prayer, and hearing the preaching of faithful ministers.

June 16 Psalm 21:12-13 Psalter 45:6

The glory of God is the goal of all things. When we experience the work of God within our hearts to turn us away from sin unto humble repentance, we respond in songs of praise. The way of sin and deliverance is the way of glory to God. The way of Satan and his devils is the way of exalting the creature in proud rebellion. Yet all that is evil is creaturely and not God. God will surely smash the rebellious uprising with haste and completely. By nature we are totally depraved, inclined in all things to exalt ourselves, but the renewed child of God is completely changed. He sees his great sin, he repents, he is turned toward God, and he sings and praises the power of God.

June 17 Psalm 22:1,2 Psalter 47:1 (1 Samuel 23:25ff)

This Psalm is the psalm of the cross. Psalm 21:6 reveals the highest joy of Christ and, in contrast, the first verse of Psalm 22 reveals the greatest depth of misery ever experienced. This Psalm was written by David under the persecution by Saul. Just as David had to traverse a path of suffering before ascending the throne, so Jesus had to suffer on the cross before His glorious ascension to the throne of heaven. The cry of this verse expresses alienation and yearning. He feels himself rejected of God, the feeling of God’s wrath completely surrounds him, yet behind that wrath is felt by faith the hidden love of God. No one ever felt the oppressing wrath of His God more fully than Christ as he bore the punishment of our sins. (Mark 15:34 and context).

June 18 Psalm 22:3-4 Psalter 47:2

We will never find peace outside of the church. For a time, David was separated from the people of God while being hunted down by Saul, and the lack of fellowship and communion with God in church was draining his spiritual strength. Instead of becoming bitter toward God, He began to meditate upon God as He had revealed Himself. God did not change, He is holy and unchangeable. He is pleased to bless His people by means of the church. He is pleased to be “enthroned upon Thy people’s praise.” David was out of place and he found comfort looking forward to the day when he could be reunited with the people of God. Let us remember the needs of the small congregations. Let us never think we can stand on our own outside of the church institute.

June 19 Psalm 22:5-6 Psalter 47:3

David confesses God’s faithfulness to his fathers, yet he feels utterly despised and begs for God’s mercy. Begging for mercy can be humiliating and degrading. If two are fighting and one pins the other down so that escape is impossible, the victor can further exalt himself at the expense of the loser by forcing out all sorts of pitiful pleas for mercy. All the loser can do is humble himself in hopes of stirring up some pity. The rebellion of Satan, his fallen angels, and fallen man was crushed by God when He spoke to Adam and Eve, but man was so depraved and lifted up in pride that he will never humble himself before God and repent. Satan and all who fall with him would rather perish in hell than turn back to God. But God in love for His chosen sent His only begotten Son who humbled Himself to death on the cross to earn the power and right of turning the hearts of the elect back to God. May we be humble in Christ and confess our unworthiness to be saved.

June 20 Psalm 22:7,8 Psalter 47:4

These very words were said of Jesus when He hung upon the cross (Matthew 27:39-43). He suffered the most bitter shame and humility before man. To stick out the lower lip is, in the East, considered a very strong show of contempt. Shaking the head is a gesture of surprise and astonishment at something strange and unexpected. You know the feeling when someone takes your own words or actions, twists or exaggerates them, and then expresses to everyone around their astonishment at such stupidity. We lash out at those who mock us even for things we do that are really foolish. Christ was willing to give up every shred of human dignity out of obedience to His Father. They pretended to love God and charged Him with hypocrisy. When others revile us and cast our sins before our face, we must be ready to come before God with humble prayer imploring God’s forgiveness in Christ.

June 21 Psalm 22:9-10 Psalter 47:5

Under the terrible attacks of the wicked David puts up a fortress of defense by proclaiming the miracle of his conception, birth, and trust in the Lord from his youth. Conception and birth is a wonder of God. We easily grow accustomed to the birth of children and Calvin writes “if ingratitude did not put upon our eyes the veil of stupidity, we would be ravished with admiration at every childbirth in the world.” David is able, in this time of affliction, to think upon the shepherd hand of God shown to him by his godly mother who raised him in the fear of God. You can be very thankful if God has been pleased to bring you into a godly home from birth and take you to be His child. Let us also remember the miracle of Christ’s birth and the wonder of God with man in our times of weak faith.

June 22 Psalm 22:11 Psalter 47:6

When we see ourselves as we really are in ourselves before God: dead in trespasses and sins, then we humbly confess “there is none to help me.” We do not look for help in our own ideas and philosophies about how to find peace and happiness. We do not muster up our own courage to stand up and come forth to the altar and accept Christ. We simply pray that God will come near and strengthen. The Psalter reads “O let thy strength and presence cheer.” God alone, by bringing Himself near and drawing us is able to strengthen our faith. In those times when all we can pray is “O God help me,” let us do it with the assurance that God will help.

June 23 Psalm 22:12-14

David compares his enemies to huge bulls and lions that charge at him from all sides with horns lowered and long teeth bared. Who would not tremble at this nightmarish scene? David says that he was limp and could be poured out like water, so oppressed and afraid he was. His heart also, by means of temptations and spiritual struggles, melted like wax. That one is moved to gather the most terrible situations in this earth to describe the affliction of the wicked surely knows the battle with sin. How often do we come to God in prayer and express our daily afflictions and battles with sin in such vivid language? We find great comfort in God only by knowing how great our sins and miseries are, and how we are delivered from those sins and miseries.

June 24 Psalm 22:15,16 Psalter 47:8

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst” (John 19:28). All through the Old Testament God so worked history that a complete portrait of Jesus was painted before He came so that every believer might recognize Him. Here David, recalling his own suffering, directs us to the intense suffering of Christ which words only begin to describe. A potsherd is a broken piece of pot left on the bottom of the kiln that becomes extremely dry and brittle after repeated exposure to the intense heat of the kiln. Even the piercing of the hands of Jesus is foretold here, and in Isaiah 53:5 & Zech. 12:10. Facing the increasing pressure of wicked men, let us remember that their fierce animal rage against Christ and every believer is met with the infinite wrath of God against them to destroy them utterly.

June 25 Psalm 22:17,18 Psalter 47:9

The Old Testament scriptures reveal more of the scene of Jesus' crucifixion. David was not literally stripped of his clothes while being pursued by Saul, but the Spirit of Christ speaking these words that describe David's condition of being stripped of his possessions and glory, speaks about the literal fulfillment in Christ on the cross. “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat:” (John 19:23). Having nailed Jesus to the cross, the wicked nature of man comes to full expression in the brutal mockery of His wasted form. His body is so wasted and stretched that the bones can be numbered. How marvelous is the love of God who by grace washes such sin away in the blood of Christ.

June 26 Psalm 22:19-21 Psalter 47:10

Though David was overwhelmed with despair, he did not cry out thinking his lamentations to be vain. There was no hope in human earthly strength, the only hope he had was the knowledge that God was hearing him. This knowledge is faith which God gives to His people. It is the bond which unites us to God. Faith firmly implants us as a tender branch into the firm trunk of a tree which is Christ. The gift of life becomes so precious when faced with death. David speaks of life when he says “my soul” and “my darling.” Every living creature clings to life as long as possible. Though we are alive physically, we are all by nature dead spiritually. God gives us new life in Christ, and we must so cherish our spiritual life, our faith, our knowledge of the truth, that we cry out to God whenever the enemy threatens.

June 27 Psalm 22:22 Psalter 47:11; 51:1

God heard the cry of David and delivered him from the hand of Saul. Saul had surrounded the mountain upon which David and his men had fled, but then a messenger came to tell Saul that the Philistines had invaded, and Saul left (1 Samuel 23:27, 28). David does not think only of himself, but makes known that his salvation is also the salvation of all his brethren. When Christ conquered death on the cross and arose in victory, he proclaimed victory for all His brethren as well. He sends His Spirit to comfort and to assure them of salvation in His victory (Hebrews 2:9-15). May the doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Christ continue to be heard from our pulpits. May the voice of Christ proclaiming the doctrines of sovereign grace continue to be heard and result in the praise of God.

June 28 Psalm 22:23 Psalter 48:1; 50:1

We turn now to some different Psalter numbers with different titles which correspond to a transition in the psalm from the cross of Christ to His triumphal resurrection and ascension. The glory of God is the goal and end of all things having been created and continually governed by God. David now turns his attention away from the enemy and toward “my brethren,” “the congregation,” ye that fear the LORD,” “ye seed of Jacob,” “ye seed of Israel.” We notice that David limits his attention to those in Israel who fear the LORD. Not all are Israel who are of Israel (Romans 9:6ff). The true Israel, brethren of Christ, are those who fear God. They are “the children of His grace” (Psalter 51). May we live today as a child of God showing forth His praise in our words and actions.

June 29 Psalm 22:24 Psalter 48:2

Why does David praise God? Why does our resurrected Lord praise Jehovah God? Why does the Word of God go forth from the pulpits exhorting the congregations to praise God? Because God is a God who does not despise nor abhor the afflicted. God does not seek out the strong, the attractive, or those who are able to prove themselves worthy. Many despise a God who loves the lowly and invent their own god who takes into heaven those who decide they want him to be their god. “Let him, therefore, that desires to be of the seed of Israel, and to rejoice in the grace of the gospel, become poor, for this is a fixed truth, our God is one that has respect unto the poor!” (Luther) May we find grace to act as a child of God, as the good Samaritan who did not despise one in great need.

June 30 Psalm 22:25 Psalter 48:3; 51:2

Even in giving praise, David confesses that his praise is not his own, but that it comes from God. God is the author of all that is good. We have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. God is pleased to multiply praise by bringing His people together into a great congregation where they join one who has experienced the joy of deliverance. David paid his vows by making a thank offering in which all the people ate of the sacrifice in a great feast of joy. Christ makes us partakers of the fruits of His suffering when we partake of the Lord's Supper. May every young person who meditates upon this word of God be encouraged to praise God in the great congregation by making confession of his or her faith. The congregation will rejoice and praises God with you.



The Song of Zion

by John Huizenga

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

July 1 Read Isaiah 29:18-24

Psalm 22:26 In Matthew 5 we read that one of the characteristics of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven is meekness. We also read in Galatians 5 that meekness is one of the fruits of the Spirit. In today's verse we read that the meek will be satisfied by God both physically and spiritually. He will care for their every need. The meek will be known because they praise Jehovah because they seek him. People of God, are you meek? Young people, if a character sketch were written about you, would meekness be one of your traits? Children, do you get along with your brothers and sisters? Did you fight today because you wanted your way? Meekness is a characteristic which needs to be cultivated. There is great blessedness in being meek. Pray to God for this precious fruit of the Spirit. Sing Psalter 48:4, 50:1, and 51:3.

July 2 Read Matthew 28:16-20

Psalm 22:27 The Jews of the Old Testament could not conceive of a church that encompassed all kinds of people. Sometime we as believers of the new dispensation have the same problem. But yet there are many evidences in both the Old and New Testament that the church of Jesus Christ is truly a catholic, that is universal, church. In the church triumphant are members from all places in the world. There are members of all skin colors. There will be many nations represented around the throne of God in heaven. But there will be one church. We sometimes forget this truth. We would like everyone in the church to look like us. Sometimes we are no better than the Pharisees of Jesus's day. Let us remember our missionaries as we pray today. Let us remember those people of God who are in other lands. Let us pray that the gospel may be spread to all nations and realize by doing so that the day of the Lord draws closer and closer. Sing Psalter 48:5, 49:1 and 50:2.

July 3 Read Revelations 4:1-11

Psalm 22:28 The kingdom is the Lord's and He is King. Is this our conception of heaven? Are we looking for the new Jerusalem in which God will reign and we will bow to His sovereign will? Or, are we looking just for an earthly utopia without sin and its related troubles? This was the disciples' conception of the kingdom even up until Christ's ascension into heaven. As elect who have matured by much study of scripture, we, too, must realize that heaven's glory will be found in God. We must be looking for that place in

which God rules and we will enjoy that rule. It is hard for us who are earthly to conceive of this. Let us work at it by daily study of the Bible and by prayers that ask for help in this idea. Sing Psalter 48:6, 49:2, and 50:2.

July 4 Read I Timothy 2:1-8

Psalm 22:29 People of God, do you pray for the salvation of those elect who are governing you? The passage in I Timothy is often misrepresented as teaching that God wants all men saved. This is not so as can be easily demonstrated from other parts of scripture. Our verse for today tells us that God gathers His church from all parts of society, as well as all nations which we saw two days ago. As we celebrate our country's birthday, let us remember that among its leaders may be God's people and we have a duty to pray for them. We must pray for government that it carry out the will of God. This, too, is fact. But we also must pray for the salvation of those in authority over us who belong to the church. Sing Psalter 48:74, 49:3, and 50:3.

July 5 Read Psalm 22:23-31

Psalm 22:30-31 These final two verses of this Psalm indicate another group of elect believers. This is the covenant seed which God graciously gives to the church. We sometimes use the term church latent to refer to those yet to be born. God's covenant faithfulness is evident here. He is faithful to His church. Do we reflect this faithfulness as we make decisions in our lives? Do we make decisions in marriage that show we wish to bring forth covenant seed and pray for a quiver full? Do we work hard to give to all of our children the covenant education that God demands of us? We read in these verses that the covenant seed will come. Will it come from us or will God remove our candlestick from our midst and raise up another generation to serve Him. These are serious things, and God's counsel will be done. Pray for the covenant seed that we have, and pray for future seed who will declare God's righteousness. Sing Psalter 48:8, 49:3, and 50:3.

July 6 Read Psalm 23

Psalm 23:1 This familiar Psalm has comforted saints young and old from age to age. David undoubtedly composed this as he sat with his sheep on the hillsides near Bethlehem. Is his confession your confession? What a beautiful thing to know that because Jehovah is our shepherd, we will want nothing. Even the youngest of our

children can understand these words. As we enter God's house today, let us seek His word so that we truly can understand what it means to want nothing. Let us cast our every care upon Him because He careth for us in every situation in life. Teach the Psalm and its meaning to your families and they will walk in the green pastures all the days of their lives. Sing Psalter 52.

July 7 Read Ezekiel 34:11-16

Psalm 23:2 Yesterday we began our study of this familiar short Psalm. Today we wish to consider the idea of our Shepherd. Our Shepherd is heavenly, meaning He has none of the frailties of earthly shepherds. We can count on Him to guide us in all ways. We can count on Him leading us in the places which are good for us. He will take us to the pastures which are lush with the good things for our spiritual lives. He will bring us to water which is good to drink; water which is living water. Are you following this shepherd? Are you staying on the paths marked out by His gracious care? Pray for the grace to do so and give thanks for the faithful shepherd that we have. Sing Psalter 53.

July 8 Read Luke 15:1-7

Psalm 23:3 In today's passage we read that our Shepherd is a seeking shepherd. We see this in the third verse of Psalm 23 as well. Our Shepherd not only looks after our physical needs, he also cares for our souls. Satan wants our souls, you know. He will try anything to capture them. But our Shepherd is caring for us. The second part of the verse speaks about leading us on the paths of righteousness. People of God, are you content to be led upon these paths? Are you willing to forsake the paths of pleasure in order to walk upon our Shepherd's carefully ordained paths? He does this for His name's sake. He does this so that He will be glorified. But for us the benefit will be the eternal dwelling place He is preparing for us. Walk those paths with the comfort that they are good paths and for a good purpose. Sing Psalter 54.

July 9 Read I Corinthians 15:51-58

Psalm 23:4 Death is all around us. We are born beginning to die. There is much evidence in creation that the punishment for sin is death. But we as the people of God do not have to fear death. We may mourn the death of a loved one. We will feel the pain that his death brings to us. But we have no fear of the consequences to the soul after death. Even as we traverse this world and its reminders of death on every side, we need not fear. Our Shepherd is near us. He watches over us. He gives to us the comfort needed to bear the pain the death of a loved one brings us. He does this because He loves us. The death of believers is precious in His sight. This should give to us the confidence to live our lives completely to the glory of God knowing that afterward He will lead us into that glory that is His now. Sing Psalter 55.

July 10 Read Joel 2:21-27

Psalm 23:5 A sheep has many natural enemies. Some of them are the parasites which inhabit its body and slowly drain its life force from it. Some of them are predators who seek to kill the sheep for food. God's people have enemies as well. Satan has his predators and parasites whose goal is to kill the sheep of God. Our Shepherd knows this very well. He has experienced all of the temptations known to man except sin and has conquered them for us. He will lead us through the battles. With His word in our hearts and mouths

we can fight off sin and Satan and rule victoriously with Him in heaven. Fight against sin, young people. Do not give into Satan and his wiles. Look to your Shepherd who will help you in all troubles. "Without Him we can do nothing." Sing Psalter 56.

July 11 Read Psalm 23

Psalm 23:6 We come to the victorious conclusion of this most comforting Psalm. Our Shepherd at the close of our lives or at the end of this world will lead us home to heaven. No matter what troubles caused us grief in this life, goodness and mercy will be ours in the life to come. We have this assurance now. That the victory is ours is sure because of the death of Christ. Of this we have no reason to doubt! What a comfort it is to know this. Do not doubt that heaven is a real place. Do not doubt that we will spend eternity in the house of our God in covenant fellowship with Him and the Lamb. Rejoice in this, confess this, and above all put your trust in the Shepherd who knows His sheep and will not let one of them be plucked from His hand. Sing your favorite of Psalters 52-56 or all of them if you are so inclined.

July 12 Read Psalm 24

Psalm 24:1-2 Do you believe in God? Do you believe that He created the heavens and the earth? The first two verses of Psalm 24 state creation as a fact and not an option. There is no maybe about whose earth we live on and who made it. It is God's, and all of it is God's. What a comforting fact this is to the people of God. We have a God who is so mighty that He created the earth on which we live. He sustains it by His providence, and it continues to exist. A God that is this powerful and mighty can surely ordain our salvation and carry it out until the end. Never let Satan snatch this comfort from you, people of God. Hold on to this truth, and it will sustain you all the days of your lives. Sing Psalter 57:1 and 59:1.

July 13 Read Matthew 5:1-12

Psalm 24:3-4 Are you a citizen of the kingdom of heaven? Do you follow the rules of that kingdom? That is the thought of today's verses. We read the passage commonly called the beatitudes. While sometimes they are held up as good guidelines for man, they are more than that. They are an expansion of the thoughts of Psalm 24:3-4. As you go or have gone about the day's work, were your hands clean and your hearts pure? Will God judge you as worthy of appearing at His holy hill? Have you determined to use only pure words in your business or play? If so, then God will give you an audience in His holy place. How is this possible? Not by our works, as we know that they are nothing but filthy rags. It is possible only by faith in Him who made heaven and earth. Sing Psalter 57:2 and 59:2.

July 14 Read Ephesians 2:1-10

Psalm 24:5 In the meditation for the first verses of this Psalm I alluded to the fact that the creator God is also the God of our salvation. This is more fully brought out in today's verse. First of all we must see that verse 5 is a conclusion of yesterday's thoughts. The man of clean hands and pure heart will receive a blessing from the Lord. That blessing is nothing less than salvation. Notice that this salvation is not earned, but it is received. This salvation can only be found from God. The passage in Ephesians made this abundantly clear. What a benefit it is to have clean hands and pure heart.

Pray to God for the grace to have these things and live the life of the true citizen of the kingdom. Sing Psalter 57:3.

July 15 Read Isaiah 55

Psalm 24:6 Young people, is it said of you that you are the generation that seeks after God? Do you look for the face of God daily and hourly? This is an important concept. Parents, you can not begin at too early an age to teach your children about seeking the Lord. This seeking is not a prerequisite to election, but rather this seeking is the walk of sanctification and gratitude for salvation. Young people, as you look for entertainment, is it entertainment that seeks the glory of God? As you look for a husband or wife, will he or she be someone who will seek Jehovah with you? To do anything less is not seeking the God of Psalm 24. As we read in Isaiah 55 seeking Jehovah has beautiful benefits. Let us seek Him with our whole being. Sing Psalter 59:3.

July 16 Read II Chronicles 14:1-8

Psalm 24:7 Many texts in the Old Testament speak of the city of Jerusalem's picture of the church of God. The walls of that physical city served as defenses from many enemies. The gates had two purposes. They were used to not only keep out unwanted intruders, but were also used to let in the King. Today's church has the Word and the doctrines of that Word to serve the same purpose. Even as Asa was diligent in building up Jerusalem, so we must be diligent to learn the Word of God so that we may fight Satan and his hosts. Sometimes we think that summer time is a time for resting from studying. Satan never rests! Should we? Sing Psalter 58:1 and 59:4.

July 17 Read II Chronicles 14:9-15

Psalm 24:8 Yesterday we read how Asa built up Judah's defenses. Today we read how he fought a war, and won that war by the power of God. God is the King that lives forever. His Son is the King who will make a triumphal entry into heaven with the whole church. Our King of glory is mighty. Israel of old had to see that in a very real physical manner. We must believe it as we read the accounts of the battle and know that He is fighting no less hard for us in our daily battles. That we are in a battle, there is no doubt. That God will fight for us is also sure. Are we thankful? Do we want a mighty God who fights spiritual battles for us? Do we confess daily that He truly is a King of glory? Sing Psalter 58:2 and 59:5.

July 18 Read Matthew 21:1-11

Psalm 24:9 Yesterday I alluded to the triumphal entry of Christ. Today we read the account of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The church of the old dispensation could not appreciate the true meaning of this event. God has given to us His Word and we must appreciate its meaning. Do we? Do we truly believe in the King that we have been given? Do we confess Him in and by our lives? Do we hold our heads high and proclaim that we are Christians waiting for the coming of our King? Are we ashamed of having the King that we do? Young people, will those around you know that Christ is your King tonight as well as every night? It will not be easy to do this in the final days on this earth. But that we must do this; of that there is no doubt. Sing Psalter 58:2 and 59:6

July 19 Read Psalm 24

Psalm 24:10 Yesterday we spoke of the necessity of confessing the King of Glory. We also saw that this is not an easy task. People

of God, we do not have to do it alone. God does not require that we face the wiles of Satan by ourselves. We see in today's verse that our King of Glory is the Lord of Hosts. First of all we can see that those hosts are the many other Christians in the world. Do not forsake them in your lives. Young people, make them your friends and companions. Fighting Satan and evil will be much easier. Secondly we know that there are hosts of angels encamped about us. God has given His angels charge over us. By His Spirit He will help us during all the battles that we face. Pray for the grace to trust in the King of Glory-the Lord of Hosts. Sing Psalter 58:3 and 59:7.

July 20 Read Psalm 25

Psalm 25:1-3 David begins this prayer asking that he and other people of God be not ashamed because they are believers. People of God, young people, are you ashamed because of your faith? Do God's enemies cause you to hide your faith as you go about your daily work? How can it be possible that we might not be ashamed as we may be ridiculed for believing the way we do? With what confidence can we take a stand that is clearly opposite from what most people may do? The answer is found in verse 2. Because we can trust in God, we will never be ashamed. True, our faith may waver at times; we may become weak and be ashamed, but yet by trusting completely in our heavenly Father, we can have confidence in Him. Let us say with the apostle, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Romans 1:16a. Sing Psalters 60:1-2 and 64:1.

July 21 Read Proverbs 8:12-21

Psalm 25:4 & 5 To not be ashamed of the gospel necessarily demands that we only walk in the ways of God. With David we must make the request to be lead in the paths of truth. This means that we must seek the wisdom that is found only in God. This means that we must be well acquainted with His Word and seek it all the days of our life. Church attendance, catechism preparation, and other Bible studies should not be a chore but should be a delight. In asking for God to lead us means that we will walk that path even when it may not be physically appealing. Each of us, no matter what our age, must wait upon God. When we pray for such help, and when we with contentment walk His paths, we will feel His blessing. Sing Psalter 60:3-4 and 67:1

July 22 Read Isaiah 63:7-14

Psalm 25:6 In reading this verse, we might be inclined to say that this is only the experience of the aged saint. It would be only one who with experience has felt the lovingkindnesses for a long time. David was probably not so old when he penned these words. He knew of God's mercy because of the experiences of Israel of old. His parents had taught him about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the children of Israel. He knew their experiences, and by faith he knew that just as God kept them, He would keep him. Is this your confidence, young people? Do you see that God has given us history to show these attributes of mercy and lovingkindness? Because they have been of old, they are good. Sing Psalter 60:5, 64:2, and 67:2.

July 23 Read Isaiah 63:15-19

Psalm 25:7 The first line of this verse is hard for any child of God to say. First of all we must confess that we have sinned. Who among us can easily admit his faults? When we are young we feel we know it all and what we are doing must be right. According to this verse we must stop and realize the paths of youth which we walked were

probably not so good. We can confess these sins only by the mercy of God. Our old man of sin would try to cover our sin. The new man asks God for help in this difficult way. The new man also knows by grace that God's mercy is good. Young people, confess your sins now. It will make it easier when you are old. Sing Psalter 61:1, 64:3, and 67:3.

July 24 Read Mark 6:1-6

Psalm 25:8 & 9 While Jesus walked on this earth much of His time was spent teaching and preaching. His parables were constructed for this very purpose. Even the miracles were more than acts of healing or help. In those miracles the child of God must see grace. David knew that he needed God to teach him. Do we know that? Do we confess that? Are we willing to listen to the great teacher? Who does He teach? He teaches the meek sinners who turn to Him in their distress. Turn to Him, people of God, and find the rest that He has prepared for us. His teachings are good and refreshing. Sing Psalter 61:2 and 67:4.

July 25 Read Proverbs 19:13-29

Psalm 25:10 Yesterday we saw who the teacher was. Today we see who the successful students are. These students are not necessarily the most intelligent. They may not be voted most likely to succeed. They may never make the honor roll of the world. But they will make God's honor roll. How will they do that? Not on their own strength of course. But rather, by God's grace which will let them keep His covenant and obey His testimonies. These students will seek Him through the help of the Holy Spirit. People of God, are you striving to be such students? Are you praying for the help needed in God's classroom? Sing Psalter 61:3, 65:1, and 67:5.

July 26 Read Romans 7:12-21

Psalm 25:11 After describing the teacher and student, David returns to an earlier theme. This theme is the necessary pardon for sin. After seeing the way he must go, he realizes that he has departed from that way often. This is our experience as well. After hearing the law each Sunday, we see our sin and know that we have need of a savior. Not only do we see sin, we see great sin. Paul's experience was no different. Neither is the experience of any other saint. I have heard many of them confess with Paul that they are the chief of sinners. We must confess that our sins are great. But we may not stop there. By God's name sake we can ask for pardon in the confidence that He will abundantly bless us. Sing Psalter 61:4 and 65:2.

July 27 Read Luke 12:13-21

Psalm 25:12-13 The passage that we read in Luke spoke of a man who thought his soul would dwell in ease. He thought he had it made. His life was before him, and he would have not troubles. How mistaken he was! David speaks of a soul resting in ease as well. But this soul will rest in ease only because he is elect of God. Only because he fears the Lord and walks in His ways. This should be our desire. We should look for the ease that obedience to God's Word brings. Only in that way will we find contentment. Only in that way will we see the blessing of God's covenant upon us. We see the evidence of that covenant in the last part of verse 13. This is God's sure promise to us. We must establish schools for our children in the faith that God will cause them to prosper and our children will inherit the land which is heaven. Sing Psalter 62:1 and 68:3.

July 28 Read I Corinthians 4:1-6

Psalm 25:14 Do you enjoy secrets? I am speaking of good secrets. I am not talking about secrets which will hurt someone when they are told, or secrets which are about someone's sin. I am talking about a secret in which someone is surprised because something good happens. Our God has a secret for us. It is a secret that is so wonderful that when we find it we will be happy forever. This secret is not for everyone. This secret is only for those who fear Him. This secret is only for those who walk in His covenant. What is that secret? Of course, it is salvation. It is the promise of living in eternal covenant fellowship with the Holy Trinity in heaven. What a secret! Look for it to come true. It will. Sing Psalter 62:2 and 68:4.

July 29 Read Exodus 14:10-20

Psalm 25:15-16 Once again David reminds us of the plight he was in and we are in. Egypt is always around us. It may take the form of Pharaoh, Goliath, Saul, Absalom, the Pharisees, or any of the cruel tricks that Satan plagues us with. Satan's traps are around every corner. He is looking for the opportunity to cause every child of God to sin—from the youngest to the oldest. No age group is immune from his wiles. But we like David need not fear. With our eyes on Jehovah, we can have the confidence that he can pluck us out of any net which is entangling our feet and is about to trip us up. God may use Satan to chastise us, but He will never let us fall from grace. Sing Psalter 62:3-4 and 66:1-2.

July 30 Read II Samuel 16:5-14

Psalm 25:17-19 In this account from David's life we see the truth of God explained. David, even as he was fleeing from Absalom, was cursed by an enemy. David, like Christ, did not revile his enemies. David saw that God by His sovereignty had even this incident planned. Even this was for David's good. In the verses we consider from Psalm 25, we see that even though his experience is that he is oppressed by Satan, he needs to ask for forgiveness for his own sins. David is not ready to blame those around him for all of his troubles. He sees the necessity of pointing the finger at himself and asking God for help. We, too, must not blame our troubles on those around us. We must examine our lives and make sure that they are lives pleasing to God. Sing Psalter 63:1-2 and 66:3.

July 31 Read Psalm 25

Psalm 25:20-22 As David finishes his prayer he teaches us one more lesson. We have learned that we must trust in God at all times. We have learned that God is our teacher and his lessons must be learned well. We have also been instructed in the necessity of asking for forgiveness for every one of our sins. Now in these verses we see that we must remember God's church in our prayers. Even though this is a very personal prayer which we would do well to model, it is also a prayer for God's people everywhere. God's church has troubles even as the individual has troubles. Because we are members of that church, we must pray for it. Each of us at what ever age has that responsibility. We do this in the realization that one day we will all be joined together around the throne with the Lamb who has redeemed us from all of our troubles. Sing Psalter 64:3-4 and 66:4.

Liberty? Or License?

Rev. Gise J. Van Baren

The two have frequently been confused. “Liberty” is often taken to be the right to do what ever one pleases. After all, is not “liberty” to be understood as “freedom”—freedom to do as one wishes? Does not liberty imply that one is not bound by laws and regulations?

No wonder such conclusions are drawn! Much is made in our own country of the cry of one of the “patriots” at the time of the American Revolution: “Give me liberty or give me death!” It was a cry against established authority in violation of the teaching of Scripture in Romans 13.

So some Christians insist that they have “liberty” in which they are freed from the requirements of God’s law. For such the law has no significance anymore. These are “antinomian” in outlook.

Scripture, indeed, speaks exultingly of the Christian’s liberty, calling it the “glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21). One is not freed from the law of God, but from the condemnation of that law. He is freed from sin and death. But the Apostle Paul insists that we can not therefore “sin that grace may abound” (Rom. 6).

One recalls from Scripture how the Apostle Paul complained of those who judged his liberty, i.e., condemned him in doing the very things which he believed to be permissible. In I Cor. 10:29 he states, “...for why is my liberty judged of another man’s conscience?” Again, Paul complains in Gal. 2:4, “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.”

On the other hand, Paul issues warnings about the abuse of “liberty.” In Gal. 5:13 he states, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for

an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” And in I Peter 2:16 we read, “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” Again, in II Peter 2:19, the apostle warns of those who while they “promise ... liberty, ... themselves

Does one have the
“liberty” to attend
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are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”

“Liberty” has an important part in a Christian’s life. We are told in II Cor. 3:17, “...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” We are reminded in Gal. 5:1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” It ought to be very clear that liberty follows out of Christ’s perfect work on the cross. He merited liberty for His people. That liberty is also the fruit of the work of the Spirit of the Lord in His people.

The question is, of course, “What is then this liberty which is now ours?” Does “liberty” mean that each individual can have his own peculiar interpretation of Scripture? Does it mean that each can determine for himself what his “life-style” ought to be? Does this “liberty” allow two equally legitimate, but opposite, views concern-

ing “women in office?” Does one have the “liberty” to attend movies if he believes it does not violate his conscience—or can another for himself say that it is wrong and a sin? Can one hold to abortion and another condemn it—all under “Christian liberty?” It comes down to this: is one’s own conscience to be his guide concerning what is right or wrong? Does “liberty” allow one to do whatever he pleases?

The question is especially important for the covenant youth. Are they to have another “judge” their liberty—or are they to determine for themselves what they may do? It should be obvious that the law of the land necessarily restricts one’s liberty. One has said, “My liberty to swing my fist stops at the point where your nose begins.” One

Liberty is not to live as one pleases, but an ability to live as God commands.

can not plead “liberty” when he is brought into a court for deliberately harming another.

The Bible itself makes very plain what Christian liberty is *not*. It does not give one the right to sin if he pleases. Gal. 5:13 states, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” Or again, I Peter 2:16, “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. . . .” In fact, “liberty” is contrasted with the “yoke of bondage” in Galatians 5:1. Our liberty, therefore, is not a license to sin. One is warned of those who promise liberty who themselves are “servants of corruption” (II Pet. 2:19). Scripture clearly recognizes the danger of abusing liberty. The danger is real. Satan himself would convince God’s people that they have a “freedom” or “liberty” to do as they will. In fact, with this very idea he approached Eve and convinced her to eat the forbidden fruit.

But our liberty is godly, spiritual, and heavenly. It is that which is possessed only by children of God. In Rom. 8:21 we read of those “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” And in II Corinthians 3:17: “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Those who are not children of God, remain in the “bondage of

corruption.” These might boast of liberty, while they are in fact bound by sin and death. These are not free at all.

Liberty does not free one from the law of God. Liberty exists within the bounds of the law. In James 2:12 we are reminded that we are judged “by the law of liberty.” And in James 1:25 we read of the “perfect law of liberty.” That law is the law of God. It serves to mark the bounds of true liberty. But the law no longer condemns.

Our conclusion must then be that Christian Liberty demands obedience to God’s law—not an ignoring of that law. Liberty is not to live as one pleases, but an ability to live as God commands. It is “liberty” to serve God and honor His commands. It is “liberty” exactly because one has been freed from the bondage of sin and death through the perfect work of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. His “liberty” is that he is able and free to serve God perfectly.

The whole concept has been compared to the restrictions of “freedom” within the realm of creation itself. A fish is free to swim as it will through the water. But should it decide that its “freedom” ought to allow it to jump to the shore, it has not continued freedom but death. A person who would swim underwater can not remain there. He may insist that he is free to do as he will, but to disobey the physical laws of God can only result in his death.

So also we are to regard our spiritual freedom. The blood of the Lamb of God delivered us from the condemnation of the law. We are freed from that. The result is that we can begin to serve God—which alone is liberty. As soon as we insist that our “liberty” ought to allow us to escape the bounds of God’s law, we are not free but once more under the “yoke of bondage.”

Ours is indeed a blessed liberty. It is not license. It does not allow any activity in which we would engage ourselves.

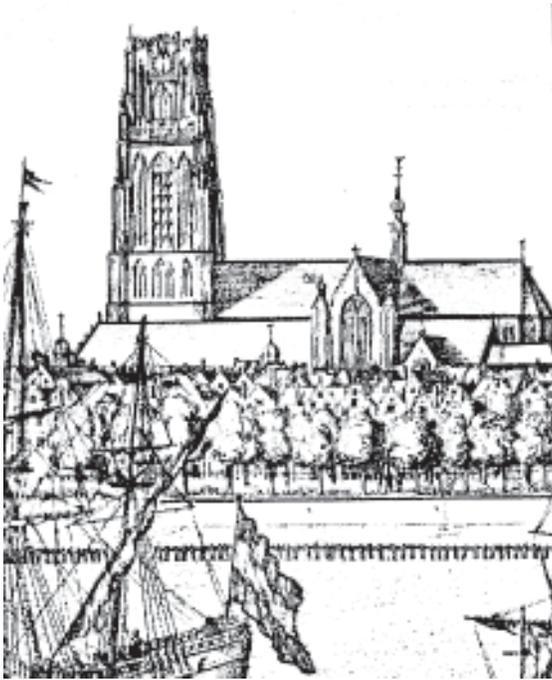
It is the freedom and liberty we enjoy perfectly in glory. The liberty of heaven is not, again, to do whatever one wishes contrary to the righteousness of God. It is a liberty in Christ whereby we perfectly and forever will be able to serve Him. Anything else would be death.

Let us, then, use our liberty in the service of God’s Name and to help the church of Jesus Christ. ❖

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The Laurens Church of Rotterdam

By J.P. de Klerk

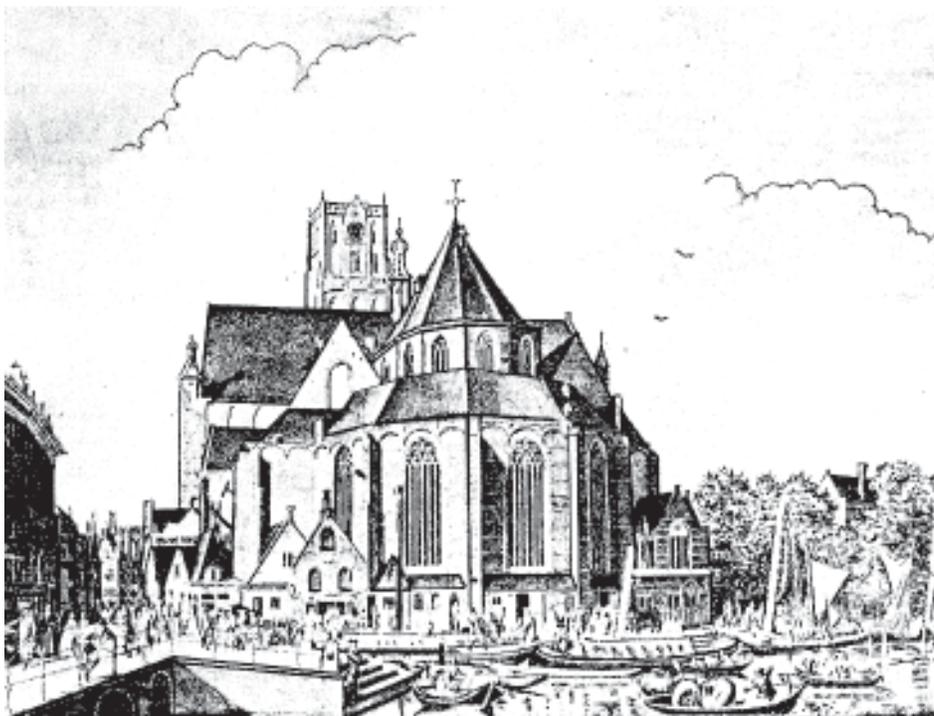


This State Reformed Church is the biggest historic building of the famous Dutch harbor city of Rotterdam. The church takes its name from St. Laurentius, arch-deacon in Rome, who died a martyr in 258 because emperor Valerianus hated his Christian teaching. It was built during the years 1449-1525 in Dutch late Gothic style with very wide, lofty aisles and timber barrel-vaults: more related to a hall-church type than a Basilica. You see the first picture of the completed building, from a copper engraving by Joost van Geel in 1665. The water is the Rotte River, where Rotterdam started as a settlement in 1200.

Inside there are decorated capitals, mausolea, memorials, and a copper choir screen. The organ is in fact three organs (main, transept, and choir organ), all three of them built by the Danish Marcussen Company. The base of the main organ consists of one solid piece of Italian marble.

The second picture shows the Laurens Church from the other side, with its back to the Rotte River, reproduced from a drawing of C. Pronk in 1750. In the meantime a big part of the river had been filled in and the center of the city was full of houses (some of them built against the walls of the church, which made the construction cheap.

The bronze doors of the main entrance were the design of the Italian sculptor Giacomo

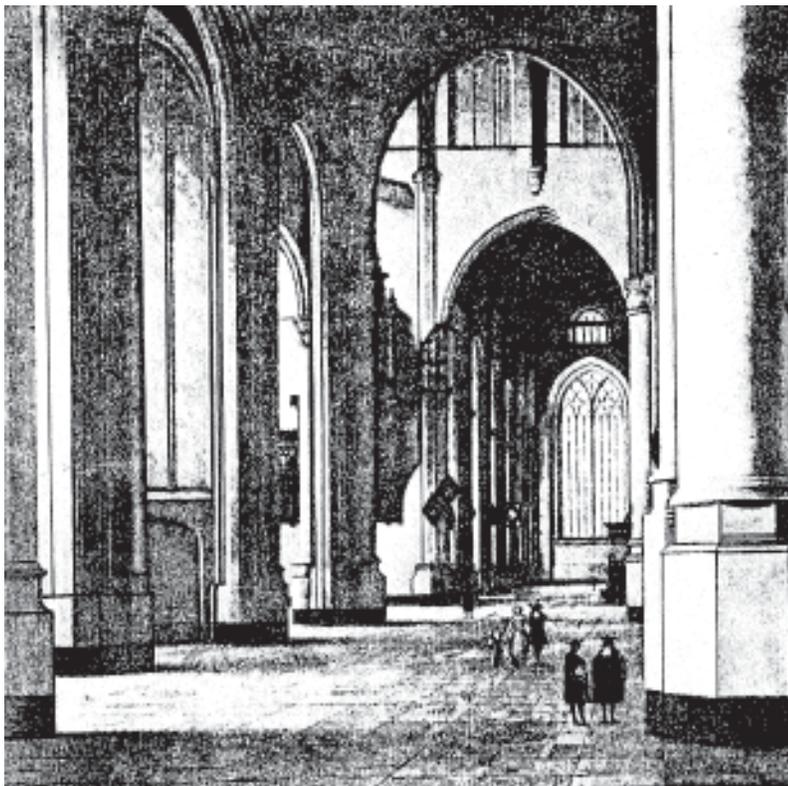


Manzù, who also designed those for the St. Peter Cathedral in Rome and the Cathedral of Salzburg

In 1572 the Laurens Church became a place for Reformed worship, but the price was high, because the Spanish army led by General Bossu came and murdered half of the population.

In June 1575 the first Reformed Synod of the region was held in Rotterdam. Soon there came problems with Remonstrants who had many followers in the city. This went on till in 1643 a Scottish Reformed Church was founded (Rev. Alexander Petrie). He brought many Reformed books with him, which were translated in Dutch. In the period till 1723 Rev. Thomas Hoog and Rev. Hugh Kennedy came and had a very good influence. In 1797 a Missionary Society was founded (for work in the East Indies). Its activities were well supported by the Reformed people in the city.

On May 14, 1940, the air force of Nazi Germany began a carpet bombing attack which went on as long as The Netherlands refused to surrender. The center of Rotterdam was erased without mercy. The Laurens Church was destroyed except for a few pieces amidst the burning city which became a bare plain. Exactly five years later, Rotterdam would be liberated by the Allied Forces.



In 1947 a beginning was made with the restoration, clearing the rubble away. In 1952 Queen Wilhelmina came to lay the first stone for the new State Reformed Laurens Church, exactly like it had been. Architect J.D. Meischke took care of the rebuilding of the church, and Architect L. Voskuyl the tower. In 1959 the transept of the church could be used again, in 1962 the choir, in 1968, the nave. The finishing touch was in 1973, the new main organ. In 1986 the tower was completed (owned by the city of Rotterdam).

The story of the Laurens Church would not be complete without a picture of the interior, as it was in 1657, from a painting made by Anthonie de Lorme. Straight lines, much light, fresh colors. See how small the people are. The Italian Roman Catholic theologian Guido de Bovio called it once “typical for the Calvinist sect, those bare walls.” But also the grave-tombs in the church of three famous Dutch admirals of the past have been carefully restored, namely of Kortenaer, Van Brakel and Witte de With, who defended The Netherlands against many enemies at sea.

But now, the character of the church has changed. It is ecumenical, no pews left but 200 modern easy chairs covered with red textile, and a corner for smoking and drinking coffee. Several so called Third World shops and offices. There are yet organ concerts and a choir, but also “Laurence deliberations.” There is a strange contemporary baptismal font. It seems that the word Reformed is forgotten.

There is yet an annual commemoration on May 4th, the eve of Liberation Day, remembering the war and occupation victims. There is an annual “Jam Hashoa service” for all churches, with guest participants of the Jewish community; remembering the annihilation of Jews in Europe by Hitler. Each Friday, a Prayer for Peace and Reconciliation is said in the Peace Chapel of the Church.



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

[Corrections for April 1997 “In Veere.” “Veveland” should read Beveland” and “1925” should read 1579.]

Knowing My God

In Order To Know My Calling As a Young Man

Some things don't change much from generation to generation. However, the modern world and even the church today are viciously attacking the proper place of a man. The distinctiveness of manhood is being swallowed up in a feminine tide. In a world where men are being offered paid "family leave" at the birth of a child, and bumper stickers describe God as "SHE," the young Christian man needs to know Who God is, and what God's calling is for him in this life. Then, by faith, he will live in obedience to that calling, for only in obedience will he find joy.

I. How and why God created me.

A. God is Sovereign.

1. God created this world with a divine design. To know and believe that gives me peace. I need only to ask myself the question God addressed to Job in Job chapters 38 & 39 to begin to understand the infinite scope of the order and design God created in His universe.
2. God did not create "persons," He created man and woman! He created them physically and emotionally different. When I acknowledge that as truth, I will believe that because this is a creation ordinance, that order and design will never change; not for different time, cultures or circumstances. If I in any way desire to change that order, I must hear God's word to Job (40:2) "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him?"

B. Spiritual Equality. Before I see the distinct calling of men and women, I should understand there IS a spiritual equality, a spiritual equalness I may speak of.

1. Both men and women are created in God's image. Gen. 1:27
2. Both men and women fell into sin and are in need of salvation. Rom. 3:23

3. Both men and women are the objects of God's grace, and thus are fellow heirs of grace. I Pet. 3:7
4. Both men and women alike possess the Holy Spirit and equally share in the office of all believer—Prophet, Priest, and King. Gal. 3:27 & 28
5. There is a mutual dependence between them, one cannot exist without the other. I Cor. 11:11 & 12

C. Created to be man. Apart from spiritual equality, men and women were created different, each having their own design, calling, and glory.

1. Man was created first as king of the creation.
2. He was created to be *head*, I Cor. 11:3 to be in authority, to lead, to be a picture of Christ, the Bridegroom of His church. Eph. 5:23.
3. After the fall, God spoke to Adam as head, even though Eve sinned first. Gen. 3:9 & 10.
4. God's rebuke to Adam in Gen. 3:17 was not only that he ate of the tree, but first, that he listened to Eve. Part of Adam's sin was that he was submissive to Eve's lead in eating the fruit.

II. How my calling is different than a young woman's.

A. In the Church. It is a man's calling to *lead* in the church. Men are called to teach, rule and exhort in the church, giving attendance to doctrine. I Tim. 3 & 4.

B. In single life.

1. Paul would have all men to be single I Cor. 7:7, because he that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. I Cor. 7:32.

2. As a single man I have a calling to live for the Lord and that, just as a married man, to rule and lead in the church.
3. "In a man the ulterior desire to marry may be triggered by the need to have a home, to fit in with his friends, to be cared for by a woman. Yet may be totally unsuited for the rigors of marriage and family. He should give prayerful consideration to the use of his talents in another way, and should not marry simply to follow the crowd." (Rev. C. Hanko)

C. In Dating. The calling of a young Christian man in dating is once again to lead. I must seek out a godly young woman, take the lead in getting to know her and her family and lead in the relationship that it will be kept pure.

D. In Marriage.

1. My calling as a young Christian man in marriage is to be the head as Christ is to the church. Marriage is God's institution designed by Him to picture for us the mystery of Christ and His bride, the church. I must exercise my headship in love. Eph. 5:23.
2. To "husband" means to take care of. It is a self-sacrificing love. Eph. 5:25.
3. I must give my wife honor as a weaker vessel. I Pet. 3:7

III. Attacks on that calling.

A. Attacks by the world.

1. The world in its entertainment is attacking my life more and more to keep me from my desire to know my God and how I must live for Him. The entertainment in parties, dancing, music, alcohol and their sensual appeal all attack my life. Television, movies and videos could well be Satan's worst attack, with its fornication, lust, rape, the popular "father is an idiot" theme, and now even open homosexuality. These are not even supposed to be named among us—Eph. 5:1-7. Paul would have us "simple" (unknowledgeable) concerning them. We are to set no wicked thing before our eyes, Ps: 101: 2 & 3. We are to have no pleasure in them that do them. Rom. 1:18-32.
2. The Women's Liberation Movement attacks my calling even as a young man. It spreads lies that the belief that man is head over the woman is simply tyranny.

3. Homosexuality is attacking my calling to true Christian manhood. It is played up as a wonderful alternate lifestyle, and poisons minds into believing that one is simply born that way. Knowing my God in my calling reassures me that His way for me is the only way. His word is clear on His creation design and that does NOT leave any room for man with man. Rom. 1: 26 & 27, Gen. 19 and I Cor. 6:9.

4. Abortion is also an attack of the world to my calling. The world today makes all sin easier and easier. Abortion offers a cover-up for sin, but knowing my God and His commandment, I know this is murder, Ex. 20:13, and that there is no hiding from Him. Ps. 44:21, Ps. 139:4.

B. Attacks by the Church.

1. Divorce and remarriage is condoned in almost all the church-world today. It is an attack on my calling as a young man in that it attempts to explain away the bond that God places on marriage. There is no taking apart what God has joined together. To attempt to do so is sin. Matt. 19:6
2. The church-world attacks my calling in the church as office bearer by giving that office unbiblically to women. Knowing God's Word stands, I know clearly this can never be God's will. I Cor. 14:34 & 35, I Tim. 2:11 & 12.
3. Promise Keepers is yet another threat on my calling as a young Christian man. While Promise Keepers is well known as a wonderful movement to teach and encourage men to be men for God and family, a closer look at it will prove to the young Reformed Christian man that it is a movement which compromises the truth and is deceptive and dangerous. Matt. 24:5, 11:23 & 24.

C. Attacks by my own sinful nature.

1. A sinful selfish desire to remain single may be harming my calling to walk close to God. Rev. C. Hanko writes: "There are young men and women who for their own selfish reason either never marry or postpone marriage as long as possible...for their selfish interests. Too often they forget or ignore, their covenant obligations. Unless they are celibate to the glory of God, to function better

for His kingdom, they are covenantally bound to marry and give birth to the Church of God.”

2. My weaknesses themselves may be attacking my calling. That may be a love of money, a desire to enjoy worldliness more than godliness, or it may be a weakness for lust, or a desire to date an unbeliever. Again, knowing God’s Word, the answers to those attacks ring out loud and clear. I Tim. 6:10, I John 2:15, I Cor. 6:15-20, and II Cor. 6:14.

IV. What I must be doing NOW to be obedient to my calling.

- A. I must know scripture. I cannot know God without knowing His Word. In His Word He reveals to me all the answers I need to know my calling and to live by it. I am truly blessed to be placed by God’s grace in His church where I am in-

structed richly in His Word by the preaching and in catechism. I must search God’s Word, memorize it and live by it.

- B. I must use that scriptural knowledge to resist temptation. I must practice spiritual sensitivity. I always have a choice: enjoy this sinful pleasure I desire, or obey God. I must draw a line and not cross over it...with humble heart, by His grace, I will obey, because saying yes to God always leads to joy in the end. Self-control and self-denial go hand in hand.

I *cannot* know my God and His calling in my life without coming to Him often in prayer. When I begin my day in prayer I will go through the day in the strength of the Lord. When I go into His presence after the day is over in self-examination and thanksgiving, I will begin to know Him and His calling in my life.

Knowing My God

In Order To Know My Calling As a Young Woman

The calling of women is being attacked on all sides today. Back just a couple of generations girls always wore skirts to school, waited for a guy to ask for a date, and *never* called a guy on the phone!! Granted, jeans may be more comfortable than skirts, but the distinctiveness of womanhood is gone. It will do us good to examine just what it means to be a Christian young woman. When a young woman today desires to serve God, she must know God. Her life of obedience will then have to be according to God’s design for women, for truly only inside the sphere of that design will she find joy.

I. How and why God created me.

A. God is Sovereign.

1. God created this world with a divine design. To know and believe that gives me peace. I need only to ask myself the question God

addressed to Job in Job chapters 38 & 39 to begin to understand the infinite scope of the order and design God created in His universe.

2. God did not create “persons”, He created man and woman! He created them physically and emotionally different. When I acknowledge that as truth, I will believe that because this is a creation ordinance, that order and design will never change; not for different time, cultures or circumstances. If I in any way desire to change that order, I must hear God’s Word to Job (40:2) “Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him?”

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3. Both men and women are the objects of God's grace, and thus are fellow heirs of grace. I Pet. 3:7
4. Both men and women alike possess the Holy Spirit and equally share in the office of all believer - Prophet, Priest, and King. Gal. 3:27 & 28
5. There is a mutual dependence between them, one cannot exist without the other. I Cor. 11:11 & 12

C. Created to be Woman. Apart from spiritual equality, men and women were created different each having his/her own design, calling and glory. Woman was created *for* man, fit for his needs. Gen. 2:18 and I Cor. 11:9

1. She was created *from* man, out of him. Gen. 2:22 and I Cor. 11:8.
2. She was brought *to* man. Gen. 2:22.
3. She was named by man. Gen. 2:23.
4. She was created to be a picture of the church under the authority of Christ. Eph. 5:23 & 24.
5. She was created to be a responder, to be in subjection to her husband, as the weaker vessel. I Pet. 3:7 "Every creature of God was made with its own glory. It is part of the glory of the female that she is the weaker vessel." (Prof. D. Engelsma)

II. How my calling is different than a young man's.

A. In the Church. It is a woman's calling in the Church to learn, but in subjection, not to be in any position of authority. She must keep silent in any position of teaching or ruling, but is to work in the church with good deeds and be a helper. I Tim. 2:11 & 12, I Cor. 14:34 & 35.

B. In single life.

1. As a single young woman, Paul tells me in I Cor. 7:34 that I can care for the things of the Lord, that I may be holy both in body and spirit.
2. As a single woman scripture gives me two examples on how to live for Christ in the church, Rom. 16:1 & 2 and Acts 9:36ff. I

am called to serve the church with whatever abilities God has given me, whether that's office work, kitchen work, visiting or works of mercy.

3. "If a woman hates housework, hates to be bothered with children hanging on her skirts, hates the cares and worries of a family, but likes to have her own career, likes to have her own life, that woman should not marry under any circumstances. She should make up her mind that she was brought into this world not to marry but to use her talents in some other way." (Rev. C. Hanko)

C. In Dating. The calling of a young Christian woman in dating is once again to be the responder. I am not to lead in this area of my life either. I may be busy in the school and church and mix with the young men in society activities, but it is my calling not to be bold, not to be forward, not to be aggressive, but to wait for the Lord's leading.

D. In Marriage.

1. My calling as a Christian young woman in marriage is to live in subjection to my husband as the church lives under Christ. This is a mystery. We see only the picture.
2. I was created to respond (no matter how much my fallen nature fights against that). It is my calling to be led, to follow. I must fully understand that I am no longer independent, no longer my own person.
3. My fulfillment comes in serving my husband. I know I will find my joy only in submitting to my husband with an inward submission of the heart that works out in outward obedience. That is God's design, outside of that I have no joy. Eph. 5:24 and Titus 2:4 & 5.

III. Attacks on that calling.

A. Attacks by the world.

1. The world in its entertainment is attacking my life in more and stronger ways to keep me from my desire to know God and how I must live for Him. The entertainment which the world offers me, even entices me with, attacks my Christian walk in all areas. The world's music, dancing, drinking and drugs all entice me to follow and enjoy. Television, movies and videos could well be Satan's worst attack on my calling. Not only am I

duped into believing the sensual, men worship me, ideas of the soap operas, but I am also enticed with the theme of the wife being the power in the home, and now even with the sinful notion that it is much easier to love and live with another woman in a lesbian relationship. These sins are not even supposed to be named among us—Eph. 5:1-7. I am to set no wicked thing before my eyes. Ps. 101:1 & 2. And I may have no pleasure in others that do them. Rom. 1:18-32. Eph. 5:1-5

2. The Women's Liberation Movement is another danger to me in my calling. They claim liberty for women by throwing off the chains that bond women to the home over the centuries. They would have me be more open-minded, understanding that man as the head means outright tyranny. "The National Organization for women is no more *for* women than the devil is for the church." (Rev. S. Key) the Women's Libbers tell me to get out of the house trap. God's Word tells me to be a keeper at home. Where do I think I will find my *joy*? Titus 2:5.
3. Homosexuality is a relatively new threat to my place as a woman. Lesbianism is a comfortable lifestyle, love without the tyranny of a man, children my own way, I can have it all. God's Word is *clear* on this sin. Gen. 19, Lev. 18:22, Rom. 1:26 & 27, and I Cor. 6:9.
4. Abortion is another attack of the world on my calling. The world makes it easier and easier for me to sin. It tempts a young woman to commit fornication and then when she becomes pregnant, (when a *child* is conceived) the world increases the heat of the temptation and makes abortion easily available without the knowledge of her parents. I must be armed with the conviction that this is murder. Ex. 20:13, Lev 18:21. And I know that there is nothing hidden from God. Ps. 44:21 and Ps. 139:4.

B. Attacks by the Church.

1. Divorce and remarriage is condoned in almost all the church-world today. It is an attack on my calling as a young woman. It takes away the permanence of the marriage bond that God designed, I am tempted to write my own wedding vows to make them more

"meaningful." Now I can say "as long as you both shall *love*" instead of "as long as you both shall *live*." I am called to remember that a marriage vow is a vow for life and does not depend on feelings, or "how things turn out."

2. The church world attacks my calling in the church by convincing me of my worth, my value as an intelligent, compassionate person with excellent qualities for work in the official offices in the church. But I know that for a woman to be in subjection is a creation ordinance, and God's Word makes clear in I Cor. 14:34 & 35 and I Tim. 2:11 & 12, that God does not call me to an office in the church.

C. Attacks by my own sinful nature.

1. A sinful selfish desire to remain single may be harming my calling to remain in God's will. Rev. C. Hanko writes: "There are young men and women who for their own selfish reasons either never marry or postpone marriage as long as possible...for their selfish interests. Too often they forget or ignore, their covenant obligations. Unless they are celibate to the glory of God, to function better for His kingdom, they are covenantly bound to marry and give birth to the Church of God."
2. My weaknesses themselves may be attacking my calling. I may have a weakness to enjoy the world, a weakness for lust, a weakness to date an unbeliever instead of waiting for a Christian young man. God's Word rings out loud and clear in answer to all these attacks. I Tim. 6:10, I John 2:15, I Cor. 6:15-20 and II Cor. 6:14.

IV. What I must be doing NOW to be obedient to my calling.

- A. I must know scripture. I cannot know God without knowing His Word. In His Word He reveals to me all the answers I need to know my calling and to live by it. I am truly blessed to be placed by God's grace in His church where I am instructed richly in His Word by the preaching and in catechism. I must search God's Word, memorize it and live by it.
- B. I must use that scriptural knowledge to resist temptation. I must practice spiritual sensitivity. I

always have a choice: enjoy this sinful pleasure I desire, or obey God. I must draw a line and not cross over it... with humble heart, by His grace, I will obey, because saying yes to God always leads to joy in the end. Self-control and self-denial go hand in hand.

C. *I cannot* know my God and His calling in my life without coming to Him often in prayer. When I begin my day in prayer I will go through the day in the strength of the Lord. When I go into His presence after the day is over in self-examination and thanksgiving, I will begin to know Him and His calling in my life.

Quotes for Discussion

Young Men:

Never say “I love you” until you are ready to follow that question with “will you marry me.”

Elizabeth Elliot

Young Women:

Satan can't stand a woman's desire for purity and so a woman's passions become his battleground.

Elizabeth Elliot

For the woman to whom God has given the gift of marriage, her highest fulfillment is to be found in subjecting herself to a Christian man in marriage. The intellectual woman who feels stifled by that has not yet understood the Biblical meaning of freedom.

?

It is not a weakness for a sailboat to submit itself to the powerful wind. Only in submission to the wind can the boat use its full strength. In the same way it is not weakness for the wife to submit herself to the husband, but only in submitting can she use the strengths God created her to use.

Elizabeth Elliot

Submission to authority comes hard for a sinner. Who hasn't said or felt: “Nobody's going to tell *me* what to do?” or “I'll do as I please!” or “Who does he think *he is*?” Remember, God created an ordered universe. Our question should always be not: who does he think he is, but who does he represent!

Both:

There is a world of difference between those who look only for their own happiness in this world and those who know that their happiness lies in the will of God.

Elizabeth Elliot

How would we learn to submit to the authority of Christ if we had nothing to submit.

Elizabeth Elliot

How in the world can you tell if you want to marry somebody if you've never kissed them? but then

How in the world can you tell you want to marry somebody just because you've kissed them?

Elizabeth Elliot

Sexuality is a gift of God, but fire and water are too and when they get out of control the result is disastrous.

Elizabeth Elliot

It's no use pretending that we're doing things “in the name of the Lord Jesus” if we're not doing them His way.

Elizabeth Elliot

It is the heart's *direction* that is always the central issue.

Elizabeth Elliot

If you are conscious of your relationship to God you will choose friends with whom any discussion can be in the sense spiritual ones, because your beliefs are the foundation of your life.

We can take a lesson from the frog:

If you put a frog in a pan of boiling water he will immediately hop out.

If you put him in a pan of cold water and slowly heat it to boiling, the frog doesn't sense the danger and boils to death.

Are you sensitive to sin in your life, or are the sins you hear in music and see on television "boiling" your soul.

Because of what God has done for us we should *desire* above all to obey Him, and be *afraid* to offend Him (I Peter 3:12).

Purity comes at a high price. Do we know well enough what honor is that we can place it above passion?

Purity means freedom *in* the will of God, out of uncleanness. (James 1:27).

Questions for Discussion

1. God used Deborah when Barak was afraid and no man took the lead. Doesn't that show that if men don't take their proper leadership women may take over?
2. Eph. 5:21 tells us to submit to each other, doesn't that show that we're somehow equal in marriage? And Gal. 3:28 tells us we're all one, isn't that proof we're equal?
3. Doesn't I Cor. 7:10-17 make it all right for me to marry an unbeliever?
4. If the wife has a strong, out-going personality with good leadership qualities and the husband is more of a follower, isn't it okay for that woman to lead in the marriage?
5. Women can do almost anything men can in this modern age. How do we explain that she is the weaker vessel? I Peter 3:7.
6. I don't get it! A wife has to be in subjection to her husband, calling him lord as Sarah did and yet the husband has to honor the wife. How do those fit together?

7. Can we say that we are tempted more in this modern world with television and Internet etc. than Adam and Eve were? (Use I John 2:16 in considering your answer.)
8. How do I know myself, what I feel is it lust or love?
9. What is the Holy Spirit telling me through Paul "For me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21)?
10. *How can* I live as I am supposed to with Satan tempting me and everyone else around me "following the crowd", I'm just not strong enough? (See Psalm 73:26).
11. There is a Christian family that has a rule for watching television—the second swear word they hear on a program the TV goes off. How many television programs, movies, videos, would pass the test if we said the second sin against *any* commandment and it's off? (See Eph. 5: 1-7).
12. We know God calls us to physical abstinence until marriage. Does He also call us to "emotional" abstinence—a keeping the heart and mind pure as well as the body?
13. A young woman may desire and get much benefit out of a college education, but is she ready to put aside that education when she marries and has children, and not fall to the pressure that she must use it in order to feel satisfied, in order to truly feel she is accomplishing something worthwhile? Does she feel like she's putting her "life" on "hold" until she can really do what she wants to do? (See Matt 25:40)

Books for Suggested Reading

Let Me Be a Woman by Elizabeth Elliot
The Mark of a Man by Elizabeth Elliot
Passion & Purity by Elizabeth Elliot
Marriage the Mystery of Christ and the Church by Prof. D. Engelsma
Better to Marry by Prof. D. Engelsma
Leaving Father and Mother by Rev. C. Hanko
Far Above Rubies Edited by Prof. H. Hanko
Promises, Promises, Promises (Pamphlet) by Rev. R. Cammenga

Church News

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

Mark 16:16

EDGERTON, MN

Presented for baptism were Kaitlyn Fae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Gunnink, and Ethan Clay, son of Rev. & Mrs. Brummel.

FAITH, MI

Baptism was administered to Derek Mitchell, son of Mr. & Mrs. Randy Dykstra.

GRANDVILLE, MI

Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Vink presented their son, Travis George, for baptism.

GEORGETOWN, MI

Baptism was administered to Jessica Sue, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Harv VerBeek, and to Audrey Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Kaptein.

Mr. & Mrs. Tom Schimmel presented their daughter, Mary Grace, for baptism.

LOVELAND, CO

Brittany Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Holthouser, was presented for baptism.

LYNDEN, WA

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Karmin Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Boonstra, to Neil James, son of Mr. & Mrs. John Meyer, to Lydia Kay, daughter of Mr & Mrs. Larry Rypstra, and to Jeremy Dirk, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dirk Vander Meulen.

SOUTHWEST, MI

Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Kleyn presented their daughter, Alyssa Dawn for baptism.

Baptism was administered to Alexis Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Smith.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

“...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Romans 10:10

HUDSONVILLE, MI

Terry Dykstra has made public confession of faith in our Lord.

HULL, IA

Public confession of faith was made by Rob Andringa, Sara Bleyenbergh, Jessica Brummel, Rebecca Scharlepp and Robyne Westra.

PEACE, IL

Heather Hoekstra has made public her confession in the Lord Jesus.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Jessica Hanco and Andrew Clarke have made public confession of their faith in the Lord.

MARRIAGES *“...and they twain shall be one flesh.”*

Matthew 19:5

DOON, IA

United in marriage were Mr. Brent Boon and Miss Cara VanderZwaag.

RANDOLPH, WI

Joined in Holy Matrimony were Mr. James Kooiker and Miss Heidi Soodsma.

HULL, IA

Mr. Les VanRoekel and Miss Gwen Netten were joined in marriage.

LOVELAND, CO

United in the bonds of marriage were Rev. Doug Kuiper and Miss Teresa Brands.

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

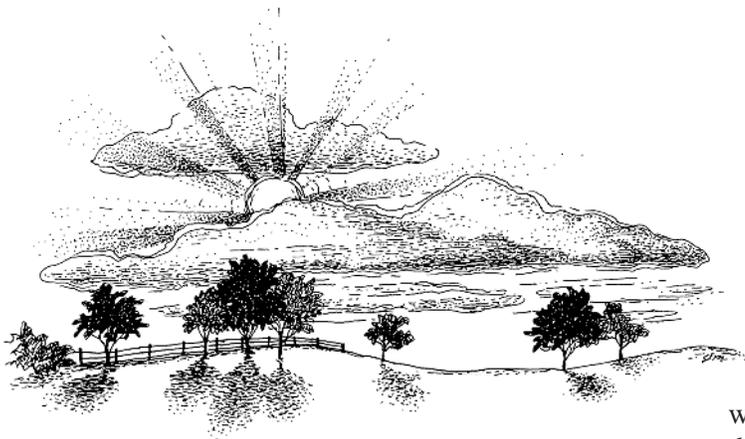
or e-mail to:

melindad@juno.com

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer



Virtue and Praise

Philip looked up from his book and stared out the window. He put the book down and went outside onto the patio. The sun was going down and the air was especially clear this evening, creating a spectacular sunset. Bright orange, pink, and purple filled the sky.

Suddenly his father joined him. "Beautiful, isn't it?"

"Yeah, I haven't seen one like this in a long time," Philip answered.

They stood there a few moments longer, but the colors were already beginning to deepen. Before they went back inside, Philip's father said, "I found this on the sofa. Is it yours?"

It was the book Philip had just laid down. "Yes, I just started reading it."

"Did you read the back cover carefully? It doesn't look like it will be very edifying."

Philip hated to displease his father, but he thought the book had sounded quite exciting. Many of his friends had read it. He tried to explain.

His father sighed. "Our minds are an amazing creation of God. He made them able to be filled with millions of things—and He commanded us to fill them with only what is good."

There was silence as they watched the last orange rays disappear. Then his father went on, "But I am glad you noticed this sunset. That's like looking at a page in a book." He handed the novel back to Philip and added, "A more elegant book."

Philip knew his father was right, but being a Christian sure seemed like a lot of work sometimes. You al-

ways have to be careful. You always have to ask, "Is this good? Does this praise God?"

He went back inside and put the book on a stack to be returned to the library. Then he closed his eyes. He could still see the sunset in his mind and he smiled. Work? Yes. But to have his mind filled with good things worth it? Amen!

"Finally, brethren,...if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).



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

Puzzle

Find the following underlined words in the puzzle below:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

T	Y	L	E	V	O	L	A	J	T
P	S	J	P	K	N	O	L	V	E
U	H	G	U	V	T	H	I	N	K
R	V	U	N	S	O	R	D	E	G
E	T	R	E	I	T	E	U	R	T
B	S	K	R	U	H	V	G	H	S
R	E	I	E	S	E	T	L	T	V
S	N	O	A	T	Q	M	I	E	K
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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.

Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church Young People's Society

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