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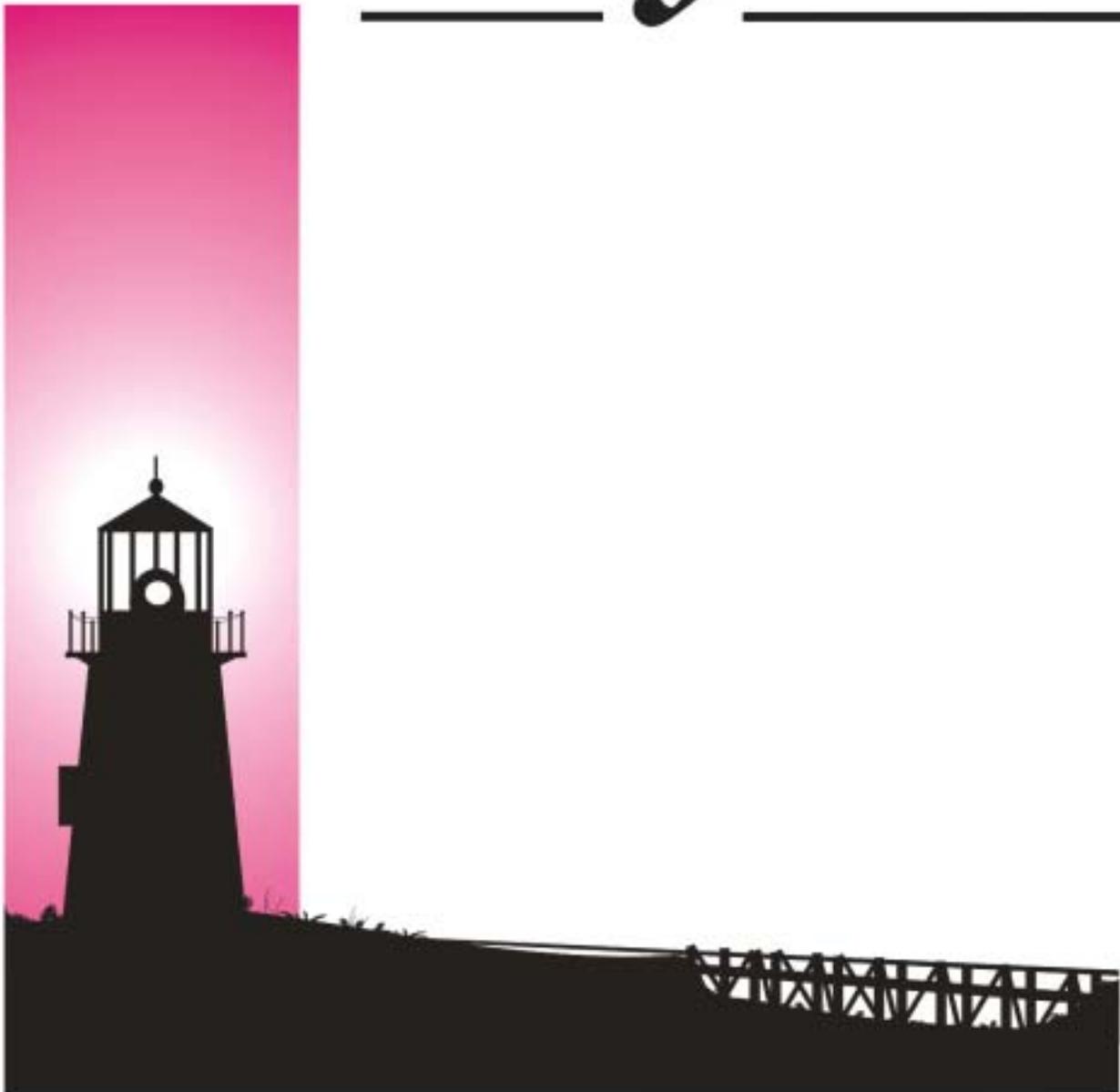


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Fleeing Sin (3)

by Aaron J. Cleveland

This time we continue our discussion of “fleeing sin” from the viewpoint of separating ourselves from those who live in impenitence. We must understand, first of all, whom we are talking about and what we mean by “separation.” One passage of Scripture in particular helps us out greatly in understanding from whom we are to separate and what is meant by separation. This passage is I Corinthians 5, especially verses 9-13.

As it is written in verses 9-11 of this chapter it is obvious that the child of God knows that he is not to “company with” the “fornicators of this world.” Knowing that the world is full of impenitent sinners (fornicators, covetous, extortioners, idolaters), the Apostle Paul recognizes the fact that it is impossible to completely separate oneself from these people. One must work among the ungodly. One must do business with the ungodly. One must live among the ungodly.

This cannot be avoided. The Apostle Paul does not espouse world flight (vs. 10). What Paul does say in these verses is that we are to refrain from close intimacy and familiarity with the wicked of this world; that is what is meant by the phrase “company with.” In other words, we are to separate ourselves spiritually as much as possible from the society of the wicked. We do not make friendships among them. We do not invite them into our fellowship and try to have as much in common as possible with them. We do not pattern our lives after their behavior. We do not seek spouses among them and date them. We do not join their clubs or groups or leagues so that we might enjoy recreation among them and play with them. It ought to be obvious to them that we are indeed spiritually separate (“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people”) and we do not seek to become closer to them.

We are to refrain from close intimacy and familiarity with the wicked of this world.

Paul continues in verse 11 of this chapter with a sharper distinction. Not only are we to separate ourselves from the society of the ungodly of this world, but we are “not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator....with such an one no not to eat.” These are indeed hard words to hear, much less put into practice. The man in verse 11 who is called a “brother” is one who is a member (or former member) of the true church living in impenitence. His profession of faith is false. More than likely it is the case that this brother has been excommunicated for his impenitence. Our responsibility to this brother is best put in the words of John Calvin, “What Paul means is, that, in so far as it is in our power, we are to shun the society of those whom the Church has cut off from her communion.” Nowhere in the Word will we read that we ought to invite the impenitent into our fellowship, downplay his sin (if mentioning it at all), and make him feel as much as possible at ease as he travels the road to destruction. No doubt we may, and must, admonish the wayward brother in love, but never may we “receive him into terms of intimacy” (Calvin on I Cor. 5:11).

Another important passage of the Bible which speaks of our calling in regards to separation is Ephesians 5:3-12. Once again the language of this passage is very clear as to our calling. In verses 3-5 Paul explains that the kingdom of Christ and of God is closed to those who live in the sins of fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, and idolatry. In verse 6, Paul reinforces what he has previously stated by adding the words, “Let no man deceive you with vain words.” Obviously there were those to whom Paul was writing that had been deceived into thinking that the kingdom of heaven is open to those who continue to live impenitently in sin. Paul, by the Spirit’s inspiration, says, “No, but the wrath of God comes upon the children of

disobedience!” We ought to be careful that we are not deceived, even in part, into thinking that sin is a light thing and that countenancing the sin of others in our midst is no big deal. The Word of God is, “*Be not ye therefore partakers with them*” (vs. 7).

Further, in verse 11 we read that we are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” This verse is explained succinctly by John Calvin. He writes: “It is not enough that we do not, of our own accord, undertake anything wicked. We must beware of joining or assisting those who do wrong. In short, we must abstain from giving any consent, or advice, or approbation, or assistance; for in all these ways we have fellowship. And lest any one should imagine that he has done his duty, merely by not conniving, he adds, *but rather reprove them.*”

We must beware of joining or assisting those who do wrong. In short, we must abstain from giving any consent, or advice, or approbation, or assistance.

Yet another important passage in our understanding of separation from sin and impenitent sinners is II Corinthians 6:14-18. Those who apply this passage strictly to marriage do so contrary to the context of the passage. Although this Word does speak to marriage, we must not limit it to marriage. This passage speaks to us in all of our dealings in this life. And the Word is this, “Be ye not unequally yoked.” Once again, no simpler explanation of this passage can be found than that of Calvin. He comments, “When, therefore, he prohibits us from having partnership with unbelievers in drawing the same yoke, he means simply this, that we should have no fellowship with them in their pollutions.”

We ought also to learn from this passage the impossibility of true fellowship with unbelievers. The believer can no more fellowship with an unbeliever than light can with darkness. The believer can no more live in friendship with an unbeliever than water can dwell in accord with fire. Those who argue that we ought to develop friendships with the ungodly of this world so that we might “let our lights shine to them” and “witness” to them are wrong. Holiness has no part with unholiness.

This idea of holiness we must see in verse 16. We read in the second half of this verse, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” These inspired words of Paul are in reference to Ezekiel 37:27, 28. Those verses read, “My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” Those among whom and in whom God dwells are sanctified. And those who are sanctified live lives of holiness and separation from the sin and sinners of this world. The desire of the child of God is not friendship and communion with those of this world and their “unfruitful works.” Rather, the desire of the child of God is friendship and fellowship with God and His people. We saw earlier that this was the desire of David in Psalm 26. And this is our desire also. In fact we sing this in Psalter #27, the second verse, “I love Thy saints, who fear Thy name and walk as in Thy sight; They are the excellent of earth, in them is my delight.”

It is interesting to note from the passage in Ezekiel the phrase, “And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel.” It ought to be evident from our behavior as individuals and as a denomination, even among the young people, that the Lord has sanctified us and dwells among us. The heathen will see this because we live “holy and unblamable lives” (Q & A 70 of the Catechism). They will see that we are set apart for the service of God. We are a “kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). May it never be said about us individually, as families, as young people, or as a denomination this, “The Lord is not among them. They are like us, no different. They think like us, speak like us, and behave like us.” Rather, let it be said, “Christ dwells in and among them. They are not like us. Their thoughts are not our thoughts and their words are not our words. They are holy, separate, consecrated to the service of a holy God.”

Next time, D.V., we will conclude our look at “fleeing sin” from the point of view of belonging to the true church where sound, antithetical preaching is found and discipline is administered. ❖



Children in the Home

by Jen Griffioen

Today, the place of children in the home is losing significance. Children are seen as an obligation: an option in life that can be chosen or done away with. The Christian's view of children in the family is radically different, however. Children are seen as a precious gift from God, and are considered as a blessing of God-fearing parents. God sees children as part of His church on earth, and therefore grants parents not only a great blessing, but also a great responsibility. The children of believers are a gift from God, and are a continuation of His church and part of His covenant.

God gives faithful children to his elect as a manifestation of his covenant in the continued generations. Psalm 127:3, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." In Old Testament times, children were a way in which one's estate was carried on through the years. A man's name lived on through his children. God, therefore, lets His name live in these covenant children on earth who have faith in him. Just as Isaac wished to bless his eldest son in Genesis 27, God gives His blessing to his children on earth. God made a promise to Abraham that he and his children would have an everlasting covenant with Him. Genesis 17:7, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Children are included in God's perfect plan, and therefore they are set apart from the world as His children. Isaiah 61:9, "And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Children become the church's witnesses in the world as the visible, spiritual additions to the church.

Husbands and wives have a calling to have children since those children are the growth of the church and the

elect seed. After the Flood, when all the unbelievers were cleansed from the earth, God called Noah to have children and populate the earth so it could be filled again with a God-fearing seed. Genesis 9:1, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Later, God reemphasizes this point and continues in verse 7, "And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein...and I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and your seed after you..." Again, as with Abraham, God stresses that the covenant is with them and their "seed after thee." God first told Noah how he must have children, and then he makes the covenant with him. Children are not forgotten in the covenant, but are included in the promise as an integral part of the church.

Not only are parents called to have children, but they are also called to be responsible for them. Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." I Timothy 3:4,5, "...One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" God sees the ruling of the family as important as the ruling in His church. These children someday will be members and leaders in the church, and must be brought up responsibly. David knew the importance of raising up his children, and devoted several of his Psalms to his sons. Psalm 34:11, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Solomon also wrote to his own son in Proverbs 1:8, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." Parents' instruction not only serves as a guide for their children, but it also

teaches them the wonders of God. In Joshua 4:6,7, the Israelites were called to make a marker of 12 stones so that the fathers could tell the children what had happened there. Parents serve as the living Word to be an example to their children. David, Solomon, and the Israelites realized the importance of this, and took every opportunity to pass on their knowledge to the elect seed.

Not only parents, but children also have a duty in the home. Children have the responsibility to hear and heed their parent's instruction. Ephesians 6:1, 4, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right..." Psalm 44:1, "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." The future church has an obligation to learn about their God, and the foundation for this knowledge is received in the home. Children will rely on this knowledge to lead them throughout the course of

Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

their lives. In the proverbs of Solomon 4:1, 2, it reads, "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law."

Children are part of the church and are precious in God's sight. Luke 13:16, "...Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Christ did not turn these little ones away, and neither can the family underestimate their importance. Children are more than just part of the present situation, they are the future, and how they are dealt with now will affect the condition of the church for years to come. ❖

Jen is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

The Heart

by John Huizenga

The word "heart" has many shades of meaning that have one thing in common: they all refer to something central or innermost. The heart of a city is in the center of the city. The heart of a plant is the material that is at the center of the stem. The biblical concept of heart is often the innermost being of a man. One of the organs most central to our physical body is appropriately called the "heart."

Twenty one to twenty two days after you were conceived, your heart began to beat for the first time. You were only about 1/16th of an inch long. Blood vessels and blood cells have begun to form and your heart began to squeeze the blood through the brand new system. Your circulatory system was the very first functioning organ system in your body.

At six weeks, you were about 3/4 of an inch long and your heart was pumping at a regular rate of about 150 beats per minute. With today's medical technology, the parents can listen to the heartbeat of their child in the doctor's office. For parents, that sound of a tiny heart beating brings wonder and amazement. First only two

hearts were beating in the family and now God has added a third.

The heart along with the blood vessels and blood are called the cardiovascular system. This system carries food and oxygen to every cell of the body and removes the waste ejected from every cell. If the blood stops flowing, the cells begin to die and very soon the whole body dies. The heart is central to the physical life of the body.

God made the human heart in such a way that it is best able to meet the high demands of the body we are given for our service to God. Our heart is divided into two pumps with two chambers (atrium and ventricle) in each side. One pump pushes blood through the lungs where it can pick up oxygen for the body. The pathway through the lungs and back to the heart is called the pulmonary circuit. After going through the lungs and getting oxygen, the blood goes to the other pump where it is pushed through the rest of the body to bring each cell some oxygen and food, take away its waste, and also pick up some more food from the intestines and liver.

This circuit is called the systemic circuit. These two pumps work together as one unit pumping blood day and night.

One more fascinating feature of the heart that demonstrates how the heart is central to our bodies is the fact that the heart can beat on its own without a signal from the central nervous system. If the heart of a frog is removed from its body and placed in saline solution, it will continue to beat for up to an hour. The heart has a built in pace-maker that sends out a signal which travels like a wave through the tissue of the heart causing it to contract in stages for the most efficient pumping of blood. Separated from the brain, however, the heart fails to work in harmony with the rest of the body and the body soon fails.

Looking through the spectacles of science, we can observe how the heart is central to our body. When we look at the heart through the spectacles of Scripture we see that and more. As with any topic in science, we must see first of all that God is the author and creator of the heart. We praise God for his handiwork. Going further, we see that the heart is central to our physical body. This truth is implied in Leviticus 17:11 “for the life of the flesh is in the blood.” The idea that blood is at the center of physical life is developed throughout Scripture and culminates in the shedding of Christ’s blood to pay for our sins. Christ gave up what is essential for earthly life in order to save His people.

The word blood in Scripture almost always refers to physical blood and a few times as life.¹ When we look at the idea of a physical heart through the spectacles of Scripture, we are led directly to the revelation of our salvation by the blood of Christ. As we search further, we discover the concept of life and living with God in covenant fellowship. God leads us from the center of physical life to the center of spiritual life with God.

When we begin to survey the realm of spiritual life we come again to the idea of “heart” in Scripture. Most often Scripture uses the fundamental idea of heart as something central not just to our physical body and life, but rather to our will and being.² It is a spiritual organ that nourishes our entire spiritual life. As with the physical heart, the beating of the spiritual heart is a sign of spiritual life. If the heart stops beating and becomes hard, then we are spiritually dead in sin and every aspect of our spiritual life is dead and corrupt.

By nature everyone is born spiritually dead. The spiritual heart never makes a single beat until God makes it alive. Until life is breathed into our spiritual heart, we

are totally depraved. In a physical body in which the heart does not beat there are no body parts that are alive. The hand will not move, the eye will not see, the lungs will not breathe. So it is with the spiritual heart. Not one part of our physical life is pleasing to God, i.e. there is no life with God, until the heart is made alive by the work of regeneration.

When our new spiritual heart begins to beat our eyes are opened and we see Christ. We see how sinful we are by nature and we turn to Christ. In Christ we see those sins forever abolished. In Christ we have the right to be called children of God. In Christ we receive the strength we need in this earthly life to fight temptations and walk in a new and godly life. When you take your pulse or study the heart in school, put on the spectacles of God’s word and examine your spiritual heart as well.

The following are places in Scripture where God reveals truths about the heart. The list comes from “Torrey’s Topical Index” on a computer program called “Word Search.”

¹ BLOOD

- **Is the life.** Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11; Leviticus 17:14; Leviticus 19:16; Deut. 12:23; Matthew 27:4; Matthew 27:24
- **Forbidden to be used as food.** Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17; Leviticus 7:26-27; Leviticus 17:10-14; Leviticus 19:26; Deut. 12:16; Deut. 12:23; Deut. 15:23; Ezekiel 33:25; Acts 15:20; Acts 15:29; Acts 21:25
- **Plague of.** Exodus 7:17-25; Psalm 78:44; Psalm 105:29
- **Sacrificial.**
- **Without shedding of, no remission.** Hebrews 9:22
- **Sprinkled on altar and people.** Exodus 24:6-8; Ezekiel 43:18; Ezekiel 43:20
- **Sprinkled on doorposts.** Exodus 12:7-23; Hebrews 11:28
- **Of sin offering.**
- **Sprinkled seven times before the veil.** Leviticus 4:5-6; Leviticus 4:17
- **Sprinkled on horns of the altar of sweet incense, and at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.** Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 4:7; Leviticus 4:18; Leviticus 4:25; Leviticus 4:30; Leviticus 5:9; Leviticus 9:9; Leviticus 9:12
- **Of bullock of sin offering, put on the horns of the altar.** Exodus 29:12; Leviticus 8:15
- **Of bullock of sin offering, poured at the bottom of the altar.** Exodus 29:12; Leviticus 8:15

-
- **Of trespass offering.**
 - **Sprinkled on the altar.** Leviticus 7:2
 - **Of burnt offering.**
 - **Sprinkled round about, and upon the altar.** Exodus 29:16; Leviticus 1:1-17; Leviticus 5:11; Leviticus 5:15; Leviticus 8:19; Deut. 12:27
 - **Used for cleansing of leprosy.** Leviticus 14:6-7; Leviticus 14:17; Leviticus 14:28; Leviticus 14:51-52
 - **Of peace offering.**
 - **Sprinkled about the altar.** Leviticus 3:2; Leviticus 3:8; Leviticus 3:13; Leviticus 9:19
 - **Blood of the ram put on Aaron and his sons.** Exodus 29:20-21; Leviticus 8:23-24; Leviticus 8:30
 - **Of atonement.**
 - **Sprinkled on mercy seat.** Leviticus 16:14-15; Leviticus 16:18-19; Leviticus 16:27; Leviticus 17:11
 - **Blood of the covenant.** Exodus 24:5-8; Zech. 9:11; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:18-19; Hebrews 9:22; Hebrews 10:29; Hebrews 13:20
 - **Figurative.**
 - **Of victories.** Psalm 58:10
 - **Of oppression and cruelty.** Habakkuk 2:12
 - **Of destruction.** Ezekiel 35:6
 - **Of guilt.** Leviticus 20:9; II Samuel 1:16; Ezekiel 18:13
 - **Of judgments.** Ezekiel 16:38; Rev. 16:6
 - **Of sacrifices, typical of the atoning blood of Christ.** Hebrews 9:6-28
 - **Of Christ.** Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; John 6:53-56; John 19:34; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:24-25; Romans 5:9; I Cor. 10:16; I Cor. 11:25; Ephes. 1:7; Ephes. 2:13; Ephes. 2:16; Col. 1:14; Col. 1:20; Hebrews 9:12-14; Hebrews 10:19-20; Hebrews 10:29; Hebrews 12:24; Hebrews 13:12; Hebrews 13:20; I Peter 1:2; I Peter 1:18-19; I John 1:7; I John 5:6; I John 5:8; Rev. 1:5-6; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 7:14; Rev. 12:11
- ² HEART, THE**
- **Issues of life are out of.** Proverbs 4:23
 - **GOD.**
 - **Tries.** I Chron. 29:17; Jeremiah 12:3
 - **Knows.** Psalm 44:21; Jeremiah 20:12
 - **Searched.** I Chron. 28:9; Jeremiah 17:10
 - **Understands the thoughts of.** I Chron. 28:9; Psalm 139:2
 - **Ponders.** Proverbs 21:2; Proverbs 24:12
 - **Influences.** I Samuel 10:26; Ezra 6:22; Ezra 7:27; Proverbs 21:1; Jeremiah 20:9
 - **Creates a new.** Psalm 51:10; Ezekiel 36:26
 - **Prepares.** I Chron. 29:18; Proverbs 16:1
 - **Opens.** Acts 16:14
 - **Enlightens.** II Cor. 4:6; Ephes. 1:18
 - **Strengthens.** Psalm 27:14
 - **Establishes.** Psalm 112:8; I Thes. 3:13
 - **SHOULD BE.**
 - **Prepared to God.** I Samuel 7:3
 - **Given to God.** Proverbs 23:26
 - **Perfect with God.** I Kings 8:61
 - **Applied to wisdom.** Psalm 90:12; Proverbs 2:2
 - **Guided in the right.** Proverbs 23:19
 - **Purified.** James 4:8
 - **Single.** Ephes. 6:5; Col. 3:22
 - **Tender.** Ephes. 4:32
 - **Kept with diligence.** Proverbs 4:23
 - **WE SHOULD.**
 - **Believe with.** Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10
 - **Serve God with all.** Deut. 11:13
 - **Keep God's statutes with all.** Deut. 26:16
 - **Walk before God with all.** I Kings 2:4
 - **Trust in God with all.** Proverbs 3:5
 - **Love God with all.** Matthew 22:37
 - **Return to God with all.** Deut. 30:2
 - **Do the will of God from.** Ephes. 6:6
 - **Sanctify God in.** I Peter 3:15
 - **Love one another with a pure.** I Peter 1:22
 - **No man can cleanse.** Proverbs 20:9
 - **Faith, the means of purifying.** Acts 15:9
 - **Renewal of, promised under the gospel.** Ezekiel 11:19; Ezekiel 36:26; Hebrews 3:10
 - **When broken and contrite, not despised by God.** Psalm 51:17
 - **The pure in, shall see God.** Matthew 5:8
 - **PRAY THAT IT MAY BE.**
 - **Cleansed.** Psalm 51:10
 - **Inclined to God's testimonies.** Psalm 119:36
 - **United to fear God.** Psalm 86:11
 - **Directed into the love of God.** II Thes. 3:5
 - **Harden not, against God.** Psalm 95:8; Hebrews 4:7
 - **Harden not against the poor.** Deut. 15:7
 - **Regard not iniquity in.** Psalm 66:18
 - **Take heed lest it to be deceived.** Deut. 11:16
 - **Know the plague of.** I Kings 8:38
 - **He that trusts in, is a fool.** Proverbs 28:26 ❖
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The Sufficiency of Scripture

by Rev. Ron Hanko

Have you ever thought that your faith would be much stronger and your life more holy if only you could have walked with Jesus Himself as the Apostles did – if you could have seen His miracles, heard His teaching from His own mouth, and followed Him around through Galilee and Judea? Peter tells us in II Peter 3:19 that we must not think that way when he calls Holy Scripture a “more sure word of prophecy.” We have something better and more sure than the Apostles had who were “eyewitnesses of his majesty.” Think of that! Can you imagine any stronger statement of the value and sufficiency of Holy Scripture?

Let us look at what Peter says.

In II Peter 1:16-18, Peter is talking about the transfiguration of Christ. Not long before His death Jesus was “transfigured” on a mountain in Galilee in the presence of Peter, James, and John. The story is told in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36. There the three disciples (Peter was one of them) not only saw Jesus and Moses and Elijah, but they heard the voice of God Himself testifying of Jesus. What is more, they saw Jesus in His heavenly glory, as we will see Him when He comes again. That is why Peter speaks of seeing His “power and calling” in verse 16. What could be better than that?

Peter (really the Holy Spirit) knew we would think that way. He knew we would ask, “But what about us? How can we know and be sure? We did not see Him. We were not eyewitnesses of His majesty.” Peter answers these questions before we even ask them, when He tells us that Holy Scripture is a more sure word of prophecy. It is more sure than an eyewitness account or than being an eyewitness! That is part of what we call the SUFFICIENCY of Scripture. It is all we need, and having it we have everything necessary for our faith and life.

But do you know why Scripture is a more sure word? Peter explains that too by talking about the inspiration of Scripture. He says, “The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (verse 21). In other words, Scripture was not written because the authors of the various books wanted to write. They were not the ones, finally, who decided what to write and how to write it. In all their remembering, consulting of sources, planning, actual writing and editing, they were “carried” by the Holy Spirit. That is what the word translated “moved” really means. They were “carried!” The real author of Scripture is the Holy Spirit.

The result is that Scripture is for us a light shining in a dark place. It is the only light we have in this world, which is the land of the shadow of death, a land which is darkened by smoke of the wrath of the Lord (Is. 9:2, 19). Scripture tells us that there will be no night in the new heavens and earth, but here now there is not day. From a spiritual point of view this world is all darkness. There is only night. And all around us the darkness deepens in these last days. In that darkness the light of Scripture shines, and until Christ, the Day Star, arises it is the only light we have.

Take heed to it, therefore! “Ye do well that he take heed unto it,” Peter says. May that word of Peter be confirmed for us by the Word of God in the judgment, saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have paid heed to MY Word. ❖

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Antithetical Dating And Marriage

Part III: Dating With a View To Marriage

by Rev. James Laning

Having considered the subject of marriage, we move on to consider dating with a view to marriage. When dating we must look for a person who clearly shows that he or she knows the truth and loves the truth. But how does one show that he not only knows the truth intellectually, but also loves

how does one show that he not only knows the truth intellectually, but also loves that truth in his heart?

that truth in his heart? A person shows this when he digs into the Scriptures and the Reformed confessions on his own. It is a big change in a person's life, when he goes from studying only that which he has to study, to studying because he wants to know his God more. Moses said to God, "Show me Thy glory." That was the one thing he wanted to see. One who loves the truth, opens the Word, and wants to see more the glory of his God.

A second way that a lover of the truth manifests himself is by his hatred for the lie. Love for the truth and hatred for the lie always go together. One who refuses to break off friendships with those who believe the lie is manifesting a lack of love for the truth, for to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God (James 4:4).



If you are a believing woman who desires to be married, you are to seek someone who is truly a godly *man*. A real man is one who stands up and fights his spiritual enemies, and does not run away from them. Our Baptism Form speaks this way, when it makes known that it is our calling "*manfully* to fight against

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sin." Scripture speaks the same way, for we read that David gave the following command to his son Solomon:

I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and *shew thyself a man*; And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments (I Kings 2:2, 3).

A young, believing woman who desires to be married should keep her eye out for a real man. A young male may be physically strong, stronger than all the others who are his age. But if he willingly gives in to temptation, and refuses to fight his spiritual enemies, then he is a weakling, a coward, and not a man.

Secondly, a young woman should seek a man who respects what she says. A real, mature man, a man who loves a woman, will listen when she talks, and will be concerned about the things that concern her. Christ listens when His bride speaks, and longs to hear her speak. A man who loves a woman will show his love for her by attentively and respectfully listening to the things she has to say.

If a young man in the church desires a wife, he must find a woman who shows she is willing to submit to God by submitting to him. It is true that while dating, a man must not insist that the woman he is dating obey him, as though she was already his wife. But she must demonstrate her willingness to do so.

In addition, a woman must have the right view of the calling of a wife and mother within the home. She

must look forward to staying at home raising God's children, if it should be the Lord's will to grant children.

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Both the young man and the young woman should be looking to see that the other one has the proper view of the covenant calling to raise a family in the fear of God's name.

Dating Someone Outside our Churches

It is a bad sign when many of the young people of the church are dating those outside our churches. It is true that sometimes this results in a godly marriage, and sometimes the person from outside our churches becomes one of the stronger members of one of our congregations. But this still should be a rather uncommon occurrence.

But when would it be proper to date someone from outside our churches? Before you date someone, you must know that this person is of like faith with you. There are many who first find someone that appeals to them

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physically, and then try to get this person to confess the truth of the Reformed faith. Many parents wrongly allow their children to date someone from outside our churches, before that person has clearly shown himself or herself to be of like faith with us. Some allow their children to date someone not of like faith, but insist that the two must be of like faith before they get married. But this is still allowing a close, intimate friendship to be built, before a proper foundation has been laid.

But how can you know that you are truly of one faith with someone else? It is true that it takes time for a young person to understand all the differences between what we confess and what his or her church confesses. But it does not take long to see the fundamental differences. For example, it would not take long to find out whether or not someone believes in the truth of salvation by God's grace alone. Almost all churches outside of ours teach that God desires the salvation of every individual. If this is true, then salvation must depend upon the will of man. Anyone who teaches that God wants to save everyone, is not united with us on the fundamentals of the faith. Anyone who teaches that God gives His grace also to the reprobate, and that this grace fails to accomplish God's purpose, is not united with us on the basic truths of the Reformed faith.

To build a godly relationship, a man and a woman must first be sure that they both firmly hold to the truth that God gives His grace only to His elect people, and that His grace never fails to accomplish His purpose. Only such a relationship is built on the foundation of Christ. Only such a relationship will be to the glory of God's name.

Fleeing Fornication

A great enemy that threatens those who are dating is the sin of fornication. The one who falls into this sin will grieve about it for the rest of his life. The child of

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God who commits such a sin is forgiven by God and experiences this forgiveness in the way of confession and repentance. But for the rest of his life it will sadden him to know that he sinned against his God by doing this before he was married.

But how does one fight against this sin? One fights this sin the same way he fights all sin. He flees from it, and thinks rather about the promise of God. He thinks on what Christ had to suffer to pay for his sins. He thinks on how Christ has washed him of his sins, and has granted him the grace to live free from this sin. While calling upon God to turn him from this evil, he seeks to avoid

tempting situations, and anything that could draw him into this deadly snare.

There are right ways and wrong ways to fight against this sin and other sins. It is wrong to trust in some physical object to help you fight against sin, by reminding you of what God says. To remind us of God's Word we trust not in some physical object, but in the Holy Spirit, Who constantly brings God's Word to our remembrance, to enable us to battle against our sins.

To fight the sin of fornication it is also important to understand how the devil lures us into this sin. He does so step by step. He tempts us to do one thing, and then, once we have done it, he tempts us to go a step further. He can use arguments like this, "Well, you have already gone this far, so you might as well enjoy a bit more. And, after all, once you have started down the road of fornication, it is just as bad as if you had gone the whole way, so you might as well keep going." Then, once you have done something you ought not, it is much easier for the devil to tempt you again. He says to you, "Come on, you have already done it once before. Why not again?"

The child of God is called to flee fornication—to run from this sin as fast as he can. This may mean breaking off a relationship that is leading in the wrong direction. But in any case, the child of God must run from this great evil. And if he has fallen into it before, he must ensure that he does not fall into it again.

Dating to Enjoy Covenant Friendship

Dating should be a time of experiencing covenant friendship. When you find the person whom God would have you marry, you will find that you can talk and talk all the time. You never get tired. You long to commune. You long to have fellowship. And what is it that brings you closer together? It is especially talking about the Word, talking about spiritual things. Why? Why does talking about spiritual things bring you closer? Because marriage is *really* the picture of God's covenant of friendship. And what is it that unites us with God, but *Christ*?

Have you not noticed that
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And *Christ is* the Word. Have you not noticed that your closest friends are those with whom you talk about the things that really matter? When you talk about spiritual things, you grow closer and closer, because that Word is Christ, and Christ is what unites God's people to one another.



The world says that your youth is the best period of your life. They say that this is the one time in your life that you are really free, and you should strive to enjoy all the pleasures that you will not be able to enjoy once you are married and have children.

This is not what the Scriptures teach. Physically we reach a peak when we are very young, and then we quickly decline. But spiritually we continue to grow. As a husband talks about the Word with his wife, he grows closer to her, so that when they have been married for ten years or so, they both confess that they are much closer than they were when they got married. It is true, there are many difficulties in marriage. When we get married, we get to see more clearly how sinful we are, because we have someone looking at us at very close range. We start to see a lot of the things about ourselves that we really did not want to see, and really did not want to admit. But in the way of confession of sin, a husband and wife grow closer to one another, and love one another more.

In the way of confession and repentance, the husband grows to see that his wife is far more beautiful spiritually than he knew when they first met, and the woman comes to see that the man she dated and married is far more handsome than she thought. This is because God causes a husband and wife together more and more to radiate the glory of Christ. The husband sees this in his wife, and the wife sees this in her husband, and the two of them grow to love one another more as they see Christ more in one another. This is the way two people experience the love of God in their marriage. This is the way a husband and wife enjoy a small foretaste of the heavenly marriage of Christ and His church. ❖

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The Song of Zion

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

by Skip Hunter

February 1 Read Psalm 119:81-88

Psalm 119:87-88 Are there times in which you feel no help from any side? Do the cares of the world press in upon you? The Psalmist felt those concerns. Moved by the Holy Spirit, he was able to not forsake the Word of God. Do we fall back upon God's Word in times of distress? Now, I do not mean that we fall back upon it in desperation, but rather as a matter of ordinary behavior do we fall upon it. By using God's Word we can pray for Him to make us alive because of His mercy. And we know that our response of gratitude will be to keep His laws. Let us give due concern to the using of God's Word at all times, and then when troubles of any kind come upon us we will be ready to not forsake the precious Word of God but will use it and all the benefits it affords to us. Sing Psalter 331:4.

February 2 Read Psalm 119:89-96

Psalm 119:89-90 Notice the progression of thoughts in these two verses. First of all we see the council of God which He has established within himself to all eternity. Secondly, we see that He has established a covenant line to which He is faithful forever. Finally, we see that He has given to this people the pictures found around us in the earth to understand His everlastingness and that of His covenant. Scientists look at the earth as it now appears and try to make it fit their scheme of its origin. The people of God can look at the earth and sigh, "Thou alone art wonderful O God!" Is this our comfort in looking at God's creation? Do we let it speak to us the words intended by God? He has given the earth to man in order that man may glorify Him in it. Are we looking, are we using it aright, are we glorifying the Creator? Sing Psalter 332:1.

February 3 Read Genesis 8:15-22

Psalm 119:91 Noah and his family had just come out of the ark after experiencing the flood. As they looked around their minds must have been whirling at what they saw. But Noah knew what he had to do. He knew that a sacrifice of thanksgiving was in order. His actions pleased God. God also shows His love for His covenant people when He gives the comfort to Noah and us that He will never destroy the world by a flood again. He will never overrule His laws which govern the earth and what happens on it in this way. Worldly scientists are fond of saying nature's laws. These laws belong to God. By His providence He holds all in His hand. We can have much comfort in this and know that God will preserve us unto

the end of time because He has created all, and all things are His servant. Sing Psalter 332:2.

February 4 Read Romans 15:1-13

Psalm 119:92-94 The psalmist has come back to what seems to be the themes of this Psalm. 1) He knows the law of God. 2) He loves the law of God. 3) He has many afflictions in this life. 4) He knows that his love of God's Word will sustain him through his affliction. This is not because of any good in him but because God's Word is good and is the power unto salvation. He once again casts himself upon the mercy seat of God's throne seeking deliverance. He knows that he will find it. Is this knowledge ours? Do we experience the same confidence? We should, you know. That is the wonder of grace found in the Word of God. Let us pray daily for such confidence in God and His Word. Sing Psalter 332:3.

February 5 Read Psalm 119:89-96

Psalm 119:95-96 There are times in which the people of God wonder how God's grace will reach them in even this bad situation. They may feel that theirs is such a plight that there is no way out this time. They are in utter despair. God, in His Word, has given to us the wonderful examples of David and Daniel. Our children know these men well. They were in places from which there seemed to be no escape. But they did! How? They escaped because the grace of God and His commandments are so all-encompassing that no matter in what state we are, we can, with Paul, learn contentment. People of God, do you need this comfort? Yes, we do! As long as we live in this valley of the shadow of death, we need the comfort that only comes from Jehovah. Sing Psalter 332:4.

February 6 Read Psalm 119:97-10

Psalm 119:97-98 People of God of all ages, do you utter the words of this verse 97 daily? Children, do you love the law of God more than anything else in this life? Young people, do you say these words as you seek entertainment with your friends? Parents, do your children and young people know by your actions that you love God's law? This is a good verse for the Sabbath. Do we make God's law our meditation all of today, or just the three or so hours we are in church? How do we spend the time between services? What are we doing after the last service of the day? Parents, children, young people, others? How would you answer these questions before God's holy

gaze? This is a powerful verse. Do we love it? Do we live it? Sing Psalter 333:1.

February 7 Read Job 32:1-9

Psalm 119:99-100 These three verses are hard for children to understand. How is it possible to have more understanding than your teachers, ministers, elders, or parents? This was Elihu's dilemma as he sat there listening to his older three friends admonish Job. But yet he was coming to the realization that they and Job were wrong. He respectfully waits unto the right moment and then admonishes them and shows them the right way of the Lord. The Psalmists must have come to the conclusion as well, that God had given to him in His word a knowledge more than his teachers had. He also knew that He must use that knowledge in the right way. This must be our realization as well. We have been given the full manifestation of God's Word and of Christ. We are more privileged than even David! What are we doing with that privilege? Are we teaching it unto our children? Are we living lives of gratitude for such a privilege? Sing Psalter 333:2.

February 8 Read I John 3 :1-10

Psalm 119:101-102 Reread verse 101. Now what? Is that our confession, or are our souls pierced with the darts of God's perfection? Do we attempt to keep our feet from evil? When you walk in a swamp, you might look for the driest path. You might look for a log or other materials to keep your feet unspotted from the stinking muck that is all around you. What about our lives? How do we walk in the muck? Where are you going, young people? In what way is the entertainment you choose? Parents, with whom do you associate daily? Would you be embarrassed to have your children see what you do or say? What about our business practices? Are they on dry ground? These are some powerful words from God to us. Let us bow in prayer and ask for the grace to keep them. Sing Psalter 333:3.

February 9 Read Psalm 119:97-104

Psalm 119:103-104 Saints of all ages can find comfort in the Word of God. It seems that it is our aged saints who know best the sweetness of its content. This is probably true because they have fought the good fight, they have run the race, and now they are ready to be delivered from glory. God has given to them a few moments in their lives to contemplate on His goodness. That Word of God, however, is sweet for all of His people. There is the necessity of using it, nevertheless. You never experience the sweetness of honey if you do not open the jar and put it on your tongue. We must open God's Word and use it to experience its sweetness. By doing this we will receive two blessings. First of all we will know experientially its goodness. Secondly we will hate every false way and see the way of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 333:4.

February 10 Read Psalm 119:105-112

Psalm 119:105-106 The book of Psalms is a book of poetry. This Psalm is one long acrostic. Each verse in a section begins with the same letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The psalmist uses another poetical device in verse 105 to help us understand God's Word. This device is called a metaphor. He compares God's

Word to a lantern that you would use to light your path in the dark. The people to whom this Psalm was originally written understood this picture well. I think we can too. We can know that the world is a dark place. We can know that we need the light of the Bible to help us find our way each day. We also know that by grace we can use this Word to keep God's judgment. Use your light, people of God! Sing Psalter 334:1.

February 11 Read Hosea 14:1-9

Psalm 119:107-108 Are you preparing your offerings for Sunday? Are we giving of our blessings to the various causes of God's kingdom? Are you preparing the offerings of your heart for today? Even though God ordained many sacrifices in the Old Testament and the offerings in the New, He is not pleased with just the physical expressions of gratitude. He wants us to lift up our hearts to Him and freely offer Him praise with our mouths. This can come by way of words, by way of prayers, but especially by way of the beautiful method of singing which He has given us. We must sing the songs of Zion tomorrow, of course, but daily. We should sing them in our homes and schools. We must sing them wholeheartedly. If our mouths barely open when we sing God's praises, something is wrong! Don't worry about your pitch; the blood of Christ makes that sound perfect to our heavenly Father. Sing Psalms and sing them with a joyful heart. Sing them today, tomorrow, and every day. Sing Psalter 334:2.

February 12 Read Acts 21:17-30

Psalm 119:109-110 In the New Testament the apostle Paul must have drawn great comfort from this Psalm. He had enemies on all sides. These enemies came from within and without the church. In his epistles he mentions how it was God's presence which saw him through these trials. We, too, must feel God's presence. We must have a knowledge of that presence which is found in the Bible. Let us surround ourselves with God's presence by reading God's Word often each day. In this way we can feel comfort even in whatever trials he places us. Sing Psalter 334:3.

February 13 Read Psalm 119:105-112

Psalm 119:111-112 The word heritage is a word full of meaning. Churches, schools, and other Christian institutions have taken it as a name. A heritage is something that has been left from a past generation to a later generation. This generation might not even be present on this earth as yet. God's Word is His heritage for us. Like any heritage we must do something with it. First of all we must use it as it has been intended. We must read it and follow it. We must also be stewards of this heritage and not waste it. A man who loves his heritage will rejoice in it. Those around us must know of our heritage. It must not be something that remains hidden. Let us make this our desire. Let us incline our hearts to do the will of God as it is found in His Word. Sing Psalter 334:4.

February 14 Read Psalm 119:113-120

Psalm 119:113-115 The walk of sanctification in a Christian must be an antithetical walk. We must say yes to the things of God, *and* we must say *no* to the things of Satan. The first sometimes seems easier than the second. In fact we sometimes

justify not doing the second because we do the first. This can never be. We must hate all thoughts other than those that are God-glorifying. We must tell the wicked to flee from us. In this world this can be hard because of the attractiveness of that which is evil. We might for financial reasons not say no to some evil action. Let us pray for the grace to say and do the thoughts in verse 115. Let us live antithetical lives and let everyone around us know it. Sing Psalter 335:1.

February 15 Read Romans 14:1-19

Psalm 119:116-117 The Psalmist was a very real man. We might not know who he was, but we can see that he was afflicted with all the frailties of man. He knows that he cannot go through this life by himself. Like a child he needs the hand of his father to guide him during his life. Each of us, no matter what our age, have these needs. We need to pray to be held up in our troubles. We also need the grace to not be ashamed of God's word. Whether in the workplace, at school, during the ball game, or during some form of entertainment we need help not to be ashamed of God's Word. With Him holding us up we will never fall nor be ashamed of the heritage that he has given to us. Sing Psalter 335:2.

February 16 Read Habakkuk 3:1-13

Psalm 119:118-120 In the first two verses of this section, you might get the indication that the writer has no problems. He knows that God puts down those who hate him. He has seen it happen with his own eyes. But then he looks at his own life. Why was he not destroyed? What made him better than those who were destroyed? He comes to the conclusion that he, too, deserves judgment upon his sin. He knew that without God's graces in his life he would come to the same sorry state as the wicked. Let us not look at those who fall and gloat. Let us see their judgment and ask God to never take His blessed grace from us. Sing Psalter 335:3.

February 17 Read Psalm 119:121-128

Psalm 119:121-124 Are we watching? Watching? Watching for what? What the next day may bring? The next month? The next year? The end of time? No, these are things that are in God's hand. We must watch for our salvation. How do we do this, you may ask? The answer is simple. Read God's Word. Before you pass this off as too trite, remember that His Word is His letter to His dearly beloved people. We must watch for our salvation by reading that Word and applying it to our lives. This will cause us to wait and watch. Because that is what He has commanded us to do. It must be an active watching, however. We may not be like the little child who waits at the corner for his father's car. He just sits there watching for the familiar car to come around that corner. No, this must be the watching of the child of God living the life of sanctification. Sing Psalter 336:1.

February 18 Read Ephesians 3:1-12

Psalm 119:125-128 Some of the battles that we as Christian's fight are verbal battles with those who make Scripture mean something other than what it does. Whether this be in the fight against evolution, the sovereignty of God, or Scripture's own authority, these battles must be fought. We must fight them

only with the tools that God has given to us-His own Word and faith. Our logic counts for nothing in these fights. Our powers of reasoning are usually quickly destroyed. We must like the Psalmist confess that we are only the servants of God. We ask for understanding to wage this warfare, and when the time is right we must leave the battle to God and say, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work." This will not get us many points in the world's debating sessions. It is the only way to be at peace with our faith and our heavenly Father. Sing Psalter 336:2.

February 19 Read Psalm 119:129-136

Psalm 119:129-130 It is hard for us to confess that we are of little ability in some matters. The world has ingrained in us this concept of high self-worth and good self-esteem so much that to not proclaim our own beings number one in something is foreign to us. These verses do just that. We must proclaim that we are simple. It is only in this way that we will receive the understanding that comes from God's law. Christ thanked his heavenly Father for hiding the mysteries of the kingdom from the wise and prudent and revealing it unto mere babes. Let us daily ask God to reveal unto us the truths of His law which are wonderful and give light to the simple people of God. Sing Psalter 337:1.

February 20 Read Exodus 4:21-23; 27-31

Psalm 119:131-132 Israel was spiritually wasting away in Egypt. The spiritual among them chafed as they lived in this heathen land. Godly parents hated what their children saw and sometimes did each day. Their prayers were heard by God and He sent Moses and Aaron with the good news that He would be delivering them from this physical and spiritual bondage. We, too, can be spiritually wasting away in this world of which Egypt is a picture. We, too, long for a better spiritual life for our children. We wish God's mercies to come upon us even as they did upon those saints in Egypt. We must not despair in this matter. He has promised to send His Son to take us unto that heavenly Caanan where we shall worship with all the saints who have gone before us before the throne of God. In our thirsting and panting in this life let us long for Jehovah's commandments. Sing Psalter 337:2.

February 21 Read Romans 6:12-23

Psalm 119:133-134 Notice the three commands in this section. "Order my steps..., Let not any iniquity have dominion..., and deliver me... The three all go together. First of all we must walk in the law of God. If we do not walk in God's law, we will never overcome sin and evil. In our walk in God's law we need to have sin conquered in our lives. We can not do this by ourselves. We need grace for this fight of faith. Finally when our steps are guided by the law of God, and we flee all manner of sin, we will find that we have many enemies from whom we need deliverance. God will help us in these three matters and that "right early." What is our response to His help? We must in gratitude keep His law. What else can we do? Sing Psalter 337:3.

February 22 Read Psalm 119:129-136

Psalm 119:135-136 The second of these two verses is what draws my attention today. The Psalmist has been speaking of enemies throughout this Psalm. All of a sudden he is crying for them. How can this be? The answer, I think, is that these enemies were found in Israel. He was not worried about Egyptians, Philistines, Syrians, or any other heathen nations. He was concerned about Israel. He weeps because people who have heard the Word have rejected it and have rejected God. This is the plight of ministers, elders, teachers, godly grandparents and parents. When these men and women see the children and young people of the church walk in sin, they weep great tears. Why? Because they know that God is not happy with sin and will not let it go unpunished. They are concerned about the spiritual well-being of the children and young people of the church. They wish to have God's face shine upon these children and young people as well. Sing Psalter 337:4.

February 23 Read Psalm 119:137-144

Psalm 119:137-138 Notice the word that is repeated in these two verses. There is a cause and effect relationship between the two verses. God is righteous therefore His law is righteous. Do we ever stop and think about that? Sometimes we may try to justify our actions before God's law. We may wish to show that something we have done or wish to do is all right. We must not just look at the law we must hold up our actions before Him who made that law. How do they stand up? If we wish the blessing of the faithful God who provides for salvation, we must also desire to keep His righteous law in all circumstances of life. Sing Psalter 338:1.

February 24 Read John 2:13-22

Psalm 119:139-140 Christ came to fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures. Here we have another foretelling of Christ's zeal for His Father's house. Because He loved His Father and hated to see His pure word desecrated, He made a scene in the temple. He was not liked by the establishment for His actions, but that did not bother Christ. What about us? Are we against the desecration of the holy things of God and His pure Word? Of course we are! Are we zealous about it? Must we be? If it were our possessions that were being ransacked, would we act? Why not when God's possessions, especially His Word or name, is being profaned? Why are we silent? We must be zealous to protect the Holy name and Word of God. Sing Psalter 338:2.

February 25 Read Luke 6:20-26

Psalm 119:141-142 Here we go again wallowing in self pity. Our self-esteem takes another hit. Is it worth it? Maybe we should think a little better about ourselves. After all, there must be some good in us. There has to be something that makes us attractive to this world, isn't there? Well, if we continue along these lines we would find ourselves contradicting Scripture both in today's verses and reading. As soon as we think ourselves to be someone and something, we will be heading for a fall. There is a great reward for those who count themselves as nothing and God as everything. Even this must come from grace and not from in ourselves. Whose reward do we want? The world's or God's? God's Word is pure; we must love it. To do

anything else is not of faith, and we know that what is not of faith is sin. Sing Psalter 338:3.

February 26 Read Psalm 119:137-144

Psalm 119:143-144 Sometimes in this life we like pleasures that give to us instant gratification. This is one of the many evil philosophies of this age. Give me fun *NOW* or I am not happy! The advertisements that assault our eyes, ears, and minds tell us this. They say it so often that we believe it. Sometimes this affects our worship. We do not want to have to go home and study the sermon; we want to completely understand it now. The minister must preach to the lowest common denominator so that all are happy. This is not the teaching of Scripture. We will not be happy all of the time. Trouble and affliction will surround us. But there is one constant. God's law is everlasting. It, even though it requires study, will bring delight to the people of God. Love that law people of God. Study that law and delight in it. Sing Psalter 338:4.

February 27 Read Psalm 119:145-152

Psalm 119:145-146 People of God, do you cry unto the Lord? Do you cry with your whole heart? This does not mean that we turn to prayer as a last resort. This means that we cry unto the Lord with full confidence that He will help us and deliver us from our troubles. Oh, sometimes it becomes a last resort because we are too stubborn to admit our frailties. Sometimes our walk in sin prevents us from crying unto God until He brings us to our knees. But cry we must because this is the way that God has ordained for us to travel. We must fall on our knees and acknowledge His glory and honor. We must once again make it our resolve to keep His law. We can hope in His Word because it is the hope that "maketh not ashamed." Let us cry unto the Lord and hope in His Word for our salvation. Sing Psalter 339:1.

February 28 Read Daniel 6:10-23

Psalm 119:147-148 These two verses are a continuation of yesterday's thoughts. These are thoughts about prayer. Prayer, as we said yesterday, is not just something that we do out of habit, convenience, or desperation. Prayer must be a constant part of our daily lives. Daniel was able to pray facing death because it was his practice. He knew that God was pleased by prayers made often. We must make prayer part of our daily lives wherever we are and what ever we are doing. By doing this we will find the comfort we need as we walk through this valley of the shadow of death. Sing Psalter 339:2.

February 29 Read II Timothy 4:1-10

Psalm 119:149-150 One of the subjects of our prayers must be deliverance from those who wish to do mischief against us. This mischief is not just the lot of a David or a Daniel or a Paul. Even today we should expect to face ridicule or even persecution for our faith. If we do not, we are probably hiding our light under a bushel. When we face such persecution, we must be ready to go to God and ask for help according to His mercy. He is merciful and will hear us when we cry unto Him. Let us be diligent about letting our light shine, let us be constantly in prayer, and let us trust in our God from "whom all blessings flow." Sing Psalter 339:3.

Psalter 306—The Glory and Condescension of God

by Beth DeVries

The Glory and Condescension of God—what a beautiful combination to describe our God. We would think that the glorious God would not condescend to us, but we know that He does. We reflect in this Psalm and Psalter versification on the sovereignty of God as He controls all things. As we think on the glory of God, His condescension, and His sovereignty, may we be brought to praise His name.

This Psalm begins by praising God. In fact the word “praise” is used three times in the first verse alone. The servants of the Lord are called to praise Him. When we think of the Lord as the great “I Am” of Exodus 3:14, we know that God’s name even commands us to praise. There is glory in the name alone. We think of the names of God: the Almighty, Jehovah, Lord, I Am, Deliverer. They all show us different aspects of God and His attributes. The names all lead us to praise our God. We shall glorify God by giving praise to Him from this day forth and forevermore.

God’s glory is also seen in His sovereignty over the entire creation. We see this in the second stanza of Psalter 306 when the Psalmist speaks of the rising and setting sun. This is emphasized in Psalm 135:6,7 which states “Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven,

and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.” These verses teach us that God not only created the world but continues to control it by His very words. God needs only to speak and things happen.

We become so accustomed to the “natural” way of things happening and the seasons that we often forget that really God is in control. God sends the snow and ice. God sends the oppressive heat and rain. We see many beautiful sunrises and sunsets. We must remember to attribute glory to God for these things because He sends them to us. We should naturally give praise to God when we take time to observe the beauty of His creation.

The Lord reigns in glory above the nations of the earth. The Psalm even speaks of His glory being above the

heavens. We see only a small portion of the vast expanse of the heavens. God in all His glory is far more wonderful than what we can see with the human eye. God’s glory is above all things. Who can liken himself to our God. When we reflect on His majesty and glory, we wonder how any creature dares to try to be God. This was the sin of Adam and Eve in paradise and Satan when

306 The Glory and Condescension of God
PSALM 113 L. M. ANDRE William B. Bradbury

1. Praise God, ye serv-ants of the Lord, Praise, praise His Name with
2. From ris-ing un-to set-ting sun Praise be the Lord, the
3. One whom but God can we re-ly, The Lord our God Who
4. He lifts the poor and makes them great, With joy He fills the
one ac-cord; Bless ye the Lord, His Name a-dores From
Might-y One; He reigns o'er all, su-preme in might, A-
reigns on high, Who con-de-scends to see and know The
des-e-late; Praise ye the Lord and bless His Name, His
this time forth for ev-er-more, From this time forth for ev-er-more,
bore the heav'ns in glo-ry bright, A-bove the heav'ns in glo-ry bright,
things of heav'n and earth be-low, The things of heav'n and earth be-low?
mer-cy and His might pro-claim, His mer-cy and His might pro-claim.

he fell from heaven. How can we minute, finite creatures ever compare to God.

The only way that we can know God is by His condescension to us. We think of the condescension of God as a blessing from His hand. The blessing that God comes to commune with us. Imagine that the sovereign God who rules over all would bother with us! Yet He does. God chose us from eternity to be His people and He comes to us. It is certainly beneath the great God of heaven and earth to concern Himself with our well being. Despite this, God in His love sent His Son to die for us and His Holy Spirit to guide us. We have been truly blessed by this God and may we praise Him for this.

God in His care for us sovereignly protects us and builds us up. The Psalm in verse seven speaks of raising the poor from the dust and lifting the needy out of the dunghill. God also speaks in the last verse of this Psalm

of making the barren woman to be the mother of children. As God did with Sarah and Abraham so can he do to any woman as He desires. We know that nothing is beyond God's control and sovereignty. God has also done this for us by His salvation. He has lifted us from being wretched sinners to being saints saved by grace. We read of this in Ephesians 2:4,5 "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)."

We give praise unto our God for His very name and because He is our God. We should spend all our days singing and giving praise to God. Thanks to God for being the unchanging, sovereign King of all. PRAISE, praise to our God always. ❖

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

Story Time

A Murderer Redeemed

by Tabitha Liu Ping'An

THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD ACCIDENTALLY KILLS BOY-FRIEND. This particular headline in the newspaper stood out amongst the others. It talked about a girl who had accidently killed her boyfriend in a fit of rage after a heated argument.

"Why did these things have to happen so frequently?" Steffi sighed deeply as she asked herself this question. The ring of the telephone interrupted her thoughts. Picking it up, she recognized the voice as that of her fellow teacher counsellor, Nancy.

"Have you read today's newspaper?" she asked. Steffi replied yes, whereafter Nancy said "I got a call to go talk to that 13-year-old girl but I've got an appointment. Would you like to take it up?" The 17-year-old suddenly felt a surge of fear in her. She had talked to many teenagers before but not a murderer. But still, this was an opportunity not to be missed. She agreed at once.

Later that afternoon, Steffi strolled into the Girls' Home located along the beach away from the city. After a while, Steffi was introduced to the 13-year-old girl, Lucy. She silently said a prayer that God would help her say the right things. The introduction was quick with weak smiles from both sides. Steffi brought Lucy to a quiet place and they sat down.

The awkward silence was soon broken by Lucy who said in a somewhat impatient tone, "So, who exactly are you and what are you here for?"

Steffi's experienced ears immediately detected the hostility in Lucy's voice and she replied softly but firmly, "I'm a friend and I want to help you. You can talk to me and I will listen no matter how long it takes." Steffi paused then continued, "Would you like to tell me what happened?"

Lucy smirked and smiled a crooked smile. “You call yourself a friend? Ha! Firstly, I don’t even know you and then, all my friends have already left me. Not a single one’s left.” Steffi thought she sensed a hint of bitterness in Lucy’s voice but Lucy carried on. “Don’t pretend to be nice, okay? If you’ve got nothing else to do but to try and get information out of me, then please leave!” Lucy’s tone was sarcastic.

Steffi was totally stunned by that remark but she managed to keep calm and assured Lucy, “Lucy, I may not know you and all your friends may have left you but I’m not here to put you down. I seek your good.” This was said from the bottom of Steffi’s heart.

“Why do you care for me? You know that I’m a murderer. Everyone hates me because I’m the worst criminal around here. No one bothers to talk to me. Why do you want to associate yourself with me? No one can help me. I can never be redeemed of this crime,” Lucy said somewhat dejectedly. “If my parents don’t love me, who else would?” Lucy’s face remained straightened. She refused to pity herself but instead chose to harden her heart to things.

Steffi looked at her straight in the face and said, “I know of someone who would love people worse than you.” Lucy stared as Steffi blurted out, “Jesus.”

Lucy’s eyes suddenly fired on hearing that word. She stood up and shouted, “If you are going to talk about this, get out!” Shocked, Steffi got up and left. Without looking back, she walked straight out of the home towards the beach.

The green-blue waves gently washed ashore, each one trimmed with countless white bubbles. The seagulls in the distance circled against the brilliant blue skies dotted with small, white, fluffy clouds. The powdery, white sand eased between Steffi’s toes as she walked on. Her steps were heavy. The palm trees swayed gently in the breeze. The peaceful surroundings were a total contrast to what had happened minutes ago.

As Steffi looked towards the horizon, she prayed, “Lord, touch Lucy’s heart. Let her know You and find peace and forgiveness in You. Use me Lord.” This simple, unselfish prayer reached God’s heart. The tears of love Steffi shed were seen by Lucy, who from the home had a clear view of Steffi on the beach. Beyond the tough exterior, Lucy’s broken heart was clinging on to the words “I am a friend.” She longed to acknowledge the need for a friend but the pride that had been in her for so long refused to give in. Overcome with these mixed feelings, Lucy broke down crying. Her heart cried

out to no one in particular, hoping someone would hear her. Unable to take the strain, she went to the fence and screamed,

“Steffi! I need a friend!” Those words, wrung out from the deepest depths of her heart, brought Steffi running back to the home, a word of thanksgiving in her breath. She found Lucy, whose tears flowed unashamedly and hugged her. Between sobs she poured her heart out.

“Why would Jesus love a person like me? I mean, I would like that but I’m so...wicked...inhumane...so cruel...and sinful. I’ve heard that He is high and grand, lives in heaven. There are so many other ‘better’ people than me in this home, I don’t stand a chance.... I’m hopeless!” Steffi could not believe that these were words said by the person who had earlier asked her to keep quiet and leave. She shook her head and said,

“A doctor is for the sick, not the healthy. Jesus didn’t come for righteous people but for sinful, undeserving sinners in total hopelessness, just like you! He died on the cross for our sins. The murderer on the cross beside Jesus was saved too. You may seem unworthy of Jesus’ love but do you know that when Jesus was on earth, He ate with tax-collectors who constantly cheated and even let a prostitute wash His feet? After He left, He even caused an anti-christian to be converted,” Lucy listened carefully, holding on to every word as if it were a precious gem. A small ray of hope shone in her eyes. Though small, it was clear. Encouraged, Steffi continued, “God chooses whom He wants to save. It’s all His will. Lucy, you’ve got to believe that Jesus can cleanse you of all your sins no matter how deep or horrible they are. I know it is one of the worst crimes...to murder. But God can help you.”

“But why does God have to?” Lucy’s inquisitive spirit perked up. Steffi thanked God.

“He doesn’t have to but He loved Man a lot and was gracious enough to give some of them eternal life. Such invincible grace made him willing to come to earth to die for our sins.” Lucy looked puzzled but Steffi continued, “Yes, yes, I know. We do not deserve this, right? We deserve to go to hell. That’s why we can never understand God’s love. It’s too great. Can you imagine how sinful we are compared to God’s perfection?” Lucy nodded as the words sunk in, “Have faith that Jesus can make you right with God and repent of your sins.”

Steffi looked at Lucy but Lucy’s gaze was buried in the middle of the wide, blue ocean, as she whispered, “God, I’m sorry for all the wrong things that I’ve ever done. Steffi said. You can help me. Please save me and

help me never to displease you again because I know You love me and don't want me to do wrong. I love You. Please love me too...." her voice trailed off as she ended with that simple plea. With wet cheeks, Lucy hugged Steffi. A new sense of life flooded Lucy.

As Steffi thought of God's mercy, she said, "It's not going to be easy, Lucy, but persevere on till the second coming of Jesus. I'll pray for you." The sisters in Christ sat, Lucy's hands clasped in Steffi's, looking towards the vast ocean...a symbol of God's love, wide and deep. Love conquers all. ❖

Tabitha is one of our short story writing contest winners. She is the daughter of Rev. Lau Chin Kwee from the First Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore.

Wandering

by Thelma Westra

*They're only lambs, just common sheep,
Their coats are woolly, warm and deep.
Through fields of green they roam at will
They wander on the plain and hill
To find the tender shoots of grass;
Contentedly their days they pass.*

*Then when the field is bare, they're lead
To verdant ground where they'll be fed.
The shepherd knows which path will lead
To pastureland, to stream and mead.
At night in folds they safely lie –
Their shepherd guards with watchful eye.*

*When morning comes, again they graze,
The grass dew-sprinkled in the haze.
A ewe lamb wanders from the flock,
She's stranded now upon a rock.
The shepherd comes; he'll gently hold
And carry her back to the fold.*

*So like that lamb are you and I –
We stray in sin, we cheat, we lie,
We set up other gods, we lust,
We steal, we kill, we are unjust.
Our Shepherd comes in grace and love,
Restores us to His fold above.*

Church History

Early Church History—

The Apologists (4)

by Rev. John A. Heys

Reprinted from the June, 1946 issue of Beacon Lights.

Origen

As we remarked in an earlier issue of *Beacon Lights*, the Apologists were divided into those of the Greek School and those of the

Latin School. We will now single out one of those in the Greek School for our consideration in this issue. Naturally we select Origen, for he was indeed the outstanding Apologist of the Greek School. Prof. Kurtz in his Church History has this to say of Origen, “Celebrated as a philosopher, philologist, critic, exegete, dogmatist, apologist, polemist, etc., posterity has with equal right honored him as the actual founder of an ecclesiastical and scientific theology, and reproached him as the originator of many heretical opinions.”

Origen was born of Christian parents (in contrast to Justin Martyr whom we considered last time) at Alexandria about the year 182 A.D. His father died as a martyr for the truth in 202 A.D. leaving Origen to support his mother and six sisters. In the following year he was called by Bishop Demetrius to be a teacher in a catechism school. Origen studied philosophy diligently to qualify himself for the task.

In a very short time he advanced from one position to one of a higher degree, and his fame soon surpassed that of his bishop who had given him a start in his career by appointing him teacher in the catechetical school mentioned above. In 211 he was appointed a missionary to Arabia. In 218 he was appointed to Antioch, and in 230 he went to Palestine where the bishops of Caesarea and Jerusalem admitted him to the rank of Presbyter. Before this he was not ordained. His own bishop, Demetrius, now revealed his jealousy for this pupil of his who had surpassed him in fame, and had Origen excommunicated for heresy, self-mutilation—he misunderstood Matthew 19:12 and had himself made a eunuch for the kingdom

he was the first to present to
the Church a system of
Christian Doctrine.

of heaven in the literal sense of the word but later confessed his wrong—and contempt of the ecclesiastical laws of his office.

Origen now went back to Caesarea and under the protection and favour of the Arabian Emperor, Philip, he opened a theological school. He wrote a commentary on John, one on the book of Genesis, one on the first 25 Psalms and one on the Lamentations of Jeremiah. In all he is credited with having written 6000 works. Some of them are only a chapter in length while others are books

of many volumes. Some claim this to be exaggeration and maintain that he wrote but 2000 books. Even then it will be plain that he was a very capable man and an industrious one.

As to his value for the church, it may be stated first of all that he was the first to present to the Church a system of Christian doctrine. He also sought to set forth all the sciences of his day from a Christian viewpoint. To give you an idea of how the church in the third century explained the truth of God which it found in His Word (we must remember that the infallibly guided Apostles have been dead for over a century and that these Apologists do not even have the word of these Apostles as some of the Apostolic Fathers might have had) let me give you seven points which Origen taught. The fundamentals of Christianity according to him demand belief (1) “in one God...the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2) “that Jesus Christ Himself...was born of the Father before all creatures...became man, and was incarnate although God, and while made a man remained the God which He was...was born of a Virgin...was truly born and did truly suffer...and did truly die...did truly rise from the dead;” (3) “That the Holy Spirit was associated in honor and dignity with the Father and the son;” (4) “in the resurrection and in the future rewards and punishment;” (5) that the world will “be destroyed on account of its wickedness;” (6) that the “Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God;” (7) “that there are certain angels of God, and certain good influences which are His servants in accomplishing the salvation of men.” These quotations are all taken from his work entitled, “De Principiis” in which he presents the principles of the Christian doctrine.

As an example of the heretical ideas of Origen of which Prof. Kurtz made mention in the quotation above, we present just this one, that the Bible was the inspired Word of God but that even the New Testament has defects in it which will be overcome only by the revelation we shall receive in eternity.

Perhaps many of his heretical opinions were due to his method of interpreting Scripture. He maintained that there was the obvious sense of the text for the simple, there was the moral meaning for those more advanced and finally a mystical meaning for the perfect man. This allegorical interpretation of his enabled him to *read into* the Scriptures practically anything he pleased. ❖

The late Rev. Heys was a minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches from 1941 to 1980.

Synodal Reformed Church of Hallum

by J.P. deKlerk

This building has obviously given problems to fit it on a piece of land where the street splits in two directions. The tower is in front, the main entrance at the left side, the roofs in differing parts. Perhaps people with many ideas have been involved. The tower seems to be multisided. This Church is well maintained, but its future is uncertain because it is part of the “Samen-Op-Weg” (together on our way) movement which becomes more and more modernist (Synodal Reformed, State Reformed and Lutheran together). ❖

J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashhurst, New Zealand.



Book Review

Portraits of Faithful Saints

reviewed by Mike Feenstra

Reflecting back upon the past century, we can see that the world has gone through many changes in a short period of time. Modern man extols this progress and growth in technology. For many in this world, this is all that they care to talk about. “We must live for the here and now!” is the spirit of the day. The truth is that the people of this world, while involved in the hustle and bustle of modern life, could care less about the unfolding of God’s counsel in history. Sure, the world has an interest in “history.” But, young people, what are they interested in? A study of their writings will show us that they study history to document the accomplishments of man and the military, political, and ideological advances of the great civilizations of the past. Although these writings are very valuable for the Christian to read, providing that he sees them

through the spectacles of Scripture, the fact remains that the world’s purpose in recording “history” is to further the cause of the establishment of the kingdom of man on this earth.

The purpose of the book, as revealed in the dedication, is to remind particularly us young people to hold fast to the faith of our fathers.

In contrast to the writings of worldly historians, the Reformed Christian views history in a completely dif-

ferent manner. We see history as the unfolding of God's sovereign purpose to glorify Himself by saving a church in His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the coming of Christ to save His church is at the center of all history. All of the other events are only sidelights which serve God's purpose.

Because the book proceeds with this solid basis, Prof. Herman Hanko's *Portraits of Faithful Saints* is a wonderful, accurate survey of the lives of saints whom God used to build His church. Furthermore, this is a history written from a uniquely Protestant Reformed perspective by a professor who taught church history at the Seminary of the Protestant Reformed Churches for many years. His book is a compilation of articles which appeared in the *Standard Bearer* from 1989 to 1997. The popular rubric was called, "Cloud of Witnesses," after the well-known text in Hebrews 12:1.

The purpose of the book, as revealed in the dedication, is to remind particularly us young people to hold fast to the faith of our fathers. In a day when the churches push church history into a dusty corner of a theological library and place innovation and will worship on the foreground, it is refreshing to read a history book that is written from a truly Reformed perspective.

Prof. Hanko begins his book with the Ancient (100-750 A.D.) and Medieval (750-1517 A.D.) periods. In these parts he draws on his vast experience of teaching church history to give us interesting accounts of men and women of the early church who fought for the basic truths that we hold so dear in our creeds. Moreover, it is good to see a section on Medieval saints. Often we forget that there were people of God who lived in those dark days when the church was under the mysticism and idolatry of the papacy. Yet, as Prof. Hanko states, "In treating men of this period . . . we have to deal with men who carried the freight of Romish error with them. In spite of this, they were men who were, for one reason or another, outstanding men in the history of the church, or who were representative of various currents of thought in the days in which they lived. We shall have to tolerate their mis-

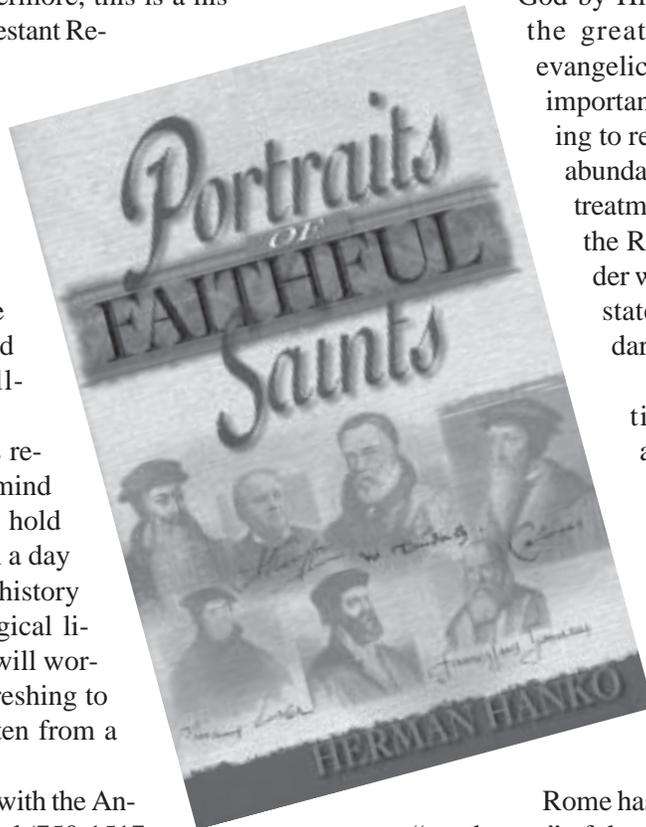
takes." After such a statement, was there anybody faithful to the Word? Yes, there is an excellent example. His name is Goteschalk, of whom Prof. Hanko states: "Goteschalk was a lonely voice in a barren wasteland." This was because Goteschalk amazingly stood for the Augustinian truth of double predestination in a time when Rome was running madly after the error of semi-Pelagianism!

Out of the darkness of the Middle Ages, God by His sovereign will brought about the great Reformation. While many evangelicals today want to mitigate the importance of the Reformation by striving to reach agreement with Rome, it is abundantly clear through Prof. Hanko's treatment of the Reformers that he sees the Reformation as a purifying wonder work of God. Prof. Hanko rightly states that the Middle Ages were dark ages indeed!

When we consider the atrocities which Rome committed against the followers of the Reformation, we can see how black the night was before Luther and Calvin. The fact remains that Rome has never repented of her persecution of the faithful saints of God. Moreover, although modern Protestant Churches think that Rome has reformed herself,

Rome has never recanted her abominable "anathemas" of the Council of Trent. The papal decree of the year of jubilee in 2000 and its indulgences clearly proves this. Prof. Hanko minces no words in his judgment of Rome's wickedness: "When God brought Reformation in the sixteenth century, the pages of the history of the Reformation were written in the blood of the saints which still cries out for vengeance" (71).

Against the dark background of Rome's outrages, it is exciting to see a book which deals with the development of the Reformed faith. I especially enjoyed the book because it includes not only prominent but also obscure Reformers from many eras. Have you heard of Peter Martyr Vermigli or Peter Datheen? Vermigli was a reformer in Italy and in England, and Datheen was the "father" of our Reformed liturgy. With regard to the post-reformation period in the Britain and the Netherlands:



are you acquainted with people such as Samuel Rutherford and Franciscus Gomarus? Both of these men were intimately involved in the construction of two great creeds that have come down to us from the Reformation, namely, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dordt. One wonders today whether any book written by a modern author from evangelicalism would even talk about Gomarus' life. If they did, they surely would not speak as favorably about him as Prof. Hanko does because Gomarus was a stubborn man.

However, Prof. Hanko is honest in that he clearly states the weaknesses of the Reformers of the past and present. It is easy for us to stand in awe of the workload and production of some of God's chosen servants. For example, I am still amazed as to how God used men such as Calvin and, more recently, Herman Hoeksema to advance His Truth. However, we must remember that these men also had their faults. This reminds us that these people were only instruments in God's hand. God revealed His Truth to them by the Holy Spirit, so that the glory is due to Him alone. Calvin was always at pains to point this out. He frequently says in his works that we must always live our lives in humble reliance on our sovereign God.

The sovereignty of God is at the basis of Reformed doctrine. We must be thankful to God that He led our

forefathers to this Truth. Specifically, we must give praise to God for giving us our own Protestant Reformed Churches, and for giving to us men such as Hoeksema and Ophoff. Prof. Hanko treats the lives of these two men in the concluding chapters of his book. After covering their history, he gives us a warning: "The generation that led the Protestant Reformed Churches to the marvelous truths of Scripture that are our heritage has died and been gathered unto their fathers. Shall another generation arise which knows not the Lord? God forbid it" (420).

Therefore, let us as young people strive to know the doctrines of the Word of God. Let us also remember the works of God in church history. Young People! Buy this book and read it! It is not difficult to read. In fact, since the chapters were originally magazine articles, each chapter can be read independently as part of your devotions, a feature which allows one to read a chapter at a time without losing the thought of the book. It has been carefully detailed and prepared by the Reformed Free Publishing Association. It can be purchased by writing to the RFPA, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville MI 49418, USA, or by calling 616-224-1518. ❖

Mike is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

Minding Missions

The Philippines: A Layman's Perspective (2)

by Nicholas Kleyn

Saturday October 9

We arose early and had breakfast in the hotel's restaurant. We had Topsilog, a cup of cooked rice with a fried egg on top, and a piece of meat on the side. It tasted good. Today's schedule called for four speeches on the covenant and started at 9:00 am. I had a little free time so took a two-mile walk on the main road leading out of Daet. I was able to see many interesting things. I then caught a tricycle to the church where the speeches were to be held.

Pastor M. Tanierla had picked up Revs. Miersma and Kleyn and was at the church already. The people

started arriving slowly and again we had the opportunity to visit with these men and talk about things of God. The meeting was called to order and opened with prayer. We sang a few hymns and then Rev. Miersma gave his speech on the covenant. They then had a question and answer period and then lunch. Pastor M. Tanierla's wife and family had prepared a lunch for all the people attending the lectures. There were around twenty-five people present. The food was very interesting, but good: a real Filipino meal. We found all these people to be very easy to talk to and very friendly. I then went for a

short walk to get some more bottled cold water to keep us cool, as the temperature and humidity were very high.

At the end of the street near the church there was a young person sitting in the dirt under a tree. I had seen him there the day before. Obviously he was homeless. It was very hot out and there he sat all day. As I was standing there watching the sights of the town go by, I saw a young girl, who must have been from the catholic school near there, stop and give him some food. It was very touching.

I returned to the church and Rev. Miersma gave the second speech on the covenant. Again we had a very lively question and answer period that had Revs. Miersma and Kleyn thinking. Rev. Kleyn then had the third speech and also another very lively question and answer period. They used Professor Hanko's book *God's Everlasting Covenant of Grace* as the basis for their speeches. There was supposed to be a fourth speech but they ran out of time due to the extended questions and answers.

We all then piled into a jeep owned by Pastor Alan Dolormente, with Pastor M. Tanierla and went and saw the ocean that was four miles away. We saw all the fishing boats and the market place where every day the fishermen come in and clean and sell their fish. The fishing boats were no more than a large canoe with a small motor and boards hanging out each side of the boat so that it would not tip over in the rough sea. I'm sure it is not a job for someone who is faint hearted. We visited for a short while with a couple from Pastor M. Tanierla's church who lived near the ocean and then went to a Chinese restaurant for supper in Daet.

Pastor Dolormente and Pastor M. Tanierla then took us to a town about 10 miles away called Labo. Pastor Dolormente is a Pastor of a congregation near Labo. He was telling us that he had built the vehicle that we were driving in. First he had just a motor and four wheels and a seat and a steering wheel. Then as he got more money he bought fenders, a top, doors, seats etc. It is amazing how these people make things with the little resources that they have.

In Labo we went to the house of one of the members of the church for a Bible study on the Perseverance of the Saints. Rev. Kleyn gave a short introduction and explained what the Bible teaches. There was then an open discussion time and questions. There were about 25 people present and it is amazing how interested they are in the truths. They have a good grasp of the basic truths of the Reformed faith but want to learn so much more.

These were people that were not at the lectures during the day. They really appreciated the teachings and had a real zeal and interest in it that we lack at times. Discussion concluded at 9:15pm and after a quick drink and cookie the ministers had to get back to the hotel to prepare for their sermons. The discussion could have gone on for a few more hours I suspect, but it had been a long day and the men were tired.

Sunday October 10

Up early at 6:00 am. The two ministers prepared for their sermons. Rev. Miersma was scheduled to preach at two different congregations and Rev. Kleyn also twice at two different places. It was early so I went for a walk down to the ocean again. It was 6:00am and the beach was already packed with people swimming and relaxing on the beach. So Sunday is just another day for most Filipinos, just like home. Everyone is very friendly and when they see a white man they say "Hi Joe." At first I didn't know why until it was explained that America always had a large military presence there after the war till the early 1990's. They called the soldiers Joe after



The Village of Jose Pangeniban.

GI Joe. Therefore they see us and assume we are American. While near the beach a man introduced himself to me and after talking for a bit he invited me for a cup of coffee to his house, so again I had the opportunity to see how these people live.

I walked back to the hotel for breakfast with the two ministers. Rev M. Tanierla came and took Rev. Miersma and we did not see him again until later that evening. Rev. Kleyn and I went to the Reformed in Christ Fellowship Church for morning worship. We were there at 9:00am. A Bible study was to be first and then the church service after that. We were able to visit with members

of the congregation as they came. There were around twenty-five people there, young and old. Around 9:30 they started. The Bible study was opened with prayer and singing and then Rev. Kleyn spoke on “The Church—Its Calling and Duty.” Then we had a discussion period with many good questions. People in the congregation asked questions that applied to their life in the church.

We sang a few more hymns and then Rev. Kleyn led us in worship service. He preached on the Parable of the Lost Sheep from Luke 15:1-10. After the worship service we were both given a very touching thank you from their Pastor and a certificate of appreciation for coming. Lunch was served by Pastor D. Tajares mother, smorgasbord style, and was delicious. We had a really nice time of fellowship with these people as the whole congregation stayed for lunch. But all too soon we had to leave again as Rev. Kleyn had to preach in another village at 3:00pm.

We took a tricycle to the bus depot and then took the bus for an hour and a half drive to a little village called Jose Pangeniban. The roads were terrible and the bus seats are made to seat small people, not us with our long legs. We arrived at around 2:30pm, stepped out of the bus, and went to the church called “The Body Of Christ.” Dante and Pastor Mark del Pilar traveled with us to this town. Both these men were born and raised in this village. Church started at 3:00 so Dante took me for a quick walk around the village. He has two sisters who live there still and showed me their places. It is hard to describe what I saw. What an eye opener. These people live very simple lives.

The worship service was opened in prayer and singing. Most of the time they spoke in English, but at this



Worship service in the village of Jose Pangeniban in the church called “The Body Of Christ.”

church when they prayed and when they had their announcements they spoke in Filipino. It is a little easier for some of them to speak their native language. Rev. Kleyn was introduced and then started preaching on Matthew 11:28. “Jesus Call to the Weary.” About half way through the sermon it started raining really, really hard, and then we lost power so the PA system did not work. There was a tin roof on the church and it was raining so hard that we could not hear him anymore. Rev. Kleyn had to stop preaching for around fifteen minutes till it quit raining. But he picked up right where he had stopped and did a fine job. They said this happens quite often during the rainy season. After the service was done, we were able to visit with the people of the congregation for a short time, had a sandwich provided by them, and then rode back on the bus to Daet. By now it was dark. We arrived in Daet and went to Pastor M. Tanierla’s place and met Rev. Miersma. He also had had a very busy Sabbath Day. We then took a taxi three hours to Naga as we had to fly back to Manila first thing Monday morning. That was the end of my trip. Rev. Miersma and Rev. Kleyn stayed for another week and visited other contacts and I traveled back home.

Observations:

I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to travel with two of our ministers to a foreign country like this and see them work. These men worked hard and put 100% into what they were doing and hardly had time to even relax.

I also feel very blessed that I have been able to meet many Christian men and women from the Philippines who have a deep love for the Scriptures and the Reformed faith. It is a love that is very sincere and evident in their lives. They are people that are content with the lot that the Lord has given them. This surely has been a lesson to me. They also want to learn more and more of the truths of Scripture. They have studied it hard and know the Bible very well, but need more teaching of the truths found in the Scriptures. They asked us when we were coming again and hoped that it was the next week. I see that the Protestant Reformed Churches can do some really good mission work in the Philippines, and I hope and pray that this may be the Lord’s will. We as a denomination need to support this work whole-heartedly.



Nicholas Kleyn is a member of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Standale, Michigan.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

A Time of War

Michael knew he was supposed to help stack wood outside by the end of the afternoon, but he was almost finished reading a very interesting book. He just couldn't put it down! Yet when he did finish it, he was almost sorry he had read the book at all.

Father walked into the room. "Why the long face, Michael?" he asked.

"I just finished this book about World War II," Michael showed his father, "and it's not a very happy story, even if we did gain the victory."

Father nodded. He had heard some of the stories firsthand. "War isn't pleasant, that's for sure. But God said there would be—and there must be—wars on this earth."

"But our country isn't at war right now, is it?" said Michael.

"Maybe not, but there are other wars going on," Father thought a moment, "and there are other kinds of

wars, too. There are physical wars and there are spiritual wars."

Michael nodded. He knew what a struggle it was to be obedient. It seemed as if he was always in that battle! He sighed.

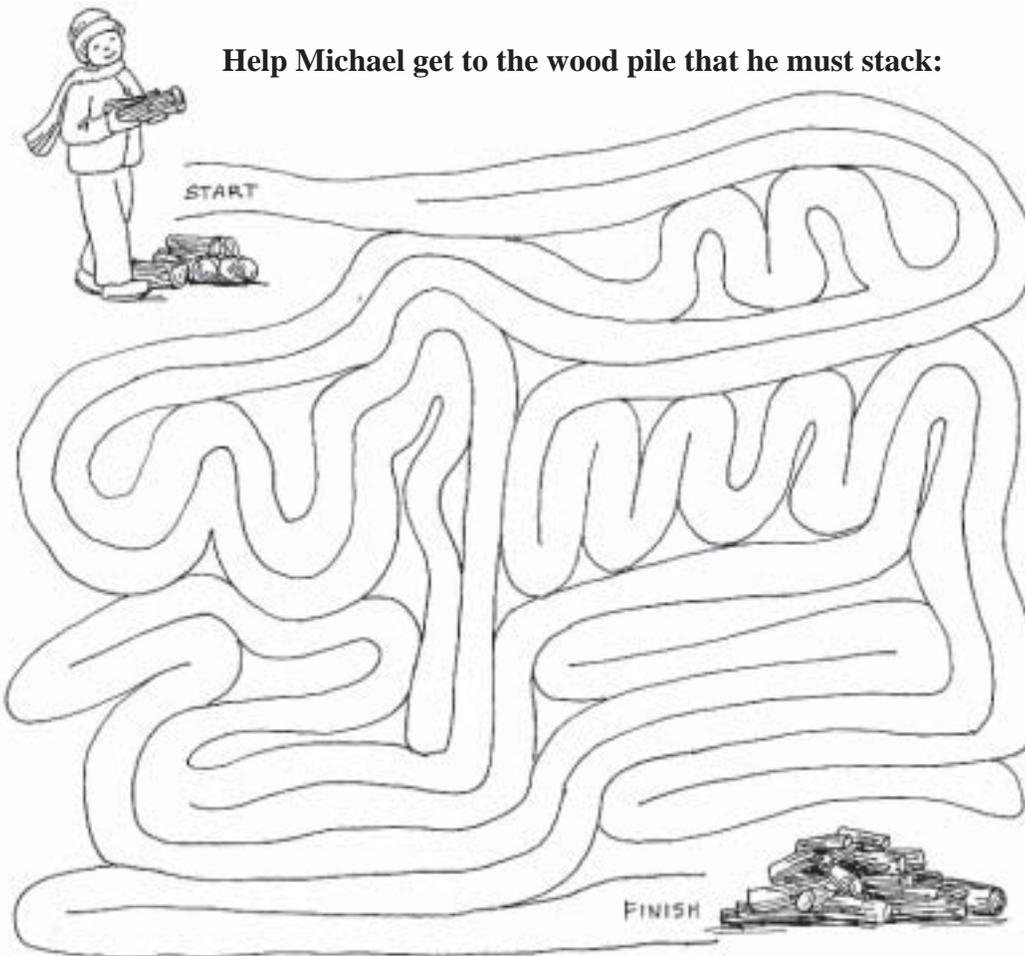
Father's eyebrows arched as he observed his son. "You know, God made this whole life on earth to be a war. 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' We're soldiers in this war until the day we die."

Michael nodded. He knew what Father meant. And he smiled, not because he enjoyed war, but because he knew Who had the victory. "Satan's head is crushed," he said.

"Satan and all his hosts will be destroyed," confirmed Father, "along with our old man of sin." He patted Michael's shoulder. "C'mon, let's tackle that job outside—like soldiers!" ❖

Connie is the mother of 5 children and a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Help Michael get to the wood pile that he must stack:



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Church News

BAPTISMS

*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."
Mark 16:16*

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Samantha Jo, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Lubbers—
Georgetown, MI
Derek Paul, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ron Koole—Hope, MI
Brice Gordon, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin VanOverloop—
Holland, MI
Esaias Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ben Bosman—Holland,
MI
Abigail Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Glen Feenstra—
Redlands, CA
Wesley Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Marlin Feenstra—
Redlands, CA
Charles Wayne, son of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Potjer—Redlands,
CA
Rachel Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Kamps—
Southwest, MI
Holly Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Kuiper—
Southwest, MI
Alana Beth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Gord Schipper—
Southwest, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

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

Romans 10:10

Public profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

Mr. Travis Maas—Lynden, WA
Mrs. Travis Maas—Lynden, WA
J. Henry Huiksen—Redlands, CA
Courtney Baker—Redlands, CA

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Kevin Timmerman and Miss Sally Ondersma—
Georgetown, MI
Mr. Michael DeBoer and Miss Lisa Kregel—Grandville, MI