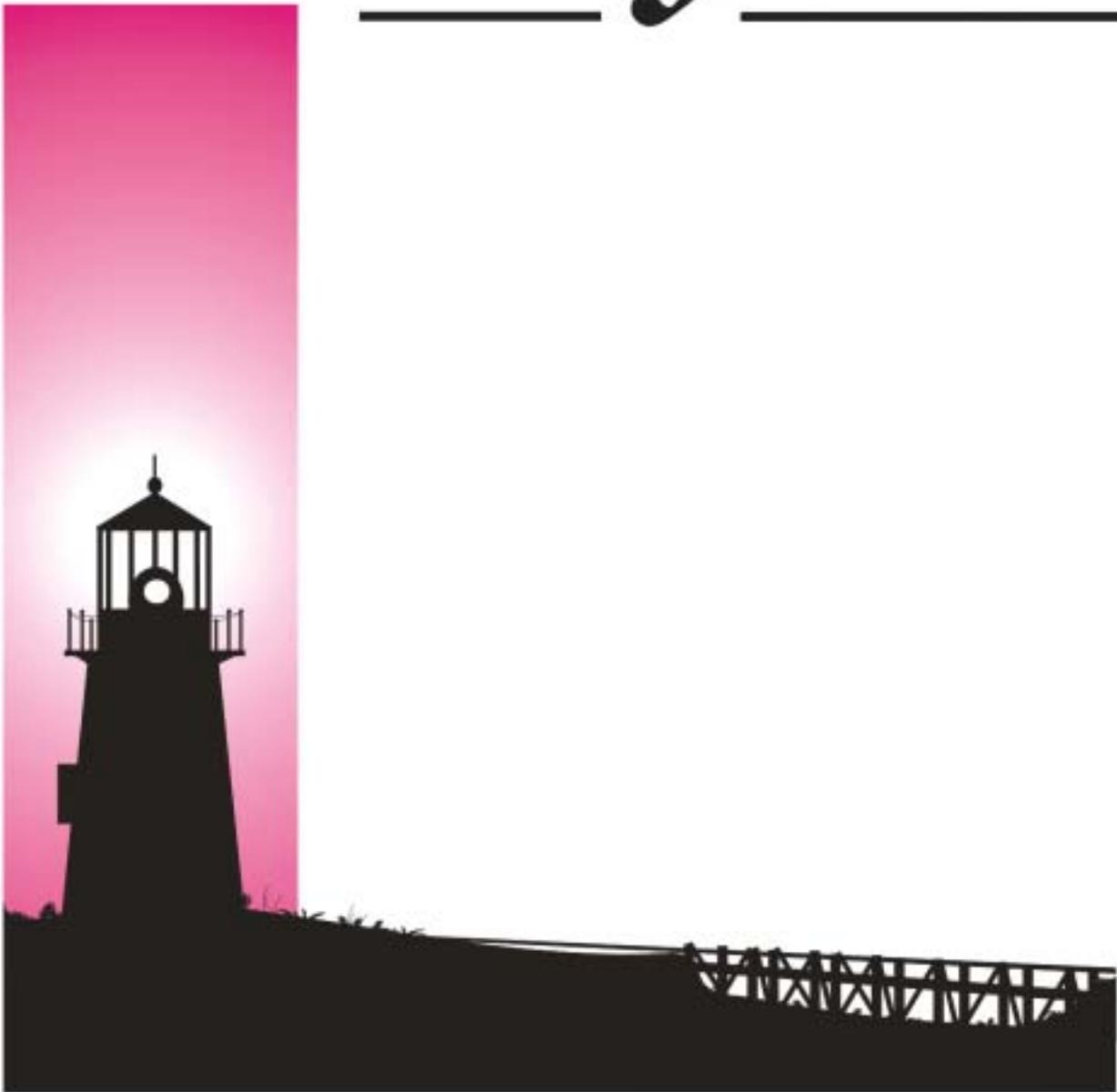


# *Beacon Lights*

*April  
2000*

*Volume LIX  
Number 4*







# Given Up to Uncleanness

by John Huizenga

Three college students sat in chairs in front of the class, two men and one woman. In this particular class, we had been learning about diversity in society and how this diversity affects the classrooms in which we hoped to teach. We had discussed the problems associated with having students from different cultural backgrounds and different social status. The professor had invited Indian elders, black students, and Hmong students to tell us about the struggles of their people. Unlike the other guests that had been invited, these three students looked like any other student on campus. They were all clean-cut and more respectable than many of the students seen on campus. They had been invited by the professor to speak with the class about their struggles as they grew up in school so that we as teachers could learn to be more sensitive to their needs.

The three students were introduced and given the opportunity to tell their “coming out” story. The first student began saying that his was not the typical horror story. He explained how he went through school as a pretty normal kid. In high school he dated a few girls but was never very interested in them. He found himself to be attracted more to other boys and struggled with these feelings. In college, he began to date another man and decided to call home and break the news. His mother answered the phone and he told her he was dating someone. Before he got to the critical information, his mother guessed that he was dating another man. She was supportive. She wanted him to bring his friend home to meet the family and discuss this issue. The only real disappointment for the parents was the fact that the son they felt would make such a wonderful father would never be a father.

After his story, the woman told hers. She had dated boys in high school but she felt used by them. They showed her no respect. In college she met a fellow classmate—a woman—that respected her and she fell in love with her. They began to date and she was finally happy in a relationship. When she told her parents, they were horrified. They were angry, they cried, and they tried to change her mind. She went back to college and when she came back home for the next vacation, her mother insisted that she date men instead. She refused and continues to find only limited support from other members of her family.

The last man happened to be the president of a homosexual group on campus. He said that he dated girls in high school as well as other boys in secret. His immediate family knew his secret and for the most part accepted it. In college he described some light-hearted experiences and little misunderstandings that he needed to work out with the friends he met. Sometimes he dated women and sometimes he dated men and was generally happy with both.

This man wanted to get across to our class that they did not need us to agree with their lifestyle, but rather they only wanted to be tolerated and considered “ok.” He told a little story to make his point. While giving some sort of speech before a group of football players, he leaked his secret. The coach who had asked him to speak whisked him to his dorm for fear that he would be beaten up by some huge intolerant football players. But instead of beating him up, they came to his dorm room and congratulated him for being open and brave.

After the “coming out” stories, the class was given the opportunity for questions and discussion. I was somewhat surprised that not one of them had mentioned religious conflict. Perhaps they did not have any or

---

were reluctant to tell about it in a public university. I wanted to know what they had to say so I asked them if they had faced any religious conflicts.

The first man seemed to have given some thought to God's condemnation of his lifestyle. He told a little story about his mother confronting him with the question, "so, what about this hell thing." His answer was brief and to the point. He said it would be hell for him to be forced to date women and do what was contrary to his deepest feelings. He said he would rather go to hell after he died than to suffer hell while he was alive.

The woman said her parents had pointed out all the passages in the Bible that condemned her lifestyle. She said she simply did not want to talk about it. She was happy with her life. She felt she was being herself. She did not like dating men and she did not want to deal with people or questions that condemned what she was doing.

The other man explained that his family went to church but did not see any real conflicts between their Christianity and his lifestyle. In fact, his mother suggested that he talk to his pastor and ask if he could tell his story from the pulpit and preach a little sermon on tolerance and diversity. He also talked about his partner's family. His partner's mother made it quite clear that she thought her son and her son's partner were going to hell. Even so, this man was quite puzzled that she treated him so nice when she believed he was going to hell.

Finally the three were asked to make some closing remarks. They all agreed that the thing they wanted most was to be tolerated by all. They emphasized that their sexual orientation was not something they chose but was a part of who they were. All they asked was that we respect them as people and say "you're OK."

We will be pressured more and more to say it, but the believer may never say to the homosexual, "you're OK." The three students sitting before the classroom are living in wicked rebellion against God. All three faced the word of God. All three said "this is the way I feel and I am not interested in what God says."

Man by nature is totally depraved. His entire life is turned away from God to walk in the opposite direction. The life of the ungodly manifests this corruption in every sort of way, sometimes it is subtle and apparently good and sometimes it is blatant and obviously wicked even in the eyes of the wicked. Often the heart of man is filled with tensions and conflicts of desires, hopes, fears, and consequences. He strives to fulfill the lusts of the flesh and display his contempt of God, but is afraid of consequences and what people will think.

This restraining fear is the work of God, but it is not a work of grace. God governs all things in the service of His gathering the church. That work of gathering his people is alone a work of grace. There are times when the almighty power of God, as He held back the waters of the Red Sea for the crossing of his people, holds back the wicked in their wickedness as He gathers His church. There are other times when God lets the waters go and He is pleased to save His people in the way of the ark. When He lets the wicked go, they turn their very manhood and womanhood into its opposite. They go as far as they can go within the limits of a humanistic moral code.

The truths God reveals about the homosexual in Romans 1:24-32 were very clear in the three people on the panel that day in class. One characteristic that God reveals is this: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever" (Romans 1:25). These three people did know what God says but they changed it into a lie. They declared that what they felt was the truth for them and therefore if God says that they are wrong, then God lies. When they began to feel the wicked lusts, they did not confess their sins before God and repent. We also, being sinful and inclined to every sort of sin, must confess our sins and repent at every appearance of those sins.

If you do not confess and repent, there is only one alternative: you will begin to pull and yearn after those sins. The ungodly world is full of such and God in His wisdom is pleased in various ways and times to let them go. We read in verse 28 "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;" The word translated "gave them over" is not often used with God as the subject. Often this word is translated "betray" as in the case of Judas betraying Christ. The only other time to my knowledge where God reveals that He "gives over" someone to

---

wickedness is found in Acts 7:42 where we read “Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?”

Finally God says of such wicked people: they are “filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:29-32). Outwardly, the three students on the panel appeared to be very decent people. Yet it was very apparent that many of these characteristics did apply to them. Especially striking to me was the man who boldly stated that he would rather live eternally in hell than to live a hellish life on this earth. Even though it was not apparent that such things as “full of murder,” “backbiters,” or “unmerciful” characterized these people, we know that we find such sins even within our own hearts.

Fellow saints, let us flee from sin.

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: [25] Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. [26] For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: [27] And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. [28] And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; [29] Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, [30] Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31] Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: [32] Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Acts 7:42: “Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?”

This is the world in which we live today. It is becoming more and more like Sodom and Gomorrah. Not only is homosexuality tolerated by most, it is encouraged. It is no longer considered sin or something wrong, but rather just a different way to live. We will grow up in a world where our neighbors, fellow classmates, doctors, mechanics, layers, farmers, or even the president may be homosexual. We will bump into them more and more.

It is OK to.

The question Satan likes to put into the minds of those who resist the pressing attitude of tolerance and indifference is “is it really that bad?”

The instructor for our class then made some closing remarks. She said this issue was important for teachers to deal with because they will be teaching children in the public schools who are homosexuals. She also asked what we would do if two mothers or two fathers came to parent and teacher conferences. Then she raised a question I thought was very much to the point. She said, “If you as teachers feel that it is wrong to be homosexual and feel obligated to warn such that continuing in that sin will lead to hell, can you teach in a public school?”

Homosexuality is quickly becoming an accepted lifestyle.

Homosexuality is sin like every other sin, but it is also a sign of being given over to sin. It is a sign that the end is near. ❖



# Medical Ethics and the Sovereignty of God

by Susann Huizinga

## *1998 Scholarship Essay*

**T**he issue of medical ethics in relation to the sovereignty of God is one that deserves much careful and deliberate consideration. Due to advanced medical knowledge and technology, questions concerning medical ethics have arisen that the Christian has never had to deal with before. How do we, as Christians, begin to find the answers to such difficult questions?

One must look to the Bible for guidance in such matters, and one sure comfort provided there is the assurance of God's sovereignty and control in all situations. The sovereignty of God is defined as "the supreme authority of God." God is not subject to any power or law which would be conceived as superior to or other than Himself (Dictionary of the Bible, p 146). This definition is based on Romans 9: 20-21: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing framed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

The Bible clearly makes it known that all things are in his control and controlled by him. Everything that happens is the work of God and this is manifested in His providence, as shown in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 10, Question and Answer 27: "What dost thou mean by the providence of God? The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years; meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand." Question and An-

swer 28 provides further comfort: "What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by his providence doth still uphold all things? That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from his love; since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move."

By understanding God's sovereignty and providence, we can better understand how the christian must deal with situations involving medicine. One example is the recent and widely publicized debate on assisted suicide. The media has given much attention to the topic due to the work of Doctor Jack Kevorkian and that of the Oregon legislature which is currently debating the issue. Movements to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide are becoming more and prevalent. The danger of falling off of the "slippery slope" is a very real possibility in this time of advancement and constant change. What position should a Christian take on this issue? The Heidelberg Catechism makes it quite plain in Lord's Day I that our bodies are not our own to deal with as we please and see fit, but are God's and controlled by Him in His sovereignty and providence. We may not, therefore, make use of the modern means of medicine to take our own life or those of others when it seems convenient or sensible to do so. Lord's Day I makes that very clear when it says: "What is thy only comfort in life and death? That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ... and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head."

---

Teachers in our Christian schools have a responsibility to teach this doctrine to their students. They must remind their students of the control God has over their lives and tell them of the comfort that this brings us. God's sovereignty is an amazing comfort, and the assurance of it makes even the greatest trial bearable. Our young people and children need to hear this truth, and the classroom is one of the means that can be used to teach them.

Teachers can also bring into the classroom modern and concrete examples from current events in the medical community and beyond. Using these examples, students can be shown first hand of the sovereignty of God. In such ways students can begin to deal with the issues that they will face now and in the years to come, as the problem of medical ethics will not die, but will become

more and more prevalent and complex due to the constant changing and evolving medical field.

Our sure comfort and guidance can be found in Romans 14:7-9:

For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

*Handy Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Merrill C. Tenney, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI. ❖

---

*Susann is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

---

## Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

# Buds

By John Huizenga

All winter long the icy winds whistled through the naked branches. The branches stood out, exposed and dark against the crisp clear sky. The squirrels scurried about and hurried back to their warm nests. The birds clung to the branches for a moment and then looked for some place more sheltered. The branches remained day and night out in the cold icy wind. They appear brittle and lifeless.

Then the soft mild spring breeze wafted through those same branches. Almost overnight, it seemed, a greenish haze collected among the branches. Each day the soft green increased and the harsh barren branches began to fade. Soon those naked branches will become a dense green canopy to shade us from the hot summer sun.

Let's take a closer look at those bleak winter branches. At the tip and at regular intervals along the branch you will find buds where last year's leaves dropped off. The bud looks rather hard and crusty, but beneath the bud scales you will find some softer parts.

Deep inside if you look very carefully, you will generally see two or three tiny green parts.

These little green parts are the embryonic (baby) leaves. Some of the buds also contain blossoms. The buds protect the tender and sensitive cells that divide to make the plant grow. As soon as it gets warm enough and sap begins to flow, the cells rapidly divide, the bud swells, and the leaves develop and quickly grow reaching out for the sunlight. As soon as the leaves are extended out into the sun, they begin to make food for the tree so that it can grow and produce fruit.

Perhaps you wonder how the buds and leaves grow if the leaves are the parts that are needed to make food for the plant? We really have the same question when we ask, "how does a baby grow inside of its mother if he doesn't eat food with his mouth?" We know that the baby gets food through the umbilical cord which carries blood from his mother. The blood contains all the food that the baby's body needs to grow. Buds do not get food from the leaves, but rather they get food from the

---

sap that the leaves made the year before. The sap is stored in the sapwood of the tree. The sap is like sugary water. If you drill a hole in a maple tree in the spring, sap will run out. This sap can be collected in pails and boiled so that the water evaporates and the sugar remains. As it boils, it becomes sweeter and sweeter until it becomes syrup and then hard like sugar.

Once the buds grow into leaves, they can begin making more sugar for the tree. The tree uses the sugar to produce fruit and grow taller and bigger around. It also stores up the sugar for next year's buds.

When we look at buds through the spectacles of Scripture, we see that God is the one who causes the buds to grow. This does not mean that the scientist is wrong when he explains how the sap makes the buds grow. Science can only see so far. When we look through the microscope of God's Word, we find answers to the questions that the scientist cannot answer. The scientist can never use science to explain where the life comes from that enables the bud to grow. The ungodly scientist says that the genetic material that gives growth instructions to the plant developed over millions of years of evolution. God tells us plainly that he created living things, and he upholds the life within every creature.

The Hebrew word that God uses in the Old Testament that we translate "bud" means in the Hebrew language "to break forth." A bud is that part of the plant from which the leaves and fruit break forth and grow. Most of the time when God uses the word "bud" in the Bible, he refers to the budding of plants. The butler in his dream saw a vine that budded (Genesis 40:10). Job points to God as the one who sends the water that makes the plants bud (38:27) and shows the wonder of a tree that buds again from the stump after it is cut down (14:9). In the Song of Solomon we read of the pomegranates that bud and bring delicious fruit (6:11; 7:12). These passages often make it clear that God is the one who causes the plants to bud.

Can a dead dry stick bud and grow leaves? Not by itself. But by the same power God used to create the world, God made the rod of Aaron to bud and grow leaves. It not only grew leaves, but it also blossomed and produced almonds (Numbers 7:8). God creates living things, he upholds their life, and he has the power to restore life to something that dies. God revealed that he was pleased to make a dead stick alive and bear fruit in Aaron alone. In like manner, God reveals his sovereign power to make dead souls alive in Christ alone (Hebrews 7).

In Psalm 132:17 God says "I make the horn of David to bud." What does it mean that God makes the horn of David to bud? We have a similar idea in these passages as well: "In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth" Ezekiel 29:21, and "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" Isaiah 27:6. Here God uses figurative language. The horn of David and Israel are not twigs with buds, but the nation did appear to be a dead stick with only a few tiny buds. That tiny bit of life was spiritual life that would burst forth, grow vigorously, and bear spiritual fruits.

God compares the budding of plants to spiritual growth in the following passages: speaking of Israel God says, "I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field" Ezekiel 16:7a. The nation of Israel did multiply and burst forth while in Egypt. But spiritual Israel is not limited to one particular nation or people. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" Isaiah 61:11. Look up at the innumerable tiny leaves that have burst forth from the barren twigs and you can see a picture of the church. Look up at the tiny leaves and you can see a picture of the abundance of praise that bursts forth from the mouths of the saints.

God also reveals to us the means whereby he makes the tiny spiritual principles of life within the people of God to burst forth and flourish. We read in Isaiah 55:10-11 "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Spiritual growth comes by the Word of God alone. May the gentle spring rain bring our minds to the house of God where we hear the faithful preaching of God's Word.

As with every comparison that God uses to teach us the wonders of our salvation, we need to be careful that we do not push the comparison too far. It would be incorrect to say that all men are like the winter twigs. They look dead but they really have a little life in them. If that were the case, then all men would flourish with the preaching of God's Word. They don't. We need to look at Aaron's rod for an accurate description of the condition of men by nature. All men are truly dry dead sticks

---

worthy of the flames of hell. Christ is the only living tree. By nature we are like brittle, dead, rotting twigs. By nature we only grow more rotten. But God has chosen his people from all eternity to be those dead sticks in which he creates a new living bud (the doctrine of regeneration). He then takes us and grafts us into Christ from whom we drink in the living water that makes us grow and bear fruit (the doctrine of sanctification).

When you have a chance, take a walk and look up at the branches of the trees. Consider the millions of tiny

buds and developing leaves. Consider the church which has grown up through the centuries into a magnificent tree. Do you see yourself as one of those tiny buds? Let us pray that God will so work in our hearts that we flourish, soak up the preaching of God's Word, and bear fruit to God's glory. ❖

---

*John is a member of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin and is editor of Beacon Lights.*

Gem of the Month

## Wait Patiently

*Lord, teach me patience as I plod along,  
Help me to understand when I'm not strong  
That in whatever way my Savior leads  
He's promised to supply my daily needs.  
So often I would run ahead impatiently  
Instead of following His path for me.  
"If I could know what lies ahead  
Then I would better know the way to tread."  
Lord, help me see the folly of this thought;  
For Thou dost know; the path by Thee was  
wrought!  
If I should try my own way to pursue,  
I'd stumble blindly just to make it through.  
My plans would end in failure, trusting me –  
Teach me to wait with patience, Lord, for Thee.*

*Thelma Westra*

# April 17, 1521

By J.P. de Klerk

**T**his is an important date in the history of the Reformation. Dr. Martin Luther had to attend to the German “Reichstag” (Diet of the realm) in the city of Worms. There was the emperor Charles V with all the electors, priests, bishops, solicitors, professors and other advisors (since the first of January the pope had put him under the ban of the Roman Catholic Church, which outlawed Luther; but he insisted that he wanted to defend his Christian conviction). Here, you see a reproduction of an old drawing (restored) made by a contemporary of Luther, who saw the illustrious company, with all their questions and remarks, attacking Luther, while the emperor was looking on and listening. Behind Luther you see the elector of Saxony, Frederic the Wise, who protected Luther and brought

him to the castle Wartburg, high in the mountains, surrounded by old forestry; he lived there ten months under the pseudonym “Junker George” (a country squire). You see, the emperor sits five steps higher on his throne. The palace guards (halberdiers) look on. Luther was a man with great courage, admired by Calvin (like he wrote in 1538 in a letter to a friend of Luther). Luther did not bow for Rome. In the Wartburg castle, he translated the New Testament into the German language in twelve weeks. Later, the Old Testament took him 12 years, but that was in Wittenberg, while preaching and lecturing. ❖

---

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





# The Song of Zion

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

by Cornelius Jonker

### April 1 Read Psalm 125, Zechariah 2:1-5

**Psalm 125:1-2** If there is any doubt in your mind about the important doctrine of perseverance or preservation of the saints, these verses ought to dispel it conclusively. They that trust in the Lord, His church, His elect, you and I, by God's grace, cannot be removed or lost. To move mount Zion was impossible, and even absurd to suppose it. So picture yourself being cradled in the Lord's arms, even as the mountains encompassed Jerusalem. Such safety, such security, such sovereign love bestowed upon us from henceforth, even forever ought to make us humbly grateful. Begin today in that confidence and end it by preparing yourself for the Sabbath tomorrow. Sing Psalter 354:1 & 2.

### April 2 Read Psalm 37:37-40

**Psalm 125:3** Today is the Lord's Day. We may rest from our daily labors and struggles and be renewed in soul and spirit by attending divine worship and hearing God's Word. The Psalmist declares that although in their daily life God's people may expect the wicked world to persecute them, rule over them unmercifully, and cause them to suffer loss, yet their yoke will not continue to rest upon them in such a way that they will yield to sinful deeds and vengeance. Do you react or reply in kind when someone mistreats you or blames you falsely? That's our nature, of course. We must not succumb to this temptation but pray for grace to be patient and overcome evil with good. Be comforted by hearing God's Word today, and if you face oppression sometimes for your faith, rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer for His sake. Sing Psalter 355:2.

### April 3 Read Proverbs 2:10-22

**Psalm 125:4-5** Verse four is a prayer that the Lord will do good to those that are good. Who are they? In verse one they are described as those "that trust in the Lord"; in verse two, they are "his people"; in verse three, "the righteous"; in verse four, "upright in their hearts"; verse five "Israel" (meaning covenant people—descendants of Jacob). All are names of those who are justified in God's sight by the work of Christ. Contrasted with these are those who willfully turn aside to their wicked ways. Perhaps they once went to church and associated with God's people. But they never loved God, and their end will be with the workers of iniquity. Be vigilant, young people, pray for grace to walk in a holy manner. In that way only will you have true peace. Sing Psalter 356:3.

### April 4 Read Psalm 126

**Psalm 126:1** It is undoubtedly true that when the Lord stirred the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia to allow the exiles to return to

Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity, the people could hardly believe it to be true. But we believe this verse to have a deeper meaning, namely the sovereign work of God, delivering His church from the captivity of Satan, from sin and death, to a new life in Him. You and I, who were dead in trespasses and sins, are made alive in Christ. You and I, who could never extricate ourselves from sin's clutches, were made free, and at what a cost! The Son of God Himself shed His blood on the cruel cross and satisfied God's justice, thereby making us righteous. Hard to imagine the depths of God's mercy, isn't it? And it seems like a dream, but it's true and we embrace it by faith. Sing Psalter 357:1.

### April 5 Read Colossians 3:15-17

**Psalm 126:2-3** Are you a joyful Christian? Do you laugh and sing with gladness so that wherever you are your joy is contagious? That's the kind of people we should be. There are those you know who seldom laugh but wear long faces because they believe that doubt is a virtue and assurance of salvation is hoped for but not easily received. And of course, there is the empty gaiety and raucous laughter of the world in their mad pursuit of carnal pleasures. But as we saw yesterday, we have every reason to rejoice for so great a salvation wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. So let us fill our mouths with holy laughter and our tongues with songs of thanksgiving and praise, so that God may be glorified wherever we are. Sing Psalter 358:2.

### April 6 Read Isaiah 44:1-4

**Psalm 126:4** This prayer was undoubtedly uttered by many of God's people throughout history who were held captive by cruel oppressors. For example we can picture the Israelites crying to God for deliverance from their cruel bondage in Egypt, or the many times during the period of the judges when Israel forsook the Lord and heathen nations ruled over them. Especially was this true during the exile in Babylon. Relief from this burden of captivity was likened to parched fields in the south land receiving overflowing and life giving rivers of water, which once were dry. Pray daily that your burden of sin may be lifted by confession, by repentance and by forsaking them, based on Christ's merits. Then, as cool water refreshes a thirsty body, so we are also spiritually refreshed by assurance of pardon. Sing Psalter 358:3.

### April 7 Read Isaiah 55:8-12

**Psalm 126:5-6** The Psalmist turns our attention to an agricultural theme, that of a sower who sows in sorrow, but reaps in joy. In one sense it continues the picture of captives thrust down to the ground by their captors, or of souls overwhelmed by sin but then delivered and given blessed freedom. We are reminded here of

---

the great Sower, Jesus Christ, a man of sorrows, Who sowed the precious seed of the Word even amongst opposition; who died, but arose and from heaven will doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing His sheaves with Him. Will you sow the seed of the Word today if God gives you the opportunity to do so even if you are reproached for doing so? Witness to your faith in Christ and “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you”. Sing Psalter 357:4.

#### April 8 Read Psalm 127

**Psalm 127:1** This Psalm and the one following picture to us the necessity of God’s blessing upon our family life, our social life and our daily labours. If we put our trust in anything or anyone else but God to direct our way; if we depend on our own strength or wisdom to defend us from our enemies which constantly beset us, then all our efforts are vain or empty. Remember the proud builders of the tower of Babel? But God was not in all their thoughts and He confounded them so their toil was in vain. Do you labor daily with the sole purpose to gain earthly riches and possessions? Is your family life so busy that God and His Word take second or third place? Listen again to this admonition: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” Sing Psalter 359:1.

#### April 9 Read Hebrews 4:9-16

**Psalm 127:2** There’s a little poem which many of you have heard that goes something like this: “Day of all the week the best; emblem of eternal rest.” Today is Sunday, a day of rest from our daily toil, but a day dedicated to the worship of God and spiritual activities. Our verse today speaks of the vanity of daily labour so intense and long that it is an affliction to earn our daily bread. Work is not an end in itself, but is a God-given duty to provide for our needs and to glorify Him also in this way. Then He gives His beloved people their needed rest and repose in sleep. May this Sabbath day truly be for us an emblem of that wonderful eternal rest, and a day in which we may renew our spirits by hearing God’s Word and engaging in other edifying activities. Sing Psalter 359:2.

#### April 10 Read III John 1-4

**Psalm 127:3-4** These verses continue the theme of the Psalm picturing to us, that in the building of a house, all is futile without the Lord’s blessing. One of the greatest blessings God gives are covenant children. Sometimes in His inscrutable wisdom God withholds children from some families and this must be accepted with patience and submission to His perfect will. The ungodly often consider offspring as hindrances to their careers and plans, and murder their unborn children. What a terrible sin! But to God’s people, children are described as a heritage and a reward and as arrows in the hand of a warrior. Children and young people, do you realize what a tremendous blessing God gave you by being born in a Godly covenant home and do you realize its attending responsibilities? Thank God daily for this gift and strive to lead a life which glorifies Him. Sing Psalter 359:3.

#### April 11 Read Isaiah 8:13-18

**Psalm 127:5** We saw yesterday what a blessing children are in a covenant home, a reward of the Lord. It signifies that children are not the fruit of chance, but that God alone gives each man his proper share. This verse describes the happy state of a man who has many of them, and as an archer armed with a well-furnished bow, so men are defended by their children, as it were with a bow

and full complement of arrows. Young people, do you strive to make your parents happy by being obedient, trustworthy and God fearing? Then you are their greatest joy! Contrariwise, when you rebel against their God-given authority, you sin and become your parents’ greatest grief. Pray for grace to walk according to their loving and wise counsel. Sing Psalter 359:4.

#### April 12 Read Psalm 128

**Psalm 128:1-2** This Psalm is closely related to the preceding one and could well be entitled, A Family Hymn or Marriage Song. The very first verse sets the tone and depicts the recipe, if you will, for a happy family covenant life. And that is, that blessings descend on the home that fears God and walks in His ways. And then it follows that God will certainly provide our daily bread, but in the way of diligent labors on our part. Idleness is certainly condemned in Scripture. We may not always feel like getting out of bed early each week day and going to work. But this is the God ordained way, and we must be thankful for the strength He gives us so that we may work to provide for our family, for kingdom causes and also to give to the poor. Sing Psalter 360:1.

#### April 13 Read Ephesians 6:1-4

**Psalm 128:3 & 4** The Psalmist continues to describe the blessings which come to a God fearing covenant home. God has determined that the family is basic, the very foundation of society. The husband is the head, even as Christ is the Head of His church. His wife is pictured as a vine. A vine must be supported, it bears fruit; it lives within the house (not women’s lib or outside careers). Children are blessings round about the table, even as a gnarled olive tree is surrounded by its own offspring, namely tender plants. Even as young plants are carefully watered and tended in a garden, so our children must be nurtured and fed daily by God’s Word. Parents, take time to do so, and children be receptive to this instruction, Sing Psalter 360:2 & 3.

#### April 14 Read I John 2:12-17

**Psalm 128:5-6** We see in these verses the riches of God’s grace as the promise of the covenant that He will not only be the God of His people, but of their children after them. And it is according to this promise that God establishes His covenant of grace in the line of continuing generations. Not only shall God fearing families be blessed, but they shall see the good of Jerusalem, the church, as well. One of their chief desires is to see the church of God in a flourishing condition. Is that your desire as well? What do you do to help your congregation grow in truth and love? Fathers, do you possibly refuse to serve in a consistory? Young people, do you perhaps take a lackadaisical attitude regarding catechism or society life? Hopefully you strive to encourage your pastor, and participate fully in the communion of saints. In this way you will experience God’s blessing and peace. Sing Psalter 360:4 & 5.

#### April 15 Read Psalm 129

**Psalm 129:1-2** This Psalm describes to us the lot of God’s people from the very earliest times to the very end of time. It teaches that although they will be subject to trials and sufferings, the Lord Himself will prove to be their deliverer and defender. The second child born into the world was persecuted and killed because of his faith. All through history the church has been afflicted, and it will continue in varying degrees until the very end when it will intensify under antichrist. Just think of Christ, the sinless One, even put to death, but through it emerged victorious and obtained our redemption. Are you persecuted and reviled for

---

your faith? Rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer for God's sake, and pray for grace to remain steadfast. Sing Psalter 361:1.

#### **April 16** Read Acts 16:19-26

**Psalm 129:3-4** Our verses for today further describe the afflictions of God's people and compares the furrows plowed upon their backs to a field through which a plow has been drawn. These furrows were long, so that no part escaped this cruel treatment. But then we read: "The Lord is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked." The allusion is to a plow hitched with ropes to the necks of oxen. The Lord is just and deals out justice to the oppressors, even as he loosed the chains of Paul and Silas in prison. God may not be pleased to deliver us in such a miraculous way, but because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, we are delivered from the power of Satan. As you hear God's Word today, praise Him for His wondrous grace and for the righteousness which is ours in Christ. Sing Psalter 361:2.

#### **April 17** Read Psalm 92:5-9

**Psalm 129:5-7** The Psalmist in today's passage utters imprecations on the wicked who hate Zion, both the King and its subjects. They will be filled with shame and loss, and wither as grass upon the housetop which soon dies for lack of earth and moisture. They are compared to farmers who have no crops to mow nor sheaves to reap. So when you see the wicked prosper, take heart, as Asaph did when he went to God's house and considered their end. They are set in slippery places and headed for destruction. We must not boast in this, but humbly acknowledge that, except for the grace of God, we are no better. Confess with the apostle Paul "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then thank God for that great deliverance in our Lord Jesus Christ. Sing Psalter 361:3.

#### **April 18** Read Ruth 2:1-4

**Psalm 129:8** This Psalm concludes with a contrast. We have seen in the preceding verses that the wicked, although they may form a high opinion of themselves, yet are nothing but mere grass, never reaching a state of ripeness. John Calvin writes "To make this obvious, the Psalmist sets them (the wicked) in opposition to fruit-bearing herbs, which in valleys and low grounds produce fruit for men. In time, he affirms that they deserve to be hated or despised of all, whereas commonly every one in passing by the corn fields blesses them and prays for the harvest." It appears that it was a custom in times past to greet one another with the words "We bless you in the name of the Lord". To bless, means to speak well of, and although we don't usually follow this custom, there's much to commend it. We should never use the name of the Lord glibly, but always be conscious of His presence and care and be ready to speak of it to others. Sing Psalter 361:4.

#### **April 19** Read Jonah 2:1-9, Psalm 130

**Psalm 130:1-2** In this beautiful penitential Psalm, the author, finding himself overwhelmed with adversities, cries to the Lord for deliverance and forgiveness. He pleads with the Lord to hear his voice and to be attentive to his supplications. None of us wish to be brought to such depths of sorrow or to be so overwhelmed by sin and despair that we feel completely helpless and lost. Yet this has happened to many of God's saints and it happens to us also and it is for our good. It is then by God's mercy that we fervently cry for forgiveness and help. Usually, the deeper the depths of our tribulation, the more fervent our prayers. Has this happened to you? How do you face them? By anger and rebel-

lion, or by falling on your knees in earnest supplication? Believe God's promises that the trying of our faith works patience so that we may be perfect and complete in Him. Sing Psalter 363:1 & 364:1.

#### **April 20** Read I John 1:5-9

**Psalm 130:3-4** When we pray, we must understand what is our true status before a just and holy God. We are sinners, not only because we are guilty in Adam, but we constantly transgress God's holy law. In answer to the question of who shall stand if God should mark iniquities, our answer is no one, myself included. Then to our great comfort, we read: "But there is forgiveness with thee." Blessed pardon to His elect, sins that are washed away by the blood of the Saviour. Only in the way of Christ's imputed righteousness to us can we stand before Him. Then, with the assurance of forgiveness, we don't walk carelessly, but in Godly fear. Do you want to be forgiven? Do you daily pray for forgiveness? Rejoice then for this evidence of the Spirit working in your heart. Sing Psalter 363:2 & 364:2.

#### **April 21** Read II Thessalonians 3:1-5

**Psalm 130:5-6** A very godly exercise is that of patience. Few of us possess it to the degree we desire. The Psalmist in our verses today exclaims that he is waiting for the Lord. Then, to stress that this is not just a formal act, he repeats twice more that even to the depths of his soul he waits. Now, most of us have waited many, many times in our lives. And why did we wait? Because we had hopes of meeting someone or doing something. If there was no hope or expectation of that, we would cease waiting. The Christian has a hope and it is totally opposite from the world's. We wait for the Lord and hope in His promises. On this Good Friday, we have a sure hope. If Jesus did not die in our stead, our situation would be hopeless. But He did not remain in the grave. Our salvation is assured, and we await His glorious return. Sing Psalter 362:2.

#### **April 22** Read I Peter 1:3-5

**Psalm 130:7-8** We saw yesterday that as individuals we wait for the Lord with hope and expectation. Now the Psalmist calls on the Church to do likewise. Then he elaborates on the ground of that hope, namely the Lord's mercy. And because of His eternal love, He redeems His Church from all their sins. That is salvation! They are delivered from the greatest evil and become partakers of the highest good. His redemption, you will notice, is not scanty but plenteous. He did not redeem them from some of their sins, but from *all* of them. What a price had to be paid to accomplish that! Do you as a member of that Church thank Him for that great gift? Do you daily strive then to walk in humble obedience and gratitude? God grant to all of us the grace to be lively, productive members of His Church. Sing Psalter 362:3.

#### **April 23** Read Psalm 131

**Psalm 131:1** Having a humble heart is a great virtue; to keep one's eyes from proud looks is noble; and to refrain from prying into matters which are none of our concern is commendable. David, the psalmist, pours out his heart as though he were a young child, but it contains the wisdom and experience of a confident man of God. This is the speech of one who is lowly in Spirit and sanctified in heart. Can you say, and really mean these words, people of God? We, who are proud by nature, can only do so by God's grace. David, who had many faults, nevertheless was a humble and righteous man, and was a type of Christ. Christ is the only

One who could truly say “for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Christ, whose resurrection we celebrate today lived a life of humiliation, but now is exalted as conquering King in glory. Trust in this King and “humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” I Peter 5:6. Sing Psalter 366:1.

#### **April 24** Read Lamentations 3:22-26

**Psalm 131:2-3** In this passage, first of all, the Psalmist compares his behavior and quietness of soul to a child who is weaned from his mother. At first glance we might say that the interesting example does not fit, for the process of denying a young child’s source of food and comfort at his mother’s breast is distressing, to say the least. But it pictures the child who is no more rebellious and is now content with his lot, for he is constantly assured of his mother’s love. So must we be content with our life and be assured that, although we face trials and disappointments, yet we are surrounded by God’s love. And then we don’t think only of ourselves but we exercise our faith by sharing concern and love for fellow church members, encouraging them in their hope and walk. Sing Psalter 366:2 & 3.

#### **April 25** Read Psalm 132

**Psalm 132:1** This Psalm is a prayer that God’s promises made to David may be fulfilled and that He will dwell in Zion forever. Most commentators agree that either David or Solomon is the author, with preference given to the latter. The Psalm begins with the petition that the Lord would remember David in all his afflictions. Oh what a terrible thing it would be if God forgets us. The false prophets in Jeremiah’s time were told by God that He would forget and forsake them for their lies and mockery. But for the godly remnant, for God’s own elect people, He exclaims in Isaiah 49 that even if mother could forget her sucking child, yet He will not forget them, for they are etched in the palms of His hands. What an unspeakable comfort! What undeserved mercy to us who by nature are no better than the forgotten ones. Pray earnestly “Lord remember me”. Sing Psalter 367:1.

#### **April 26** Read I Kings 8:17-21

**Psalm 132:2-5** These verses describe the deep concern in David’s heart for a place where Jehovah would allow His worship to be celebrated, a place where the ark, the symbol of God’s presence, could rest. We don’t know if he actually swore an oath that he would not go to his house or sleep on his bed until a fitting habitation for God’s worship was erected. But it should probably be understood that he would never enter his house or ascend to his bed without feeling a deep concern about this subject, and God commends him for that desire. How about our zeal for the house of God? Are we eager to attend His house of worship? Do we treat God’s house with reverence and respect, both in attitude and appearance? Do we come prepared to take an active part in worship services and society life? Our answers to these questions will certainly give us our spiritual temperature. Sing Psalter 367:1.

#### **April 27** Read II Samuel 6:12-15

**Psalm 132:6-7** Many commentators have many different interpretations on verse 6, with some being more plausible than others. In general, they agree that it has reference to the ark of the covenant. The ark was taken by the Philistines in the battle in which Saul was killed, and had been moved to several places in subsequent years. Most of the people had no idea of its present location. Now that it had been found and brought back to Jerusa-

lem, there was great rejoicing, and proper worship was restored. The phrase “we will worship at his footstool” is interesting. In essence it means that God is the Holy One who dwells in the highest heavens and Who said “Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool.” It is incumbent upon us that in humility and reverence we must worship Him. “O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.” Ps. 95:6 Sing Psalter 367:2.

#### **April 28** Read Numbers 10:33-36

**Psalm 132:8-9** The Psalmist elaborates further on the worship of God and prays that Jehovah will arise and draw nigh to Mount Zion, His chosen place of rest along with the visible emblem of His grace and power, namely the ark. Then he prays that righteousness may adorn the priests and through them be displayed amongst the people. This righteousness is the righteousness of Christ. He perfectly satisfied the justice of God by His redemptive death on the cross. This righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We are justified in God’s sight, our guilt is removed. Because of that, His saints can’t help but shout for joy. Remember when the Pharisees asked Jesus to rebuke His disciples for shouting praises to Him upon His triumphant entry into Jerusalem? He answered that if they held their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. Think of that, people of God, and praise Him wholeheartedly. Sing Psalter 368:1.

#### **April 29** Read II Samuel 7:8-13

**Psalm 132:10-12** Shortly after the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem by king David, he purposed in his heart to replace the tabernacle with a more elaborate and permanent building. God, through the prophet Nathan, forbids him to do that, stating that David’s own son was chosen for that task. Then God promised him that the throne of his kingdom would be established forever through David’s own seed. David’s kingly line of earthly successors did continue for many years in Judah, in contrast to nine different houses of kings in Israel. The psalmist prays that God, for the sake of the promise made to David, would show favor to his anointed posterity. This really points to Christ, The Anointed One, and to David’s true posterity, the Church. You, people of God, are living members of that Church. Prepare today for the privilege of gathering in divine worship tomorrow. Sing Psalter 368:2.

#### **April 30** Read Zechariah 2:10-13

**Psalm 132:13-16** Our passage today speaks of God’s church. What a fitting passage for the Lord’s day! God has chosen Zion. He desires it for His habitation. Zion was the earthly symbol of the true church of Jesus Christ. Zion’s strength was vested in her theocracy. God in Christ was her king. Look how He blesses her: He dwells within her, He provides for her abundantly, He gives bread to her poor, He clothes her priests with salvation, and He causes her saints to loudly rejoice. Young people, do you count it a great blessing to sit under the preaching of the Word today, or do you attend out of custom or parental persuasion? If we don’t eat earthly food, we would soon starve. So it is with the living bread, God’s Word. If we disdain and refuse that, we starve spiritually which is infinitely worse. Pray that together we may hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life. Sing Psalter 367:4.

# Psalter 64—Spiritual Aspirations

by Beth DeVries

“Lord, I lift my soul to Thee.” This is the opening of Psalter number 64. This versification of Psalm 25 immediately reminds us to whom we must go in prayer. We do not go to God with just our minds but our whole soul! Throughout this Psalter versification we are reminded of our need to trust in God. God will be our guide in this life and will bestow mercies upon us from above.

The Psalmist speaks to his God. This reminds us that our God is a personal God and cares for us as individuals. We are to seek God with our whole being because He is a personal God. We can not address Him half-heartedly as we do some acquaintances but speak to Him with our soul. This means that we speak to our God and He hears us. We put our trust in God because He hears our prayers. God calls us to trust in Him and He will protect us from the enemy. We are reminded of this often in the Psalms. God will not allow the foe to exult over His people.

David reminds us to not be ashamed of the name of our God. Our God will not disappoint us or leave us ashamed, yet how often don't we appear to be ashamed of our God. God assures us in this Psalm that His people shall not be put to shame by others. Those who truly trust in God to care for and

bless them will not be ashamed of their God. We must remember that God should be ashamed of us for the many sins we commit against Him, yet He exults us, His people. We owe praise to our God, may we proclaim His name rather than be ashamed.

Christ brings spiritual victory to his people and He does this by His leading them in this life. We are reminded in this Psalm that God guides us in truth. God will make His path plain for us when we earnestly seek Him. The Lord's path is not always what we expect it to be but it is always good. We read of this also in Isaiah 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” This passage reminds us that God's ways and thoughts are beyond ours and we are grateful that His ways are right and holy. We wait on God to learn His way

in this life, putting our trust in Him.

The Psalmist goes on to speak of the sins of youth. He asks God to forgive these sins of long ago. We frequently equate these with sins during the teenage years; however, one of the commentators suggested that this

64 Spiritual Aspirations  
PSALM 25 7s SPANISH HYMN Arranged by Benjamin Carr

1. Lord, I lift my soul to Thee, O my God, I trust Thy night;  
2. Lord, to me Thy ways make known, Guide in truth and teach Thou me;  
3. Sins of youth re-mem-ber not, Nor my tres-pass-ces re- cord;

Let not foes ex-ult o'er me, Shame me not be-fore their sight.  
Thou my Sav-our art a-lone, All the day I wait for Thee.  
Let not mur-ey be for-got, For Thy good-ness' sake, O Lord.

Yes, my name be put to shame, None who wait for Thee to bless;  
Lord, re-mem-ber in Thy love All Thy mer-cies man-i-fold,  
Just and good the Lord a-bides, He His way will sin-ners show,

But dis-hon-ored be their name Who with-out a cause trans-gress.  
Yea - der mer-cies from a-bove, Change-less from the days of old.  
He the mock in jus-tice guides, Mak-ing them His way to know,

---

also includes the sins of our infancy and early childhood. This would include those many sins we committed before our realization of how great our sins are. Our sins are what constantly stand between us and God. We daily or frequently throughout the day ask God to forgive our many sins. We continue every moment to accumulate a large debt of sin before the face of God. There are many sins which we do not realize that we commit and many in our thoughts that slip in. For these sins we must daily seek repentance. We, of course, have the assurance that our sins are forgiven us by the sacrifice of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ. This forgiveness of sins is the manifestation of God's love on us, His people.

God through the gift of forgiveness of sins and eternal life shows His unfailing mercy toward us. God continues to care for us even when we fail to show our love to Him. As we have spoken of the Lord leading us and caring for us we know that this is a result of His mercy.

The last part of Psalm 25 which we address this time (verses 8, 9) speaks again of God's teaching us to walk in His ways. David speaks especially of God guiding the meek. This reminds us of our calling to be the meek on the earth. We can be meek in the eyes of the world because we have the assurance of our salvation and our God. We need not worry about our life in this world because we are just pilgrims passing through to our eternal home. We must trust in God in all our life. As we humbly seek God, He will make His ways known to us. May we remember this when we reflect on this Psalter versification of Psalm 25. "Lord, I lift my soul to Thee."



---

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

---

## Where We Stand

# Witnessing and Testifying of the Truth (1)

by Rev. Barrett Gritters

*Young People's Convention, Redlands, 1999*

**T**he theme that Redlands gave me to speak on tonight is "Witnessing and Testifying For the Truth." The theme text is: "Be ready always to give an answer." My theme fits in the text in this way: Last night Rev. Koole spoke about being *ready* to give an answer—*knowing* the truth. Tonight I'm going to be speaking on our *witnessing and testifying* of the truth, that is, actually giving an answer. Tomorrow night Rev. Bruinsma will speak about the *hope* in us that gives rise to the question people will ask: "Why are you living that way? What kind of hope do you have in your hearts?"

I want to start out by saying that Protestant Reformed people (although I'm generalizing) aren't very good at witnessing and testifying the truth. We *know* the truth. Our catechism classes, parents and schools do a good job of making us know the truth. We're good at *defending* the truth against error. We know what the lie is. We know how to put up the sword to defend the truth against

those errors. We're even pretty good, I think, by the grace of God, in our ability not to give in to the lie when it comes in the form of the truth. But we're not very good at witnessing and testifying of the truth. We're good at defense but not at offense.

I'm not sure why. Why is it that we know the truth, we're able to defend against the lie, but we don't know how very well to wield the sword of the Spirit positively, speaking the truth in love in a testimony of the grace of God that He's shown to us? I think one of the reasons—and you may add others—at that is that we really haven't been *trained*. That's not your fault; that's my fault, as a minister. That's my fault as a parent. We haven't really been trained to do that. I'd like to begin the training of us in a little way tonight, to witness and testify to the truth.

There's another reason we aren't very good at it. (There is not very much that I can do about that tonight, except God blesses the speech that I give.) We aren't

---

very excited, enthusiastic about, zealous of the truth that we know in our hearts. We don't pray enough. May God take this truth that we have here and drive it down deep, so that I *want* to say to the neighbor what God has given to me.

I would like to present four things we ought to speak about and be ready to speak about. I want to help you remember them so you are able to testify to a neighbor—believer or unbeliever—from the Scripture.

## 1. Creation

Everyone ought to speak about creation, origins, and beginnings. Where in the wide world did this world come from? There are hundreds of opportunities to speak about creation. Not very many of you drove here to California, but if you did, you may have come past the Grand Canyon. You may have taken a little side track through Yellowstone. And you may have heard the ranger say, "This rock was formed how many billions of years ago." Ah! There's an *opportunity*. Or it may be that you don't go to a Christian high school that teaches the truth of creation according to the Word of God. There's *opportunity*. There are hundreds of opportunities to speak about creation. We ought to begin with the beginning. That's easy, too. What's the first book of the Bible? Genesis. What does "genesis" mean? Beginnings. And on the beginnings of creation are built all the other truths of the Word of God.

That's where we ought to begin, not only because that's the first book of the Bible, but that's where the apostle Paul taught us to begin. When the apostle was on his missionary journeys in Acts 17, he went to Athens where the philosophers were debating philosophy. There, he sought an opportunity to witness to the truth. Where did he begin? "I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom you therefore worship ignorantly, him I declare to you" (vs. 22). Then, what's the first thing Paul says about this God? "God that *made the world* and all things therein..." (vs. 24). Creation was the very first thing the apostle Paul spoke about on this missionary journey.

What are the texts you ought to use with creation? What texts should you memorized with regard to that truth so that immediately it comes to mind? Hebrews 11:3: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." That's all you need—a subject and a text—and you go from

there. That's a text that you use not only with the unbeliever, but with the believer. Hebrews 11:3. Testify about creation.

Right here I want to repeat what Rev. Koole said last night. You don't need to worry about whether you *convince* them that God made these worlds. You don't need to be nervous about whether they're going to say, "I believe you." All you need to do is present the truth. "By faith I understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of my God in heaven."

Do you want some help? Subscribe to a magazine called *Creation Ex Nihilo*. Nice magazine. Color pictures like *National Geographic*. Ask your pastor to show you how to subscribe to it. More help? Prof. Engelsma preached six sermons in South Holland on *Origins*. Some of you this summer on Tuesday nights came to Hudsonville Church and listened to those sermons with me. You ought to order those six sermons and listen to them so that you're able to defend from the Word of God the truth of God about creation.

But why creation? Why begin with origins? Because you want those to whom you speak to know about Him. You want everyone you talk to, no matter what you talk about, to learn about God. And when you tell them about creation, they're going to learn two things about Him. They're going to learn the two attributes of God's *goodness* and God's *sovereignty*. When you talk about creation, you will first say, "We have an *amazingly* good God. Look what He made! Look what He's done! Look what He did in the heavens! Look what He did in creating *me*! We have an awesome, a beautiful, a good God." That's important because the objection of the unbeliever is often this: "You have a God who is not good. He allows sin, death, suffering, murders, rapes, all kinds of evil things." What kind of God do we have? We start with this: we have a good God. Creation gives you the opening to testify of that attribute of God.

*And:* tell of the attribute of God's absolute *sovereignty*. How does that come out of the truth of creation? He *made* it; and if He made it, He owns it; and if He owns it, He has the right to do with it what He wants to do with creation. Our God is a sovereign God. Acts 17 teaches that, too. Right after the apostle Paul said, "The Lord made the heavens and the earth and everything that's in them," he said: "seeing He's *Lord* of heaven and earth..." Right away, that opens up the truth that what He says, *is*. What He commands is right. We press the claims of the ownership of God. God made you, and you, and you. And if He made you, then He says, "Hear

---

Me, love Me, obey Me.” He’s sovereign. That’s what you say when you talk about creation. He’s a good God, and He’s a sovereign God. He’s no timid deity, waiting in line with all the other gods to see how many of you He can get to follow Him. He’s *the* God! He made the worlds! He says to all of you, “Worship *Me*.”

## 2. Death

Number two: You have a beautiful opportunity, though not as often, to talk about death. Talk about beginnings. Talk about endings. You’re going to die someday. What do I want to say about death? “I’m not afraid to die.” Can you say that, right now? “I am not afraid to die.” That’s what you need to witness, that’s what you need to testify. And I’m not afraid to die because there’s a heaven where God’s people go when they die; and in that heaven is a Christ Who lives and Who was dead, and so possesses me that when this body goes down to the grave, when these eyes close and I breathe my last breath, I’m going to awake in heaven with Him, because I belong to Him.

Text? What’s a text? Death, resurrection, living in heaven. Let’s use the one in I Corinthians 15. Everyone remembers that has to do with the resurrection of the body. Then you just need to look through that passage, and find there that this mortal—this flesh—can’t inherit heaven. This mortal needs to put on immortality, and this corruption needs to put on incorruption. And when it has, I’m going to be in heaven with God, sharing all of the glories with all of the saints from the beginnings of creation. I believe that. Number one—creation; number two—death.

You don’t have very many opportunities to talk about death at your age, but you’ll find them. You will. When I was in seminary working in the trailer park we lived in, I had opportunity to befriend a number of the older folks there, who were always looking for someone to help them out. One couple always asked me to come over. The woman was a believer and the man was an unbeliever and wasn’t afraid to say it. His wife took sick and died. My wife and I visited him. He asked some questions—not really good questions, foolish questions. We didn’t tell him they were foolish questions. The one I remember him asking was: “So she’s in heaven. Can she see me? Will she know what I’m doing? Will she be able to tell where I go, the things that I say?” How would you answer that? Death: opportunity, *great* opportunity! They ask you about your hope. “Can they see us?” I don’t really remember how I answered. What I would say now is, “I’m not worried about what *she* sees. I’m

concerned about Another, Who is my Judge and Whom I will face in the end when I die and give answer to about what I’ve done.” What our loved ones see is not the important question. What God sees is the important question.

I know that some of you from Redlands had opportunity just a week or two ago to speak about death. Your aunt lost a son and daughter-in-law and children who were killed when a semi with an unsecured load, going around a corner, lost the pipes, fell on the van, and killed them all. Questions! Opportunities! Be ready to speak about death. What’s the text? Where are you going to look? I Corinthians 15.

What do we speak about first? First: creation. What’s the text? Hebrews 11:3. Second? Death. The text? I Corinthians 15.

## 3. Life

In the third place, life. Probably you’ll have more opportunity to talk about this. Talk about beginnings; talk about endings (creation and death), and then talk about everything in between. Life. And what in the world is life all about? Opportunities! I tell you, there are opportunities galore. You watch the football game with your neighbor, and the ad comes on the television showing a young man with a girl in this arm and a 6-pack in this arm; and he says, “This is life!” *Opportunity!* Are you ready? Are you ready? Or the ad has a nice shiny car, a guy leaning against that car, or cruising down the curvy mountain road in the car: “This is life!” *Opportunity!* What’s life? What’s life to *you*? To me? What makes life significant? What gives life meaning? What fulfills me? What’s the only solution to the testimony of the wise man in Ecclesiastes, who says, “Emptiness of emptiness! It’s all emptiness!”—except for what? Give me a text. What fulfills you? What’s the heart of your life? Go to Psalm 73. Toward the end of the Psalm (vs. 25), the psalmist says, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.” God is my portion now.

What’s life? What’s comfort? What’s joy? What gives meaning to my existence here at the convention? Lord’s Day One. That I’m not my own, but I belong to Him. He owns me. When I see Him, have Him, I say, “This is life. This is life. God is my God.”

First? Creation. The text? Hebrews 11. Second? Death. The text? I Corinthians 15. Third? Life. The text? Psalm 73. “The *Lord* is the portion of my life.”

---

#### 4. What God Has Done For Me

But those are all really minor compared to this, what you ought to be ready to speak about: *what God has done for me*. Be ready to testify of that. I hear some say, “That’s for the Baptists. Sounds like you want me to get up here and give a testimony of what God’s done for me. That’s Arminian. That’s fundamentalist. That’s Pentecostal.” Really? Does any Protestant Reformed young person say that? “Testifying of what God has done for me is Arminian?” I want to read you a Psalter verse that we sing and know well. “Come, hear, all ye that fear the Lord, while I with grateful heart record *what God has done for me*.” “Come,” we sing Sunday after Sunday. “Listen, all ye that fear the Lord, while I with a thankful heart record what God has done for me. I cried to Him in deep distress, and He heard me, He helped me, He lifted me up and set my feet upon a rock. I want you to know what God has done for me.” That’s not Baptist. That’s not Arminian. That’s the Reformed, biblical faith of the Word of God. What has God done for you?

What will you say? Texts. Texts. I don’t want you to memorize a text right now, because all of you know

exactly what you need to say with regard to what God has done for you. Three things. *First*: who are you? What are you in yourself? A self-righteous, unfulfilled, unhappy young person. That’s what you are in yourself: a sinful, depraved, corrupt young person. Begin right there. *Second*: what has God done for me in Christ? What *hasn’t* He done for me in Christ! *Amazing* things. He gave His Son to die for me! *Third*: what am I doing to show that I’m thankful for what God has done for me?

Where do you find those three things? What I am by nature, what God has done for me in Christ, and what I’m doing to show my thanks to Him. Where does it come from? It’s the three divisions of the Heidelberg Catechism; the three parts of the Baptism Form, and the three sections of Romans. What I am, what God has done, and how I show that I’m thankful to God.

Next time: The real advantages of this fourth approach. ❖

---

*Rev. Gritters is pastor of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.*

Church Family

---

## Covenant Marriages (1) God’s Holy People Separated from the People of the Land

Aaron J. Cleveland

*For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*

**T**he above quoted verse is the word of God to His people Israel found in Deuteronomy 7:6. In the preceding verses of that chapter, Israel is instructed as to how they are to deal with the heathen nations they will encounter in the land that has been promised to them. And that word is, “Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them.” (vs.2). Further, they are commanded to make no marriages with them (vs. 3). The

sons and daughters of Israel were not to marry the sons and daughters of the heathen because God says, “they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods” (vs. 4). So sharp was this separation between God’s holy people and the heathen to be that the people of Israel were to “destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire” (vs. 5). And the reason for this; “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God.”

Another passage, I Peter 2:9, speaks with language very similar to the Old Testament passage. It reads, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy

---

nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” The Word of God to His covenant people is always, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Peter 1:16, Lev. 11:44). God who calls us is holy. We are holy because we have been sanctified by the Spirit to be members of Christ and therefore we “more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives” (Catechism, Q & A 70). We do not pursue a life of holiness in hopes of someday becoming holy by our own doing, but by the power of Christ through His Spirit we desire to live a life of holiness, consecrated to the service of God. Because holiness is that attribute of God in which He is Self-centered, so we, by the power of the Spirit of Christ, become more and more God-centered.

Throughout Scriptures, the holiness of God’s covenant people is emphasized. They are indeed a separate people. This spiritual separation is very obvious from the words they speak and the manner in which they conduct themselves. One particular area in which the people of God live spiritually separate is the area of marriage. We do good to remind ourselves regarding the principles found in God’s Word regarding our holiness and our marriages. Especially as young people who anticipate marriage in the future, these truths regarding our holiness are very important to remember before we get married.

Many times throughout the Old Testament the children of Israel had to be reminded of their calling to remain separate. Quite often this calling to separation included the command not to marry those who were the people of the land. The passage quoted at the beginning of the article was one of those instances. This passage

---

Quite often throughout the history of the church, the devil has used the means of mixed marriages to lead many away from the church and to the worship of strange gods.

---

along with Exodus 34:11-17 emphasizes that God is a jealous God. He will not allow His people to worship other gods and He will not allow His sons to be led away

by the daughters of strange gods. The commands in Exodus 34 and Deuteronomy 7 are related to the first and second commandments of the law, that we are to have no other gods before us. Quite often throughout the history of the church, the devil has used the means of mixed marriages to lead many away from the church and to the worship of strange gods. It is also a means by which he brings false doctrine into the church.

Ezra 9:1-2 records for us the sin of the people of God who had returned from the captivity and had married the sons and daughters of the people of the land. It is said of them that they had “not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands.” A number of things are worthy of our consideration from this accusation of the princes to Ezra.

First, it is said that the people of Israel (including the priests and the Levites) had not separated themselves from the “people of the lands.” This was really the beginning of the problem. It was not the case that one day, all of a sudden, they decided it would be a good idea to marry those outside of Israel. Rather, it was the case that this sin had its beginning in the breakdown of the spiritual separation from the people of the land.

Secondly, once this separation deteriorated, the people of God began to make marriages with the sons and daughters of these heathen nations. So bad was the situation that many, from the rulers to the common people, married those who were not fellow covenant members. Rather, they actively searched for marriage partners outside of the sphere of God’s covenant people.

Thirdly, it is pointed out that the “holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands.” Those who had been set apart, consecrated to the service of God had mixed themselves with and even joined themselves in marriage to the unholy, thereby profaning the holiness of the Lord by corrupting His worship and by going after strange gods. Further, the children born from these marriages were strangers to the true worship of God (read Nehemiah 13:23-31).

During the days of Nehemiah, because the sins of mixing with the wicked and intermarriage were so prevalent, it became necessary for the faithful to swear an oath of separation unto the law of God. This is recorded for us in Nehemiah 10:28-30. We read that the faithful “separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daugh-

---

ters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding” (vs. 28). That oath was not merely to acknowledge the law of God, but to “walk in God’s law and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord” (vs. 29). At the top of the list of the things they vowed to do was “not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons” (vs. 30). As covenant families they vowed to live in holiness. And as a nation of God’s covenant people they confessed that the only way to remain faithful in the service of God was through the way of spiritual separation from the world and consecration to God. They also confessed the truth that God saves His people from among the seed of believers. To allow their sons to marry the daughters of the land would mean that their sons would be led away to strange gods along with their grandchildren. This was a serious oath. Sadly, it was evidently broken by many as we know from a reading of the last verses of the book of Nehemiah.

One final Old Testament passage, Genesis 6:1-4, also brings to our attention the terrible consequences of mixed marriages. This passage records history about 120 years prior to the flood. It is said that as men began to multi-

ply upon the face of the earth, “that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (vs. 2). In other words, the covenant seed, the children of Seth, began to marry those who were the seed of the serpent, the descendants of Cain. The result was that the church almost disappeared off the face of the earth. In order that His church might be preserved, which at that time consisted of only eight souls, God destroyed the ungodly in the Flood.

Having seen from the Old Testament how God’s covenant people are holy and are not to join themselves in marriage to the “people of the land,” next time we will, D.V., establish positively who the young people of the church are to befriend and to marry. Having also seen briefly the evil consequences of mixed marriages, we will show the blessed results of covenant marriages in the Lord. ❖

---

*Aaron is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

---

Church History

# Early Church History— Ebionism

by Rev. John A. Heys

*Reprinted from the November, 1946 issue of Beacon Lights.*

When we began this series of essays on early church history, we were asked to do so from the viewpoint of the lives of the great men God raised up and used in the growth of His church. Thus far we have done so, calling your attention to Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Origen and Tertullian. However, we also felt the need of giving you a general picture of the condition of the church in the periods in which these men lived.

We have now come to the period of polemics, and once again we feel the need of making a few general remarks about the period and the events that lead up to it

before we begin to single out and treat the lives of individuals who lived in that age. This period of polemics had in common with the period of apologies, the period which we have just considered, the fact that the church is still fighting against its enemies. That is true of the church in every age. The age of polemics differed from the age in which the apologists lived in that now the true church and the true believers found themselves fighting almost solely against the enemy who was *inside* and not outside the church. The apologists, we have seen, sought to prove that Christianity has and deserves a place in this world and that the heathen idolatry and humanistic philosophy of man is to be condemned. The church in the age of polemics—the word polemic, by the way, means argument or controversy—strove to defend the

---

truth over against the false doctrines that were being taught *in* the church. It was a period of arguments and controversies over points of doctrine. In it there was a tremendous step made in the development of doctrine.

The devil being cunning and crafty and having found by experience that persecution — and the church had undergone some extremely violent persecutions before the age of polemics—did not hinder Christianity but rather occasioned its spread sought now to undermine the church from within. There was a rapid rise and development of false doctrines under his guidance. The existing false doctrines, that is, the false doctrines that were present when Christ was here upon earth and when His Spirit was poured out upon His church, began to assume new forms that were more suitable and deceiving in that they professed to believe in Christ.

One of the chiefest of these new forms of an old false doctrine was that of Ebionism. It was simply a whitewashed Judaism. Remember what we said in a previous installment that the two chief opponents of Christianity in the early days of the New Testament Church were Judaism which was the doctrine of the unbelieving Jews who wanted to hold on to all the ritual and shadows of the Old Testament and rejected Christ completely even though He was of Jewish descent and Paganism which was the old idolatry, mythology and philosophy of the heathen nations outside of the nation of Israel. Well, in the second century this Judaism put on a new cloak but remained unchanged in its heart. It began to profess faith in Christ, that is, in as far as it felt the necessity of doing so in order to deceive those who professed to be Christians, and at the same time by implication it denied Him completely. The devil is still at his old trick which was first tried in Paradise and was so successful in deceiving man.

The main tenets of this Ebionism were the following four points for which information I am indebted to Prof. G.M. Ophoff and his church history notes: (1) Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of David, but a mere man like Moses and David. (2) Circumcision and observation of the whole law of Moses are necessary to salvation. (3) Paul is an apostate and a heretic, and all his epistles must be put under a ban. (4) Christ is soon to return and will introduce the glorious 1000 year reign of the Messiah with Jerusalem as its seat.

Notice that here in the second century the false doctrines of pre-millennialism, arminianism, and modernism were being taught. There is nothing new about these doctrines. Modernism today denies Christ's divinity and

preaches Him as an excellent teacher and a man who set us a wonderful example of love and obedience. But there is nothing modern about Modernism. Ebionism taught this same heresy centuries ago. The point we wish to make here, however, is that here in the second century

---

Christians who have been  
fighting the enemy outside  
the fold now found  
themselves fighting against  
those within the fold.

---

false doctrines are beginning to creep into the church that calls itself Christian. And Christians who have been fighting the enemy outside the fold now found themselves fighting against those within the fold. The church began to argue, to discuss and to defend the truth. A period of controversy or polemics was about ready to begin. ❖

---

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

## HELP WANTED

*Would you like to get involved in the publication of Beacon Lights? We are looking for some reliable help with mailing, proof reading, subscription managing, and good ideas. You will not be required to do any writing but you are always welcomed to make a writing contribution. No experience is necessary. We meet once a month for about an hour for the regular Beacon Lights meeting. If you have any questions please call either Beth De Vries (616) 735-9001 or Mike Feenstra (616) 531-2349. Thanks for your prayerful consideration.*

Beacon Lights Staff

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

*... let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

## A Time of War Antithesis (2)

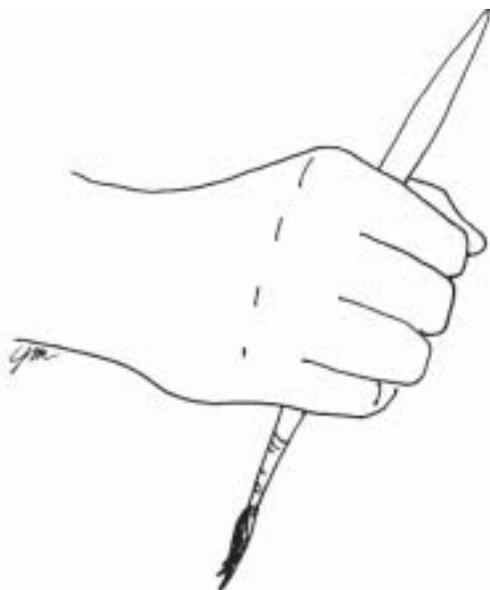
"Antitha—. Antithi—. Antath—." I just couldn't get the word out. It felt like my mouth was full of marbles.

"Antithesis," Father helped. "Antithesis means that we are opposed to the world of sin and the devil. We must fight and strive to live holy, godly lives. 'The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.' Paul said that. Even he, an apostle, had to battle within himself to fight sin."

I nodded. It was a battle all right.

"Hey," Sally interrupted in her little girl voice, "what's this?" She held up my new paint brush. I had just set it down, but was going to use it to paint a car model I was making.

"That's mine!" I snapped and grabbed it from her. But as I grabbed it, the pointed handle scratched her arm. She began to cry. And Father had seen the whole thing happen. I didn't dare look at him.



"I-I'm sorry, Sally," I said. I patted her head. "I don't think the scratch is *too* bad."

She wiped her eyes. "It's okay," she said with a sniff. "It's getting better already."

There was a slight pause and Father said grimly, "It's a battle."

I nodded again. It surely was!

"And if we can hardly keep from sins that tempt us every day," he added, looking at both Sally and me, "how can we be fit and ready soldiers to defend the Gospel?"

I looked at him with some alarm. It didn't look very hopeful for me! I could hardly keep from fighting with Sally for even a few minutes, besides all kinds of other sins I constantly committed. How would I ever be able to defend the truth against the lie? Yet I wanted to! And I wanted to be good, too. What a battle!

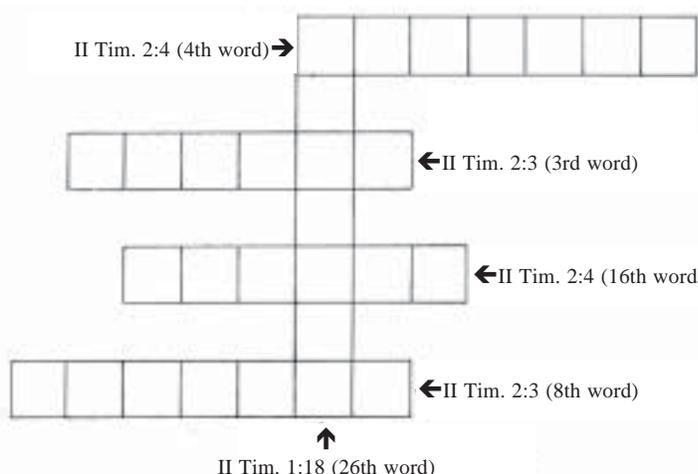
"It's very easy for me to sin, too," Father said to us both. "All soldiers, including myself, need to have a weapon and armor to be able to fight." He put his hand on my shoulder. "We better see what that is..." ❖

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

### Puzzle

The Holy Spirit caused Paul to write to Timothy as if he were a real soldier. And indeed he was—a spiritual soldier of Jesus Christ. Those letters to Timothy are for us, too.

Look up the following Bible verses. Count each word in each verse to find the correct word to put in the puzzle:



# BEACON LIGHTS

P.O. BOX 375  
Jenison, MI 49428

Periodical  
Postage  
paid at  
Jenison, MI  
(UPSS046-840)

## Church News

### BAPTISMS

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

**The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:**

Ashley Jayne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Cnossen—  
Byron Center, MI  
Sarah Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. & Mrs. Kuiper—Byron  
Center, MI  
Casey Ryan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ken Vink—Doon, IA  
Ashley Nicole, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David VanEgdom—  
Doon, IA  
Jay Allen, son of Rev. & Mrs. Smit—Doon, IA  
Tory Lynnae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Mowery—  
Holland, MI  
Joshua Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Klamer—Hope, MI  
Isaac Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Jessup—Hope, MI  
Audrey Nicole, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Linker—  
Lacombe, Canada  
Nicole Jolene, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David Buiters—  
Randolph, WI  
Brija Reed, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Todd DeMeester—  
Southeast, MI  
Kyle Jon, son of Mr. & Mrs. Robb Lubbers—Southeast, MI  
Braeden Christian, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Potter—  
Southeast, MI  
Tyler Seth, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ben Cammenga—Southwest,  
MI  
Matthew William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mark DeKraker—  
Southwest, MI  
Mitchell Darin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Huisken—South-  
west, MI  
Rachel Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Kamps—  
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:**

John DeVries—Grandville, MI  
Jordan Kamps—Grandville, MI  
Dawn Kuiper—Grandville, MI  
Amanda Ondersma—Grandville, MI  
Clinton VanderKolk—Grandville, MI  
Rebecca Pols—Holland, MI  
Dawn Wassink—Holland, MI  
Brian Ensink—Hudsonville, MI  
Nikki Schipper—Hudsonville, MI  
Kelli Engelsma—Hudsonville, MI

### MARRIAGES

*“...and they twain shall be one flesh.”*  
*Matthew 19:5*

**United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:**

Mr. Scott Ensink and Miss Kelly Christians—Georgetown,  
MI