
Beacon

August/September
2002

Volume LXI
Number 8

Lights

*"Study to shew thyself
approved unto God, a
workman that needeth
not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the
word of truth."*

11 Timothy 2:15

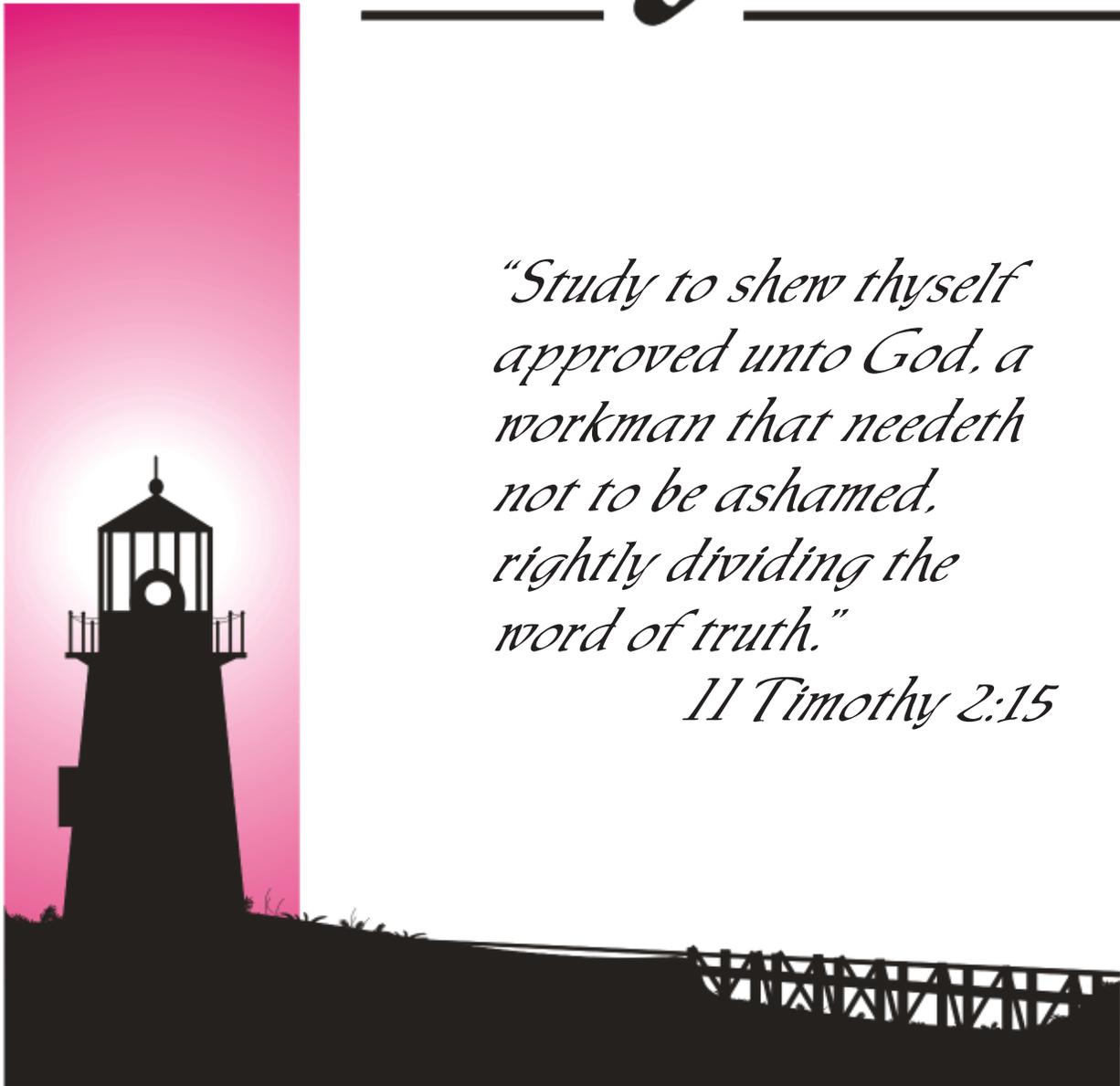


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Beacon Lights is published monthly by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies. Subscription price is \$10.00. Please send all correspondence, address changes, subscriptions, and article submissions to the business office.

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A Little Isn't So Bad? (2)



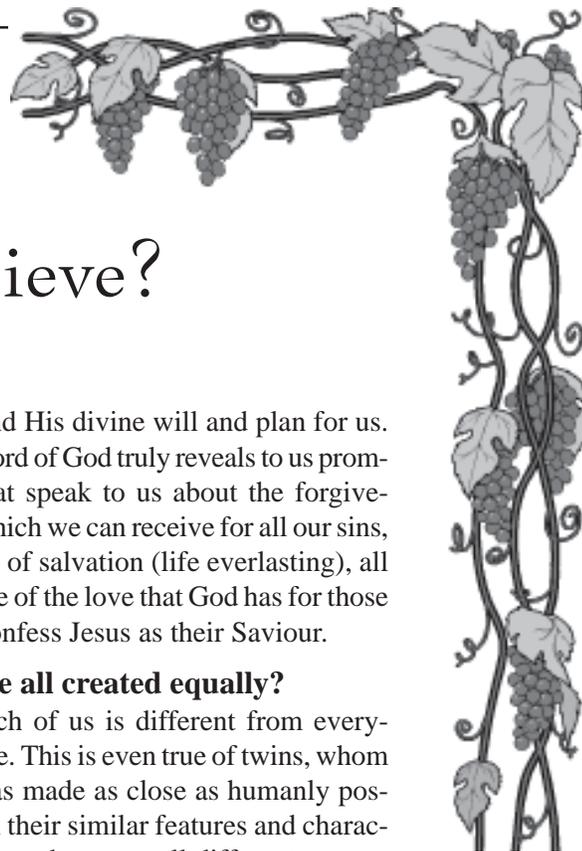
by Randy Valburg

Last time we considered the serious spiritual problems that result when one acts on the thinking “A little isn’t so bad.” Chief among these is a compromising attitude that leads one to commit seemingly minor sins without repentance. However, these “minor” sins are the “little foxes that spoil the vines” (cf. Song of Solomon 2:15). That is, although they may appear as innocent as cute, fluffy little foxes, they will have a spiritually destructive influence. For example, listening to “Christian” Rock, Pop Rock, or worse can destroy one’s love and appreciation for singing the Psalms. Occasionally watching movies or television with actors continuously impersonating the sins of others will cloud one’s spiritual discernment. Consider what the Apostle said: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (I John 2:15). This means that if we go about loving what the world loves, then we will be consumed by the world and not experience the love of our heavenly Father.

What about the problem of so-called questionable activities such as reading a typical romance novel or book about the young wizard, Harry Potter? Well, consider the following real world situation. Recently, when working in a factory, I read *The Pursuit of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges at break times. “What are you reading?” someone asked. “Why are you reading that?” by someone else. And, “That’s an interesting title. What is meant by pursuing holiness?” It is not hard to imagine what disturbing questions and comments would have come from people had I been reading a book about the magic-wielding, power-seeking, rule-breaking, and at times deceitful and revengeful Harry Potter. “Hey, did you see the movie?!” and “I wasn’t much of a reader before Harry Potter books, but I am now.” In the first scenario, it was evident that there was something different about me and the book I was reading from the secular setting. In the latter, there was no obvious distinction.

Now, someone will argue that reading Harry Potter or typical romance novels for pleasure is not outright disobedience to God and His Word. We realize, however, that it can lead to the destruction of watchfulness. Is spending one’s time in this way truly heeding the biblical command concerning worldly things to “Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away?” (Prov. 4:15) By not doing this, one is not obeying Christ’s command to “watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation” (Matt. 26:41). Then, overconfidence about not falling in a certain area will occur. One’s mind will gradually be deceived until disobedience happens. So, indulging in book after book of the sort mentioned above will eventually eliminate one’s watchfulness and hinder prayers, especially the petition “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” This would please Satan whose goal is to once again make us slaves to sin.

Our lives must be characterized by the Spirit’s command: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2). So, by His grace, we prove what God’s perfect will is through holiness in every area of our lives. Living holy consistently allows us to be effective servants of God (2 Tim. 2:21). ❖



What Do You Believe?

by Ishu Mahtani

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

What is God’s ultimate purpose for our lives?

Do you know what is God’s purpose for your life? I believe each one of us has some view of life which we have come to accept and live by. Man’s ultimate purpose for living is to be found in enjoying pleasure and avoiding pain. There are philosophies and teachings in this world that often influences our lifestyle and our thinking. Humanism, Secularism, Pragmatism, Existentialism and Hedonism are but to name a few types of philosophies that have taken the center stage in this fast changing world. These are schools of thought which are but man-centered. Man-centered proposals in life look to man for answers. But when we face particular trials, struggles, and temptations in our lives, man-centered answers will not be able to help us at all. On the contrary, during times of severe testings in life, when we realize how man cannot really help us, we may begin feeling a dire sense of hopelessness.

Have you been searching for answers to such soul-searching questions about the meaning of life? My intention in this article is, in fact, to try to share with you something which I feel is very important for all of us. You see, God has a plan, and if we are able to submit and live our lives humbly, according to His plan, we will not only be able to come to a better understanding of what life is truly about, but experience a life that will be more meaningful and more fruitful in many ways to our souls.

In order to do this, we will first need to try to understand something more about God. And what better place to learn about this than by turning our attention to the Word of God? Do you know what the word of God is? Have you read a Bible? When we read the Bible, we can truly hear what God has to say to us. I don’t mean literally; I speak in the spiritual sense. If and when we are able to see with spiritual eyes what God has to say to us through his Word, our hearts will be stirred. Then and then only will we be able know a little more about our

God and His divine will and plan for us. The Word of God truly reveals to us promises that speak to us about the forgiveness which we can receive for all our sins, the gift of salvation (life everlasting), all because of the love that God has for those who confess Jesus as their Saviour.

Are we all created equally?

Each of us is different from everyone else. This is even true of twins, whom God has made as close as humanly possible in their similar features and characters. Though we are all different, we are yet equal in one sense: in our very nature we are all sinners. We do not need to commit any act of sin before we become sinners. Man was in the beginning created good. But man fell into sin by his own act of disobedience to God, so that his nature became corrupt and wicked.

What is sin? Sin is simply the breaking of the commandments of God. As long as we have the desire to remain in sin, and as long as we are not redeemed from our sin, God has no other plan for us except that of eternal punishment in hell. Yet God himself has provided a way out from the condemnation of sin, and has revealed that way in the Bible. We really need to have a true understanding of the Word of God to understand how we can be saved from this bondage of sin. How CAN we stand clean and purified before the sight of God?

Do all religions teach us the truth about God?

Every religion in the world will probably have something say about God. Most teach that there is a god and that all things come under his rule. However, there other schools of thought that dispute such a belief, and will in fact refuse to acknowledge that there is any “creator.”

Many religions have wise sayings that seem to direct our attention to God, but they all never really teach us the truth. There are many false teachings which lead us away from God. “We have only one God,” they say. But the idols they worship reveal to us that they in fact

have many “idol” gods to which they continue to bow.

Because of our disbelief, God continues to look down from heaven. God spoke these words: “Where is now their God? ... Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.” Can the true people of God worship Him in such an idolatrous and sinful manner? Absolutely not!

What happens to us when we die? Is there any hope for the wicked and the sinful?

“The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Taken from Psalm 14:2,3)

If man were to depend on his own ways or his own works, there would surely be no hope for him, for God has revealed in His Word that no amount of “charitable” work, no “visits” to any holy shrines, nor “confessions” to any priest, will save you from the judgment of God.

Man teaches us that God loves us and has a desire to save us all from eternal death. Others speak about how good will triumph over evil, and how if we desire good then we will surely become victorious over the powers of evil. Man also vainly hopes to be able to create his own heaven, preparing material things that he thinks he can bring along with him to his resting place.

But those who refuse to acknowledge God and turn from their vanities and confess Jesus Christ as their only hope will face eternal death.

For those who truly believe that He is, God has given to them the blessed hope of heaven. In Deuteronomy 30:20 this is made clear; “That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

So is there hope for you?

No, if Satan remains in control of your life. As long as you are under the bondage of sin, you allow the devil to continue using you for his own selfish, sinful and evil devices. If this is the case, then there is no hope for you. Instead, you will find yourself falling under the wrath of

God. God is revealed to us in the Bible as a God who will manifest His wrath upon those who worship any god other than Jehovah, the true God. God does not wish to see you worshipping mammon. The only way of salvation, by the power of God’s grace, is to break away from the chains with which the devil has bound you with and run to your Saviour, Jesus Christ. Sometimes you may be motivated to do that only when you are faced with some form of crisis in your life. But then it may be too late.

But, yes, by God’s grace, there is hope for you. If you are someone whose conscience constantly speaks to you and reminds you daily of how sinful, hopeless and unhappy you are, if you have found that the things of this world do not now mean anything to you, God has perhaps opened a door for a way out for you. God has sent us His Son Jesus for that very purpose. Humble yourself therefore today, and seek God. Many others, myself included, have walked this path you may now desire to walk, and have truly, truly been blessed. Believe me!

In Ephesians 2:1 we are called and drawn to God with these blessed words, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” If you feel that you truly have this desire today, then go before His throne today and confess Jesus as your Saviour. If God, by his grace, has a plan to save you, He will. You will never know His ultimate purpose for you until you seek Him.

In the famous words of John 3:16 we read, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” This clearly reveals to us that Christ is the Son of God. Christ was born, suffered for our sins, and died on the Cross for a purpose. That purpose was to pay the price for all the sins of all of His people. Christ has earned salvation for the people of God for whom He came to die. He has done it all for us. If you have the desire and the will and truly believe, you will be saved. “For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Believe and be saved!

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). ❖

Ishu is a member of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore.

The Fourth Man

A Story from the Time of the Afscheiding

by P. S. Kuiper
translated by Rev. Cornelius Hanko

Chapter 21 Following Events

The morning worship service of a group of Seccessionists had been interrupted by the authorities, but not stopped. As the worshippers paused before the second service, the house in which they were meeting was raided by the police. Some were badly mishandled and bloodied, but a number escaped through a back door that led to the barn. Rev. Buddingh was returned to his home.

It was noon of the following day. A boy's head peeped up above the hedge that separated the farm of Jan Hartog from Jacob Bollebakker of Looseind.

"Do you see him coming?" a voice whispered. "No, I don't see anything," came the answer. A disappointed mumbling arose from the group of boys that sat behind the hedge.

"Be patient!" said Toon in such a forceful manner that you could hear that he was a son of "Father Jacob."¹ The object of their waiting was Maarten Boelhouwer.²

The whole day they had teased and pestered him in as far as that was possible under the stern eye of instructor De Liefde. Just before the tower clock had struck four, however, it had gotten out of hand. When Maarten had walked to the chair of the instructor to show him his slate, Toon had slyly pricked him in his leg with a pin. Thereupon Maarten had turned about and had given his silent enemy a ringing slap in the face. Instructor De Liefde had turned pale and, without saying a word, had pushed Maarten into the hall. When school was finished at four o'clock Maarten had to stay.

The deeply offended Toon had rounded up the boys in the schoolyard. "We do not allow ourselves to be bullied by such a filthy fanatic! After a while we will beat him up. Are you game?"

Not all the boys had hopped to it. Cornelis Van Ravenswaay wanted no part of it and Dokky had spit at the feet of the despised Toon. Others had silently withdrawn. To his satisfaction Toon still managed to gather a group of boys behind him.

Now they had already sat for half an hour waiting behind Toon. It had rained that morning and the shrubbery leaves were dripping with water. "My shoes are getting dirty here," mumbled Lodewijk Peet, the son of the weavers' boss, who sat next to Toon. Because he also wore shoes during the week he was called "the young lord."³ Besides, he took daily lessons from instructor De Liefde in French, and often showed off by using a French word whether it fit or not. Many of the boys were bitterly offended by that. But since Lodewijk always was supplied with plenty of spending money, he was a devoted friend of Toon.

"Soon we'll beat him up!" growled the vengeful boy. "They should do that with all that secessionist rubbish. Last night my father fired that Thijs Van Vliet. Aha, now he can nicely starve!" Toon could not imagine a worse death.

No one paid attention to what he said. Most of them were becoming restless. Deep in their hearts they had no grudge against Maarten. They were merely stirred up by the others.

"Maybe he went home another way," one of them suggested. "Impossible," spoke Lodewijk pompously. "There he comes!" shouted Toon, suddenly aroused. His eyes shone viciously! "Be ready, boys!"

Maarten was approaching on the opposite side of the Looseind, unaware of any danger. Lonely and miserable he trudged along. Instructor De Liefde had been reasonable in his treatment and he had not been beat with a rod or stick. But the old instructor had not understood the depth of his hurt. It was exactly that seemingly kind misunderstanding that made the boy feel so desperate. Discouraged, he crossed over the curved Elleboog street.

At that moment his assailants jumped up and leaped upon him. "Now once for all we'll beat you up, you hypocritical undertaker's helper!" screamed Toon, while Lodewijk displayed his wisdom, "La bourse ou le vie! (Your money or your life!)"

As soon as Maarten recognized Toon he realized what was up. Courageously he clamped his teeth, took off both of his wooden shoes and, fully determined, awaited his enemy. The first attacker received such a powerful blow to his head that he fell away whining. For a moment the cowardly troop withdrew. Maarten took advantage of that by jumping between them. He swung to the right and to the left with his wooden shoes against the heads of his enemies, who wildly and angrily rushed upon him.

For safety's sake Lodewijk kept to the rear, but at an unguarded moment the 'young lord' saw his opportunity to jump unexpectedly on Maarten's back. Soon Maarten lost his balance and fell to the ground, to the wild delight of his attackers, who mercilessly stomped him, kicked and spit on him. Helplessly the boy pressed his lips together. He uttered no sound, although the tears burned behind his eyes. A few of the neighbors had come out, but no one put out a hand to help the victim.

Around the bend of the Elleboog street appeared a man who was not accustomed to seeing injustice without doing something about it: Manus Rebel. As soon as the old hussar saw the tumult he stood stock still. Exactly what was happening he did not know. What he did know was that his young friend was in trouble and needed help.

For that he was always well prepared. Before the gang realized what was happening he dragged Lodewijk by his attractive hair and threw him full length into the puddle of water. Groaning, Lodewijk scrambled up and promptly chose to run off. At this moment his clothing did not look like those of a young lord. That applied also to the language that he spit out, there was not a French word in it.

The others stood together frozen to the spot. Manus Rebel stepped toward them like a butcher approaching pigs. The gang flew apart like a whirlwind. Only Toon Bollebakker could not get away fast enough because he was so fat. The hussar gripped him by the pants and gave him a good licking, which would last him until the summer vacation. Wailing loudly he went off to his father's farm.

Fully satisfied, Manus Rebel wiped the dust from his clothing and then turned to the spot where Maarten had laid. But the boy had long before stumbled along the farm of the brothers Van Wulfen to his own home. His deliverer was about to follow him when a strong hand was laid on his shoulder. He looked up and saw the face of Constable Peter De Nooij, adorned with a bandage.

"Manus Rebel, I arrest you for mistreatment of children!"

The old sergeant calmly took a step backward and looked at the tall policeman as if he were a rebellious recruit. "A thousand bombs and grenades, there we have our field marshal in battle against mistreatment! Only your opinion is all wrong."

De Nooij stood for a moment dumbfounded. Then he screamed, hoarse with rage: "Get going! On to the courthouse, you old skeleton!"

"Swish"—a brown stream of tobacco brushed past his head, so that with a husky cry he jumped aside. "Also insulting the authorities!" His prisoner looked at him with scorn.

"Worthy sir, I was submissive to authority when you still crawled in your diapers. I accompany you obediently, but you need not scold an old man like me."

Then he stepped with measured tread in the direction of the Kerkbrink, while the constable followed him, chaffing with rage. The duo drew a lot of attention, to the annoyance of De Nooij, who was glad when they climbed the steps of the courthouse.

Mayor Andriessen looked up in surprise when both men entered. Van Huizen, who was about to leave the mayor's chamber with a stack of papers, out of curiosity remained standing to listen.

De Nooij swiftly saluted. "Your honor, I just arrested one of the ringleaders of yesterday. Now he was engaged in mistreating two school boys, Lodewijk Peet and Toon Bollebakker."

"Swish"—now he had another shot of juice to deal with, which finally landed in the ashtray of the mayor.

“Say, you shameless cur!” bellowed the mayor, “You are not in the stables of the cavalry.”

“Alas, not,” answered Manus Rebel, “for there you find more decency than here.” Thereupon he gave in his own pithy manner an account of what had happened, while the quill pen of the mayor screeched over the paper on which the mayor was writing. “Your police can better check on those boys, rather than condemning an old servant without a hearing,” Rebel concluded.

“I am capable of giving my orders, Manus Rebel. You always have been a strange chap, but now it has gone too far,” said the mayor. “I do notice with what kind of people you are keeping company. Don’t forget you are known by the company you keep.”

These last words made a noteworthy impression upon the old watchman. His unruly attitude disappeared. He stood upright with uplifted head before his examiner.

“Mayor, in 1812, when you were still working in the small tobacco shop on Kerkstraat, I had to go with Napoleon to Russia. There I experienced the burning of Moscow and the horrible retreat over the Berezina. Three years later I fought with our crown prince at Quatre-Bras and Waterloo. In my old age as a volunteer I also went through the Ten Day Campaign!

“In my life I have seen many evidences of bravery and companionship, but they are nothing compared to the courage and believing trust of these Secessionists. I have also seen much cowardice and villainy, but never such a beastly pack of cowards as yesterday noon in our town.

“At Waterloo I risked my life for the freedom of our fatherland, but now I ask myself what is left of that freedom? Indeed, one is judged according to the company he keeps. Well now, mayor, in the little time that I have left I want to belong to the Secessionists. That will be my honor!”

It was deathly quiet in the mayor’s chamber. There was a strange look of amazement in the eyes of the mayor; in those of Van Huizen a shy respect. Manus Rebel turned himself about on his heels and marched with stiff legs to the door. There stood De Nooij, but he never made a move.

“You go and make your rounds,” the mayor ordered weakly after the door was closed. Behind the back of his policeman he tore up the report.



That evening Koen Splint looked up his friend Maarten. He had also received his share that day: in the

weaver’s shop his companions had poured beer over him to force him to sing a psalm. Finally his boss had freed him and cursed his attackers. Not because they harmed Koen, but because they were not working.

The Secessionists suffered severely at the hands of these terrorists. Men servants and maid servants were fired, storekeepers lost their customers, children could not run freely along the streets. That day Koen even went to the weaver’s shop with a knife in his pocket. Day and night his father had a spade at the door to protect his home.

Maarten was brought to school every day by his father. In the evening his father loosened Bas’s chain, so that the dog could go freely about the farm and keep undesirable persons at a distance.

On Saturday of that sad week Ko Boelhouwer went to check on his bee area, for the buckwheat was now in full bloom. Just then a sheep herder with his sheep passed over the moor. The man, who was a member of the Secession congregation, told what had happened to Karssemeijer and Reijmerink.

Mayor Andriesson had signed a warrant that same Sunday evening. It stated that Karssemeijer had undermined authority and Reijmerink had hit the mayor.

That week both men were hauled out of their houses and were brought by three village policemen and a process server to a prison in Loenen. There they had to spend a night in a cell. Fortunately a woman from that town had brought them some food.

The next day they were sent on to Amsterdam and again locked up in a prison. They sat in a cell from eight o’clock in the morning until five in the afternoon without anything to eat or drink. After a short hearing they went to a “night quarters,” a stinking coop full of vermin. They received only a straw sack and a vessel of dirty water, but still no food.

But even as Paul and Silas, they spent the night praying and singing. The following day the prisoners might receive two friends from the capitol, who had also taken along some food. After eating, they had to return to their cell, but they still felt comforted.

At noon they were given their freedom, but put on probation.

The sad tale of the sheep herder made a deep impression. “The Lord saw it and will reward accordingly,” the old man said in a trembling voice.

Beginning the next Sunday the Secessionists met at night or in the early morning.

A short time later the foremost “evil-doers” of the notorious Sunday in June were sentenced before the court of Justice. A fine of 500 guilders was laid upon them.⁴

A few hours later terrible news went from house to house: Gerbert Hogenbirk, a Secessionist from the beginning, upon hearing of the fine he had to pay, had sagged to the floor after the sentence and died in the court.

For a little while this did make an impression on the town. For a few days Maarten could go to school undisturbed, and for a while Koen was left in peace at the weaver’s shop. ❖

¹ We met him before. He was an overly pious member of the local church who, with a sense of his own importance, admonished others how they were to live.

² Maarten was of a family of Secessionists and had been at the worship services which were stopped by the police.

³ Most of the children were from families who could afford shoes for their children for Sunday, but the rest of the week, except in winter, they went barefoot.

⁴ These “evil-doers” were, of course, the Secessionists.

Church Family

Deceit

by Aaron J. Cleveland

“**D**eceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil.” The first half of Proverbs 12:20 serves as a good starting point for a discussion of the subject of “deceit.” When we read the dictionary definition of the verb “deceive,” we find that it means: 1) To cause (a person) to believe what is not true; mislead. 2) To catch by guile; ensnare. The American Heritage Dictionary Second College Edition, 1982, also gives a very detailed listing of the various synonyms of the word “deceive” along with their definitions. This helps us to get a better sense of the meaning of the word as well as the various forms of deception. The synonyms are:

Synonyms: *deceive, betray, mislead, beguile, delude, dupe, hoodwink, bamboozle, outwit, double-cross.*

These verbs mean to victimize persons, for the most part by underhanded means. *Deceive* involves falsehood or the deliberate concealment or misrepresentation of truth with intent to lead another into error or to disadvantage. *Betray* implies faithlessness or treachery that brings another to grave disadvantage or into danger. *Mislead* means to lead into error and does not invariably imply intent to harm. *Beguile* suggests deceiving or misleading by means of allurements. *Delude* refers to deceiving or misleading to the point of rendering a person unable to detect false-

hood or make sound judgment. *Dupe* means to delude by playing upon another’s susceptibilities or naiveté. *Hoodwink* refers to deluding by trickery such as mental blinding or dazzling. *Bamboozle* less formally means to delude by trickery such as hoaxing, befuddling, or artful persuasion. *Outwit* means to frustrate another person by ingenuity and cunning and is less forceful in its suggestion of bad faith. *Double-cross*, a slang term, implies betrayal of a confidence or the willful breaking of a pledge (page 371).

The dictionary definition of this word is not very flattering; neither is the meaning of this word as we find it in God’s Word. When we take a Strong’s Concordance and locate the word *deceit* and its variations such as *deceitful, deceitfully, and deceitfulness*, and seek to know the meanings of these words in the original Hebrew and Greek, we find that the unflattering definition grows. Words such as *fraud, craft, false, feigned, guile, treachery, delusion, and sham* appear. It is very clear from the very beginning of the discussion that the practice of deceit is a great evil.

It would be a mistake to focus, in this article, mainly on the deceit which surrounds us in the world and to limit our discussion to that deceit which comes upon us from outside of us. We are completely surrounded by

lies. So-called scientists spread their lies about the origins of man and the universe. Politicians and leaders lie about their accomplishments and intents. Companies lie about the capabilities of the products they sell. School teachers and college professors promote false world and life views. Ministers and theologians spread every lie possible about God and His Word. However, we will not get very far in our understanding of deceit until we go to the source of it.

Our Heidelberg Catechism, in Q & A 112, properly identifies “lies and deceit” as the “proper works of the devil.” This connection is found in John 8:44. This verse records a part of Jesus’ response to unbelieving Jews who hated the truth. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” Those who hate the truth and speak lies are the spiritual children of the devil.

Let us not forget that we, by nature, are the spiritual offspring of the devil. Our Catechism asks the question in Lord’s Day 3, Question 8, “Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good and inclined to all wickedness?” The answer, “Indeed we are; except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.” We must recognize that deceit is a very real power that works within our hearts. According to our old man of sin, we delight in lies. Because of our sinful nature, we are capable of treasuring incredible lies and all sorts of wicked thoughts. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). The heart is deceitful and wicked to the point that it can’t even be known by man. Let us not underestimate the sinfulness of our own heart and our sinful willingness to believe lies. Deceit is a power which very really dwells within our hearts.

We, as children of our Heavenly Father, have been delivered from the spiritual dominion of the father of lies. The devil no longer exercises spiritual dominion over us as he does over the seed of the serpent. We have been purchased by the blood of Christ and are the possession of our Lord. He renews us by His Spirit so that we now delight in the truth according to the new man. In the inner man we hate every lie. However, as long as we remain on this earth and possess our evil natures, we must be warned against deceit and all those who would deceive us. The lies of the devil are many and his minions are busy at work in this world. The devil knows

that he has an ally in our evil flesh. Let us understand how deceit works within us and how the devil and the world would draw us away by appealing to our sinful flesh.

In order to understand how deceit operates within us, we must know that sin itself is deceitful. Read Hebrews 3:13. We must know that sin is sin. We must know, as some have put it, the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Sin is committed against God, and His justice requires its severe punishment. Sin always has consequences. Impenitent sinners suffer the consequences of their sins in this life and forever in hell. The end result of sin is everlasting death.

It is precisely these truths that our sinful hearts would have us not believe. Sin presents itself as the opposite of what it actually is. On this topic Matthew Henry gives a good explanation as he comments on Hebrews 3:13. He writes,

There is a great deal of deceitfulness in sin; it appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing. The deceitfulness of sin is of a hardening nature to the soul; one sin allowed prepares for another; every act of sin confirms the habit; sinning against conscience is the way to sear the conscience; and therefore it should be the great concern of everyone to exhort himself and others to beware of sin.

John Calvin, in his comments on this passage explains in part how Satan “creeps” into our hearts and gradually, by his deceits, leads us into open sin. In part he writes, “And this is a way of speaking that ought to be especially observed; for we fall not immediately by the first assault into this madness of striving against God; but Satan by degrees accosts us artfully by indirect means, until he holds us ensnared in his delusions. Then being blinded, we break forth into open rebellion.”

...Satan by degrees accosts us artfully by indirect means, until he holds us ensnared in his delusions. Then being blinded, we break forth into open rebellion.

Satan is a master deceiver who patiently leads us small step by small step until we have walked all the way down the path that leads to open sin. An example of this gradual process will help us better understand.

Perhaps we are a student at one of our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. Because of an unkind word we spoke or because we misbehaved in class, it became necessary for the teacher to discipline us in love. After we walk out of the presence of the teacher, several evil thoughts about this teacher's character begin to cross our mind. (He's unreasonable. He's a lousy teacher anyway.) Instead of crucifying the evil thoughts and submitting to his admonition, we cherish the evil thoughts about him and allow them to float around in our mind. Over time these evil thoughts grow and become more evil and outrageous. We still do not crucify these thoughts, but allow them to fester. Later in the day, we are talking to a fellow student and our hateful thoughts of this teacher slip innocently enough out of our mouth. We find that we delight to put his name in the mud. Still, we refuse to kill these evil thoughts. Maybe

the next day we find ourselves recounting the story again, this time adding a few more little lies, to ruin the good name of the teacher even more. And before we are aware, we are deceived to the point that we think that we are doing the whole student body and perhaps God a favor by smearing the good name of the teacher in the presence of many others. By degrees we are led farther down the path of sin. What began as a "small" evil thought we entertained, ends in openly speaking evil of a brother in Christ. This is just one example of how easily we can become deceived.

We will continue, Lord willing, in our next article to further examine how deceit works within us. We will notice how the power of deception is related to our love of the truth of God's Word. We will look at a few characteristics of deceivers. Finally, we will see how the child of God is protected from deceit by a living knowledge of true doctrine as it is distinctively confessed. ❖

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Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

When I In Awesome Wonder... The Golden Coast Of Michigan Derelict

by Deane Wassink

Have you ever seen the clumps of lilacs growing in the middle of what appears to be a "natural" area of plants? What about the lonely clumps of daffodils or roses bushes that seem to be out of place? Odds are, you will find the remnants of a house or barn nearby if you have the opportunity to look. The shoreline has many of these abandoned houses, these derelicts of past owners who made the property their home. At one time the shoreline property was farmland, but not very desirable. In fact, a member of the older generation

once told me that his family always felt sorry for the farmers that lived in the "sand" near the shore. Their crops would burn up or be stunted while the farms with the heavy soils further inland would flourish.

Imagine that! What is now prime real estate was once considered worthless land. Of course, it now sprouts bathing suits and tennis courts instead of grain for livestock.

Often the story would go like this. The "pioneer" would find some land recently cleared by the logging

industry in the nineteenth century. They would then plant this virgin soil with crops of wheat, hay, or corn. For a time the soil would support a living until the thin topsoil would be played out. The farmer would be forced to move his family off the “worthless” land to find a decent farm. The soil, opened to the elements by the plow, would begin to dry out and blow turning this already poor soil into ridges of moving sand. Eventually, the forest would reclaim the land with the help of the people who were in charge of controlling the erosion. Sometimes it was the workers of the WPA during the “Great Depression” of the 1930s who planted dune grass and evergreens to stop the soil loss.

The remnants of the old farmhouses now lie derelict along the lakeshore. Often, the only indications that a family once lived there are the telltale plants that I mentioned at the beginning. Other times you can see the old foundations of the house or outbuildings, including the barn. At most, that foundation is now just a few large boulders that served as cornerstones. Often you can find antique treasures like old bottles, barbed wire and dishes in gullies near the houses where they dumped the “garbage.” Of course, one could argue about the use of the word “treasures.” Oftentimes, the wind blown sand just buried the remains of the old place so that it could no longer be found.

It is a fascinating exercise of the imagination to stand in the middle of one of the derelicts and let your mind's eye try to recall what it must have been like back when someone lived there. No motor driven machinery, only animals, tools and bare hands. Probably a mixture of animals including a couple of horses, cows, hogs and chickens. The clothes would have been handmade. The construction material was wood framing with wood siding and wood shingles on the roof. Work would have been backbreaking. Life would have been very difficult with very little medical care to protect from disease and accident. I am sure many little graves were dug into the sand hills. Then, despairing, the families would be forced to leave after a time by the growing infertility of the land. They took what they could carry and moved on.

Now I am standing where they took a last look at what they had called home. I am thankful for the beauty of the creation around me. I am also touched with a sadness of broken dreams and suffering that often accompanied the move.

Life is like that, even now. We can pour our hearts into work or possessions, into making a home. But, in the end, we have to leave it. Difficulties arise in our lives.

Trials come. One day we will have to leave it all in death. The scene is different than the one for the pioneers, but the difficulties are the same. The houses today are more durable than the old houses; yet, they too will rot into the ground or be covered by sand. The only thing left of all our treasures will be a few things that survive in the dump. The things of this earth have no lasting value—not for the pioneers nor for us today.

I am reminded of a song sung for generations by my Dutch forefathers, who were among the pioneers of West Michigan. Psalter number 136 based on Psalm 49 reads in part: “Dust to dust, the mortal dies, Both the foolish and the wise; None forever can remain, Each must leave his hoarded gain... Crowned with honor tho’ he be, Highly gifted, strong and free, If he be not truly wise, Man is like the beast that dies.” That is the point. That is the lesson we must learn. The only thing that is of lasting value and worth in this life is our spiritual relationship to God in Christ. What do you value more than anything else? ❖

Letting Go

*One by one, I must let go,
Of all the things I treasure so.
My wife, my family I love so much now,
By grace I must let them go somehow.*

*For when my time on earth is finally done,
When I my race have fully run,
Let me love You above all the rest,
In God my hope I learn to rest.*

*Until then let me treasure them all,
As gifts that on me from heaven did fall.
Give me patience and kindness and a meek heart,
That, through me, Your praise may truly start.*

*In my generations may Your name be raised,
Alone as the One worthy to be praised.
When finally my family must lay me to rest,
They'll know that for us that end is best.*

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Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

reprinted from August/September 1993 *Beacon Lights*

August 1 Read Ruth 4:13-22

We do not know anything about the birth of David except for the names of his father and his father's relatives. We only know of a few of the women in his family, and the most well known of these were not even Israelites. The little we know shows us clear evidence of the providence of God and His wonderful grace toward us. Two of David's relatives were Rahab and Ruth. We should know the stories of these women well. Their stories serve to show the providence of God and His greatness. Their stories also show us His grace. First we see His grace to these women. Then we see His grace to us, as from David's line comes our Christ. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. Sing or read Psalter 211.

August 2 Read I Samuel 16:1-13

The next episode in the life of David is his anointing to be king over Israel. In our last devotional we saw that God's ways are best. This is true. In this passage as well. Jesse had eight sons. Jesse and Samuel felt that God would appoint a king from the first seven. God did not agree. God told Samuel not to look at the outward appearance because He looked at the hearts of these men and they were not suitable for His purpose. We, too, must not be satisfied with the outward appearance of those around us. No, we cannot look into the spiritual heart of a person, but we can see from his spiritual life evidence of that heart. Young people, this is important even as you seek friends in this world. Look at their spiritual appearance and see if it is pleasing to God. Sing or read Psalter 214, especially stanzas 1, 6 and 7.

August 3 Read I Samuel 16:14-23

David has been given the title "Sweet Singer in Israel." As his many Psalms indicate, this title is well deserved. But David did not sing just any songs. David's songs were the songs of Zion. David's songs were songs that pleased God. We see this as God used the songs of David to chase the evil spirit from the heart of Saul. What about our songs? Do we sing songs that would earn us the name "Sweet Singer in Israel?" Do we sing songs that are pleasing to God? Do we use the musical talents that God has given us for His glory alone? When we listen to music, to what do we choose to listen? Is it God's music or Satan's music? Sing or read Psalter 277, especially stanzas 1 and 2.

August 4 Read I Samuel 17:38-51

You really should read all of today's chapter to appreciate David's actions. As we study David, we will see how he truly

was "a man after God's own heart." Goliath was troubling Israel, and all Israel trembled at his feet. David was outraged that Goliath had defied the armies of the living God. He also was bothered that no one from Israel would stand up to this heathen person. David went to fight the Philistine with the only weapon the elect ever needs. He went to fight armed with the name of Jehovah. With this weapon of faith, he defeated Goliath and pictorially defeated Satan at his worst. We must also fight against Satan with the name of Jehovah. With that mighty weapon we will prevail in any situation. Sing or read Psalter 158, especially stanzas 1 and 6-8.

August 5 Read I Samuel 18:1-9

Can you be the kind of friend that Jonathan was? Jonathan, because he was Saul's son, had a right to the throne of Israel. But that right had been taken from him because of his father's sin. Did Jonathan go off in the corner and pout? Did Jonathan wish evil on David and do all he could to make sure that David could not get the throne? We never see that in Jonathan. If you remember, David and Jonathan had a friendship higher than that of marriage. Their friendship was based on God's Word. Jonathan acted the part of a true friend. You see that here as he takes his royal garments off and puts them on David. Are we that kind of friends? Are we willing to put our earthly desires behind us so that we may allow our friends to carry out the will of God? Sing or read Psalter 369.

August 6 Read I Samuel 18:10-16

Saul and David are excellent examples of the antithesis. Saul looked only after himself, saying "yes" to the things of Satan and "no" to the things of God. David, however, by God's grace would say "yes" to those things of God and "no" to those things of Satan. Make no mistake; David was not perfect. He had the old man of sin present in him even as we do. He was only a picture of Christ. Jehovah was with David according to verse 14 because he walked wisely in all his ways. Do you desire God's favor, young people? Then walk wisely in all His ways. Only then will you experience the full measure of the grace of God. Sing or read Psalter 29, especially stanzas 1 and 2.

August 7 Read I Samuel 22:1-5

Saul's hatred against David continued to grow until David had to flee for his life. David made a mistake, however. David left Canaan to go to Moab. David left the promised land, the picture of the church, and the picture of heaven. What about us? Are we sometimes tempted to leave the church to go where there is not church because we are afraid of something? Are

we afraid that we cannot make it financially where God is pleased to call His people together, so we go to a city without a church? God sent the prophet Gad to call David out of Moab and back to Judah. God's Word is plain today that we should remain where the church is. If we do not heed that Word, He will chastise us until we return. Stay near the church, young people, and receive the blessing of Jehovah. Sing or read Psalter 384.

August 8 Read I Samuel 23:1-6

As David was running from Saul, he was also careful to do the work of the Lord. The town of Keilah was oppressed by the workers of Satan, the Philistines. David's men were afraid, but God encouraged them to carry out His work. What about us? Are we afraid to do the work of the Lord? Are we fearful to stand up to the workers of Satan? We must not be! Even as God promised David sure victory over the Philistines, we have sure victory over Satan. It will not be easy. David had to flee shortly after winning. We will be scorned for a righteous stand. We must have confidence and faith in the ways of Jehovah, and He will give us the victory. Sing or read Psalter 293.

August 9 Read I Samuel 24:1-15

Even though David was promised the throne, he had to wait upon Jehovah's time. Even though Saul had forfeited his right to the throne, David could not take the throne until God gave it to him. David could not touch the man anointed by God to be king. We, too, must realize that we must wait upon God's time before we do anything. We must never run ahead of God. Running ahead of God is easy to do. Sometimes we think we know the answers and so we don't wait for the will of God. This is wrong of us. God's will is best; ours must be subservient to His. Patience is hard to practice; but practice it, young people, and God will bless your way. Sing or read Psalter 72, especially stanzas 3 and 4.

August 10 Read I Samuel 25:1-3; 23-31

If the account of this chapter is not familiar to you, take the time to read the whole chapter. David had done good to Nabal; Nabal repaid him with evil. David thought to destroy Nabal and his house. Then Nabal's wife, Abigail, comes to David and speaks peaceable words. Abigail is the peacemaker Christ speaks of in the beatitude. There, peacemakers are called blessed and children of God. What about us? Are we peacemakers in the church? Do we stop our brethren from causing trouble even when they have been wronged? This is our calling from God. Notice how Abigail brings peace. She does it using the Word of God. That is what we must do as well. Sing or read Psalter 350, especially stanzas 4 and 5.

August 11 Read I Samuel 30:1-10; 21-25

David goes and fights against the Amalekites who had wronged him by taking his wives and his men's wives. They win a great victory and gather many spoils. As David is dividing the spoils he gives some to some men who had stayed behind guarding the luggage that had been discarded to make the battle easier. In doing so, some men who had fought became jealous against their brothers and did not want them to share in the spoils. Using his God-given wisdom. David decreed that

those who stayed behind were as important as those who had fought. We must remember this principal in the church as well. All are not called to the front lines in the church. God ordains that some stay behind, but yet we must not disdain them because we know that they as well will share in eternal life. Sing or read Psalter 156.

August 12 Read II Samuel 5:1-12

Amid terrible civil war David received his kingdom. Notice how he received it. In verse 12 we read that the Lord established David as king. It was a long wait from the time Samuel anointed him king in Bethlehem. Many events occurred. But it was all in the hand of God, who wanted this man king. God wanted this man to be the picture of His Son, Christ Jesus. The throne would be established in David and would continue until Christ came. We must always remember that David is a picture of Christ. There is much for us to learn as we read the accounts of history and as we read David's Psalms. We must learn this because it deals with our salvation. Sing or read Psalter 264, especially stanzas 1-3.

August 13 Read II Samuel 6:12-19

David wanted the ark brought back to the tabernacle. In this chapter we read of two attempts to do this. In the first, God's laws are disregarded and a man is killed for disobedience. In the second, David is found in joyful celebration and is scorned by his wicked wife, Michal. There are many things to be learned in this chapter. The one to which I want to point you is that of worshiping Jehovah. This must be done, and it must be done correctly. The Lord will have nothing else. There is great blessing to us when we worship Jehovah in spirit and truth. David rejoiced to see the symbol of Jehovah put in the tabernacle. Do we rejoice whenever we get opportunity to worship Jehovah? Sing or read Psalter 378.

August 14 Read II Samuel 7:1-17

David wanted to build a beautiful temple for God. This seemed to both Nathan and him to be a good thing to do. But this was not God's plan. God decreed that David's son would build a temple. David was to be a picture of the warring Christ. David had to fight and win the battles against God's enemies. In telling David this, God gave the promise that Christ would come from his line, and that his line would continue on the throne until Christ would come. In the last part of chapter seven, David responds with a beautiful prayer of submission. Let this be our prayer as well when God reveals His will for us even when it is not what we think is right. Sing or read Psalter 367, especially stanzas 1 and 4.

August 15 Read II Samuel 9

David never forgot the kindness Jonathan had shown him even when David was running from Saul. He also remembered the covenant they had made because of the beautiful spiritual friendship that was theirs. He seeks out crippled Mephibosheth and gives him a place in his house. We have a spiritual friendship with Christ. We must seek out those who need special attention because of their lot in life. We must not only seek them out, but we must make sure that they have a place in the fellowship of the church of Christ. Christ died for our sins be-

cause He loved us. We must show our gratitude by our care for others. This care must not be selective; we must care for the Mephibosheths in the church. Sing or read Psalter 305, especially stanzas 1, 3 and 5.

August 16 Read II Samuel 12:1-14

We must never forget that even though David was a picture of Christ he was still a man with the old man of sin in him. David fell into wickedness in his lifetime. In chapter 11 and 12 we see him brought down because of his pride. He has forgotten that God has called him to fight, and he wants to enjoy the lusts of this world. God must chastise him severely, and He does it by killing his son. There are many lessons to be learned in these chapters. One of them is that we must not give in to the temptation of committing adultery and fornication. If we do so, we can be sure that God will chastise us. When we are chastised, then we must turn to God and ask for forgiveness. Forgiveness will be found for the child of God. Read the Fifth Head Article Four of the Canons of Dordt for more on this. Sing or read Psalter 140.

August 17 Read Samuel 15:13-18

David had sinned against the Lord. One of the chastisements that he received was that strife would never leave his house. One of his sons, Absalom, rebelled against him. David, for the good of Jerusalem, flees from his son until God allows him to return. Through all of this account David shows that he is a man after God's own heart. It was a hard trial, but David knew that it was from Jehovah. God brings trials to us as well. Sometimes they are because of our sin. We must realize that all things come from God's fatherly hand and acknowledge that He will carry us through all trials. Sing or read Psalter 202.

August 18 Read II Samuel 24:14-25

Once again David's old man of sin rose up against him. A sin common to all of us grasped him so tight that he could not be dissuaded. This common but great sin was pride. If there is anything that can wreck havoc in the church quickly, it is the sin of pride. Pride causes us to say and/or do things which are so vile in the sight of God. Pride causes brother to sin against brother. Pride causes good friends to speak hard words against one another. We must constantly fight against this tool of Satan. If we wish peace in the church, we must put aside pride in ourselves and seek pride in God's name. The whole nation felt the sting of God's wrath against David's sin of pride. Let us pray that He will spare us from this sin. Sing or read Psalter 366.

August 19 Read I Kings 1:28-37

As David neared the last days of his life, one of his sons, Adonijah, rose up against him and tried to make himself king. Through the faithful work of Bathsheba, Nathan, and others, David was persuaded to give the command to make Solomon king. Why was this so important? It is important because through Solomon's line would come the Savior. The promise of an eternal throne led through Solomon. The last verse you read contains the words of the covenant promise. That promise is for us as well. God saves in the line of covenant generations. Faithfulness to His Word bring great blessings. The ulti-

mate blessing is life with Christ in heaven. Sing or read Psalter 151, especially stanzas 1, 2 and 6.

August 20 Read Psalm 24

David, the "sweet singer of Israel," wrote at least seventy-three of the Psalms. In this one we see a description of the elect and also of Christ. We read that being elect makes it necessary that we live a life of sanctification. Just because we are elect does not mean that we can "Sin that grace may abound." Our lives must be pure before God. It is those who will receive the blessings of salvation. The elect must also seek the face of God. This cannot be done while enjoying the pleasures of sin. We must constantly be looking upon Jehovah who made heaven and earth. Finally David tells us about Christ. He describes Christ as the King of glory, but also the Lord of hosts. David was a warring king leading Israel to victory over its enemies. Christ, too, is a warring king leading the church to victory over its enemy, Satan, and all his hosts. Sing or read Psalter 59, especially stanzas 1-3 and 7.

August 21 Read Psalm 1

In this Psalm we see many aspects of David's life. We see his trust in the Lord who is the strength of his life. Also, we see his constant call to battle against the enemies. Then, in verse four David's love for the house of God is evident. Finally, in verses eleven through fourteen, we read that David wants no way but the Lord's, and he asks for patience until that way is revealed to him. Young people, are your desires like David's? Do you battle sin? Do you have a zeal for the house of the Lord? Is God your strength? Our prayer must be that we always wait upon Jehovah. David gives us a good example; let us follow it. Sing or read Psalter 73.

August 22 Read Psalm 3

It is thought that David wrote this Psalm while fleeing from Absalom. If this is so, what a tremendous confession of faith verse five is. David was fleeing from his beloved son who wanted to kill him. He left Jerusalem, the royal city. While fleeing David prays for comfort. The comfort God gives him allows restful sleep at night. What a beautiful thought for us! Young people have cares and concerns. Their flight from sin can cause restlessness at night. Young people, go to God in prayer with your concerns. Because Christ sits at His right hand, God will answer your prayer, and give you rest. Then you can say with David the words of verse eight. Sing or read Psalter 5.

August 23 Read Psalm 110

There are many Psalms which are prophecies of Christ. One such Psalm is the one we read for today. Here we have a clear picture of the priesthood and kingship of Christ. David was a picture of Christ the king as we have pointed out before. The holy Spirit shows us that Christ was more. Christ was a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Christ is the priest who fulfilled the work pictured in Aaron's line. On the cross Christ made the final and complete sacrifice for our sins. It is of Him that David sings in this Psalm. We too must sing of Christ and the blessedness He gave us with His sacrifice on the cross. Sing or read Psalter 302.

August 24 Read Jeremiah 23:1-8

In the prophecies Christ is stated many times to be of the seed of David. Today's reading is one of those clear examples. Israel was in desperate times. Their sins were great, and Babylon was on their doorstep. During these perilous times Jeremiah comes to the elect with the comforting words that Christ would come. He would come from the promised line of David. Jeremiah's comfort was founded on the sure promises of God. The faithful need not fret that the church would be destroyed. We must cling to those sure promises today as well. Even in these days of apostasy we know that Christ will return "to judge the living and the dead." Sing or read Psalter 58.

August 25 Read Luke 1:26-33

For hundreds of years Israel waited for the son of David who would redeem them. Then one day to a virgin girl the angel Gabriel came with the good news that Christ would be her son. Every faithful woman in the line of Judah had this hope. Gabriel states that Jesus' father was David, and He would rule on David's throne. What joy is here not only for Mary but for the church of all ages. David's son is coming! That should be our joy today as we are thankful for Christ's coming and dying on the cross. We need to embrace Christ as the royal sufferer because through Him comes salvation. Sing or read Psalter 3.

August 26 Read Acts 2:22-36

Today's portion of Scripture comes from Peter's inspired sermon on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit through Peter makes it evident that David was only a picture of the Christ. This was done to prove to the doubters that Christ was truly the Son of God sent into this world to die for the sins of His people. But Peter wants to show more than that. Peter wants to show that Christ rose from the dead and is ascended into heaven. He does this by referring to many of the Psalms of David which state this very fact. The final reference is to Psalm 110. Peter shows the crowd and us that it is a crucified Christ Who is responsible for salvation. There is no other way to heaven but by that Christ Who is the son of David. What a joy that is for us! Is that your joy? Sing or read Psalter 303.

August 27 Read Revelation 22:12-21

Our final look at David is found in the last chapter of the Bible. Here Christ Himself claims David for His father. This chapter is for us as we wait for the return of Christ. We can take great comfort that Christ claims David for His father. This gives testimony to us that all the words of the Bible are true and not to be tampered with. We know our salvation is sure, and that we can expect Christ to return even as He has said. Let it be our prayer and guide for our lives that we want Christ to return quickly. Sing or read Psalter 27.

August 28 Read Proverbs 5:1-13

Within the next few weeks school doors will once again be opening. What will YOU learn? How will you understand the knowledge that is presented to you? Solomon in the book of Proverbs, especially in the first few chapters, spends a considerable time on this subject. The main thrust of his message is wisdom. This wisdom is characterized by the fear of Jehovah. Christian teachers have made it their concern to instruct the

covenant children in the fear of Jehovah. How are you receiving such instruction? Do you love it? In these verses Solomon discusses the folly of not walking in the wisdom of God. Re-read these words of God carefully and plan to spend the next nine months seeking true wisdom. Sing or read Psalter 326.

August 29 Read Ecclesiastes 12:8-15

Solomon, the wisest man ever to have lived, concludes this book with words which are well applied to our schooling. Verse twelve is one which students sometimes appeal to in order to find relief from their school work. This is not the meaning of the verse at all. Solomon had looked at all of life and had found that without God there is no purpose—all is vanity and vexation of spirit. This is true of education as well. If our education is not grounded on the fear of God (verse thirteen), it will have no purpose. As teachers and students we need to remember this as we begin a new school year. Each lesson would be better not learned unless it is learned in the fear of Jehovah. Pray for the grace to attend school each day with this truth in mind. Sing or read Psalter 359, especially stanzas 1 and 2.

August 30 Read Philippians 2:1-8

What is your attitude, young people, towards those with whom you go to school? How are you going to treat every member of your class? Are you going to treat them nicely, with the love of Christ in your heart and manner? Christ came to earth and died for those who have treated him most shamefully. Who are those people? The answer is simple—US. As you meet your classmates again let the mind of Christ be in you toward them. Help those who need help. Weep with those who mourn. Have joy with those who rejoice. Then you will show yourself to be a true follower of Christ. You will also find that the school year will go much easier. My prayer for all students is that they love one another even as Christ loved us. Sing or read Psalter 51.

August 31 Read Psalm 119:97-104

How could it be that David became wiser than his teachers or his elders? Was it because he had more intelligence than his teachers? Is David using boastful words out of pride? The answer can be found in the second parts of the parallels used in these verses. David makes the claim because of the understanding of God's law which God gave him. These are not man's boastful words but rather the words of faith. This should be our goal as well—not merely to be wiser than our teachers—but to give God glory for using their efforts in our behalf. Our teachers can only take us so far; God's grace must lead us the rest of the way. Pray for that grace in this new school year. Sing or read Psalter 64.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

reprinted from August/September 1993 *Beacon Lights*

September 1 Read Zephaniah 3:8-13

Zephaniah prophesied to Judah during a period of great wickedness. We read that Judah was serving other gods and trying to serve God their own way and not His. To the faithful, Zephaniah encouraged them to be faithful and wait for God to bring salvation. In verse nine he says that when salvation comes, the people will have the language to serve God. This language will come from God. It will not be of man's doing. In this day of constant change to the Word of God we need this encouragement as well. We do not need to be trying to find new ways to call upon God's name. God will show us His ways, and we know that they are best. Sing or read Psalter 327, especially stanzas 1 and 4.

September 2 Read Acts 10:9-17

The vision which you have just read is a great blessing to most of you. I say this because most of you are Gentiles. You are not Jews, the original branches of the vine which is Christ. Peter had a hard time with this vision. In it God turned his whole world upside down. He was pondering the meaning when messengers from an Italian came to bid him come and preach to him. On the way to Simon's house the Holy Spirit showed him the meaning of the vision. In verse 34 Peter confesses that God is no respecter of persons and that in every nation He has His people. Is this our confession? Sing or read Psalter 178.

September 3 Read Amos 9:11-15

One of the blessings to the elect is to know that God will never forsake them. Israel constantly sinned against God, causing Him to bring justice against them. God has to do this because He is holy and sin cannot go unpunished. But for the righteous there is the beautiful promise of Christ. This is seen in these verses. Once again the church is pictured as a plant that is cared for by a faithful gardener. This gardener will care for His vine so that it is safe and brings forth fruit. We, too, can be comforted by the promise that God will care for us. Sing or read Psalter 220, especially stanzas 3-6.

September 4 Read I Thessalonians 1:1-10

Young people, are you an example to all who believe around you? Does your walk and conversation show that you are a Christian? This is a serious calling. We must never

fall into such sins that our brothers are tempted to do the same thing. We must never cause our weaker brethren to fall into sin on our account. Then, too, our faith must show to all who are around us. When we are not in the company of the saints, those around us must know who we are. We must show the salvation given to us to all with whom we come into contact. Our example must be such that others may be led to Christ. Sing or read Psalter 6, especially stanzas 1-4.

September 5 Read Lamentations 3:22-32

Most of us have never felt the depths of despair felt by the prophet Jeremiah. If you read the preceding verses to our text, you will find a man full of sorrow. He had been afflicted by his own people because he preached the truth. When he showed them their sin, they afflicted him. But worse than that, Jeremiah was witness to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. He had seen terrible things done to God's people. Then he remembered the promises of God. He knew that all this was done for Israel's profit. He knew that Jehovah's mercies were sure, and that God would bring back His people and send the Christ. This must be our comfort in all affliction. Jehovah's compassions are new every morning, and great is His faithfulness. Let us continually give thanks to Him from whom all blessings flow. Sing or read Psalter 79.

September 6 Read II Peter 1:1-11

Making our calling and election sure is serious business, young people. It is also very necessary. Peter, in addressing the elect, includes all elect, even young people. Some of you have made confession of your faith. Others are contemplating that serious step in your spiritual life. To you comes the command to make your calling and election sure. This is done by your walk. What you speak with the lips must be shown by your life. Go back and reread verses five through eight. In those verses you see how to make your election sure. No, this is not man doing anything for himself, but rather the exercise of the faith given by God. Then, too, see the promise of the last part of verse ten. "For if ye do these things ye shall never fall." What a blessing for all of God's people, including the young people. Sing or read Psalter 10.

September 7 Read Malachi 1:6-14

Tomorrow is the Sabbath. What will our attitude be as we celebrate the Lord's Day? It is possible to attend church twice and still profane the Sabbath. God said that Israel did just that. They kept all the sacrifices, but yet they felt that it was weariness. They felt that keeping the law was more than they wanted to do. What about us? Are we resentful that God commands that we keep Sunday holy? Do we feel that part of Sunday belongs to us to do what we want? Let's stop and look again at the Fourth Commandment. "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy..." What a small thing to do in thanksgiving for our salvation! Sing or read Psalter 226.

September 8 Read I Thessalonians 2:13-17

The word "tradition" to some has an unpleasant denotation. To some it means that if it is just tradition to do something then it does not necessarily have to be done. In fact some say that if it is tradition then do not do it. Here Paul is using the word "tradition" to speak of the long history of God's covenant faithfulness. Most of us from the cradle have been taught about the blessedness of the covenant and our God. To that we must stand fast. We must not look for new things but rather hold to the old as set forth in the Scriptures. In holding to the traditions of which Paul speaks we will receive the comfort that comes only from Christ. Sing or read Psalter 342.

September 9 Read Leviticus 1:1-9

Much of the book of Leviticus talks of the ceremonial law for the Old Testament church. Even though Christ fulfilled that law there is much that can be applied to our lives today. Today's portion of Scripture speaks of sacrifices. Our sacrifices now are not the bloody sacrifices of Israel. Yet we still bring sacrifices. Psalm fifty-one speaks of sacrifices being a broken spirit and a contrite heart. We bring our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving when we pray and sing. We often talk about the sacrifices necessary for the work of the kingdom. All of us must sacrifice to Jehovah. These sacrifices must be from the heart for then they will be acceptable. Sing or read Psalter 147, especially stanzas 1, 4 and 5.

September 10 Read II Timothy 4:1-8

Paul feels that his life on earth is over and so he gives Timothy some final exhortations. Paul is content to die because he knows that to be with Christ is the greater glory. The Holy Spirit through Paul says that he had fought the good fight. The fight he speaks of is the fight of faith. Is this your testimony, young people? Are you fighting the fight of faith? If God would take your life today, could you make the same claim as Paul? Paul knew his reward would be a crown of righteousness. That is the reward for all who

faithfully fight in the fight of faith. Sing or read Psalter 121.

September 11 Read Micah 7:5-13

Whenever we read many of the prophecies, we must always remember that Israel was facing captivity. We must also remember that there is a message for us today in the Word of God. Today we face apostasy and wickedness all around us. Sometimes the child of God despairs at what he sees. But yet we have the same comfort Micah felt in verse seven. We must trust in no man. Men are weak. We must wait with confidence upon Jehovah. In waiting upon Jehovah, we trust in Him for our salvation. We also have the confidence that He will hear our prayers and answer them. Sing or read Psalter 21.

September 12 Read III John 9-14

Paul mentions two people who are opposed in viewpoint. The first is full of pride and wants his way all the time. The second has good report of men and also of the truth. John gives direction in verse eleven which is easy to follow and must be followed. When you must make choices, young people, make your choices based on verse eleven. Verse eleven speaks of the choice of the antithesis. Follow not the evil but follow the good. Following the good is following the command of God. Following the evil is following Satan. Sing or read Psalter 43, especially stanzas 3, 5 and 6.

September 13 Read Nahum 1:9-15

The book of Nahum is written to foretell the destruction of Nineveh, the chief city of Assyria. Assyria had afflicted Israel much in its history, and now God will bring vengeance upon them. Besides the word of destruction to Nineveh, there is also a word of instruction to Judah and us. The last verse of the chapter tells us to keep the preaching in high regard. The minister is the ambassador of Christ and must be regarded as such. We must also keep the way of the Lord in the church as well. We may not change what God has ordained, or we will go the way of Nineveh. Sing or read Psalter 224.

September 14 Read James 2:14-26

One part of every Christian's life must be a walk of sanctification. The word sanctification means holiness. After being justified by faith, we must walk in a holy manner all of our lives. This is what the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of when it speaks of thankfulness for salvation in the third section. This is not something that can be mandated; it is something which must flow from the heart of the redeemed child of God. As we see in this chapter, it is very necessary. Are you joyful because you are saved? If you are, then walk in the way of sanctification. Sing or read Psalter 50.

September 15 Read Nehemiah 13:10-22

Do you tire, young people, of hearing of things you must not do? Does it get old when teachers, elders, ministers,

parents, and others constantly tell you not to do something? If you would go through the Bible, that is what you would find. God's people need to be told often to obey Jehovah. Nehemiah had left Jerusalem and had gone back to Babylon. After a period of time he returned to Jerusalem. In this chapter we read of some of the sins to which Israel had returned. Nehemiah had to rebuke them. Today is the Sabbath. It is good that we read these words and examine ourselves to see if we are "Remembering the Sabbath to keep it holy." Sing or read Psalter 67.

September 16 Read Luke 16:19-31

Parables, you remember, were used by Christ to teach about grace and the kingdom of heaven. In this parable we learn about how not to enter the kingdom of heaven. A nameless rich man had all for which a person could wish. But yet when presented with an opportunity to thank God for that, he refused. Lazarus was put right on his doorstep, but the rich man ignored him. We can be guilty of this same fault. We sometimes ignore those who are placed before us and need our mercy. Thankfulness and sanctification are required by God. Are we ignoring them? Sing or read Psalter 61.

September 17 Read Numbers 6:22-27

The familiar blessing we just read is full of comfort. Look at it more closely. First of all, notice that there is nothing for us to do. All of the work is dependent upon Jehovah. He will bless us, keep us, be gracious unto us, and give us peace. Because of this we know that the blessing will come to pass. If we tried to bless ourselves, we know that our sins would rise up against us, and nothing good would happen. Secondly, notice that it is to be done in the name of Jehovah, and He will bless us. Through His name we can do great things. Hosanna, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Sing or read Psalter 318, especially stanzas 4-7.

September 18 Read Mark 6:21-34

Jesus was a man of great compassion. We see it expressed here to two groups of people. The disciples had just come back from their preaching tour of Galilee. They were extremely joyful because the gospel was having a good effect. Then they were crushed by the news of the murder of John the Baptist. Jesus took them into the wilderness to comfort them. Very soon afterward a multitude of people came to find Jesus. He, realizing that they desired the Word, began to preach unto them, and when they became hungry fed them. This is the Jesus we confess. Are you down, lonely, or depressed? Seek the Comforter who will show you all things. Sing or read Psalter 114, especially stanzas 1 and 10.

September 19 Read Obadiah 10-16

As Israel was being led into captivity, Edom stood round about mocking and scorning them. There was nothing that

Israel could do because its sin had put them in that sorry state. God, however, saw Edom's scorn. Because they mocked His people, they mocked Him. In this prophecy we see that God will bring vengeance upon those who mock Him and His people. Sometimes we feel the sting of other's mocking. Sometimes it seems that everything we say does nothing but make it worse. Do not despair, people of God. Our God has said, "Vengeance is mine," and "I will repay." Do not be thinking of ways to get revenge. Cry to God and He will answer. Sing or read Psalter 253, especially stanzas 1, 5, 11 and 12.

September 20 Read Philemon 9-22

While Paul was in Rome, a man who was a slave ran away from his master and came to Paul. The slave became a willing worker in the gospel, but yet Paul knew that the slave belonged to his master and had sinned by running away. In this short letter Paul asks for forgiveness for the slave and even offers to pay any loss the master has incurred. This must be our attitude as we work for others, or for students as they do their school work. We must realize our duty, and if we shirk it, we must ask for forgiveness and make up the wrong that we have done. Sing or read Psalter 281.

September 21 Read Proverbs 16:1-7

By nature people are planners. We wish to do this or that. This is not all bad. God has given us minds with which to plan. He had given us knowledge to use. But yet we must wait upon Jehovah as well. Man's plans are tainted with sin. Verse three tells us to "Commit thy works unto the Lord." Young people, as you look ahead to your future life, stop and ask yourself, "Is this what God would have me do?" Search the Scriptures to see if your plans are in accordance to the will of God. Verse seven contains the blessing in this. Plan, people of God, with God in mind. Sing or read Psalter 95, especially stanzas 2 and 3.

September 22 Read Philippians 1:12-20

Paul wrote this epistle as he was in prison. This circumstance did not distress him as he had been imprisoned because of the gospel. He also felt that the gospel was being spread because of his imprisonment. How about us? Do we look for the gospel to be spread by our actions? Do we realize that God can use any situation for the spreading of His Word? Paul was happy that Christ's name was being glorified through his discomfort and even possibly through his death. Do we have this outlook on life? Do we try to have Christ's name glorified or ours? Sing or read Psalter 76.

September 23 Read Psalm 48

This Psalm celebrates the beauty of the church. In the Old Testament, physical Jerusalem served as a picture of the spiritual church. We see here that the church is the

advantageous place to be. It is beautiful to the eye, it is defensible in time of battle, and it is a place of great joy. We also see a command to stop and consider the church. Look at her history. Not for pride in human strength, but rather because of what God had made her. Then the last verse of the Psalm gives the reason. This God will be our guide even unto death. By staying in the fortress of Jerusalem, Israel was safe from enemies. By staying in the fortress of the church we will be safe from our enemy, Satan, and all his hosts. Sing or read Psalter 133.

September 24 Read Revelation 6:1-8

Yesterday's devotion encouraged us to look and study the history of the church. In reading today's passage we see the worth of studying the history of the world. When Christ opened the book of the counsel of God, He set in motion actions which take place in history. Among these actions are the running of the four horses with their riders. As we study history we see the effects of the horses' running. In different eras different horses are prominent. As we move toward Christ's return, we see all of the horse running. Are we watching? Are we praying, "Thy kingdom come?" Sing or read Psalter 182, especially stanzas 1, 2, 5 and 7.

September 25 Read Ruth 2:1-9

One of the commands that God gave was that farmers had to leave certain portions of their crops untouched for the poor. Here we have three people who studied and loved God's commandment. Ruth, the Moabitess, even though she was from outside had learned that she being poor was entitled to a portion of a farmer's crop. Naomi knew that she must let Ruth go and glean because that was the station God had placed them. Boaz, too, knew and obeyed the law that he must help those who were poor. How do we know the law of God? We must study it, and we must take every opportunity to learn it. Our lives are ordered by God, and in His Word is the guide for every step of our lives. Sing or read Psalter 149, especially stanzas 1, 2, 5 and 6.

September 26 Read Romans 6:12-23

We live in an age in which sin abounds. The printed page, the music, and the airwaves celebrate sin in a way not often known to man. The church cannot help but be affected by this attitude. This is serious because we are commanded to be holy and sin not. Paul throughout this chapter warns against the attitude that because we are saved we can sin all we want. This is never so. The last verse of this chapter should make this clear to us. We need to examine our ways and turn from sin so that we may ever be assured of eternal life which is through Christ. Sing or read Psalter 8.

September 27 Read Song of Solomon 3

This book celebrates the beauty of marriage of a man and his wife. Throughout Scripture we can find passages with this theme. But we must remember that like all ordinances

that God gives, there is a picture to be considered. Marriage is a picture of Christ and His bride, the Church. Marriage must be held sacred. Just as Christ only has one bride, a man or woman are only to have one partner. Just as there is a beautiful friendship in marriage, so is there a beautiful friendship between Christ and the church. If you are contemplating marriage, consider that it is a picture of the bond between Christ and the church. Marriage is beautiful, but not to be taken lightly. Sing or read Psalter 124, especially stanzas 1, 2, 8 and 9.

September 28 Read Titus 3:1-8

These few verses show what good works accomplish and what they do not accomplish. First the negative is shown. Not a single good work can give us salvation. Salvation is only obtained through the mercy of Christ through regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Then we have the positive. Because the Holy Spirit imparts regeneration upon us, we believe, and then we must be careful to do good works. This is the whole process of salvation. Good works come because we are saved. They are expression of our thankfulness to God for giving salvation. Let us walk in them because they are good and profitable unto us. Sing or read Psalter 162.

September 29 Read Zechariah 4

There are two verses in this chapter which should always serve to uphold the child of God. The church has always been small in the world. Israel was never accounted as one of the great civilizations of its day. Isaiah called the church a hut in a garden of cucumbers. In the New Dispensation the church was in danger quite often. Even today those who believe the truths as expounded in the Scriptures are few in number. But the faithful need not despair. God is faithful. He has promised that all things work together for the good of them that love Him. Have you picked out the verses of comfort? They are six and ten. Sing or read Psalter 160.

September 30 Read John 4:31-38

During the episode of the Samaritan woman, Jesus took time to instruct His disciples concerning the kingdom. At this time of the year, it is good for us to listen to the instruction as well. As we look around us, we see crops ready to be harvested. Corn, fruit, and many other crops are waiting for the laborers to take them to be stored. Christ gives us this picture of the kingdom so that we may see that the laborers come from the church. Are some of us called to gather the fruits of the work of the Spirit? Each of us must pray and ask what we are to do in this matter. For some it is to take up the calling of minister. Heed that call, young men, and prepare yourself to take up the work of harvesting. Sing or read Psalter 169.

Psalms Bringing Comfort

by Melissa Van Baren

A mother overcome with grief over the loss of her baby. A young girl just married. A child in Sunday school. An older lonely gentleman who lost his wife years ago. A minister of the word. Missionaries in Ghana. New babes to the word. Confused and depresses teenagers. Established churches in America. People of God abroad. Confused? Well, they all have something in common. They have faith in God, and with that they all have comfort. God has given a very special means for bringing comfort to His people in every circumstance of life: the Psalms.

The mother who just lost her baby can turn to the psalms and find comfort in them. She can turn to any one of them and know that God is in control and to Him her prayers should be. “Lord, hear the right, attend my cry, and to my prayer give ear, my prayer that riseth unto Thee from heart and lips sincere” (Psalter # 33). How many times have we sung these words and truly felt such sorrow! She can find comfort and strength in those words because she too knows others have sung those words! Yet the next time she turns to them it may be a prayer and pleading for another cause. There are so many examples of comfort from the psalms that they would easily fill a whole article!

The young bride brings to mind the classic example of “O Royal Bride give heed.” What about the proclaiming of her love? What about the blessed union of the two souls that God has joined together? That, too, is spoken of in the psalms! “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133). This is shown in many a Psalter numbers such as 369, 370 and 371. What about praise to God for all that He has given her? That is in there too! Even the mother who has lost her child also sees these psalms as a blessing! She, too, is able to lift her voice in one accord!

The child in Sunday school is able to learn Psalm 23, but that also fittingly applies to the elderly gentle-

man! Those young children grow up and soon turn into elderly people. They grow in their understanding of that Psalm. Children don’t fully comprehend death, but when that child becomes older she starts to understand “yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (vs. 4). What a comfort it is to know that the Psalms are timeless and ageless! God gave them to David and David spoke them from the heart, pleading to God. Now we too know what David meant. What a comfort!

Most of us who read this were raised in covenant homes and take many concepts in the Psalms for granted. Now imagine yourself a new convert coming to realize the truth expressed in the Psalter: “All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom Lord, hath fashioned me: I give my Maker thankful Praise, Whose wondrous works my soul amaze” (Psalter 383). Doesn’t that bring new meaning to the words when we view them from another perspective? What a joyful thing when you think of God’s people out in the desolate lands and when they come into communion with others of God’s saints and they are able to sing from the heart “With joy I heard my friends exclaim, Come let us in God’s temple meet; Within thy gates, O Zion blest, Shall ever stand our willing feet!” (Psalter 350). What a blessing for those who are well established in the Word to joyfully sing these words! What a blessing for new babes in the faith to join in that singing!

Young people of God, it is clear from many of the psalms that David also suffered the feelings of despair and depression. Yet God delivered him! What a joyful thing to be able to sing of this and know that God will deliver even the depressed teenager! It is a wonderful thing to me to be able to read and sing these words! It also brings things more to home and heart when you think of how other people of God may be singing them!

This is a challenge for all—while singing in church try to think how others in the church might be singing them. Think of how these words hit home for them. Does this bring new meaning to the words for you? Have you noticed that words you learned when you were a child now take on new meanings, and a deeper understanding comes each time you sing from the heart? What a blessing this is! We are never to be bored with the Word of God!

Singing to me is such a glorious thing—such a blessing God has given to us! Use these praises to the utmost. Think about what you are singing. Think of how those words effect not only you but also your neighbor sitting next to you. Think

Think about what you are singing. Think of how those words effect not only you but also your neighbor sitting next to you.

of that mother, of the elderly gentleman and of the teenager! Think of those people who are on the mission fields. Think of GOD!

“Sing a new song to Jehovah, for the wonders he hath wrought; His right hand and arm most holy triumph to His cause have brought, In His love and tender mercy He hath made salvation known, In the sight of every nation, He His righteousness hath shown” (Psalter 261). ❖

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The Difference

by Bonnie Lynn Boer

*The World can count on nothing
There's no pleasure in their life.
They go around each day and find
Fake pleasure amidst the strife.*

*They grope around for something
On which to place their trust.
But when it comes to stability
Their plans all turn to dust.*

*The Worldly see the earth as a
Place to store up treasure.
They bet and they gamble
But in the end they know no pleasure.*

*The World moves from place to place
Trying to grasp things in their hand.
But in the end of the journey,
Their house is built on sinking sand.*

*The Righteous have a different plan-
Their promise is complete.
They may stumble upon life's path,
But they will rest at Jesus' feet.*

*They may search for some enjoyment
But in the end they always find,
A place of pure happiness
Where Jesus is in mind.*

*The Godly see Christ's earth
As a temporary place.
They find all their pleasure
Through the Word, and by God's grace.*

*The Righteous have a stable life
Serving God around the clock.
And in our journey's end
we see our house on Solid Rock.*

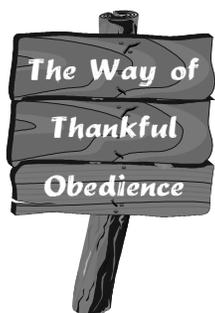
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The Second Pointer on the Spiritual Roadmap: Worshiping God Rightly

by Rev. Doug Kuiper



Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:4-6



Young people, we have seen that our lives are a spiritual journey, the destination of which is God's glory in all that we do. The road down which we travel is named The Way of Thankful Obedience.

In our journey, we have already passed the intersection of

The Road of Many Gods. In fact, we did turn down that road! By nature, we do have many gods! And someone—friends, coworkers, other people we know—had promised us that if we took that road, we would end up in the city of Happiness. But then we realized that the Happiness to which this road would take us was only Earthly Happiness. The city's name is simply "Happiness," because its citizens and visitors think earthly happiness is the only kind of happiness. So we knew, by God's grace, that we were on the wrong road, for our goal was not Earthly



Happiness; and using the Map of God's Law, we saw that we should get back on The Way of Thankful Obedience, which requires us to have only one God.



But now we approach another major intersection. The Way of Thankful Obedience and The Road of Image Worship are going to crisscross. Once again, we have seen conflicting signs as to which road we should take. Many advise to take The Road of Image Worship, for it will lead us past a very impressive sculpture, in which an artist tried to portray what God looked like.

Should we take that road?

According to the Map of God's Law, this Road of Image Worship will not take us to our destination. We will arrive at our destination only if we refrain from making images of God, and worship God rightly.

Notice that the second commandment has to do with worship. It speaks not only of *making* graven images, but *bowing down to* them and *serving* them. That is worship.

The commandment forbids us to worship any graven image. Its intent is not to forbid us to make images of people or creatures (we may take photographs, paint pictures, and make sculptures), but to forbid us to worship an image of any person or creature.

Why is it important that we not worship any image? Because God alone may be worshiped.

Some might then say, "But we are worshiping God—this is what God looks like." Aaron said that to the chil-

dren of Israel when he made the golden calf: “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:4). To which the answer is, God does not look like any creature! God is Spirit! He says, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Isaiah 42:8). Similarly, when God says in the second commandment, “For the LORD thy God is a jealous God,” He means to say that He is jealous of His glory and honor, and will not share it with any creature.

For this reason, that man who makes a sculpture, or graven image, or a painting, and claims that it pictures God, is wrong, and is a liar.

The commandment, by implication, commands a right worship of God. What such worship requires of us Jesus teaches in John 4:24: “God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Right worship of God requires us to know Him as He reveals Himself in His Word.

Do you want to know what God “looks” like? Moses did! He said to God, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory” (Exodus 33:18). In response, God reminded Moses that no man can see God and live—but God would hide Moses in a cleft of the rock, and show Moses His “back parts” (Exodus 33:20ff). That glory of God Moses heard God proclaim: “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6-7). Moses “saw” the Lord’s glory, as the Lord proclaimed His name to Moses.

We will also “see” God,
therefore, not in the form of
any image, but in knowing
Him as He makes Himself
known in Jesus Christ and in
His Word.

We will also “see” God, therefore, not in the form of any image, but in knowing Him as He makes Himself known in Jesus Christ and in His Word.

Right worship of God requires us also to worship Him in the manner in which He has commanded in His Word. God in His Word requires us to gather for corporate worship (in church, Hebrews 10:25), and in that worship to pray and sing (1 Corinthians 14:15), hear God’s Word preached (1 Corinthians 14:3ff), partake of the sacraments (1 Corinthians 11:23ff), and give offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Now to apply this to our lives, I would have you face two questions.

First, do you think of God as He reveals Himself in His Word?

It is so easy for us to try to picture God, in our minds. When we do, we have made an image of Him.

It is so easy for us to think God must be the kind of Being we want Him to be—for example, One who only loves, and never hates, and never will punish the wicked. Many in the church world think of God this way. But He makes Himself known in Scripture as one who hates sin not only, but also sinners (Psalm 5:5, Malachi 1:3, Romans 9:13). He makes Himself known as the one who punished the sins of His people in Christ, and who will yet punish the ungodly for their sins, with everlasting torment in hell. When we think of Him differently from how He reveals Himself, we have made an image of Him.

So, do you study your Scriptures, learn your catechism, pay attention to the preaching, so that you learn of God as He reveals Himself?

And second, do you worship God rightly?

Do you even worship God? You go to church—but do you do so just because it is expected, or do you participate in worship, from your heart?

And do you worship God privately, in prayer, song, and reading the Scriptures?

God has a right to dictate how we worship Him, for He is God, He is our Creator, and He is our Savior. In love for Him, we will obey Him in this matter. To do so is to walk The Way of Thankful Obedience. And walking that way, we will glorify Him in all that we do. Furthermore, He promises to shew mercy to those who love Him—He will cause us more and more to experience and enjoy His nearness and His love. Such experience is what characterizes True Happiness! ❖

Rev. Kuiper is pastor of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

Premillennialism and Dispensationalism

by Rev. Ron Hanko

Strictly speaking, premillennialism and dispensationalism belong to the same school in that they both teach that the personal and visible coming of Christ will be *prior to* (pre-) a yet future thousand year reign of Christ. There are also other similarities:

(1) Both teach a *literal* thousand year (millennial) kingdom.

(2) Both teach that this millennium and kingdom are *future*.

(3) Both teach that the millennium kingdom of Christ is *earthly*, centered in the city of Jerusalem, and that it involves the personal visible reign of Christ on earth.

(4) Both teach that the promises of God to Abraham and to the Jewish nation regarding the land have a future, literal, earthly fulfillment to that nation.

(5) Both believe also that “Israel” in Scripture always and only refers to the physical descendants of Abraham.

(6) Both teach more than one resurrection and more than one judgment.

There are, nevertheless, important differences between the two views. Dispensationalism teaches *two* comings of Christ prior to the millennium (usually separated by a period of seven years), i.e., the rapture and the revelation—Christ’s coming *for* His saints and *with* them. They also teach that the rapture will be *secret* and *at any moment* and that it will occur *prior to the great tribulation* so that the church will not pass through the tribulation, but will be away with Christ.

Dispensationalism also teaches that the New Testament Church is but a parenthesis in history, that the Jewish nation alone constitutes the people and kingdom of

God, and that the millennial kingdom of Christ will be an exclusively *Jewish* kingdom, i.e., the Jews and they alone are the kingdom people. Along with all of this, dispensationalism also teaches that the Holy Spirit will be absent from the earth during the time between the rapture and the revelation, the two stages of Christ’s premillennial coming.

In addition, the older dispensationalism of the Scofield Bible notes, teaches different ways of salvation, denying that salvation is only in the blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ and through faith in Him. All this historic premillennialism rightly rejects, teaching that the so-called rapture and revelation are *one* event, not two. Premillennialism also denies a secret rapture and teaches that the church *shall* pass through the great tribulation. Finally, it teaches that the church *has* a part and place in Christ’s kingdom, and is not just a “parenthesis in history” between God’s past and future dealings with the Jews.

Historic premillennialism has also always rejected the heretical teaching of the Scofield Bible notes, that there are different ways of salvation in different dispensations and the strange teaching that the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth during the time between the rapture and the revelation.

Nevertheless, we believe that while premillennialism rejects many of the false teachings of dispensationalism, it does not go far enough. So, as we hope to show in our next article, premillennialism also is unbiblical. ❖

Rev. Hanko is pastor of Lynden Protestant Reformed Church in Lynden, Washington.

Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Tryn Eva Elyse, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Stefan Haney—Bethel, IL
Sarah Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Keith Zevenbergen—Doon, IA
Hannah Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Kamps—Hope, MI
Jason David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Dykstra—Hudsonville, MI
Sarah Lanthrop—Spokane, WA
Meghan Elice, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Bennett—South Holland, IL
Jaclyn Anne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Todd Terpstra—South Holland, IL
Travis John, son 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:
Justus VanderWalt—Bethel, IL
Rebecca Rutgers—Hope, MI
Phillip Kalsbeek—Hope, MI
Stephanie Koole, Hope, MI
Annette Meyer—Hope, MI
Cinda Kroese—Hull, IA
Lisa VanMannen—Hull, IA
Nathan Schiermeyer—Hull, IA
Evan Brummel—Hull, IA
Kim Vogel—Hull, IA
Steve Uittenbogaard—Hull, IA
Jonathan Hoksbergen—Hull, IA
Amanda Hoksbergen—Hull, IA
Ryan & Sarah Lanthrop—Spokane, WA

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Jeremy Driesen and Miss Melissa Hoogendoorn—Doon, IA
Mr. Phillip Kleyn and Miss Kristin Brands—Edgerton, MN
Mr. Mike Brummel and Miss Tricia Flikkema—Faith, MI
Mr. Jordan Kamps and Miss Chandra Poortinga—Grandville, MI
Mr. Daryl Koole and Miss Jodianne Meulenberg—Hope, MI
Mr. Brian VanMaanen and Miss Janae Anderson—Hull, IA
Mr. Timothy den Hartog and Miss Carisa Bleyenbergh—Redlands, CA
Mr. Shaun Karsemeyer and Miss Lorianne Van Voorthuysen—Redlands, CA

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

August 24, 1572

... *let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

The heat of August went down with the sun, and darkness settled over the streets of Paris, France. It was the eve of St. Bartholomew's feast, and a royal wedding was in progress, too. All seemed pleasant and safe. All seemed as usual. A maid lit a candle and helped her mistress to bed. A mother prayed for her baby and gently rocked him to sleep. A merchant put his accounts away and bid his wife and children to rest well.

But not all in the city was as usual.

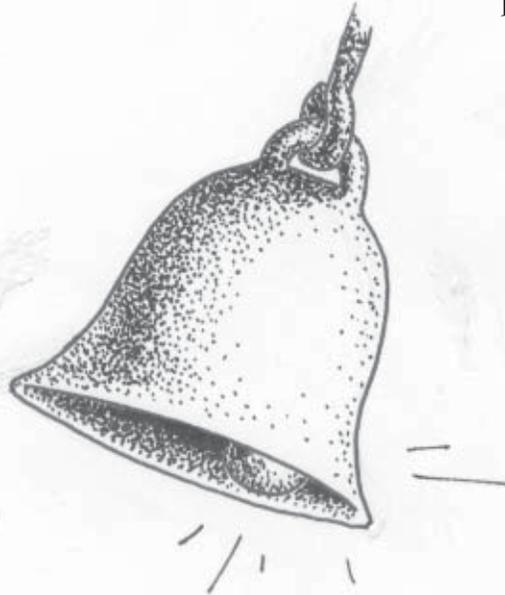
In a hotel room lay an Admiral recovering from murderous wounds—while a great band of soldiers secretly crept into the surrounding streets. In the palace, the king wished a special friend good night—fully knowing his friend would not live to see the morn.

As part of the city slept, another part awaited the signal. With help from his mother, Charles IX, the twenty-two-year-old king of France, gave orders for the bell of St. Germain to ring. Though some of his friends would die, and thousands of his subjects would die, the massacre must begin. They were Huguenots. They were not Catholic. They believed as Calvin and the Reformers, not as the priests and the Pope. And there were too many of them. For that they ought to die. The soldiers heard the bell and began their horrible duty.

One of the first to be attacked was the Huguenot Admiral in bed. Throughout the night and following days it continued across the whole city against anyone found to be Reformed. It continued across all of France.

When news of the horrible night reached the Pope in Rome, bells rang out there too. But they were not bells of sadness and mourning. No, they were bells of rejoicing and glee. Just as Cain was not sorry for killing his brother Abel, so also there was no remorse here. There is no new thing under the sun, saith the Preacher.

But the Huguenots knew Jesus' words. To them, His Word was better than thousands of gold and silver—and even their own lives. In these last days, we have Jesus' words, too. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b). ❖



Find the underlined words from the following parts of Lord's Day 9 in the puzzle below:

Q. 26. What believest thou when thou sayest, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?"

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...is for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father; on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt...that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me, in this valley of tears turn out to my advantage; for he is able to do it...and willing..."

E	Y	E	L	L	A	V	B	E	N
V	L	A	N	R	E	T	E	O	D
I	E	B	G	N	I	L	L	I	W
L	R	L	V	L	Y	I	I	H	V
S	H	E	N	T	I	R	E	L	Y
D	E	G	A	T	N	A	V	D	A
N	A	N	B	W	V	L	E	K	S
E	R	U	T	E	A	R	S	N	D
S	O	G	N	E	A	R	T	H	A
D	E	K	A	S	A	Y	E	S	T

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

BEACONLIGHTS

P.O. BOX 144
Randolph, WI 53956

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

How Can We Improve?

Dear Readers,

I know there are many readers who value the publication of *Beacon Lights*. The staff also feels strongly that God has blessed our churches through the use of this publication. Much of our time the past few months has been dedicated to cleaning up the book keeping and reorganization of the staff to bring timely and accurate mailings.

The new system, however, is worthless without quality material to read. Our churches are filled with ears listening to the wonderful sound preaching of the ministers that God has provided. What then do we read when we get home? We have been blessed for many years with the rich and meaty script of the *Standard Bearer*. Certainly, the *Standard Bearer* is the main course for spiritually mature believers, but there is plenty of room for appetizers and dessert. It is essential that the children start reading from a publication that will be sound and spiritually edifying, and will also lead them to read faithfully from other publications from our churches. The main target of *Beacon Lights* has been our young people. We would like to see *Beacon Lights* buzz with the spiritual life of our young people.

We need your help. The *Beacon Lights* staff needs young people to talk to us. We would like to get a group of young people on our staff that is willing to generate ideas and topics. If you are willing to do this, please let us know. We need teachers and parents to guide us to some key topics you feel are important. We need fresh ideas. What would make *Beacon Lights* a magazine that you can't wait to find in the mail? What would make *Beacon Lights* a magazine that the young people talk about? What would make *Beacon Lights* a magazine that parents and grandparents want to read to find communion of the saints between young and old? Though *Beacon Lights* is targeted at the young people, we feel it is valuable for everyone.

So tell us your ideas. Let us know what you would like to read. It would do the staff and all the readers a great service by answering the following questions and sending it in to us. An email message would also be most welcome.

1) Whose writing would you like to read: more ministers, more young people, more parents, more teachers or _____

2) What type of writing would you like to see: doctrinal articles, stories, articles about people in our churches, variety, or _____

3) Which rubrics do you like best? Number them in the order you read them.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editorial | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruitful Branches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor Profile | <input type="checkbox"/> From the Pastor's Study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Story Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Devotional |

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture | <input type="checkbox"/> Where We Stand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book Reviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Gem of the Month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Lights | <input type="checkbox"/> Church History |

4) Has *Beacon Lights* disappointed you in any way? Please explain. _____

5) What topics would you like to see addressed in *Beacon Lights*? _____

6) How do you feel about an open forum rubric where anonymous questions from the readers are answered? _____

7) Do you have suggestions for the overall appearance of *Beacon Lights*? _____

8) Is there anyone you know who does not get *Beacon Lights* and may benefit from this publication? (*any address submitted will get 6 months free.*) _____

If you have any other ideas or suggestions, please take the time to send them to us. You can tear off this page and mail it to me, write up a note on your own paper, give me a call, or send a note on email. Your time with this is much appreciated. I would also like to thank all those who have spent the time to write articles on topics important to them and have sent them in for publication. Articles that come from your heart are always welcomed.

Beacon Lights
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II Corinthians 9:6-7: "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."