

Beacon Lights

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*“Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God’s truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.”*

– Luther

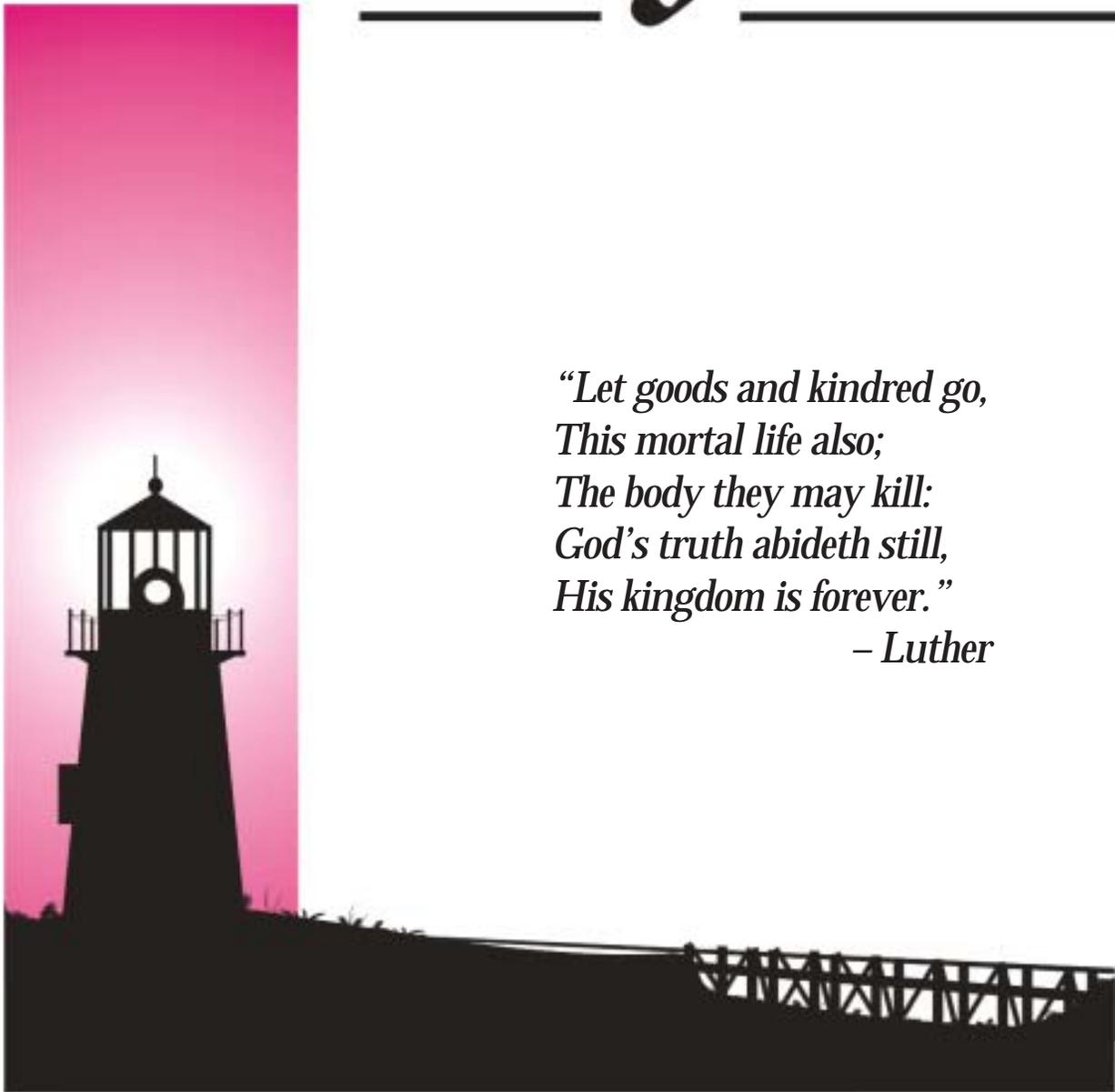


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Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor

Dear John,

I read with interest your Editorial “The Teachers Are Ready Are You?” (August/September 2007).

I disagree with your statement that “the training of children in the schools is the most powerful way to prepare citizens for the kingdom (of God).

I believe the training of children in the church is the most powerful way to prepare citizens for the kingdom of God. That’s where the power of the Holy Spirit works in their hearts through the preaching and catechism and does what the home and school can never do—makes them citizens. Then they become “willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him” (H.C. Lord’s Day 1), at home and in school, serving God in his kingdom.

I look forward to reading more about the seminar “The Kingdom of God and the Protestant Reformed Churches.”

In Christ,
Jeanne Venhuizen

Dear Jeanne,

I appreciate your comments and agree with you. I should have written “a powerful way.” I think I was getting caught up with the concept of public school being a great (perhaps the greatest) influence in preparing citizens for the kingdom of this earth, and too quickly made the contrast with Christian schools and preparation for life in the kingdom of God. God is pleased to use each sphere (church, home, and school) in a unique way for the preparation of citizens in the kingdom.

In Christ,
John

The Gift (6)

by Tom Cammenga

With her hands filled with the dessert dishes she walked from the family room into the kitchen where her husband was already filling the dishwasher. Setting the dishes down on the island behind him, she pulled one of the stools out and sat down.

“Well, I think that went quite well if I do say so myself,” she said as she straightened the flower that sat in the middle of the counter top.

Turning to pick up the dishes she had set on the island her husband put his hands on the counter and smiled.

“Yes it did.” Picking up the dishes he turned and put them in the dishwasher. “He sure didn’t seem to be himself at first but while we were having supper he seemed to relax. I think he even had a good time,” he said as he dried his hands on the towel that lay across his right shoulder.

Janet sat quietly at the island then as her husband put the soap in the dishwasher, shut the door, and started it up. When he turned around she was tracing an imaginary circle on the top of the counter with her index finger, lost in thought. He walked around the island and after he pulled a stool out for himself he gently touched her shoulder.

“Ok, I’ve seen that look before. You’ve got something on your mind, don’t you?”

“Jack, did you see what happened while you were reading the Bible after supper tonight?” she asked after nodding her head yes in answer to his question.

“No,” he said with a questioning look on his face. “But I am sure you will fill me in,” he said with a slight smile.

She turned slightly on her stool so that she faced him.

“He had tears in his eyes Jack. I don’t think anyone noticed it but he had real tears flowing down his cheeks.” She stopped for a moment as if trying to comprehend what she had just said. “I couldn’t believe it... I still can’t

believe it. He has always been such a sweet man but as far as I know he wasn’t religious at all.”

“Well,” Jack said as he sat down and pondered what his wife had just revealed to him. “I guess we just don’t know how the Lord works sometimes. You never know, maybe he is beginning to see what he has been missing all these years. Or, maybe it just reminded him of Jenny.”

Janet looked at her husband for a moment and then as a tear formed in the corner of her eye she said, “Oh, how I wish there was something we could do for him. He must be hurting so much.”

“There is, honey,” he said as he took his wife in his arms. “We can pray. In fact,” he said as he squeezed her tighter, “that is the only thing we can do. Pray and leave it in the hands of Father.”

For a few moments they held each other, each lost in their own thoughts. Both knowing the truth of the words Jack had spoken and yet both feeling so inadequate for the task. Janet finally slowly let go and stood up.

“I suppose we had better get the kids tucked in,” she said as she turned back to look at Jack. “And tonight I know exactly what to pray with them about.”

Jack smiled then as he too stood up and followed his wife upstairs. What a blessing she was! Certainly more precious than rubies! As he walked up the stairs he silently gave thanks to God for her...as he had done so many times before.

After arriving home and filling a small glass with juice the old man sat down in his chair, holding in his hands the tattered and worn Bible that his wife had read for so many years. For a long while he simply sat and stared at the black cover, his eyes studying the gold lettering as his finger slowly traced each letter. His mind however was awash in what seemed like a torrent of thoughts and memories. Finally he gently opened it and began searching for the passage that Jack had read after

supper. Though he did not know the Bible well, he knew exactly where to find this passage.

There was no way for Jack to have known that the passage he had selected to read after supper were the same words the old man had last read to his wife in the final hours of her earthly sojourn. These were the last words she had asked him to read and though he had at first objected and even argued with her, he had read them after all. He had read them even though he wasn't sure that she could hear him. He had read them even though he didn't want to.

The passage he searched for and finally found after a minute or so was Romans 8:24–39. After adjusting his glasses he began to read.

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at

the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When he had read these words to his wife they had seemed to be just that—words. But as Jack had read them and now as he read them over and over again they seemed to speak to his wounded soul. The word “hope” held a new meaning and though he couldn't explain it, and though he didn't even understand it himself, he was sure that there was something there that he had been missing for a long, long time.

With a multitude of questions and as many doubts running through his mind he got ready for bed. As he pulled the covers back in order to crawl into bed he glanced at the Bible that he had placed on the night stand. For a fleeting moment he considered saying a prayer but the confusion in his heart and soul extinguished the thought as quickly as it had arisen. After all, even if there was a God, how could he make up for all the years he had not believed?

The activities of the night had taken their toll on him though and within mere minutes he had drifted off to sleep. Although he had feared that the dreams would return to interrupt his night once again, they remained outside of his consciousness and he slept soundly. At some point, however, before he faded off to sleep he had reached out and lay his hand on the old Bible. His last thought before sleep overtook him was of his dear wife.



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

Hebrews 11

by David Warner

1. *Faith is the substance of things which we hope for,
The evidence of things which we can't see,
but grope for.*
2. *The elders who on this faith were firmly stood
Obtained a report that was honest and good.*
3. *Through faith's eyes we know, it isn't absurd,
That the worlds and all in them were framed
by God's Word.
So all things we see now that do exist here
Were certainly not made of things which appear.*
4. *By faith Abel offered his choicest sheep,
The best from the flock which he did keep.
Of his gifts God the Lord had testified
And witnessed this righteous man, now justified.
His sacrifice was better than that of Cain,
The earth drank the blood up of Abel, the slain.
And though the blood of this first martyr
was shed,
By faith he yet speaks to us all from the dead.*
5. *By faith Enoch was taken away
And God didn't give him a dying day,
But translated him up to heaven above
Because he had walked with and pleased God
in love.*
6. *But without faith one cannot truly please
God,
For one that comes unto Him with praise
and laud
Must believe that He is, and that He will
reward*
- Those that truthfully, diligently seek for the
Lord.*
7. *By faith Noah God's warning did hear,
Preparing an ark and moving with fear.
The world was condemned by the Flood so great,
But the Church had been saved in the ark –
just the eight –
For of faith's righteousness Noah was heir,
He and his family were all in God's care.*
8. *By faith Abraham the call did obey
And in his homeland he did not stay,
Knowing not where he went, in God he believed,
The inheritance land he thus received.*
9. *By faith he sojourned in the promised land,
And in this strange land did heed God's
command.
Both Isaac and Jacob blessed God's holy name
To be heirs with their fathers, their promise
the same.*
10. *He looked for a city which hath firm
foundations,
The builder of which is the King of all
nations.*
11. *By faith also Sara gained strength to conceive
And did in her old age a child receive.
She judged him who promised a faithful one
Who was able to give her, the barren, a son.*
12. *There sprung from just one old and almost
dead man
More sons than the stars in the heavenly
span,
Innumerable, like the sand of the shore,
For God His promises cannot ignore.*
13. *Having not received the promise themselves
yet,*

- They died and with the Lord were met,
Persuaded of promises seen afar off,
They embraced them amid every sneer, every
scoff.
As strangers and pilgrims on earth they
confessed
That through their rejection by earth, they
were blessed.*
14. *They declared plainly for what they had
sought,
Their seeking a country had not been for
naught.*
15. *And if they were mindful of whence they
came out
They could have returned to it, without a
doubt.*
16. *But now they desire a heavenly place
Where God is called their God with
unashamed face
And shows to His people His mercy and pity,
Preparing a place for them each in His city.*
17. *By faith through the trial Abraham didn't
falter,
Offering his only begotten on the altar.*
18. *Because in Isaac his seed would be called,
In this same act he was not appalled,*
19. *For God would be able to raise from the
grave
From whence unto Abraham a figure God
gave.*
20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau;
Though blind, the things yet to come Isaac
saw.*
21. *By faith Jacob blessed when he was near
death
Manasseh and Ephraim with his last breath.
The only True God He worshipped and
praised
While the staff which he leaned upon kept
him raised.*
22. *By faith Joseph told Israel they'd one day
leave Egypt
And with his own people his bones must be
shipped.*
23. *By faith Moses was a proper child,
Hidden three months by his parents mild,
Who were not afraid of the king's command,
Entrusting all things into God's sovereign
hand.*
24. *Though found in the Nile River's water,
He wouldn't be called son of Pharaoh's
daughter.*
25. *Affliction and trouble did Moses endure,
Choosing rather to suffer with God's people
pure
Than taking the pleasures of sin for a season,
But in choosing thus, Moses had reason:*
26. *For treasures in Egypt were far lower priced
Than that which is found in the reproach of
Christ.*
27. *By faith Moses made Egypt's people forsaken,
Feared not the wrath of Pharaoh, was not
shaken,
For Moses endured and he persevered,
As seeking the Invisible One whom he feared.*
28. *Through faith Moses had the great Passover
kept,
So only Egyptians the next morning wept
In rooms of their firstborns, now empty and
void—
Where there was no lamb's blood, the angel
destroyed.*
29. *By faith had the Israelites from Egypt fled,
They passed through the sea that is still now
called Red.
Israel crossed where God made it dry ground,
God caused all the chasing Egyptians to be
drowned.*
30. *By faith did the city of Jericho fall
After Israel marched around the great wall,
Doing it God's own specific way,
The Canaanite town fell the seventh day.*
31. *By faith Rahab died not as a wicked harlot,
For Israel saw her cord hanging scarlet.
She was spared alive as one who believed
Because she had peacefully spies received.*
32. *And what else can I tell about?
For time would surely soon run out*

*Before I told of Gideon
 Or told of Barak, or of Samson,
 Jephthae, David, Samuel too,
 And all the other prophets who*
 33. *Through faith subdued the mighty kingdom,
 Made righteousness to Israel come,
 Who all the promises obtained,
 Stopped the mouths of the lions maned,*
 34. *Quenched the violence of fire,
 Escaped the sword's edge in times dire,
 Out of weakness were made strong,
 And amid the alien throng
 Turned the enemy to flight
 And waxed valiant in the fight.*
 35. *I could tell of faithful women,
 Their dead were raised to life again.
 Tortured prophets wouldn't take
 Deliverance – they'd rather wake
 In a glorious perfection
 Through death and the resurrection.*
 36. *Others were cruelly scourged and mocked,
 In bonds and prisons they were locked,*
 37. *Stoned and tempted, sawn asunder,
 Slain by sword, or else they'd wander
 Clad in skins of goat or sheep
 They'd sow a lot, but little reap.
 Chosen by God as subjects sent
 To bear destitution, affliction, torment.*

38. *The world wasn't worthy of these men of
 God,
 It saw them as vagabonds wandering
 abroad,
 Through deserts they traveled, bearing the
 heat,
 In mountains they tried to find a retreat.
 They went to the dens and the caves of the
 earth,
 Yet none of them starved in the times of
 great dearth.*
 39. *These all had obtained through their faith
 good reports
 But entered into the Lord's heavenly courts
 Not having received the Promise yet,
 Their Savior on whom their eyes were set.*
 40. *God having provided for us something
 better –
 We read of it in His own Word, His love
 letter –
 They should not be made to be perfect
 without us,
 'Til all of the Church has been gathered
 about us. ❖*

*David is a member of Peace Protestant Reformed
 Church in Lansing, Illinois. He wrote this poem as
 a senior at Heritage Christian High School.*

Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

Victory in the Valley

by Ryan Barnhill

God has visited his church numerous times throughout the past few years. Yes, God is always with his church, and constantly provides for all her needs. These visits however were special visits. These visits included the taking of a loved one to glory, or another especially difficult trial. You may have

wondered as I have, why does God do these things? How do these trials benefit me in my life on this earth? From what in God's Word can I draw strength during these difficult trials? My favorite verse in Scripture is found in Isaiah 40:31. This verse centers on the comfort that a Christian has in God's sustaining grace by using the pic-

ture of an eagle. We can all benefit from a brief study of the biology of an eagle and how God, in his infinite wisdom, used even an example of the eagle to teach his people about comfort.

As a part of the 2007 graduating class at Covenant Christian High School, we can tell you first-hand that God has given us as students special visits over the past few years. God has taken from our midst two dear students, as well as parents of students. No matter where you live, you all very well know of at least a few loved ones who have passed on to glory “before their time.” One does not have to search very long surfing the web, reading the daily paper, or watching world news to see that everyday Christians are persecuted and even killed for their faith. Perhaps last Sunday your minister announced that a father or mother in your congregation has been diagnosed with cancer. When we see these trials and afflictions, our finite minds cry out, “Why Lord? Why this particular person at this time?” During this time you and I must look to God’s Word to answer those questions.

Isaiah 40:31 is a fascinating verse. It is especially interesting because God uses a picture that we can easily understand. It may not surprise you that God uses the eagle as a picture in this verse. Throughout history, eagles have been seen as strong birds. If you have ever seen them up close in the wild, at the zoo, or have seen pictures of them in a book, you will see their strength. You can easily imagine an eagle gracefully gliding with the wind currents on his seven foot wingspan. He sweeps the ground with his sharp yellow eyes, looking for prey from his position at hundreds of feet above the earth. He suddenly swoops with a speed of around one hundred miles per hour, extending his talons to catch a helpless rabbit. By his sheer strength, he is able to carry the four pound rabbit back to his nest, where he is able to feed his eaglets. His nest alone weighs nearly two tons after a life full of gathering sticks and branches to build his home. No, there is no question that the eagle is one of the stronger, if not the strongest, birds on this earth.

It is *this* bird, first, that we are compared to. “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...” Eagles undergo a fascinating process at about the midpoint of their life called molting. During this process, the eagle suffers a chemical change in his body. At this time, a number of things will happen to the eagle. He seeks out a secluded valley where he will lose his feathers, lose weight, and even make his talons brittle by digging them in the dirt. His head is constantly in a stooped

position because of the weight of calcium build-up on his beak. His vision starts to weaken and is he unable to fly because of his lack of strength. The end result is that he walks around like a pathetic turkey because he is incapable of doing anything else!

That is not the end of the eagle’s life however. There is yet hope for that poor secluded bird in the depths of the valley. At the end of the molting cycle, the eagle will find a rock where he soaks up the sun. At this time, eagles that have already gone through the molting cycle will begin to drop pieces of meat down to that eagle. After a period of time, the molting eagle will begin to gain its strength back, and is soon able to fly again. In this way, the eagle renews his strength.

No wonder God used this creature for our comfort in times of trial! There are so many applications that we can draw from this verse alone. Have there been times when you have felt like the eagle in the gloom of the secluded valley? Have there been times in your life when you have been too weak to lift your head or see clearly? What a wonderful promise is yours in the beginning of this verse! Jehovah shall renew your strength! He feeds you spiritual meat from his Word and through prayer, and feeds you that meat through our ministers chiefly, but also through your teachers, parents, relatives, and friends. He causes your feathers to grow again so that you can once again soar to Him in confidence.

The verse reads on to say that “they (us as believers) shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Eagles have an interesting way of teaching their young the art of flying. At a young age, parent eagles will show their eaglets the way a mature eagle lives by soaring over the nest. After a time, the parent eagles will remove the soft lining from the bottom of the nest, making the nest less comfortable for the eaglet to live in. After that, the eagles will lift the eaglet to the lip of the nest, where the mother will suddenly push the eaglet down. Meanwhile, the male eagle monitors this whole process very carefully from above. When the eaglet is pushed out of the nest, the father will wait for a few seconds before shooting downward with breathtaking speed to catch the eaglet on his wings before it is crushed by the ground. The parents, sometimes switching roles, will repeat this whole process over and over until the eaglet learns to flap its wings, catch the wind current, and begin flying.

There is a beautiful application here too. Why does God send us trials? Through these trials, as also illustrated by the second part of this verse, God teaches us to

“fly.” He teaches us that trials are for the good of our salvation. Surely, we do not see that truth very well as we walk through our journey on this earth. Nor does the eaglet see the mother’s decision to push it out of the nest as very wise either. We can agree that the eaglet would be foolish to think that its mother was pushing it out of the nest to kill it. Are we not also foolish then if we think that God sends us trials to weaken our faith, or to cause our downfall? Yet, you and I often fail in this regard. Our human nature constantly questions God’s providential hand. Do you not look forward to that day when you shall see how your trials and afflictions have molded you into someone who is perfectly fit for your heavenly place? Do you and I reflect back on our life and praise God for the good that has come even out of a death or serious disease?

You may have wondered, “What is the basis of this comfort?” We have talked about means by which we receive this comfort, and results of this comfort, but the foundation of our comfort has not yet been described. You know as well as I do that Jesus Christ is found on every page of Scripture. This page, and more narrowly, this verse, is no exception. There is a reason that the name Lord, or Jehovah Salvation, is used in this verse. He is a God of salvation! He sends His only begotten Son into the world so that poor sinners are made rich! *Grace* is the basis of our comfort. This is supported in a commentary that I was reading about Isaiah 40:31 which said that “Those who trust to their own sufficiency, and are so confident of it that they neither exert themselves

to the utmost nor seek unto God for his grace, are the youth and the young men, who are strong, but are apt to think themselves stronger than they are.” We are saved from the clutches of death, and from the slave of sin. Listen to the words of Paul: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” This verse in Isaiah would give us no comfort if we ourselves had to renew our strength. This verse would give us no comfort if we had to mount up on our own wings. No! Salvation is all of God in Jesus Christ! *Jehovah* mounts us up on his wings. *Jehovah* renews our strength by His sustaining grace so that we are able to walk and run our spiritual journey in this life. Thanks be to *Jehovah* for giving us that which we could never do or merit ourselves. Thanks be to *Jehovah* for giving us eternal life through Jesus Christ—an eternal life in the blessed city where we shall never grow weary, and where we shall live in thankful praise for our salvation!

May God give us the strength to live every day of our lives resting on the wings of His wonderful grace in Jesus Christ. There is peace in the valley! ❖

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Church Family

Glory in the Lord

by Kris Moelker

Are we living the way we are commanded to live? Or are we giving in to our sinful natures? Do we go about our studies, employment and other daily activities humbly serving the Lord by serving others? Or are we letting the sin of pride dominate our lives?

All of us have to fight the sin of pride all life long. We can so easily elevate ourselves above others when we hear either good or bad news about others. Immedi-

ately we can speak words and think thoughts that give in to our sinful natures. “I would never do that,” or “I would have done that differently if you would ask me.” We say such phrases or think such thoughts or hear them from the lips of others. Then we go about our activities without considering that these phrases or thoughts are the result of falling into the sin of pride.

As we consider this, we realize that we have to constantly battle pride. All sin is rooted in pride because our human natures think we are wiser than God. Remember how Satan spoke through the serpent to Eve when he tempted her to partake of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In Genesis 3:4, 5 we read, “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” This was the serpent’s response to Eve when she tells him they may not eat or touch the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil lest they die. In pride Eve adds to God’s command to them, and this was wrong for her to do. God did not forbid them from touching the tree’s fruit, but he commanded them to not eat it. She then sees that the fruit of the tree was desirable to her eyes, took of it and ate it. She gave the fruit to Adam and he ate of it.

Through this sin of our first parents, the whole human race along with the creation fell under the curse. Think about how dreadful the sin of pride is. Because of sinful pride, a beautiful creation became ugly. Adam and Eve had been created to bear the image of God and now they needed to be covered with clothes to hide the shame their naked bodies displayed as a result of their sin against their God and Creator. They attempted to cover themselves by making aprons out of fig leaves, but God clothed them with coats of skins. Blood had to be shed and animals had to die because of Adam’s sin. Shedding the blood of animals for sacrifice in the Old Testament points towards the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He is the Lamb of God who willingly sacrificed his life as he died on the cross to pay for this original sin and all the sins of his people.

Meditating on this great truth should cause us to humbly thank God for paying the ultimate price for our sins. We do not deserve this gracious gift of God to us. We deserve to be cast into hell forever. We deserve to spend eternity paying for our sins. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Because Christ suffered the agony of hell and died the death we deserved to die, we will spend eternity in heaven thanking him for our great salvation. He was forsaken as he gave his life for us so that we can enjoy fellowship with God forever. He paid the debt we owed God so that we have the privilege of being taken to heaven when we die. This should always be the reason for our humility.

Our duty to glory in the Lord is a duty we must not take lightly. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God demands of Judah that they glory in him only: “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24). The apostle Paul refers to the passage in Jeremiah in I Corinthians 1:31, “That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” We are called to glory in the Lord constantly throughout life. We may not take any breaks from this duty. God demands this of all of his people including young people.

As young people of the Church, you must be constantly aware that the battle against the sin of pride is fierce. Throughout the day, you must ask God for strength to fight this battle. You cannot fight this battle alone, for then you will certainly fall into the snare of the devil. Remember this as you wake up in the morning to prepare for the day. Think about this as you attend your classes and thank the Lord for your teachers. As you go to your place of employment, humbly ask the Lord for the strength to please him. In your recreation, seek to do the activities which would glorify his Name. Pray for grace to keep your mind fixed on him. At the end of the day, think about the activities you were engaged in and where you fell short of your calling to glory in the Lord. Then go to God in prayer confessing your sins and asking him for forgiveness.

As you strive to glory in the Lord you will experience the blessing of the Lord. The Lord is pleased when you glory in his name. Seek to please him always. When you are faced with peer pressure to give into pride, pray for the grace to resist this temptation. The more you think about the Lord and the great salvation he has given you, the easier it will be to give him the glory. Encourage each other as fellow saints to honor the Lord at all times. Continue to grow together in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Use the opportunities he has given you in your home, school, worship services, catechism and society to learn more of him. Trust God for the strength to daily fight the battle of faith and then humbly thank him for the grace he gives you to serve him each day of your life. ❖

Kris is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Skip Hunter

October 16 Read Psalm 18:25-36

Who is God? “God is God” were the first words spoken by Rev. H. H. Hoeksema during the first Reformed Witness Hour broadcast. To know God is to know his attributes. As the people of God, we must know who he is. Our goal in this next series of devotionals will be to know God by learning about his attributes. By knowing God we can serve him and glorify him. Let us remember and confess that God is God and there is none like him. Sing Psalter 316.

October 17 Read Psalm 69:16-30

In yesterday’s Psalter number we sang about a few of God’s attributes. We will look at God’s lovingkindness today. We read in this Messianic prophecy of his lovingkindness towards his own Son. It is the same lovingkindness that he provides for us. No matter what the circumstances, he is always with us. He is loving because he is our Father. He is kind because we are his children. With his arms he holds us and keeps us in his care. Sing Psalter 187.

October 18 Read Isaiah 49:14-21

God is faithful. Of that we have no reason to doubt. He will care for us at all times. We never have to doubt our salvation. In his faithfulness he watches over us. He is faithful even when we are unfaithful. In this world, fathers and mothers leave even very young children. But as we read in today’s text, God will never leave us. We can be assured that he will faithfully see us through this life into glorious eternity. Sing Psalter 72.

October 19 Read III John

God is truth. Because truth is his, we know most assuredly that our salvation is sure. There is no truth in the world apart from God. We know that even our best words are lies because they are polluted with sin. But with God it is not so. By faith we can know that he is truth and speaks the truth at all times. When our children walk in that truth, we have the greatest joy possible in this life. Is that your desire, young people, to walk in God’s truth? Sing Psalter 68.

October 20 Read Ephesians 1:4-12

God is gracious. What a beautiful truth! We, who see sin all around us and in us, can be comforted that God is gracious. What is grace? Grace is God’s unmerited favor towards those he has chosen in Christ. Notice, it is unmerited. Nothing

that we can do can save us. There is nothing that we must or can do. That alone is comforting because we know who we are. It is favor. God loves us. In that love he has favored us with salvation. This grace is only towards the elect. As God’s people we can begin and end each day in the confidence that God is gracious towards us. I know that the elderly understand this attribute well. May our young people and children learn to grow in the grace of God. Sing Psalter 164.

October 21 Read Revelation 4

One truth of God that is denied in the world today is his sovereignty. Few want God to be in control of every aspect of their lives. Man wants to be in control, and if God is sovereign, man has no control. Those who believe in evolution deny God’s sovereignty. Those who deny certain parts of Scripture want nothing to do with God’s sovereignty. When we acknowledge the power of God, we truly understand who God is. When we honestly look at our lives, we will confess that only by God’s sovereignty all things work for our good. Deny God’s sovereignty and you will have nothing on to which to hold. Sing Psalter 266.

October 22 Read Lamentations 3:18-26

Our God is merciful. What a blessed truth! He is merciful in that by his grace we are not destroyed on account of our sins. He is merciful in that he cares for us in this world of sin. Mercy is a beautiful attribute because we become aware of it each and every day as the prophet said in today’s reading. God’s mercy is everlasting. It never wears out or runs out. Men can be merciful to a creature or to each other, but a change in mood can do away with that mercy. This is not so with God. God is always merciful, and that mercy is always sufficient. People of God, meditate on that mercy each and every day and then give thanks to our merciful God. Sing Psalter 281.

October 23 Read John 17:1-8

At the beginning of this set of devotionals we spoke of knowing God. Well, we cannot know God if God is not knowable. There are subjects in this world that are mysteries to some of us. Some of us cannot fathom nuclear physics or quantum mechanics, or even auto mechanics. We are unable to know them. But one of God’s attributes is that we can know him. By his Word and creation we can know our heavenly

Father. This knowledge is not just head knowledge. It is the comforting knowledge of a God who loves us. He reveals himself to his people in a special way. Through Christ we can gain a knowledge that comforts us in whatever station of life that we find ourselves. Through our knowledge of God we can rest assured that he is our God and we are his people. Sing Psalter 64.

October 24 Read John 4:21-26

One of God's attributes is that he is spiritual. Now this is not an easy concept to understand. Maybe the easiest way to begin to understand this idea is to know that God is neither earthly nor created. By understanding these ideas, we can dismiss many of the misconceptions of God that are in the world today. Because God is spiritual, he is invisible, indivisible, and independent. These are just a few of the aspects of God who is spiritual. Because God is spiritual, we can rely on him trusting that he has no earthly or creaturely failings that characterize us. This also tells us how we must worship him. As Christ said we must worship him "in spirit and in truth". God is not a God to be worshiped in any other way than he has appointed in his Word. Let us worship him who is spirit in this way and in this way only. Sing Psalter 204.

October 25 Read Romans 11:30-36

Two days ago we spoke of God's knowability. Today we will look at his knowledge. There are two types of knowledge that God has. First of all there is that knowledge which he has toward his creation. Because of this knowledge nothing can hide from God. His eyes are upon all aspects of his creation. His knowledge compasses all things. This is not the knowledge that man has. Man's knowledge is flawed. Man's knowledge about creation is limited. God's knowledge is perfect and unlimited. The second part of that knowledge is God's knowledge of love towards his people. This, too, is a special knowledge. It is specific towards those whom he has chosen in Christ. It is love for them by which he sent his Son to die on the cross. God's knowledge is wonderful surpassing any knowledge that man can have. Let us be thankful that he knows us and cares for us. Sing Psalter 325.

October 26 Read Psalm 145:14-21

God is righteous. Because God is righteous, we have great comfort. His righteousness means that he will not change. There is no error in him. He is holy, and in that holiness what he says and proclaims will surely come to pass. In God's righteousness he gives to his people salvation, which will surely come to pass. In doing this he imputes to us wretched sinners righteousness. Because of this we can be assured that our salvation is sure; that he will take us to everlasting glory. God's righteousness brings to us comfort at the grave of a loved saint. We mourn their leaving us, but we do not have to mourn their next state. God is righteous; he takes his loved ones to him. Because God is righteous, we must be thankful to him for our salvation. Let us do this as we sing and turn to him in prayer. Sing Psalter 192:1, 2, 5 & 6.

October 27 Read Numbers 14:13-19

Our God is a longsuffering God. He is longsuffering towards his people who are sinners. In his longsuffering he sees us as we sorrow. This could be the sorrow over sin either in ourselves or in someone we love. Because God is longsuffering he helps us come to him in our sad condition. He helps us find the way to walk in the right path or help someone to walk on that path. He also is longsuffering towards his people as they suffer through pain or even death. In his longsuffering he is merciful and helps us to find grace in time of need. He will wipe away our tears when no one else can. We wait for Christ's return. Has God forgotten us? No, in his longsuffering towards his people, he cares for us each and every day until Christ does return. Be comforted in these things, beloved people of God. Sing Psalter 191:1, 2 & 4.

October 28 Read Psalm 90:1-9

"From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." What comforting words are these to God's people. God is eternal. Because he is eternal we know that he will always be just as he has always been. Because he is eternal, he is unchangeable. In contrast to man who is like grass, God never will pass away. Because he will never pass away none of his attributes will pass away. We can always be assured of his mercy, love, grace, truth, and so forth. Especially we can be sure of our salvation. Young people, you have not lived long on this earth. Talk to your grandparents. They will tell you of the comfort derived from the fact that God is the eternal unchangeable one. Sing 247.

October 29 Read I John 4:7-16

One of God's most amazing but most misunderstood attributes is his love. It is amazing because God loves those who of themselves cannot love him. He loves those who of themselves do not want to love him. In fact he loves those who quite often hate him. It is misunderstood primarily because many wish to believe that God loves all men. Nothing can be farther from the truth. God's love, like his grace, is particular. It is particular to those whom he has chosen. Because God loves us, we must love others. This is one of his communicable attributes. We cannot love like God, but we must love out of thankfulness for his love towards us. Do this today, people of God of all ages. Let us love God and also love our neighbors as ourselves. Sing Psalter 79.

October 30 Read Isaiah 6:1-7

Our God is a holy God. His holiness stands opposed to this unholy world. He is spotlessly clean in all his ways. There is no spot of wrongdoing to be found in God. We cannot or may not question God because he is holy. Because he is holy, all that is connected to him must be holy. His word is holy and therefore must be believed. His worship must be holy. And most importantly his people must be holy. We are called to be holy. Of ourselves we cannot do this. By his grace we can. Young people, do you seek holy entertainment with your

friends? Do you seek the holy things of God? God is holy, and we, his people, must too be holy. Sing Psalter 265.

October 31 Read Daniel 2:17-23; 28-30

God is all-wise. Wisdom is different than knowledge. Wisdom is that proper use of knowledge for some purpose. For God that purpose is the salvation of his people. God's wisdom is high. It is past our understanding. It is alive, and in its life it brings us to glory. God's wisdom brings his church to his appointed end. That is what we celebrate today. The great Reformation was ordained by a wise God for his glory. It was ordained to bring his church to glory. What comforting thoughts we can have today. Let us remember them when we celebrate Reformation Day. Finally, Christ is God's wisdom. Our Savior was made wisdom for us in order that we could be saved. Sing Psalter 42.

November 1 Read James 1:16-25

Our God is unchangeable. A term we use for this attribute is immutable. This is a comforting thought to us. Because God is unchangeable, he will keep the covenant that he has established with us. Man breaks promises he makes. We see this in the ugly sin of divorce. God, however, will never divorce his people. No matter how unfaithful we are, God is immutable. He will keep us in that covenant that he and only he has established with us in Christ. Young people, you do not have to look to the future in fear. God will not change. Just as he has cared for your parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents, he will care for you. He will care for his church of which you are a member. He cared for the church of the Old Testament, of the New Testament, of the Reformation, of today, and of the future. Because he will not change, he will care for his church into eternity. Sing Psalter 275.

November 2 Read Job 42:1-6

God's attributes are interconnected. We have become aware of that fact even as we have studied them. The attribute of God's omnipotence is no different. God cannot be omnipotent without being sovereign. God cannot be omnipotent without being immutable. We could go on and on. Being omnipotent means that God is all-powerful. His power extends over all parts of creation. We see this during hurricane season, tornado season, and now as we in the Northern hemisphere are beginning to experience winter season. We see God's power in the storms, but we do not have to fear. He has power over the storm. True, God's people have been killed in storms. But that does not mean God lost his power, but rather God in his power used the storm to take his people to glory. God's omnipotence gives to us the comfort that no other power can separate us from his love. Sing Psalter 241:1, 7-9.

November 3 Read John 5:25-31

We have alluded to God's independency before. God is God means God is independent. He was not created. He was not "dreamed up" by someone. God was, and is, and is to come. In his independence he has no need of anyone or anything else. If you look at other gods in this world, you will see a lack of independency. Man does not want his god to be independent, for if his god is independent man must be dependent. People of God, our independent God is a source of great comfort for us. Because he is independent, he gave to us the independent Christ who redeemed us from our sins. No dependent being could do this. This is evident from the picture worship of the Old Testament church. The blood of countless sacrifices was only a picture. Christ is the sacrifice for the church. No dependent God could be that sacrifice. Thanks be to God! Sing Psalter 203.

November 4 Read Jeremiah 23:23-32

God is everywhere and is everywhere present. What an awesome idea this is! Take a look outside at night. When you see the myriads of stars you get a little idea of God's omnipresence. We know that all creation is under his hand. With so many stars, we see that omnipresence. Now look at a seashore. Do you see the many sands of the many seas? Is not God omnipresent? Is not God's church scattered through the length and breadth of this earth? Does not God care for each of his saints? Do we not see his omnipresence? We often are afraid because God is omnipresent. We should be comforted. No matter where we go, or what we do, God is there. Let us be assured by God's omnipresence. Sing Psalter 384.

November 5 Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9

God is one. We have been looking at various attributes of God. We may be tempted to surmise that God is made up of parts. The idea of the trinity sometimes leads men to believe that there are three Gods. Scripture is adamant on the truth that God is one. In his oneness there is no division. There is no "civil war." There is complete unity within God. Our God who is a spirit is one. Because he is one our salvation is sure. The love that he gives to his people is an unfeigned love because he is one. As the "Essentials book" puts it, because God is one there are no other gods. This gives us complete trust in the one holy God. Sing Psalter 352.

November 6 Read Zephaniah 3:5-13

Our God is a just God. Now this idea can bring terror to the hearts of God's people. Because he is just, we should all be doomed to everlasting punishment. But because of Christ's sacrifice God's justice was satisfied and we are found innocent before the judgment seat of God. Because God is a just God he not only punishes the evildoer, but he rewards the good with good. Now we know that no one is good apart from the grace of God. That is true. Nonetheless, God rewards the good. That is a comforting part of his justice. Oh, yes, this cannot be disconnected from his mercy. The two go hand in

hand together. That is the comfort that we have. Our just God is merciful in his justice. Sing Psalter 253:1, 7, 9, 12.

November 7 Read Jeremiah 9:12-14; 23-24

Do we think we know all about God now? Have we exhausted all knowledge about God and his attributes? Nothing can be farther from the truth! We are mere creatures. We struggle to learn a little about God, and we forget what we have learned. We try to understand, and we end up more con-

fused than when we started. Should we just throw up our hands and say, "What's the use? Who can know God?" That's what Satan wants us to do. He wants us to quit studying. He wants us to quit meditating upon God's Word. He wants you, children and young people, to quit memorizing God's Word. No, God will help us. Because he is love, because he is merciful, because he is wise; he will help us know him and know him as the true God. Continue to study and to know him as the God that he is. Sing Psalter 333.

Memoir of Rev. C. Hanko

Rev. C. Hanko

Chapter 27

World Tour of 1975

edited by Karen Van Baren

In A Watered Garden, Gertrude Hoeksema refers to the 1970s as a time of outreach for the PRC. Some of our contacts included those from New Zealand and Australia who were unhappy with the pastors coming from the Reformed Theological College in Geelong, Australia. Other contacts included those of the Gospel Literature and Tract Society in Singapore. Those who desire to read more about this trip can consult the late 1975 and early 1976 issues of the Standard Bearer.

In 1975, I took a world tour with the Hoeksemas, and in the meantime did some work for the churches. We had a layover in Los Angeles. Homer and Trude Hoeksema left us temporarily on another flight to visit some islands in the southern Pacific. Beth Bos, my granddaughter, was paged to have some error in her tickets corrected. When that was taken care of, we left for Hawaii. We arrived in the hotel in Hawaii about six o'clock, which was midnight back home. After dinner all were ready for bed.

The next morning we took in some of the scenery, but in the early afternoon Beth and Verna Klamer (now Verna Terpstra), her traveling companion, had to take their plane to Hong Kong, and then to Singapore, where we would meet them in about four weeks.

At 1 a.m. I boarded the plane for New Zealand. This was a large plane, and I was amazed to see people streaming in with hats, overcoats, and all kinds of winter clothing. But on Wednesday at 8 a.m. I arrived in Auckland,

and came to the full realization that this was the first day of winter there. It was actually a nice day, but one could wear more than the clothing we wore in Hawaii where it was 92 degrees.

Mr. Van Dalen and his son Rich, members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand, met me at the airport. I stayed with them over night, after they had taken me around to see the city. There I had my first experience with the cold of winter. This home, as the others, had no central heating. The only warm room in the house was the kitchen, where we sat until bedtime. As I prepared to retire, my feet became like blocks of ice. After a short time in bed, I decide to go to the bathroom, where I might be able to warm up. Instead I met the wind blowing in from the vents in the wall. But on the way back to bed, I discovered a sheep skin rug. This I wrapped around my feet, and soon went off to sleep. My first lesson Down Under: Don't take your shoes off until you are sitting on the bed, ready to crawl in!

The next day I met Homer and Trude in Wellington, where we went to a restaurant with Mr. Van Rij, Mr. Van Herk, Mr. Kuppa, and Mr. Vooys and some ministers in the area. Homer and Trude went with Mr. Van Rij to Christchurch, while I stayed in Wellington to preach for ten people twice on Sunday. On Monday, I went to Christchurch. We spent the evening in discussion with a large number of people, and the next day went on to Dunedin. After a few days there we went north to the city of Nelson to meet with a mixed group of people. I

stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Button, who were definitely English, even in their way of living. They had been Episcopalian, but had left their church, yet were far from being Reformed. At the cottage meeting that evening Mr. Button burst forth, "Do you mean that God creates people to burn them up? What a conceit to think you are elect, while others are damned." After he quieted down, we referred him to Romans 9. Later, before we left, I had a calmer discussion with him. Thereupon we returned to Christchurch, had another meeting there, and then went off to Australia.

On Tuesday, at 9:30 a.m., we arrived in Melbourne, where we were met by Mr. Van Beelen, who was under censure, because he opposed Rev. Woudstra, professor in Geelong seminary, for his views on creation and predestination. In regard to the latter, Rev. Woudstra taught that God chose Abraham, later Israel, and now the church to win souls for Jesus.¹

After a five hour wait, we took the plane to Tasmania, arriving in Wynyard, where we had a discussion on the covenant in the afternoon and a lecture at night. There we met the Kleyns and the Bosvelds.² I stayed with and had a pleasant visit with the Bosvelds. From there we went to Launceston where we met a group of about thirty people, and where the subject of supra and infralapsarianism came up. This Sunday morning Prof. Hoeksema preached for Rev. Rodman in Launceston.³ I preached in St. Andrew's cathedral, where Rev. Miller was minister. This was a wonderful experience, especially listening to the large pipe organ and preaching from a pulpit on the wall. After the service, we all had dinner with the Connors, after which Rev. Rodman took us to Winnaleah, where we met in the home of the Cairns.⁴

On Monday, we saw a farm of kangaroos, wallabees and foresters (a large, gray kangaroo), after which Rev. Rodman took us through the rain forest between Winnaleah and St. Helens, and then on to the peninsula and Port Arthur, where in previous years English prisoners were kept.

In the evening we met the Terry Kingston family. I enjoyed my stay at the Kingstons very much. The next morning the people showed us their little church in the woods, which meant so much to them. Rev. Rodman took us to the plane that brought us back to the mainland. There we spent the day in the hotel, since all three had the diarrhea, resulting from the water we drank on the island of Tasmania.

The next day Mr. Van Beelen met us and took us to a motel in Geelong.



Prof. Hoeksema with Bosveld boys in Tasmania, Australia

We found the seminary in Geelong to be nothing more than an old pickle factory, remodeled to suit the needs of the school. The rooms were large, cold and bare with a few chairs and a small heater located somewhere in the room. There was a dungeon below where classes were held. The school had only three professors and twelve students. We invited the professors to come to the motel for a dinner, at Mr. Van Beelen's expense, but they refused. One student, a Mr. De Graauw, arranged to have the students meet with us at the Commodore Motel, where we were staying. As a result twelve students came, three professors to keep an eye on the affair and two ministers. We spent an interesting afternoon with them, since they pressed us with many questions about common grace and the free offer, most of which we had heard often in the past. One professor remarked that it was like Paul and Silas sitting there answering questions. Only one student, Mr. De Graauw, lingered afterward to show some real interest.

At 5:30 p.m. we took the train to Melbourne, where we met Mr. Morgan, whose son David had come along with us from Geelong. We talked long into the night, since Mr. Morgan was a theologian, with many books

lining his living room and dining room walls. The next evening, a good-sized group came together to discuss a variety of subjects, such as, common grace, Christian education and the Association for the Advancement of Christian Studies.⁵ Once more it was late before we retired.

On Saturday morning we were on our way by air to Sydney where Rev. Stafford met us.⁶ Mrs. Stafford was a concert pianist, who taught teachers how to teach music. They had three children, Naomi, Markus and Matthew. Here the Hoeksemas stayed with Miss Martin, while I stayed with the Staffords. On Sunday afternoon I preached to about thirty people in Stafford's congregation. In the evening Prof. Hoeksema preached in a Baptist Church, where a Rev. Kastelign of the Free Reformed Church was present to spy on our activities.

On Monday, Miss Martin took us to the botanical gardens, which were of special interest to her, since she was a botany teacher in the high school. On Tuesday, John Steele and Miss Martin took us downtown, where we saw the famous Sydney opera house. The largest auditorium was five stories high, the upper floors reached by elevator, yet the acoustics were perfect, even up there. We also took a sight seeing tour through the channels. The congregation there donated \$500 toward our traveling expenses.

On Wednesday morning, at 8:19, we boarded the train with John Steele, Rev. Stafford and two other persons to travel north to Wauchope. There we met Rev. and Mrs. Tripovitch of the Free Presbyterian Church. These people did not understand the covenant. Mrs. Tripovitch was looking for a conscious or dramatic conversion in her son, and was concerned, because, although his walk was proper, he had not shown signs of conversion. While she was making supper on a cook stove, heated with wood, I explained to her our view of the covenant. She became extremely interested. In fact, while Prof. Hoeksema spoke at night on John 3:16, she could hardly contain herself, moving restlessly on her chair. I wondered whether she strongly disagreed, until she whispered to me, "I can hardly resist crying out Hallelujah!" After the lecture she said to her husband, tapping him on the chest, "I want you to keep a copy of that lecture, learn it, and preach like that." I doubt whether he ever did.

The next morning we went by a small two motor plane to Lismore. The pilot was very willing to describe the scenery as we flew over banana plantations, over the ocean and tropical areas. At Lismore, we met Chris

Coleborn, who took me to the home of Peter Torlach.⁷ After I disposed of my luggage, we took a ride through the country, engaging in a serious discussion on God's covenant. That evening, Prof. Hoeksema lectured, followed by a long and interesting discussion.

The next morning I had devotions with the Torlach family in the living room, after which Chris took me to the plane. We were so involved in a discussion on the covenant even as we sat at the airport, that had not the pilot come to call me, I would have been left behind.

We returned to Sydney, where a package was made up of winter clothing and various souvenirs that were sent to our home in Michigan.

The next day, Rev. Stafford, John Steele and Miss Martin met us at the airport where we had coffee together before boarding the plane at 10:10 a.m. This plane took us to Djakarta, Indonesia.

We had enjoyed our stay in Australia and especially appreciated their wonderful hospitality. But the time had come to move on. It was a long, wearisome trip of nine hours across the alkali flats of inner Australia to the famous resort Bali, and then on to Djakarta. The hostess in the plane asked, "Why don't you stay at Bali? That is a much nicer place." But our schedule directed us to Djakarta.

As we returned to the plane at Bali, I remarked to the stewardess that she looked rather distraught. She answered, "You would too, if you had been searching under the seats for a small alligator that had escaped out of a box carried in by a small boy." I could hardly disagree with that.

Arriving in Djakarta we were met in a crowded airport by Kornelis Kooswanto and Paulina Wangedorm who ushered us through the teeming crowds of sweating humanity to an auto nearby. On the way I was warned not to lay my arm by the window, lest someone take the wristwatch at any amount of damage to the hand or arm.

Kornelis brought us to the Borobudur Hotel, a beautiful building only a year old, overlooking a filthy city.

The next morning at 6:30, Kornelis and Paulina were at the hotel to pick us up for the early service at 7 o'clock. At the church we were given tea and cakes before the service. The service was conducted by Kornelis in the Indonesian language. The sermon on John 14:6 was delivered by Prof. Hoeksema to an audience of about 150 people in English and translated as he went along.

After the service, we had sandwiches and tea, and then went to the home of Paulina. Mrs. Surengo was also there. Thereupon she took us to see her home and

her apothecary. Mr. Surengo was away to Europe to attend the A.A.C.S. meetings.

At 10 a.m. we had another service. This time I preached on Psalm 91:1, 2 in the Dutch language, which again was translated into the Indonesian.⁸

This, by the way, was the first time we experienced women elders, one of whom led in prayer before the service.

After the service we had an elaborate meal at the church, consisting of rice, barbecued chicken, chop suey and numerous side dishes. Prof. Hoeksema and I were each presented with a batik shirt, while Trude was given a table set of real batik.

In the evening we met and had a discussion with the young people of the congregation.

The next morning, Cornelius Marinus, who worked for Mr. Van Rij, took us to the bookstore that had been receiving some of our literature. He also took us outside of the city, which had about seven million inhabitants, to show us the canal, that once was kept clean by the tide from the sea. Now the tide no longer swept into the canal. But about a million people were living along its shores in cardboard huts. Occasionally some were driven away by the police, but they soon returned, because of the work nearby in the banana plantation, the rice paddies and the tea fields. Pickers were picking the small, tender leaves from the plants. We also saw the huge estate where the governor lives. This must cover about a section of land, fenced in, containing streams, deer, and other animals, all in their natural setting.

We had a real Indonesian lunch at Pumpuk, and then had to return to the airport to catch our plane.

What struck us about Djakarta were the remnants of the Dutch influence, since the East Indies had been under the Netherlands before World War II. There were Dutch names on the streets, the offices (i.e., kantoor), the garages that advertised remmen for brakes, aku for generator, etc.

We were also deeply impressed by the total confusion in the traffic. Everyone drove like a maniac, cars missed each other by fractions of an inch, while everyone fought to be first. We would not have been able to drive there. It was bad enough to ride through the pandemonium with someone else driving.

When we arrived at the airport, we met Cornelis, Paulina and Mrs. Surgaro and her daughter, who had come to see us off. Since the plane was delayed 45 minutes in leaving, we had a little while to visit together.

At 8:40 p.m., we arrived in Singapore, where Beth Bos and Verna Klamer had waited since 7:00 that morning. They were glad to see us, and we were glad to see them. Ong, whose girl friend we had met in Christchurch, took the Hoeksemas, while Peter, who had harbored the girls, took me to Mrs. Paauwe, the place where we would lodge.

Mrs. Paauwe was the wife of a minister, who was away to attend the A.A.C.S. This mother of a four year old would leave home at six in the morning to care for children in the nursery, who had been taken from pagan homes, to give them a Christian training. Intermittently, she would come home to supervise the Chinese woman who took care of her child. At 11:00 PM, her day was complete. She did arrange to come home at 10:00 PM the last evening we were there to visit with us.

The next day, Ong and Peter, along with Beth and Verna took us sight-seeing. First we went to Peter's father's shop, then to the observation tower of the hotel, where we had a nice view of the entire city of 200,000 inhabitants. We had lunch in a Chinese restaurant and then took a sky ride to Sentosa Island, where we spent part of the afternoon. After we had supper in a restaurant, Prof. Hoeksema spoke to a rather large audience of young people between the ages of 18 and 28, who had been converted from heathendom to Fundamentalism. The Prof. spoke on the marks of the true church. Afterward they asked, "Do we have those marks?" And when they were told to decide for themselves, some answered, "We fear that we don't." There was a couple present with the garb from India, who showed great interest. When I bid them goodbye they assured me that they would be back the next night.

On Wednesday it was raining, but at 9:30 Peter picked us up to take us to the Botanical Gardens and the campus of the American University, which covers many acres of land. After that we went to the Calvary Baptist Presbyterian Church, where Peter was full time evangelist. We had lunch there, and then went up one of the high rises to get an idea of how the people lived in those crowded areas.

At 5:00, Ong picked us up to take us for supper to the Salad Bowl, where we had eaten the evening before. Early that morning, someone had asked me to speak on assurance of faith. He said, "That is what we lack." So in the evening I took the viewpoint of Lord's Day 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism and spoke on "Our Only Comfort." It is quite obvious that the Arminian has no real assurance or comfort, since his salvation depends, at least

in part, on himself. In the question hour, one of the most important questions was “How do we attain that comfort?”

At 5:30 the next morning, Ong was at the door to take us to the airport. Soon after, Peter brought the girls over, whereupon we headed for the airport. The plane left at 7:30 so we had time for a cup of coffee with Ong. He presented each of us with a beautiful tablecloth as a remembrance. And so we were again on our way, the girls with us.

When we left Singapore, we felt that we had enjoyed the visit very much, more than our stay at Djakarta. But we had been so strongly impressed by their Arminian tendencies, that we never expected to hear from them again. Yet shortly after we came home, a letter arrived from Chin Kwee, seeking more permanent contact.⁹

It was a three hour trip to Bangkok, Thailand, our next stop, where we would spend a couple of days. A bus took us to Narcis Hotel, where we had lunch in a Bavarian restaurant. In the afternoon we took a tour through some of the elaborate temples.

On Friday Trude stayed in her room, and Homer stayed with her. Verna also preferred to rest. So Beth and I went out to see the town. Later in the day Trude went with the girls, and I went with Homer to buy a few souvenirs.

At 7:30 p.m. we were brought to the airport, where we had to wait until 10:30 p.m. for our flight. We had a DC-8, a long narrow plane, that took us, with only one stop over, on a 14 hour flight to Switzerland.

The stop over was in Iran, where we were forbidden to take cameras or any other luggage from the plane. We were herded like a flock of sheep into the airport, with guards in white robes and turbans all around staring at us. All in all, it made us feel very uncomfortable, creating an idea that we would never care to come back to Iran.

The next morning, we flew over the Alps. This was noon according to our time, but still six o'clock in the morning there. It was an unforgettable sight, the massive snow covered peaks in the dazzling brightness of the morning sun, with small towns and lakes stowed away in the valleys below.

Upon our arrival at the airport, we soon discovered that there was no guide to direct us. We planned to go to the mountains, where we would spend the Sunday in a missionary retreat. But we had no idea how to get there. Nor was there anyone who could give us direction in our language. As we stood with all our luggage in the

center of the terminal, a guide did come, but we could not get through to her what we wanted, neither in English, nor in Dutch, nor in German. In disgust we turned to the ticket office for the Netherlands, intending to buy tickets to go directly to the Netherlands.

This woman could speak both Dutch and English, and could inform us how to get to the railroad station, where we would board a train that would take us into the mountains. When the train reached its destination in the mountains, we were directed into the depot, where we could obtain our noonday meal. This was served to us in pans that were kept warm on a small heater.

Thereupon we took a bus which took us to our destination. There was a hotel with small cottages. We were assigned rooms in the cottages, and also assigned a seat at the table in the main building, where we would eat our meals.

We spent a very enjoyable Sunday in this retreat, even though we soon discovered that the Roman Catholic Church was the only church in the area. We had our worship services at the bank of the river, with Prof. Hoeksema speaking on a passage from Isaiah. As we sang, people would walk past slowly to listen to us.

In the afternoon we saw men harvesting grain with scythes and carrying bundles on their shoulders, so that all that we could see was two legs and a bundle of grain moving toward and disappearing into the barn. We also took a walk to enjoy the scenery.

On Monday morning the bus was at the hotel very early to pick us up and to bring us back to Zurich, where we took the train through Germany past Cologne, to Amsterdam, arriving at the depot about 10:00.

The girls and I thought we had reservations at a certain hotel, but there was some misunderstanding, because they were not expecting us. Yet they did have lodging for us. So the next day Homer and Trude went to Stad Groningen, while we took the train to Alkmar, where we met a bus that took us over the Afsluit Dijk to Harlingen. There we tried to call a certain Mr. Dykstra in Zeksberen, but reached the wrong Dykstra. So we sat in the restaurant, discussing how best to spend our time by going into Groningen. While we were eating our lunch, the Dykstra who we wanted to contact, came to the door and asked, “Are there Americans here?” He had been informed by the other Dykstra of our call, so decided he might find us in the restaurant. The two girls went to his daughter, who was supposed to be able to speak English, while I went to the home of this Dykstra (a relative of the Miedemas in Hudsonville PRC) who took me

sightseeing, ending up on the dike as the sun was setting.

This Dykstra had arranged that I should preach in their church, an old cathedral, the next Sunday. But this did not fit in with our plans. He complained of the modernism in his church, and was eager to talk about the Reformed faith. The next day the girls went with me to Harlingen, where we did a bit of shopping.

Early the next morning, Dykstra took us to the train in Harlingen, which would take us by way of Leeuwarden back to Amsterdam. When the train pulled out, Dykstra went by car and met us in Leeuwarden, where we still had a cup of coffee together. He urged me to try to come again in the near future, slipping into my hand a twenty dollar bill.

All day Beth, Verna and I traveled by train, the same train Homer and Trude were on, except that we did not see each other until we reached our destination in Luxembourg. There we were once more confronted with the problem that we had no interpreter. But we finally found out that our hotel was outside of the city, and what bus we had to take to get there. The bus driver set us, with all our luggage, out on the road about a half mile from the hotel. Our next problem was how we could get to the hotel with all our luggage, far more than we could carry with the four of us. So the girls went to the hotel to inform them of our arrival, and they sent a bus to pick us up and bring us to the lobby.

There we obtained rooms for the night, and the next morning we went back to the city to board the plane that would take us by way of Newfoundland to Grand Rapids.

Luxembourg has the old walled city within the new city. We would have liked to see the old city, but the difficulty with the language prevented us from doing any more than was absolutely necessary.

The next day a bus took us to the airport, where we boarded a plane for our last flight to the U.S. This plane was packed with people, and the girls and I had seats so close to the back that we could not put the back down to take a bit of rest. All day we sat upright in our seats, hardly enjoying more than seeing the ice flows in the water below.

A large crowd had come to welcome us as we arrived in Kent County Airport, but we were so tired that we could hardly appreciate that. We had one desire, and that was to go home and get some rest.

Endnotes

¹ Rev. Woudstra was a CRC minister on loan to the Reformed Church of Australia.

² Nick and Ina Kleyn have since immigrated to the U.S. with all but one of their children. They and their children are members of various PR churches. The Bosvelds mentioned here are the parents of Michael Bosveld of Hope PRC.

³ Rev. Rodman was a leader and a minister in the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches of Australia.

⁴ The Connors are the parents of Pastor Chris Connors of the EPC.

⁵ This later became the Institute for Christian Studies still located in Toronto and dedicated to Neo-Kuyperianism and the philosophy of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven.

⁶ Rev. Stafford was minister in an independent church. Miss Martin and John Steele were members of his church.

⁷ Chris Coleborn is currently pastor in the EPC. Peter Torlach is the father of David Torlach, currently studying in our seminary.

⁸ Some of the people could understand Dutch because Indonesia was part of the Dutch East Indies.

⁹ Chin Kwee is Pastor Lau of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church. At this time he was a leader of the Gospel Literature and Tract Society. ❖

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Church History

Martin Luther's Table Talk

by Professor Herman Hanko

Martin Luther, the man whom God used to bring reformation to the church in the 16th century, was a remarkable man. I do not think that such

a man existed prior to Luther, or that such a man will ever again be seen in the church of Christ. Though he was a highly educated man, equal if not superior to any

of his contemporaries, and although he was of brilliant intellect, he could speak the course, sometimes brutal language of the uneducated peasantry, and bring the principles of God's Word for which he stood to their level.

His knowledge was vast and his acquaintance with all the ancient church fathers and what they taught was deep and broad. His education left nothing to be desired. His teaching and preaching abilities were superior to any of his colleagues. His gift of writing made his books sweep through Europe like wildfire and shook the citadel of Roman Catholicism to its foundation.

He roared like a wild bull throughout Europe and caused princes and kings, bishops and popes to pay attention to what he said. And, almost all the time, though in his own way, he said the right things. He could tenderly rock his infant son in a cradle, and stand fearlessly alone before emperors and cardinals—as he did at Worms. He could speak in tender words of his love for Katie his wife, but make the highest prelates in Rome blanch at his thunderings. He could write endearing words to his family but fire mighty blasts that echoed throughout Europe.

To get to know Luther the man requires that we hear Luther talk to us. This is possible in a volume of his "Table Talk" in which he speaks on almost any subject under the sun, and speaks with eloquence, conviction and frequently in a way that makes one burst out laughing, or, perhaps, titter a bit nervously at his fierce invective or barnyard expressions.

Luther was a monk prior to the Reformation. He lived in the Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg. When he married Katherine von Bora he did not move from the monastery to a private home, but lived in rooms in the monastery set apart for him. Because Luther rejected monasticism, the monastery was no longer used as monks' quarters, but to house visitors from all parts of Europe, students who studied at the University of Wittenberg, nuns who escaped from their own convents, people who were deprived of their livelihood and others who for one reason or another needed housing. The result was that almost always Katie had others besides her own family at her dinner table. Those present would discuss many different subjects and Luther would comment on them. Some present at his table took down his words and preserved them. They are collected in a volume entitled *Table Talk*. They give us a rather intimate look into Luther's private life, which will help us understand a bit better the remarkable man that he was.

Not all the quotes below were Luther's words at his dinner table; some were spoken at other times when he was in conversation with friends. Some were answers to the hundreds or thousands of letters sent to Luther to seek his advice. And some are directed to his own family. But here is a smattering.

Luther's conversion from Roman Catholic work righteousness to justification by faith alone, was described by him in these words.

The words "righteous" and "righteousness of God" struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified. If God is righteous, he must punish. But when God's grace I pondered, in the tower and heated room of this building, over the words, "He who through faith is righteous shall live" (Rom. 1:17) and "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:21), I soon came to the conclusion that if we, as righteous men, ought to live from faith and if the righteousness of God should contribute to the salvation of all who believe, then salvation won't be our merit but God's mercy. My spirit was thereby cheered. For it's by the righteousness of God that we're justified and saved through Christ. These words (which before terrified me) now became more pleasing to me. The Holy Spirit unveiled the Scriptures for me in this tower.

Luther's main contribution to the reformation of the church was his teachings in doctrine. His "table talks" frequently spoke of doctrinal matters, although our choice of passages gives only an inkling of what Luther's talk and writings on doctrine were like.

After baptism original sin is like a wound which has begun to heal. It is really a wound, yet it is becoming better and it's constantly in the process of healing, although it is still festering, is painful, etc. So original sin remains in the baptized until their death, although it is in the process of being rooted out. It is rendered harmless, and so it cannot accuse or damn us.

* * * * *

The epistle to the Galatians is my dear epistle. I have put my confidence in it. It is my Katy von Bora.

Luther was asked whether God is in each and every minute creature. He responded

It is so, for God is excluded from no place and is confined to none. He is everywhere and he is nowhere.

* * * * *

Under the papacy I was exposed to every error. The reason is that I had no faith. Faith is, as it were, the

center of a circle. If anybody strays from the center, it is impossible for him to have the circle around him, and he must blunder. The center is Christ.

Luther had a great deal to say about preaching and preachers.

A preacher is like a carpenter. His tool is the Word of God. Because the materials on which he works vary, he ought not always pursue the same course when he teaches. For the sake of the variety of his auditors (listeners, HH) he should sometimes console, sometimes frighten, sometimes scold, sometimes soothe, etc.

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The pope is...offended because I teach Christian liberty, but what do I care? In fact, I preach against him so that it may be known that the doctrine of the papists is corrupt, but what I say and do is according to God.

Someone asked Luther why he preached and wrote with such vehemence. He said

Our Lord God must precede a heavy shower with thunder and then let it rain in a very gentle fashion so that the ground becomes soaked through. To put it differently, I can cut through a willow branch with a breadknife, but to cut through tough oak requires an axe and wedge, and even with these one can hardly split it.

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One should preach about things that are suited to a given place and given person. A preacher once preached that it's wicked for a woman to have a wet nurse for her child, and he devoted his whole sermon to a treatment of this matter although he had nothing but poor spinning women in his parish to whom such an admonition didn't apply. Similar was the preacher who gave an exhortation in praise of marriage when he preached to some aged women in an infirmary.

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When I die I want to be a ghost and pester the bishops, and godless monks so that they have more trouble with a dead Luther than they could have had before with a thousand living ones.

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In my preaching I take pains to treat a verse, to stick to it, and so to instruct the people that they can say, "That's what the sermon was about." When Christ preached he proceeded quickly to a parable and spoke about sheep, shepherds, wolves, vineyards,

fig trees, seeds, fields, plowing. The poor lay people were able to comprehend these things.

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Every high priest should have his private sacrifices. Accordingly, Pomeranus (a friend of Luther, HH) sacrifices his hearers with his long sermons, for we are his victims. And today he sacrificed us in a singular manner.

Throughout his ministry Luther was intent on teaching his vast audience the principles of the Christian life. This was necessary, for Rome had neglected such attention to the walk of believers.

A lie is like a snowball. The longer it is rolled on the ground the larger it becomes.

At a time of severe illness, when his colleagues were concerned lest his death should make the papists happy, he said:

I am not going to die now. I know this of a certainty. For God will not strengthen the papistic superstition through my death so shortly after the death of Zwingle and Oecolampadius (two Swiss reformers, HH). God will not give the papists such an occasion for rejoicing. To be sure, Satan would gladly kill me if he could. Every moment he is pressing me, is treading on my heels. Yet what he wishes will not be done, but what God wills.

* * * * *

Almost every night when I wake up the devil is there and wants to dispute with me. I have come to this conclusion: When the argument that the Christ is without the law and above the law doesn't help, I instantly chase him away (by breaking wind). The rogue wants to dispute about righteousness although he is himself a knave, for he kicked God out of heaven and crucified his Son. No man should be alone when he opposes Satan. The church and the ministry of the Word were instituted for this purpose, that hands may be joined together and one may help another.

* * * * *

We want to set things straight and make everything right. To this God says, "Well, then, go ahead! Be clever and do a good job! Be a preacher and make the people godly! Be a lord and mind the people's ways! Get to it at once!" What a retrogression would occur (if God would do this, HH)! And the conclusion would be: "Vanity of vanities" and "Let wisdom be attributed to God alone" (Eccl. 1:2, 2:26). We are fools and wretched bunglers in all we do and attempt.

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If God were to withhold our necessities from us for a year, what a cry there would be throughout the world! But now that he lavishes them upon us we're all ungrateful, and there is no one who gives thanks.

* * * * *

Satan often said to me, "What if your teaching by which you've overthrown the pope, the mass, and the monks should be false?" He often assailed me in such a way as to make me break out in sweat. Finally I answered, "Go and speak with my God, who commanded us to listen to his Christ." Christ must do everything. Accordingly we wish to be Christian and leave it to Christ to answer for this.

* * * * *

Young fellows are tempted by girls, men who are thirty years old are tempted by gold, when they are forty years old they are tempted by honor and glory, and those who are sixty years say to themselves, "What a pious man I have become."

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For some years now I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.

When asked to join a prince on a hunt, Luther said,

I have indeed been sent here for this purpose, but I'm not a hunter of wild game. I give chase to the pope, the cardinals, the bishops, the canons, and the monks.

When near death Luther said

I'm subject to the will of God. I've given myself up to him altogether. He'll take care of everything. I'm sure that he won't die because he is himself life and resurrection. Whoever lives and believes in him shall not die; though he die, yet shall he live (John 11:25). Therefore I submit to his will.

* * * * *

Christ fights with the devil in a curious way — the devil with great numbers, cleverness, and steadfastness, and Christ with few people, with weakness, simplicity, and contempt — and yet Christ wins. So he wished us to be sheep and our adversaries to be wolves. But what an unequal contest to fight with ten or a hundred wolves! He sent twelve disciples into the world, twelve among so many wolves. I think it's a remarkable war and a strange fight in which the sheep are killed and the wolves stay alive. But they'll all go to ruin as a result, because God alone performs miracles. He'll preserve his sheep in the

midst of the wolves and he'll crush the jaws of the wolves for ever.

* * * * *

I am free from avarice, my age and bodily weakness protect me from sensual desire, and I am not afflicted with hate or envy toward anybody. Up to now only anger remains in me, and for the most part this is necessary and just. But I have other sins that are greater.

Luther was a family man and sometimes wrote movingly of family life. It is not an exaggeration to say that, in addition to reforming doctrine and life, Luther also reformed the home.

I wouldn't give up my Katy for France or for Venice — first, because God gave her to me and gave me to her; second, because I have often observed that other women have more shortcomings than my Katy (although she, too, has some shortcomings, they are outweighed by many great virtues); and third, because she keeps faith in marriage, that is, fidelity and respect.

* * * * *

There is no sweeter union than that in a good marriage. Nor is there any death more bitter than that which separates a married couple. Only the death of children comes close to this; how much this hurts I have myself experienced.

* * * * *

I'm rich. My God has given me a nun and has added three children. I don't worry about my debts, for when my Katy has paid them there will be more.

Luther liked to tease his wife, as is clear from the following exchange between Luther and Katy.

Luther: *The time will come when a man will take more than one wife.*

Katy: *Let the devil believe that!*

Luther: *The reason, Katy is that a woman can bear a child only once a year while her husband can beget many.*

Katy: *Paul said that each man should have his own wife.*

Luther: *Yes, "his own wife" and not "only one wife," for the latter isn't what Paul wrote.*

Katy: *Before I put up with this, I'd rather go back to the convent and leave you and all our children. (Spring, 1532)*

Man has strange thoughts the first year of marriage. When sitting at table he thinks, "Before I was alone; now there are two." Or in bed, when he wakes up,

he sees a pair of pigtails lying beside him which he hadn't seen there before.

Luther gave this advice (jokingly) to a bridegroom on his wedding day:

You should be content with the general custom and be lord in your house whenever your wife is not at home.

The following conversation took place between Luther and his daughter Magdalene shortly before she died.

Luther (in prayer at her bedside): *I love her very much, but if it is thy will to take her, dear God, I shall be glad to know that she is with thee.*

Luther (speaking to Magdalene): *Dear Magdalene, my little daughter, you would be glad to stay here with me, your father. Are you also glad to go to your Father in heaven?*

Magdalene: *Yes, dear Father, as God wills.*

Luther: *You dear little girl!*

Luther (turning away): *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. I love her very much. If this flesh is so strong, what must the spirit be? In the last thousand years God has given to no bishop such great gifts as he has given to me (for one should boast of God's gifts). I'm angry with myself that I'm unable to rejoice from my heart and be thankful to God, though I do at times sing a little song and thank God. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's—in the genitive singular and not in the nominative plu-*

ral. (Luther meant that we belong to only one Lord; and we are thankful that we are not ourselves lords.)

Some of Luther's words while she yet lived and after she died.

I'd like to keep my dear daughter because I love her very much, if only our Lord God would let me. However, his will be done! Truly nothing better can happen to her, nothing better.

* * * * *

(After she died): *You dear little Lena! How well it has turned out for you. Ah, dear child, to think that you must be raised up and will shine like the stars, yes, like the sun! I am joyful in spirit but I am sad according to the flesh. The flesh doesn't take kindly to this. The separation troubles me above measure. It's strange to know that she is surely at peace and that she is well off there, very well off, and yet to grieve so much!*

Katy was in the background, unable to be near the bed because of her grief. Melancthon, Luther's co-worker said: "The feelings of parents are a likeness of divinity impressed upon the human character. If the love of God for the human race is as great as the love of parents for their children, then it is truly great and ardent."

(All quotations are taken from: Luther's Works, Vol. 54, "Table Talk" (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967).

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"The Body They May Kill..."

by Judah E. Finney

A Martyr in Rome

On September 9, 1560, in the city of Rome itself, and before the very eyes of the Pope, Pius IV, there was put to death for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ one Jean Louis Pascale of Piedmont, a young pastor in the Waldensian colonies in Calabria and Apulia, in the South of Italy.

For a year the zealous youth had endured the honors of the filthy, disease-ridden prisons in the several cities along the way from his bereaved flock in Calabria to that great city Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, in whose blood-stained streets he must be slain. But truly he was sustained by the grace of God. Through all that miserable period of captivity,

bound with lacerating cords, burdened by a heavy weight of irons, and fed not so much with bread as with the constant taunts of the priests and their daily attempts to bring him to recant, he not only persevered faithfully in the truth, but maintained a steadfast attitude of godly joy in Christ. He could not be swayed, not even by his brother, nor could he be cast down in spirit. Comforting letters somehow continued to find their way from his cold, damp cell to his sorrowing friends and to his beloved Camilla, speaking with happy submission of the death he knew awaited him.

The day had come at long last; the crowds were thick as on a festival day, the papal entourage was seated in exalted splendor. A hush fell as the young minister came to a stand before the pile of fagots and turned to say a few words to the foes round about him. Just imagine him standing there, alone before the Bishop of Rome, whose name was the fear of the whole world, the enemy of the church of Christ through all the long centuries. Not many at all have had the awful privilege of confessing their Savior before the face of this dragon in that dark seat of his power. Pascale spoke but little; his confession bore that same boldness it ever had. He declared his steadfastness of faith in the only Savior, Jesus Christ, *and hesitated not to denounce the Pope enthroned before him as being quite evidently the very Antichrist!* This was enough: the command of death was given even as the Pope and his companions ground their teeth in rage. Pascale, calling upon God, Who had so marvelously upheld him in the strife, expired, his last breath wrung from him and his emaciated body given to the fire's burning heat.

His people had not long to grieve his loss, for the Inquisitor, with fierce wrath against Christ, had within weeks utterly destroyed the once flourishing colonies of the Vaudois, and hunted down their fleeing citizens across the plains, through the forests, to the mountaintops, while hundreds of miles away, deep among the wild valleys and soaring crags of the Cottian Alps, a young Piedmontese woman mourned for the young Jean Louis Pascale, to whom she had been engaged only days before he had answered that dangerous call to labor in the shadow of dread Rome. So full of joy and zeal and youthful vigor her betrothed had then been, and now in but a short time, he was dead, his ashes mixing with the Tiber's current, and making their pell-mell way out to the wide sea.

Was It Worth It?

Was it worth it? Is doctrine so important that it is worth dying for, worth sacrificing *everything* for, as Louis Pascale and his Camilla did? Should we hold the doctrines of Scripture in such high regard that we are willing to chose faithfulness to them over all else? For countless thousands in the days of the Reformation and throughout the history of the church, the answer has been a decided "Yes." Our fathers have clung to sound doctrine with a devotion that amazes and shames us who have a calling to walk in their footsteps. Their consuming zeal for sound doctrine is almost completely alien in our day of tolerance and ecumenicity. Does it not seem strange to us at times that fierce controversies raged and hundreds, even thousands, died over such a seemingly minute question as the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper? Are we not tempted at times to question the necessity of the debate over the unconditionality of God's covenant? Did the Splits of 1924 and `53 really need to happen, or were they shameful squabbles over a couple of hair-splitting points of abstract theology?

Did the Splits of 1924 and `53 really need to happen, or were they shameful squabbles over a couple of hair-splitting points of abstract theology?

Is truth more important than unity? It is. The argument is simple.

To know God in Jesus Christ is our life.

While the fundamental purpose of creation is the glory of God, it has pleased God, for the glory of His great name, to make Himself known to us His chosen people, and that not in cloudy obscurities or cold formalities, but in all the warmth and beauty of His own gracious covenant of loving fellowship. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Here we must make clear that the pleasure of God is not that we know *about* Him, but that we know *Him*. If we can recite the entire Catechism off from memory that is wonderful, commendable, but not by itself of any value. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory

in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me..." (Jer. 9:23). The highest glory of heaven is not the absence of grief and trouble or the reuniting of parted friends, but *this*, that "*The tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God*" (Rev. 21:3). Then will come the final, eternal perfection of the everlasting covenant of grace, then "shall I know, even as also I am known" (I Cor. 13:12). "*This is life eternal!*"

To know God we must know about Him, through His revelation in Scripture.

Truth is not, *may* not be an end in itself, but it is absolutely essential if we are to know our God. For as with any human case of "knowing someone," of experiencing a personal relationship with someone, there must be a basis for it—contact, whether it be seeing someone or shaking hands, or getting to know them by correspondence. While we do not have physical contact with Him, we do have contact with him in somewhat the same way we do with someone we know by mail. He has written us a letter, a whole book of letters, in which he makes himself known to us, and tells us of His power and great majesty as our creator, shows us our natural sinfulness and misery, and reveals in all its radiant loveliness and glory the salvation that he has wrought for us through Christ Jesus. But this is not a cold note we find waiting for us one morning in the mailbox. The Holy Spirit works its truth in our hearts, through the diligent study of it, but more especially, and that with saving power (Rom. 1:16), by the faithful preaching of the gospel.

This gospel is therefore our treasure, more valuable far than unity, than peace, even than life itself, since "to live apart from God is death" (Psalter 203:5).

As the church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim.3:15), so the church's foundation is the truth revealed to her by Jesus Christ through his apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20). Her foundation is the gospel! Readers, your *foundation*, and mine, is the gospel of our Lord and only Savior Jesus Christ, what Luther called in the Ninety-Five Theses the "*true treasure of the Church*" (emphasis mine). It is not unity that is our "true treasure," no, better to know God with one or two, than to go a whoring from Him with those three and twenty thousand that fell in one day (I Cor. 10:8). And it is only *this* gospel, the true, pure gospel, that is our foundation and treasure. As for the heresies, the false doctrines, the

devil's gospels (and he has them in plenty), God curses them all in his unquenchable fury (see Gal. 1:6-9). Such abominations trouble the saints. They rob the people of God of precious comfort and solid confidence in the God of our salvation, and they rob God of his glory. (If it is taught that the covenant is conditional, though the teaching be cloaked in vague qualifications, what will happen to our trust in Christ alone? Will it not be withered, and a proud shoot of self-confidence instead spring up in one case, and in another dark despair creep in over the soul?)

By now it should be clear why one would chose to lose his life rather than stray from the pure truth of the word of God. For the sake of our souls, for the sake of the church, for the glory of God's name—are we as concerned for God's glory as our fathers were?—we must not seek peace with the lie, for *there is no peace* (Jer. 6:14; 8:11)! Until the heavens are rolled up as a scroll and the elements are burnt with fervent heat, there is perpetual battle between the woman in white linen and the woman in scarlet and purple. Zion's foundation is the truth: let no crack appear in her bulwarks! Her peace is only through constant warfare: let not the weapons of our spiritual warfare rest, or grow dull! "In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us" (Neh. 4:20). Let us study the Scriptures, *know* them, and so know him, who is our refuge and our mighty fortress (Psalm 91:2). Then his truth will be our shield and buckler (v. 4), and as those who "do know their God" (Dan. 11:32), we "shall be strong, and do exploits"!

Jean Louis Pascale knew his God, and how many in glory will be rewarded for bearing valiant testimony to Jesus Christ even in the very teeth of the Pope of Rome, in the heart of that great whore of the seven mountains? No, it was not in vain, for while indeed, "the body they may kill," as they had that of the young pastor of Calabria, yet through it all, "God's truth abideth still." That is the truth for which Louis Pascale and a multitude more died, not to save *it*, (God forbid!) but because *it* had saved *them* (Romans 1:16), and so they loved it—not their lives—unto the *death* (Rev. 12:11).

May we so love it! ❖

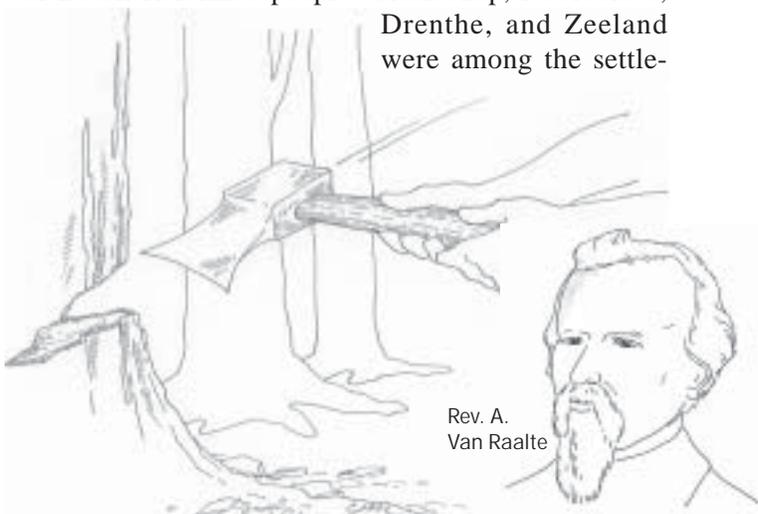
Judah is a member of Lynden Protestant Reformed Church in Lynden, Washington.

Music in the Woods (2)

The forest rang with the crack of axes and the zip-zeep of saws. It was the sound of hard work. Several log buildings joined the site of the tiny Indian settlement on Black Lake, and as more Dutch immigrants continuously arrived, more and more dwellings were needed. Amidst all the chop-chop-chopping in the woods, the birds sang with clear, sweet melodies of praise to their Maker—but that was not the only praise heard in the forest. The men sang too. Freely, without persecution, they sang aloud the songs of Zion as they worked. They sang the Psalms that expressed every joy and sorrow, every fear and hope they ever felt as children of God. It truly was a concert of finest music in the woods.

They had reason to sing. After a perilous journey across the Atlantic to arrive in the woods of West Michigan, they had scrambled to build log cabins—cabins with little protection against cold and rain. The journey had been difficult, but this wilderness was worse. Lack of proper food and shelter, along with mosquito-born disease brought much sickness and death. In the summer of 1847 Rev. Van Raalte preached words of comfort and hope to his immigrant flock, but it was a difficult time for him, too. At one point he exclaimed, “Lord, must we all perish then?” They clung to the Word. They continued to sing. In the Psalms were the comfort and courage they sought. In the Psalms they gave thanks in all things.

Yet in all their problems and set-backs, the building progressed and more immigrants came. Other settlements were established in surrounding areas with several Reformed churches and ministers moving in. Though not without troubles, the area was fast becoming what Rev. Van Raalte had hoped. It was, for the most part, a colony of Dutch Reformed people. Graafschap, Noordeloos, Drenthe, and Zeeland were among the settle-



Rev. A. Van Raalte

“LITTLE LIGHTS”

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

ments that joined the “city” of Holland near Black Lake. They were a colony of Dutch immigrants who had learned poverty and persecution in the Netherlands, but who had learned something else too—the truth. Though they were still gravely poor in this new land, here they could freely preach and teach the truths of God’s sovereignty in salvation, of election and reprobation, and of grace alone for God’s people. And here they could sing of these truths in the Psalms.

In May of 1848 one new arrival to the area had this to say about these Dutch folk:

The first thing which attracted my attention on the morning of my arrival was the singing in all the little houses near us. I soon learned that my neighbors sang psalms after every meal. (*Anna Post, 1848*)

These Dutchmen would need to keep singing such words of courage and truth. Their trials were by no means over.

Find the following underlined words in the puzzle below:

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.” Psalm 95:1, 2

L	T	E	L	H	G	C	M	S	R
V	A	C	O	T	N	U	A	K	U
B	S	O	T	W	I	L	K	L	N
P	L	M	E	P	U	M	E	U	B
R	U	E	L	A	I	K	J	F	E
E	F	Y	T	A	G	E	C	Y	F
S	Y	I	K	R	S	C	A	O	O
E	O	H	P	I	K	P	W	J	R
N	J	U	O	S	N	O	I	S	E
C	P	N	R	L	A	H	T	I	W
E	M	O	C	E	H	L	H	N	V
M	A	K	E	T	T	G	M	G	U

Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

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Church News

BAPTISMS

"For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Bradley Herman, son of Mr. & Mrs. Colin Buchanan—
Ballymena, N Ireland
Alaura Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Moore—Bethel, IL
Amy, daughter of Joel and Brooke Holleman—Cornerstone, IN
Andrew Gise, son of Todd and Beth Van Baren—Cornerstone,
IN
Abby Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jan Zeldenrust—Edmonton,
Alberta, CAN
Logan Mark, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Koole—Faith, MI
David Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan DeJong—Faith, MI
Kylie Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Kuiper—Faith, MI
Tessa Joelle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Bergman—Faith, MI
Riley Ann and Zoey Marie, daughters of Mrs. Rebecca
Quinton—Holland, MI
Roy Anthony, son of Mr. & Mrs. Chuck Doezema—Holland, MI
Anthony Ryan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Mowery—Holland, MI
Levi Brent, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Overway—Hope, MI
Myles Jay, son of Mr. & Mrs. Justin Miersma—Hope, MI
Olivia Hope, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Traviss—Hull, IA
Hoyt Maurice, son of Mr. & Mrs. Darrell DeVries—Hull, IA
Ayden Tyler, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon VanDyk—Kalamazoo, MI
Michael Aiden, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Tolsma—Loveland, CO
Hailey Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rick Mingerink—Peace, IL
Brendan Scott, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Vermeer—Peace, IL
Grace Leanne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dean Poppema—
Southwest, MI
Vince Henry, son of Mr. & Mrs. Henry DeVries—Wingham,
Ontario, CAN
Ethan Gerry, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Guichelaar—Wingham,
Ontario, CAN

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6

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

Michael Kooienga—Byron Center, MI

Travis DeYoung, Ashley VanDer Noord, Nicole Van Drunen,
Mary Venhuizen, Eric Armendariz, Tom Braaksma—
Cornerstone, IN
Todd Ferguson—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN
Eddie Falk—First, MI
Jacob VanderWall—Georgetown, MI
Rebecca Quinton—Holland, MI
Emily Dykstra—Hope, MI
Ryan Barnhill, Alyssa Hoekstra, Ben Kuiper, Justin Lubbers—
Hudsonville, MI
Eric VanMaanen, Kalen VanMaanen—Hull, IA (daughter)
Megan Zylstra, Julie Tolsma—Immanuel, Lacombe, Alberta,
CAN
Bryan Kiel, Brad Kiel—Kalamazoo, MI
Kayla Schwarz—Loveland, CO
David Warner, Lauren Warner, Lauren Wiltjer—Peace, IL

MARRIAGES

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Kurt and Mrs. Ciri Mingerink—Byron Center, MI
Mr. Jared Hekstra and Miss Stacy Mingerink—Byron Center,
MI
Mr. Mike Streyle and Miss Jen Riley—Doon, IA
Mr. Shawn Kamminga and Miss Lynnae Dykstra—Faith, MI
Mr. Alex Kalsbeek and Miss Cyndi Adams—Faith, MI
Mr. Ryan Richards and Miss Faith VanDyke—Faith, MI
Mr. Jordan Whiteley and Miss Bethany Slopsema—First, MI
Mr. Nathan Schipper and Miss Marie Kulhawick—
Georgetown, MI
Mr. Devon Brinks and Miss Lisa Miedema—Georgetown, MI
Mr. Bradley VanOostenbrugge and Miss Katelyn Kamps—
Grandville, MI
Mr. Tom Huizinga and Miss Kristin Koole—Hope, MI
Mr. George Kamps and Miss Cathy Lightner—Hudsonville, MI
Mr. Dan Gritters and Miss Kara Vander Meulen—Hudsonville,
MI
Mr. Kyle Van Der Brink and Miss Kerri Keizer—Hull, IA
Mr. David DeBoer and Miss Michelle Wierenga—Immanuel,
Lacombe, Alberta, CAN
Mr. Brian Kotman and Miss Trisha Heys—Loveland, CO
Mr. Justin Pipe and Miss Brenda Brands—Loveland, CO
Mr. Joel Westra and Miss Kelly Hanenburg—South Holland, IL
Mr. Dan Kuiper and Miss Jori Engelsma—Southwest, MI
Mr. Tom VanderWaal and Miss Heidi Bleyenbergh—Trinity, MI