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“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

I Peter 3:3-4

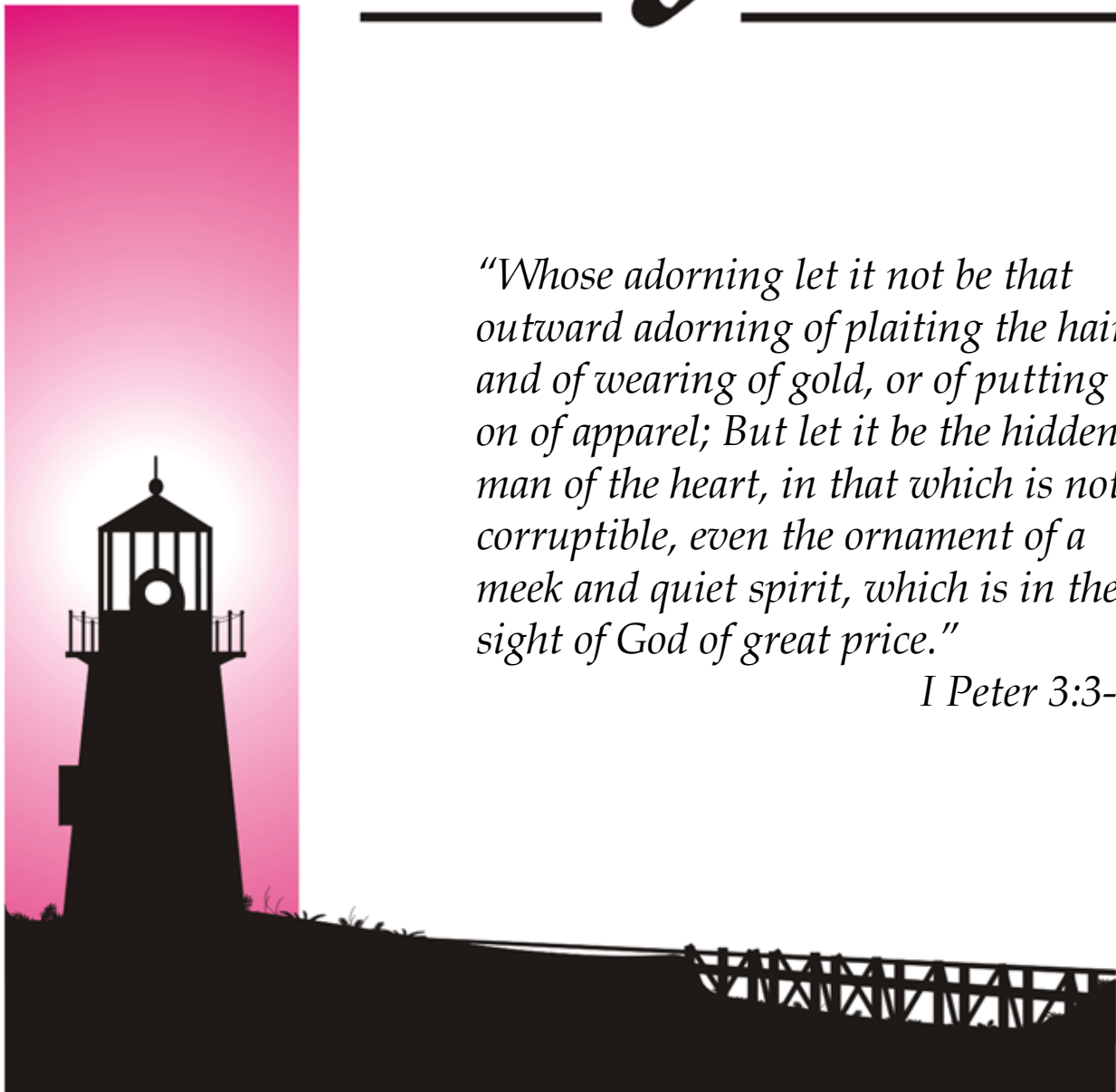


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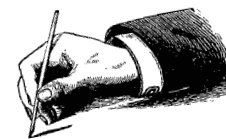
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Energy Anxiety

by John Huizenga

This past Memorial Day, when Americans had been given a day to remember those who had gone out to fight and defend the liberties we enjoy, the noise raised over \$4.00+ gasoline was greater than the noise of the parades and gun salutes. By the time this is read, the flash of fireworks will likely have illuminated signs with even higher numbers.

Oil is quite literally the lifeblood of the world in which we live. Everything from plastic parts, medicine, and fertilizer to heating our homes, transportation, and the roads we drive on are made with oil. Our society, culture, economy, and lifestyles have grown and developed around oil. Great civilizations in the past have risen, and then fallen into ruin when what once supported their growth became weak and failed. No civilization has ever grown as rapidly and to such glory and with such vigor as the industrialized civilization we now enjoy. Millions live like only a few kings were able to enjoy in any past civilization. Yet it all rests upon a resource that is limited. We have alternative energy resources, but none of them are capable, at least at this time, of replacing oil. Restrictions in its flow raise serious concerns and quickly causes pain in a host of areas. Too much restriction too quickly could lead to the equivalent of a cardiac arrest, and the world as we know it would crash to the earth like a giant beast left for the scavengers.

It is my understanding, that God in his wise providence as he preserves the world and gathers his church, prepared this enormous reserve of oil while he was saving the church with the Flood. The vast quantities of vegetation that thrived at the time of Noah had absorbed a thousand years of solar energy and then were buried. The vegetation was quietly processed beneath the feet of the crusaders and wandering tribes of men until God was ready to nourish the twentieth century world with this high energy "milk." America and the rest of the industrialized world have gorged themselves, and now the millions in China and other countries have gotten a taste and are scrambling to the feeding trough.

How long will the feeding frenzy last? No one is sure. Oil companies are drilling deeper, and in more difficult places to find more reserves. The increasing demand in the world for oil will only use it up faster. On the other hand, more efficient use of oil and alternative energy sources will stretch the reserves. Are governments in control of the supply and manipulating the world? God knows, and we are comforted knowing that king's hearts are in his hands as a river of water. Everything is working perfectly according to his sovereign plan. The church in all its beautiful glory is being gathered, one living stone at a time. What a comfort we have as the ungodly look with anxious eyes to the scientists and engineers for a solution.

Americans have prided themselves in their creative solutions to problems, and there is no doubt that high oil prices serve to encourage the development of alternatives to our dependence on oil. Here too, we see the handiwork of God as man digs into the treasure chest of this earth. We as servants of the living God, who has created the earth with all of its elements and resources to be discovered and used by man, stand amazed at the variety of ways that the elements of the earth can be combined and made useful. God uses difficulties and obstacles to force man to subdue the earth and discover the vast treasure that

he has created. Who would have imagined that various elements could be mined from the rocks, and the electrons manipulated in such a way that man can communicate vast amounts of information around the world? Now we are being forced to find alternatives to the energy we have become so dependent upon. Ungodly man foolishly praises himself, while we give glory to God who has created the mind of man along with the vast array of treasures within the earth.

We know we live in the last day. God has been pleased to prepare a vast reserve of rich, easy to use energy that has fueled a dazzling world with technology that boggles the mind. Bathed in the lavish riches, the ungodly have perhaps been distracted from the church. God makes it very clear that having riches can make a solid Christian life difficult. The time may be near when man becomes more aware of an end to cheap oil and the world is forced to become lean. As the nations rage, kings and powers will rise to attempt to preserve peace and prosperity. Are we ready for the day when the world unites and considers pilgrims to be a threat and a burden to this world?

The nations rage, the devil goes about as a roaring lion, God prepares the pieces of the antichristian kingdom so that one day the world will be ready for one earthly power to rule and control all the resources we need to live. The devil will hold the reins, and just when his pride reaches its climax, the reality of his defeat, which has already been accomplished at the cross, will be made known to all the world. We look up now and then from our work as citizens of the kingdom of God and see the gathering clouds of the antichristian storm, but we are not afraid, nor do we slack in our work. We may suffer, and even die because this world has no place for us, but we go forth confident and secure in the promise that our Lord prepares a place for us where we may praise our covenant God forever. ❖

Fruitful Branches



Confessing God, My Protection

by Ryan Barnhill

We live in a dangerous world. There are those who would tempt the church and seek the blood of her people. Closer to home, we fight our sinful natures each day, constantly experiencing a battle between the new man of righteousness and the old man of sin. Satan prowls around looking for those whom he can devour. The Christian life is full of temptations, snares, enemies, and fear. But there is one who is bigger than our enemies, temptations, snares, and fears. God is our protector. He cares for his people like a shepherd. Let us see how God protects his people by examining his word in I Samuel 17, as he cares for his servant David in his fight against Goliath.

The book of I Samuel records different historical events in covenant history. One of the events that stand out is the faith of Hannah as she prayed to God for a

son. Another is the battles that Israel fought against the Philistines. It was also at this time that Israel longed for an earthly king to rule over them. True of all these events is that they display faith, or lack thereof. These events cannot be disconnected from God's covenant, his promise of salvation to his people. We must remember that God preserves his church because his mercies in Jesus Christ endure forever (Psalm 106:1). We see a people who have faith, but also a people who faltered in that faith. It is in this context that we come to I Samuel 17.

In I Samuel 17, we see that the Philistines assembled to war against the Israelites. Goliath, a man of whom we read in verse 4 as a "champion" among the Philistines,

stood in the valley between the two opposing armies. This was indeed a frightening man. His presence was very intimidating. The Holy Spirit tells us that Goliath was six cubits and a span. If we assume that one cubit equals about 1.75 feet, and that a span is the distance between the end of the thumb and the tip of the pinky with an outstretched hand, Goliath may have been nearly eleven feet tall! Additionally, according to modern day equivalents between shekels and pounds, Goliath may have been wearing a coat of mail weighing about 170 pounds. The head of his spear weighed nearly 20 pounds, along with brass protection on his legs, a target of brass between his shoulders, and a helmet of brass upon his head.

Briefly reviewing more of the history, Goliath sought an Israelite to fight him. If the Israelite won, then the Philistines would be Israel's servants. If Goliath won, then Israel would be enslaved to the Philistines. Day after day the giant approached the Israelites and made his offer, and the Israelites would shrink back in fear. All except one man. David, a youthful shepherd and son of Jesse, heard the offer of Goliath as he was delivering food to his brothers at war. As you well know, David asks about the offer, and then goes to King Saul for permission to fight the giant. After some convincing, Saul allows David to fight Goliath.

Verse 39 is a key verse in the narrative. Naturally, Saul gave David the protection that he would need when he faced Goliath. Yet, David put this armor off because he had not proved it. Instead, he chooses five smooth stones out of a brook. What a mental picture! David was but a young man who tended for sheep. He had killed a lion and bear before, but never had he encountered a giant with protection and weaponry. Furthermore, David had no protection of his own. Yet, amazingly, we do not read that David hesitated once throughout all of this. Goliath mocked David for taking up the challenge. He cursed David according to his gods, and told him that he would feed him to the birds and animals.

David was not afraid. He did not back down from Goliath's vain threats. According to earthly standards, David had every reason to run at that moment, and run fast. Then we come to a stunning confession in verse 45: "Then said David to the Philistine, thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." What a beautiful confession! An amazing confession! What happens next we all know—David kills Goliath with a sling and a smooth stone.

This amazing confession proceeded from David's

mouth by the grace of God, rooted in a strong confidence. That confidence was faith! The Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 7, Question 21, defines true faith in a personal way as "not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel, in my heart; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits." There is no doubt that David knew his duty to kill Goliath was not merely to rid Israel of an intimidating foe, but had covenantal weight too. God was watching over his chosen, covenant people, and would direct David in fulfilling his purpose.

This faith of David was not merely head knowledge, but heart knowledge also. He refused the armor that Saul gave him to go into battle with only one thing—God's protection! What an amazing testament to the faith that God gives his people in Jesus Christ.

What about your faith? What about mine? Do you view God as your protector? This trust also implies a deep humility. I am nothing of my own! There is nothing that you can do to protect yourself! We are but the dust of the ground and we wither as the grass. Furthermore, we learn from Paul in Ephesians 2:8 about the significance of faith: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Faith is not a warm and fuzzy feeling concerning a vague reality. It is a strong confidence and assurance that we are saved by none other than the mediator of the Covenant of Grace, Jesus Christ. God will protect you because, borrowing from the words of our Essentials of Reformed Doctrine catechism book on page 38, "God maintains, restores, and perfects his covenant through him [Jesus Christ]."

That faith is tested in our day. America and other nations around the world are becoming more and more hateful of Christians. Biblical principles are being tossed aside because they don't please the flesh. You and I are not accepting enough. There will come a day when legislation is passed that silences Christians. There will be a day when God will allow Satan to prowl the earth more freely than ever before, with his murderous eye on the Church of Jesus Christ.

That faith is tested in more subtle ways today also. Satan leads his own group of "Goliaths" in today's world. Certain individuals in well-known circles, such as Hollywood superstars, government officials, and distinguished professors, hate the church on this earth. There are men who "know it all," the "intellectual giants" in the earth. There are men and women who draw huge crowds of

followers because of their fame. Then you have the church—lonely and despised. She is despised by the world, but rich with God; Rejected of men, but accepted by God. She fights an intimidating battle.

Yet, God protects that precious remnant! Do not forget the “P” in TULIP. God preserves his people. God has protected his people throughout history. She has strayed from God’s commandments over and over again only to be nearly devoured by the wolf. Over and over God gently leads her by the hand as a shepherd back to the green pastures of his word. This confidence in the protection of God is the same confidence that saints in the history of the church have held dear to. Just imagine the persecuted church in Roman times: the poor vulnerable Christian sitting dusty, bloody, and exhausted in the middle of the coliseum. He hears the constant jeers of the crowd as they mock him and his faith. He is being surrounded by hungry lions. Yet he looks up and sees God, his protection! A protection that is so deeply rooted in his heart that no man or persecution can take it away!

Personally, God protects you and me. Are you ever in a situation where you are pressured to drink or to do other things that you know you should avoid? Have you experienced the mockery of your peers in a college class? Have you been shunned at work for being a Christian? Be assured, God is your protector! God is infinitely above your enemies, and he is high above mere pressures of co-workers and friends. He is our sovereign God! He views powerful men of the earth as mere dust, a minute detail of his vast creation. Oftentimes you and I forget the power of God’s word. Void of God’s word, men and women with PhDs sputter forth useless and vain informa-

tion. Without God’s word, you and I are whipped around by the winds of this world. Equipped with God’s word, you have everything! God, our protector, gives us that word so that we may grow in our knowledge of him and be encouraged by it.

What is left then? Thanksgiving! That is, blessed thanks to our God for his eternal protection. David himself sensed this protection in a very real way in Psalm 23. You and I, as David confessed in that Psalm, eat around our shepherd’s table peacefully while the wolves bare their teeth all around. In our Christian churches, schools, and homes, we are in blessed communion with our God in heaven. What comes from such protection? A heart is overwhelmed with thanks. In II Samuel 22, David, as seen in verse 1, speaks a word of thanksgiving for the deliverance the Lord gave to him over his enemies, including Saul. Though the waves of death, the floods of ungodly men, and the sorrows of hell swept over him, he stood firm in the rock of his salvation (vss. 5, 6)! Our God is indeed a powerful God.

Let us pray and sing that which David confessed in II Samuel 22:47: “The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation!” Do not back down when you face a Goliath. Do not be intimidated though the sins of flesh discourage, Satan tempts, and the world mocks. We have a sure victory even while we are on this earth. Rejoice in the blood of the lamb! For in that blood of the covenant is our protection and eternal victory. ❖

Ryan is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Consider the Creation

When I In Awesome Wonder...

Michigan’s Golden Coast

Perspective

by Deanne Wassink

I write about the wonders of the creation where we live. Especially, I focus on the complexity and uniqueness of the community of natural life on the eastern shore of the great freshwater lake, Lake Michigan. This

community forms an ecosystem made up of the complex and mutually dependent relationships of all the creatures found there. It is the community formed by the fresh water, the desert-like sand, the sculpting winds, and how

the plants and animals live and interact there, whether they are alive or dead, prey or predator. As I ponder the many fascinating aspects of this place where I work as a farmer and landscaper I am struck by one humbling truth. It has to do with the ultimate question of “why?”

We must be honest with ourselves here. These questions must be answered: How did this ecosystem come about?

Why does it exist?

We cannot escape these questions nor flippantly answer them.

In reality there are only two answers that can be given to the origin of the ecosystem of the shoreline. The first is man-centered; the second is God-centered. Either you must hold to the religion of “evolution” and say that everything in the world around you occurs purely out of chance and is driven by mutation and survival of the fittest. Or, you must take God at his word in the Bible confessing that nothing is by chance and that all things have been created by his sovereign hand for the purpose of his glory.

I believe in the all powerful God of the Bible. To hold to that truth gives the only possibility of direction in this life. On the physical level of the creation of Michigan’s shoreline, it means that he designed it completely. I observe with wonder how every part of creation, from butterflies to boulders, from bogs to bluegills, show his handiwork and reveal his glory. Rather than simply being fascinated by the peculiar adaptation of a creature, as in evolution, I ask myself what the creature reveals about God, the creator. I ask whether he has revealed anything in Scripture that may help me understand the creature. There is day and night difference between the two approaches to understanding what we observe. One is mere curiosity. The other is meaningful worship and praise.

The lessons or the “parables” that I observe in the creation around me are gleaned from what he teaches me in his word. It tells me about who he is. It reveals his care of his children and his care of the sparrow. It shows me that he clothes the flowers of the field. It proclaims him to be the morning star. His church is shown to be as numerous as the sands of the seashore. The seasons, seed-time and harvest, the rainbow all point to his covenant established after the great flood of Noah. The beehive and the colony of ants reveal that he is a God of structure and order. Storms and floods reveal his power. Death reveals sin and the curse. I could go on and on. Every aspect of the creation reveals his power and glory.

When I am sufficiently humbled by his greatness revealed around me, his word and Spirit convict me of

my sin and bring me to sorrow and repentance. Then that same word and Spirit teach me of his mercy and grace in Christ Jesus. Oh what a glorious truth! It is then that the creation also speaks truth about my Savior. Then I have a clear understanding of the answer to the question, “why?”

It is all of God and reveals his glory!

The alternative is purposeless and cruel chance. It is the hopelessness of “survival of the fittest”. It results only in man-centered greed and pride.

You cannot have it both ways.

Where do you stand?

Do not stop at the wonder of the natural world. You must face the God of creation. You must come to understand him in his word, the Bible.

It is my prayer that you may come to repentance and thereby see the glory of our creator and Savior.

Where do you stand, my friend?

May God give us eyes to see his wonders that surround us.

Knowing

*I don't understand how He made the heavens,
But, I know He did.*

*I don't know every bug, beast and bird,
But, He does.*

*I don't know how butterflies know how to fly,
But, He taught them.*

*I don't know how and why the earth is tilted,
But, He did it.*

*I don't know why it rains today and not tomorrow,
But, He does.*

*I don't understand how to make anything alive,
But, He gives life to all things.*

*I do know Who made the earth,
He did.*

*I do know how He saved me.
He paid the price.*

*I do know where I'll be when I die,
He will take me home. ❖*

*Deane is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church
in Zeeland, Michigan*

The Liberty of the Christian Young Person: Free to Serve

by Rev. Douglas Kuiper

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage....

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Galatians 5:1, 13

Freedom is always preferable to bondage. One who sits in a prison cell looks forward to the day of his release. He who lives under a tyrannical rule looks forward to the day of the death of the leader of his country. And he desires deliverance, who knows the bondage of sin and experiences its misery.

The gospel proclaims that God's people are free—free from rules and laws which govern every part of our lives, as if we are children, and free from slavery to sin.

This freedom we have in Christ. We call it “christian liberty.”

In this freedom, let us live, serving God, obeying his laws, rejoicing to be free!

What Christian Liberty Is

Liberty is, of course, freedom. So Christian liberty is the freedom which God's people have in Jesus Christ.

This freedom has three aspects to it.

First, it is a freedom to obey God's moral law.

In Adam, all humans were created with this freedom to obey and serve God. But Adam lost this freedom by his sin, and brought the whole human race into bondage to sin. On account of his sin, we are by nature “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Just as Pharaoh would not let the Israelites leave Egypt to serve God, but made them serve him rigorously, so Satan is a cruel tyrant, who will not permit us to obey God, but keeps us in slavery to sin. This is the explanation for “total depravity”; this is why even those actions of the unregenerate which appear to be kind and good, are not truly so.

But we have been freed! In Jesus Christ, we are delivered from this slavery to sin, and given the power to obey God's law again. Read Romans 6 to understand this better. In verse 11, the Holy Spirit through Paul says: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but

alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And verse 14: “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” In this verse, the Spirit does not mean that we are not bound to God's moral law (the ten commandments), for we certainly are. Rather, we are freed from the curse and the dominion of the law, which is to bring us into sin. And notice from verse 22 the blessedness of this freedom: “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

Your liberty in Christ, young people, is a freedom to obey God's law! Do not think of God's law as a burden, or as restricting your freedom! It is “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25), the law which shows us how the free man ought to live.

Second, our liberty in Christ is a freedom from bondage to the Old Testament ceremonial laws.

Remember that at Mount Sinai, God gave Israel not only the moral law (ten commandments) and civil law (governing Israel's life as a nation) but also the ceremonial laws. These laws governed matters of worship, such as when Israel was to observe feasts, and what she was to bring for sacrifices. The ceremonial laws also governed one's personal life, regulating the need for infants to be circumcised on the eighth day, what foods were clean and unclean, when a man or woman was unclean and by what process he or she could be cleansed, and such matters.

This law was a burden. It regulated every aspect of the life of the Israelites, in detail. In giving them these laws, God was treating them as children, who need every part of their life regulated by their parents, and who need to be taught. Paul tells the Galatians in 3:24: “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” The law reminded them that they needed Christ, and could be saved only in Christ.

These laws we need keep no longer, because Christ came to fulfill them. We must still know what they taught us, namely, that we are justified by faith in Christ. But we no longer need the ceremonial laws to teach us this; we have the completed Scriptures, and the Spirit of God, to impress this truth on us. The church has come to maturity

now; the letter of these laws is abolished. (Read Article 25 of the Belgic Confession to see that this is the teaching of Reformed churches).

This aspect of Christian liberty, the church in Galatia had a hard time understanding. We can appreciate this. The church had just come to maturity at Pentecost, not more than 25 years earlier. And even more recently, through Paul's mission work, the saints in Galatia had learned of the abolishing of the ceremonial law. So they had to relearn how to live!

Some in Galatia were teaching that Jews and Gentiles alike had to be circumcised to be saved. This Paul means when he says in Galatians 5:2: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." By admonishing them to stand fast in this liberty, Paul means to say that the church must now live in the consciousness that Christ has come, and that his atonement by the shedding of his blood is complete.

The moral law remains; the ceremonial law is done away. That is our liberty in Christ.

Yet a third aspect of our liberty in Christ is our freedom to live our whole life, and perform every action, to God's glory.

God's law does not regulate every aspect of the life of believers in the New Testament. It regulates some, by requiring us to do certain things, and forbidding us to do other things. But that which is neither commanded nor forbidden, we are free to do. We call these "adiaphora"—things indifferent; we may do them, or not do them, as we please.

That we may do them as we please does not mean God gives us no principles to guide us. First, the law does place some restrictions on this freedom. For example, you are free to have whatever job you want, so long as it does not lead you to disobey the 4th commandment by working unnecessarily on Sunday, or the 5th by joining a labor union. And I am free to buy whatever car I want, so long as it does not lead me to violate the 8th commandment by spending more on the car than I can afford, and the 6th commandment by driving recklessly and carelessly.

Second, faith must motivate us in all that we do, even our eating and drinking (Romans 14:23). Third, we must seek God's glory in all these things—we may not marry a certain person, or have a certain job, to serve ourselves; we must seek God (I Corinthians 10:31). Fourth, we must be ready to give an answer to God for what we do, and why we did it (Romans 14:12). For, while God gives us some freedom regarding how we live, he does care about our heart at all times.

What Christian Liberty is Not

It is clear, then, that Christian liberty is not a freedom to disobey God's law. To pretend you are free to disobey the law is to show that you are not free, but still in bondage to the law.

And Christian liberty is not the freedom to do whatever I please, no questions asked. It does not mean that if any brother or sister in Christ ever questions my motives and goals for doing something, I may say to them, "None of your business." Not, that is, if they come convinced I am abusing my liberty, and calling me to use it rightly.

How important that we be reminded of this! It is so easy to use our liberty in Christ as a reason to sin. It is so easy to say to someone who comes to speak to us about our sinful conduct, "But Christ makes me free to do it; you can't tell me what I'm doing is wrong."

Some in Galatia were using the liberty they had in Christ as a reason to tell the Gentiles that they must obey the ceremonial law. To this Paul responds by telling them to stand fast in their liberty, and not be brought again into bondage (Galatians 5:1). And in verse 13 we are reminded that we may not use our liberty as "an occasion to the flesh," that is, as a reason to seek themselves, and to violate the law.

The same apostle made this same point to the Romans: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2).

The Life of the Liberated Christian Young Person

Young people, knowing that Jesus Christ has freed you from sin's bondage and from the ceremonial law, how do you—and how should all Christians—live?

First, we not only obey God's law, but delight in it: "Oh, how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). We strive to perform this law from our heart, guarding our heart against sin: "I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end" (Psalm 119:112). So we fight against sin, knowing that at times we are sorely tempted to sin. In our fight against sin, we both warn others against sin in a brotherly way, and fight sin in ourselves, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5).

Second, we have our priorities right. Our life is one of service to God! We seek first God's kingdom, with our time, energy, and finances (Matthew 6:33). We work hard at the job God has given us. We view recreation as important to refresh us for service to God, but not as the

all important goal of life. We think of ourselves as pilgrims and strangers, traveling through this earth to heaven. We know our need for the Sabbath day to refresh our soul.

Third, we evaluate actions before doing them. Before buying a car, going on a date, organizing a party at our house, we examine why we want to do these things. Do we believe that we are seeking to glorify God in doing these things, and in how we do them? Honestly answer the question: “Will God be pleased with my doing it (I Corinthians 10:31)?” Such prior evaluation of our actions keeps us from being impulsive, doing things without thinking, or doing anything that we think will make us happy.

Fourth, we are careful not to insist that everyone act and think like us in every respect. Our liberty in Christ means that in areas which are indifferent, each child of God will serve God differently. We do not call him “crazy” who does not like the food which is our personal favorite. When another does something which our conscience would not allow us to do, we do not immediately think that they are sinning or are inferior to us in sanctification, but we charitably consider that perhaps they are performing that action to God’s glory; especially we are so charitable when they are not in clear violation of any command. For they, too, shall give account of themselves to God (Romans 10:12-13).

This is how the free person lives! We must live this way, of course; God requires us to live as though we are free. Even more, we do live this way, in the power of God’s grace, and in thankfulness for the freedom we have in Christ.

The Threats to This Life

Living such a life of freedom, the Christian young person is aware of threats to this life. Against the two main threats, Paul warns the Galatians.

The first is that of being entangled again with the yoke of bondage (verse 1), that is, the threat of making many rules to govern life in minute detail. We call this legalism.

One way legalism shows itself is by making rules about what one must do to be saved. Throughout church history, many have fallen into this error of trying to base our righteousness on our own deeds. The Pharisees were an example of this; and so were the false teachers in Galatia, who said the saints must be circumcised. The error is that of forgetting that Christ’s atoning work provided salvation for all God’s people, full and free.

Or, legalism might show itself by making rules about how one must show gratitude for salvation, or how the child of God ought to live to enjoy fellowship with God.

Rules which go beyond the ten commandments, and beyond the teachings of Scripture, tend in this direction. A rule against owning TVs, or forbidding the use of the internet, for example, would be legalism. (Note: for your parents to prohibit such in their own home is not legalism; but for the church to prohibit any of her members to do such would be legalism). The error is that of forgetting that God gave his law to prescribe exactly how he would have us live thankful lives, and that we must not pretend to know more than God how to live thankfully.

The second threat is that of using liberty for an occasion to the flesh (verse 13), that is, saying that we are free to live as we please, so denying in our life that we are really freed from the bondage to sin. This we call antinomism, or antinomianism, which literally means “against law.”

Antinomism shows itself by seeking self. An “occasion to the flesh” is an excuse to please oneself, by disobeying the law. Seeking self, one does not serve others in the body of Christ. Any idea that life is for me, that I can do entirely as I please, that I am not required to show gratitude to God or to serve others, is really antinomian.

These two threats to the life of liberty are always present in the church of Christ; Satan is always trying to draw us away from a life of freedom.

With these threats in mind, the apostle says: “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.” Avoid the dangers; fight against the threats; and live the life of the freed child of God!

How can we guard against these threats? By walking in the Spirit—walking in accordance with God’s Word, out of a pure heart. So Paul tells the Galatians: “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (verse 18). And he who walks in the Spirit brings forth the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (verse 22-23); and then notice: “against such there is no law.”

That is, these works are not forbidden! We are free to live in this way! And the Spirit gives us the power to do so.

Great blessings we enjoy in the way of standing fast in this liberty. Peace, with God! Joy, in God! Living in this liberty, we have no fear that God is angry with us. And what greater blessing can the sinner experience, than that of being assured that his sins are covered by Christ’s blood, that he is righteous by faith alone in Jesus Christ?

Young people, pray every day for grace to serve God in the freedom he has given you! ❖

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Watching Daily At My Gates

The Song of Zion

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

(Reprinted from July, 2000)

by Skip Hunter

July 4 Read I Samuel 19:18-21

Psalm 143:9-10 In verse ten we have the words, “Teach me to do thy will.” We should all take heed to these words and make them part of our daily prayers. By nature we do not wish to do Jehovah’s will. In fact by nature we wish to do the opposite of Jehovah’s will. The psalmist knew, and we must learn this as well, that God’s way is best for us. God’s spirit is good the verse says. Is this our testimony? Let us learn the will of God. Let us walk in that will. Let us bow before Jehovah’s teaching as he leads us into the land which flows with milk and honey where we will receive our eternal reward with the whole church triumphant. As we prepare to enter God’s house tomorrow, let us go to sleep with this prayer on our lips, “Teach me to do thy will.” Sing Psalters 389:5, 390:3, and 391:2-3.

July 5 Read Psalm 143

Psalm 143:11-12 In verses seven through twelve of this Psalm we have a series of pleas from the Psalmist. There are ten of these petitions. Take the time this Lord’s Day to find them and ponder their meaning. Do this personally and also with your families. The last five words of the Psalm give the reason why David could make these petitions. He knew that he was the servant of Jehovah. Only one who depends on a master can plead for such help. Is this our plea? Do we confess that we are God’s servants? Did we worship that way today? Do we live that way throughout the week? Let us think about being a servant, and then let us seek the help of our Master the almighty God. Only in that way can we find the good life here on this earth, but especially in our heavenly home. Sing Psalters 389:6 and 391:4.

July 6 Read Psalm 144

Psalm 144:1-2 In this Psalm of praise, David blesses Jehovah who is everything to him. David has experienced much in his life. Throughout his life David has learned that in all things he must trust Jehovah. David acknowledges that he is a man of war. Even in this he knows that he has done all things only with God’s help. It was not the man David who “killed his ten thousands;” it was Jehovah who had made that possible. Do we, in the station and calling that God has placed us, acknowledge Jehovah as the One who gives to us the abilities to carry out that station? Do we daily give credit only to God? We must do this, you know. To do anything else is to claim that we have abilities of ourselves. In claiming that, we would claim that we have a part in our salvation. This we may never do. Let us daily praise God who doeth

all things in and through us. Sing Psalter 392:1.

July 7 Read Hebrews 2:1-10

Psalm 144:3-4 David continues in his confession that he is nothing and God is everything. Here we see the same words as used in the familiar Psalm 8. These words were repeated in the book of Hebrews as its writer prepares the defense that Christ, alone, is the source of salvation. David looked back at his life; from man’s point of view it looked illustrious; from his enlightened eyes he saw it for what it really was: nothing! Can we do this? Do we do this? Do we claim credit for our accomplishments and even for our salvation? If we do, we are sadly mistaken. We are making ourselves puffed up with pride and are in danger of falling as those who have committed the dreadful sin of pride. Let us confess that man is nothing, emptiness. Let us fall upon our knees now and daily and give all glory to God. Sing Psalter 392:2.

July 8 Read Isaiah 64:1-8

Psalm 144:5-6 David had many enemies in this life. Just contemplate the account of Samuel as he ran from Saul and later became king. But David realizes that these were not just his enemies; more importantly he realized that these were God’s enemies. He understood that these men were the agents of Satan, who were trying to rid the world of the church and to prevent Christ from coming to save his people from their sin. Therefore he prayed this imprecatory prayer for deliverance. Do we use this language today? Are we so jealous for the cause of Christ in this world that we pray such a prayer? We should and we must for this is the will of God. Sing Psalter 392:3.

July 9 Read Judges 5:24-31

Psalm 144:7-8 David continues his plea for help against those who war against him and God. Now he gives the basis for that plea. The wicked are fountains of lies and deceit. They constantly take God’s Word and deceitfully use it. We, too, must be zealous about God’s Word. Like David we must be offended at the misuse and mistreatment of that Word. Are we? Do we, as a course of habit, express our dislike of the misuse of God’s Word, name, attributes, and works? This is unpopular, you know. We, in America, like to claim freedom of speech in all things. This misuse of God’s things is not covered under the freedom of speech. Let us use God’s Word correctly in our lives and let us be jealous for that Word in our daily lives. Sing Psalter 392:4.

July 10 Read Revelation 5:6-14

Psalm 144:9-10 In gratitude for his deliverance, David declares that he will sing a new song of thanksgiving unto God. It is a new song because it is not polluted with man's sin. It is God's song written for his praise. These verses show to us a correct interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism on this point. We must have knowledge of our sin. We must confess that our deliverance is only through the blood of Christ. And we must give gratitude for such deliverance. This gratitude is not legislated by man's ordinances; this gratitude comes from a thankful new heart given by God. Let us praise God daily for our salvation and let us do it with the songs that he has given to us. We need to use no other words! Sing Psalter 392:5.

July 11 Read Nehemiah 13:23-31

Psalm 144:11 In today's text we find reference to a problem that the church of all ages has experienced. There are those in the church who are strange because they have no use for God. In today's reading, Nehemiah found the same problem in Jerusalem after the captivity. This problem, too, is common in the church of all ages. There are "strangers" there brought in when men and women of the church marry men and women in the world. True, God can bring someone into the church from the outside. Think of Rahab or Ruth. But this is the exception not the rule. God saves his people in the line of continued generations. Parents, pray for your children that they do not bring strange children into God's church. Sing Psalter 392:6.

July 12 Read III John 1-11

Psalm 144:12 Why must we keep those who speak a mixed language out of the congregation? The answer is given in the beautiful words of today's text. We do this for our children's sake. We are not isolationists. We are not elitists as some would claim. We are a people who must care for the covenant seed that God has given to us. As a farmer rids his farm of weeds so that the desired plants can have all the nutrients, the Church of Christ must make sure that her sons and daughters receive all the spiritual nutrients showered upon them by God. As a mason chips away all unneeded parts of a rock so that he can have the right one for his building, so must we chip away the pollution of sin out of our children's lives. This is an awesome calling. Let us pray for the grace to carry it out. Sing Psalter 393:1.

July 13 Read Leviticus 26:1-13

Psalm 144:13-14 When we do all that is possible to nurture the covenant seed, God will bless us with spiritual plenty. Even though the text speaks of physical things, we know that these are pictures of the spiritual. It is true that our physical lives are affected by our spiritual strength and weakness. But we must be concerned about the spiritual climate in the church and in our congregations. Why? Simply because it is the Church of Christ, and it is our duty to be jealous toward the body of Christ. To do anything but to care for our children in the best way possible is to cause the church to go into ruin. Root out those evils in our houses and in our lives that are damaging to God's children. Pray for the strength to bring those children up in the fear of Jehovah. In doing this God will bless us both in this life and in the life to come. Sing Psalter 393:2.

July 14 Read Psalm 144

Psalm 144:15 In the first verse of this chapter David speaks well of Jehovah and his works. In this final verse he declares that the people of God are blessed or happy in the way of their keeping the Word of Jehovah. A happy church is not one which has a social program for every need that can be imagined. A happy church is not one whose order of worship is "up-to-date and meaningful." A happy church is one which brings its children up in the fear of the Lord. This church catechizes its children and young people diligently in God's Word. The parents and elders make sure that catechism as well as church is attended faithfully with no thought of skipping for some "good" reason. The happy church is one which loves God's Word and teaches its children to love God's Word. Is ours a happy people? If not, why not? When God is Lord over all things in our lives, we will be happy. We do not make him Lord; he is Lord! And we must bow to him in all that we do. Sing Psalter 393:3.

July 15 Read Psalm 145

Psalm 145:1-3 In these opening verses of this beautiful Psalm of David, we find David giving all glory to God. As we have said before, David had a life in which many men would like to boast. David accomplished many things which would land him in all sorts of halls of fame in this world. As David neared the end of his life, he saw that all of his accomplishments were little in comparison to the greatness of God. Children and young people, have you fallen prey to the philosophy of the world that you have to be number one in this life? If you have, reread these verses and reread them daily. Our greatness is nothingness. God's greatness is everything. Let this be our daily confession. Sing Psalters 394:1, 397:1, and 399:1.

July 16 Read Psalm 78:1-8

Psalm 145:4-5 Summer time! Parents, are you instructing your children? Catechism has recessed. We are in the middle of school summer vacation. Who is teaching the covenant seed? Is it the television? Is it some day care worker? Is it a baby sitter? Is it Satan? Parents, who is instructing your children this summer? We have much to teach our children about God. What better time to do it than when our children are not encumbered with the busyness of school and other activities. We need to tell the Bible stories to them. We need to show our children God's hand in nature. Are we making the most of our opportunities this summer? If not, why not? Sing Psalters 394:2, 397:2-3, and 399:2.

July 17 Read Acts 4:19-31

Psalm 145:6-8 We need to contemplate the truth of verse eight daily. Our sins rise up before God and in his righteous anger we should be destroyed in and because of our sin. But in his righteousness, God is also merciful. He loves us with a love that cannot be found on this earth. He is gracious to us poor sinners and gives to us eternal life with him in heaven. As we busy ourselves this summer with all of our plans, let us stop and contemplate this truth. Then let us fall upon our knees and pray, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Sing Psalters 394:3 and 397:4, 5.

July 18 Read John 1:9-18

Psalm 145:9 One of the truths that we must teach our children is the goodness of God. This goodness extends to the whole creation as the whole creation goes about its calling to glorify God. Are we in the middle of drought? God is good! Has a dreadful storm ravaged our town? God is good! Have you seen the beautiful sunset? God is good. Even the lilies know the goodness of God. Even the sparrows are under his watchful eyes. God is good; of that there is no doubt. Are we teaching that goodness to our children? Are we teaching them about the ultimate goodness of God? That goodness, of course, is his great love for his people expressed in his sending his Son to die for their sins. God is good. What a truth! Sing Psalms 395:1 and 397:6.

July 19 Read Romans 8:19-27

Psalm 145:10-11 Do we confess the greatness and goodness of God to those around us? Our children must learn to do this even as they mingle with others. Our young people need to be guided to make public confession of faith before God and his church. The whole church must publicly confess God, his goodness, and his love in whatever place we are put in this life. This means that in the workplace we must rebuke those who sin. We must give God the glory when it is due to him. Our children must learn to sing and listen to the songs of Zion and not of Satan as they are with their peers. They will not do this if they are instructed by those who do not confess every truth of God. We must open our mouths daily and in all places and speak about the glory of our great God. Pray for the grace to do that, and pray for your children as well. Sing Psalms 395:2, 397:7, and 399:3.

July 20 Read I Kings 10:1-13

Psalm 145:12 There are two accounts of a king of Israel or Judah showing his kingdom to a worldly monarch. Here we have Solomon's experience with the queen of Sheba. Later on Hezekiah shows his kingdom to ambassadors from Babylon. Christ mentions the Queen of Sheba's visit while he was on this earth. With this example he condemns those who do not believe him. God reprimands Hezekiah because of his sin of pride. We, like Solomon, must speak of what God has done in our lives and not what we have done. We must make "I" a little used word in our vocabulary except when daily confessing our sins. Let us give God the glory due to his name. Sing Psalm 395:3.

July 21 Read Micah 4:1-7

Psalm 145:13 One truth that should afford us great comfort is that God's kingdom is everlasting. It has no beginning and no ending. Nothing can threaten its existence. No power, whether earthly or otherwise, can overthrow it. Satan attempted to do so throughout the Scriptures. But God always, by his power, said I am King. This is great comfort for the child of God. We need not fear anything that may happen upon this earth. As Paul in Romans 8 confesses, "nothing can separate us from the love of Christ." Let us hold on to these comforting words. Let us rest assured that nothing will harm us since our King's kingdom is everlasting. Sing Psalms 395:4 and 397:8

July 22 Read John 5:1-9

Psalm 145:14 The people of God in this life are often the weak in this world. We constantly fall either because of our

sinful nature or because we are oppressed by those that hate the cause of Christ and his gospel. But each time we fall, we find our God picking us up and setting us on our feet once more. When we are oppressed in the world, He makes it possible for us to hold up our heads proudly and to say, "My God is Jehovah." The prophets in the Old Testament knew this. The afflicted in Christ's day felt his personal healing hand upon them. This can be our confidence today as well. No matter how we are afflicted, God will hold us up. Let us make that part of our daily prayers to him. Sing Psalm 396:1.

July 23 Read Matthew 6:25-34

Psalm 145:15-16 In this day of plenty, it is hard for us to look unto Jehovah for the fulfillment of our physical needs. Most of us have food enough for day, week, and even several months stored up in our houses. Most of us have much in the way of clothing. We have houses that protect us from all types of weather. Our physical bodies are cared for by doctors through means of modern medicine. But yet we must look upon our heavenly Father for all of our spiritual needs. He is the Giver of every good thing. He will supply all of our needs. Let us pray daily for our daily bread and wait upon the open hand of God for all things. Sing Psalms 396:2 and 398:1.

July 24 Read James 4:1-12

Psalm 145:17-18 It is the experience of the child of God that he has needs. These needs may be spiritual or they may be physical. Usually they are a combination of the two. Just as a child cries out in the night for his mother or father, the child of God will cry out in this night of sin for his heavenly Father. The earthly child has confidence that his parents will attend to his needs. He knows that mom or dad is just in the next room. The child of God can also have the same trust and confidence. His heavenly Father is always near to him and is always ready to help him. When the elect call upon God, he will help them because he is near. Let us rest in that confidence each day of our lives. Sing Psalm 396:3.

July 25 Read I John 5:12-21

Psalm 145:19 What is our heart's desire, people of God? Is it wealth, health, or earthly happiness? Do we desire the well-being of our children? Are we concerned about our last days on this earth before death closes our eyes? What is our desire? According to this text, the elect have a desire. This desire is very different from that of the wicked. Oh, we might share their desires at times, and our earthly desires might even overshadow our one true desire. We desire eternal bliss. This cannot be achieved by any thing that happens on this earth. There is nothing that we can do to achieve it. We know this quite well. But we need not despair. God is near unto us; he will hear our cries; and he will save us. What a beautiful truth and comfort this verse is! Meditate on it daily and through the night. Sing Psalms 396:4 and 398:2.

July 26 Read I Peter 1:3-12

Psalm 145:20 This verse is an example of the well-known Hebrew antithetical parallelism. This is a poetic device used quite often in the Psalms and in Proverbs. The second part of the verse provides a stark contrast to the first part. These two parts are absolute concepts. God will save the elect; God will destroy

the wicked. There are only two kinds of people in this earth: elect and reprobate. Every human being is one or the other. God takes the elect to heaven; he condemns the wicked to hell. There is no other final destiny for any person in this life. Because these are two sure things, we can rejoice in them. We rejoice in that God's word is sure, and that he will take us to our final glory. Let us ponder these things as we attend church and worship the sovereign God. Sing Psalter 396:5.

July 27 Read Psalm 145

Psalm 145:21 David has come full circle in this Psalm. He starts out by proclaiming that he will bless God for his greatness. Then he recounts many of these greatnesses in the Psalm. In this last verse he again says that he will bless God and he calls on others to do so as well. Is this what we do? Do we bless God publicly? Do we encourage and even command others to do so as well? This is our command in this life. Let us bless God from whom all blessings flow. Sing Psalters 396:6 and 398:3.

July 28 Read Psalm 146

Psalm 146:1-2 This is the first in a group of Psalms which is a doxology for the whole book of Psalms. Their theme is quite simple. Praise ye the LORD. Another way of saying this is Hallelujah! We might wonder why so much space is given over to this theme. But then we must remember whom we are praising. Then as the psalmist states in verse 2, we realize that we must praise the Lord every day of our lives. Every breath which comes from our mouths must have Jehovah's praise in it. This is a foreign idea in this day and age of man-praising. We would rather praise others and especially ourselves than to praise God. As we study and meditate upon these Psalms, let us learn about the praise of our covenant God. Sing Psalters 400:1 and 401:1.

July 29 Read Ecclesiastes 3:16-22

Psalm 146:3-4 One of the first reasons for praising Jehovah is simple: who is man? Why should we praise him or even trust in him? Man is a creature whose days upon this earth are numbered. We cannot be sure that a man will be here the next day to help us. We cannot be sure that a man is even trustworthy since by nature he is not. God, on the other hand is eternal. He will always be here. He is trust in himself. When he makes a promise, we can be assured that it will be carried out. Don't trust in man, people of God, trust in God, and you will never be disappointed. Sing Psalters 400:2 and 401:2.

July 30 Read Matthew 5:1-12

Psalm 146:5 Do you want happiness in this life? This is a question that is found in advertising. It is found on the lips of doctors of all types. It is found as the titles and themes of countless books and magazine articles. In this verse we find the formula for happiness. To be happy we must have God as our help. When God is our aid we will truly be blessed. We will be able to put our hope in something that will stand forever. This is not an uncertain hope, but rather it is a certain and sure hope. We will find true and blessed peace and happiness in this life when Jehovah is our God. Sing Psalter 400:3.

July 31 Read Genesis 1:1-13

Psalm 146:6 The next few verses of this Psalm explain who the God of our trust is. The psalmist first identifies him as the

Creator of all things. This is both basic and necessary. If we do not believe that God is the supreme Creator, we might as well give up immediately. To dismiss the truth of creation is to dismiss all truths. We see this truth in the words of Jeremiah 33:25-26: "Thus saith the Lord; if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them." Throw away the doctrine of creation as it is laid out in Scripture and you can throw away the rest of Scripture with it as well, including our salvation. It is that plain! Sing Psalter 400:4.

August 1 Read I Kings 17:8-16

Psalm 146:7-8 The next identification of our God is that he is help of the helpless. In this world God has made many to be oppressed. This oppression can be caused by many things. It could be sin, physical disability, or affliction of men. No matter what the cause is; God is our help. We can trust in him to deliver us from all manner of oppression. Now this deliverance may not be as miraculous as the widow of Zarephath. It may be that our deliverance may be the "no" that the apostle Paul received concerning the thorn in his flesh. But this we know, that God's grace is sufficient for us. Because of this we can trust in him and trust that he will care for us in all circumstances in this life. The reason for his care upon us? It is simple: he loves us. Sing Psalters 400:5 and 401:3.

August 2 Read I Kings 17:17-24

Psalm 146:9 Once again we come upon antithetical parallelism. You remember what that is, do you not? If not, just go back a few days and read the explanation. The historical account that we have read the past two days fits well with these verses. This widow who was a Gentile had a hard life. She was a widow, she was poor, and eventually her son died. Into her life God brought Elijah and a word of grace. In seeing the miracles she tasted the goodness of God. There were many widows in her town, but she was special because she was chosen by God to taste of his grace. The others who trusted in Baal were turned upside down in their affliction, but this widow was set on high. Trust in Jehovah who cares for his people because he loves them. Sing Psalter 400:6.

August 3 Read Psalm 146

Psalm 146:10 This Psalm, as all others in this section, ends how it starts: "Praise ye the LORD." After reading this Psalm, is that your confession, people of God? Young people, are you willing to have the praise of Jehovah fill your mouths? Do you let the world of your friends know that Jehovah must receive the praise and not man. Have you turned off the man-boasting songs on your audio equipment and replaced them with God's praises? This is not just the psalmist's confession; it is his command as he was moved by the Holy Spirit to write this words. Praise Jehovah. Hallelujah to him who reigns forever and ever. Praise ye the LORD. Sing Psalters 400:7 and 401:4.

Hope Chest: Laying Up Virtues of Christian Womanhood

by Sarah Mowery

“Don’t I look beautiful, Mommy?” My three-year-old daughter’s smiling brown eyes meet mine in the mirror.

“You always look beautiful to me, my Leah,” I reply, as I slip a final bobby pin into the wispy blonde curls that I’ve piled on top of her head and step back to critique my work.

“But I really look beautiful in my flower-girl dress, don’t I?” she giggles and shimmies approvingly up to her reflection. I pull her away from the mirror and lift her from the bathroom counter to set her back onto the floor.

“How long until Auntie Bethany’s wedding?” she asks, her little fingers tracing the pink rosettes that dot her dress.

“The wedding’s a few weeks away,” I respond as I unzip her dress and help her slip back into her t-shirt and shorts, “but now we know that your dress fits, and Mommy knows how she’s going fix your hair that day. Now go play outside until lunch.” I watch her skip merrily away, tossing her head and humming to herself.

It starts young, doesn’t it—that girlish fascination with weddings and all things pretty and romantic? As I stood in a check-out line recently I noted all of the bridal magazines displayed among the other periodicals, and I remembered myself as a little girl snipping brides and bridesmaids from Grandma’s JC Penney catalog to create a collage of flowers and lace. Later, in junior high, I created “Perfect Wedding,” a homemade board game that occupied hours of my younger sisters’ and my time. I remember the time that my mom unfolded her wedding dress from among layers of blue tissue paper in her cedar chest in order to show it to my sisters and me, and I can still picture the anniversary open house at which my aunt wore the long-sleeved satin gown that had so long been buried in my grandma’s hope chest.

Is there a cedar chest tucked away in a corner of your home? Does your grandma have a hope chest? We tend to think of hope chests as fragrant resting places

for family heirlooms, wedding and baptismal gowns, or keepsake trinkets and treasures. Some time ago I asked my grandma what she had put into her hope prior to marrying my grandpa. Things she would need once she was wed, she responded, articles to help her keep a home—things like linens, towels, bedding and quilts; perhaps family mementos, recipes, or photographs as well. Many of the items young women would put in their hope chests they sewed or embroidered themselves—maybe you remember reading about Laura Ingalls stitching her quilt samplers in the *Little House on the Prairie* books. In essence, a hope chest was a sign that a young woman was readying herself to start a life of her own, and her evident hope was that she would find a suitable man to marry and give this gift that she had been keeping for so long.

...I used my hope chest to set aside things for our wedding day, instead of lay up things for our marriage or for keeping our home.

Shortly after we were engaged, my husband gave me a hope chest, a beautiful, walnut chest that sits in our living room today. I note now with a hint of irony what I put into that chest: white slippers to wear with my bridal gown, a sparkly headband for my hair, pearl earrings, a garter with a blue ribbon, a white daisy pen to set by the guestbook, pillar candles to set on the tables at the reception...I used my hope chest to set aside things for our wedding day, instead of lay up things for our marriage or for keeping our home. As I look back, my own actions reveal something to me about the day in which we live. Extravagantly-dressed brides, wedding cakes, and honeymoon suites are very much in style today, but

most who live around us want little to do with submissive, godly wives.

**I had accepted far more
feminist premises than I
realized, for during the months
following our wedding, I
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that I was squandering talents
that God had given me.**

Like many girls, from the time that I was a little, I hoped that I would get married someday. As I reflect on my teenage years, I am struck by the fact that at that crucial time in my life I focused—and was encouraged to focus—almost solely on obtaining good grades, acquiring college scholarships, and selecting a major. Though I was already dating my future husband, deliberately preparing myself for marriage rarely crossed my mind. Later, I graduated from college with a two-year degree instead of the four-year degree that I had originally sought in order that I might support my soon-to-be husband while he finished his education. I remember driving away from that college campus for the final time feeling more like I was failing the Lord than fulfilling his high calling for my life. I had accepted far more feminist premises than I realized, for during the months following our wedding, I struggled to shake the voices of my professors who had insisted that I was squandering talents that God had given me. It took even longer for me to fully acknowledge that placing my intellect and talents at the service of my husband and later my children was a far greater challenge than studying or working as career woman ever could be. I know from speaking with women in our churches that there are others who struggle with those same impressions. We, too, often spend many months, or sometimes even a year or more planning our weddings, but specifically preparing oneself to care for her future husband is easily overlooked. And so I contend that that we must do a better job of preparing our daughters and young women to be wives, encouraging them above all to lay up virtues of Christian womanhood in their own spiritual “hope chest.”

So how does one prepare herself to be a wife? At the time that I was working on organizing my thoughts on this subject, our pastor spoke at a combined ladies’

meeting on “Understanding and Loving Our Husbands.” He addressed the women present that evening regarding understanding and loving our husbands physically, psychologically or emotionally, and spiritually. He began his speech by reading from Genesis 2, the account in which God created Adam to be king of the creation and then made Eve to be Adam’s perfectly suited helper.

God created Eve to care for her husband physically. I think that most of the women who attended the ladies’ meeting expected Rev. Overway to at least mention caring for one’s husband by preparing meals or keeping house. These certainly are chores that consume much of a wife’s time in the home, and her husband benefits when his wife does these chores cheerfully and with interest in what she is doing, to the glory of God and to promote her husband’s well-being. However, Rev. Overway focused on the most basic way in which a wife cares for her husband physically – by meeting his sexual needs. God made Adam to need to express himself physically, and he created Eve to respond to that desire of her husband. How beautiful must have been the beginning of that first marriage without sin to mar the sexual relationship! Today, how troubled even godly marriages can become when the world’s sexual perversions and pornographic obsessions creep into the bedroom!

A young woman prepares herself to meet her future husband’s sexual needs by living chastely and modestly. One practical way in which young women guard their sexuality is by clothing themselves in a way that is fitting for a daughter of the King. Throughout the Bible, there are many instances in which clothes—or their absence—serve to represent the spiritual condition of human beings before God and his glory. For example, in Jesus’ parable of the wedding feast and in the book of Revelation the full realization of the salvation of the elect is pictured in the wearing of wedding garments or pure, white robes. When Adam and Eve sinned, they suddenly discovered that they “were naked” and hastened to clothe themselves. In contrast to Adam and Eve’s rush to clothe themselves, the fashion industry continually seeks to uncover more of the body in order to appeal to sensuality. When *Reader’s Digest* asked Mary Quant, mother of the mini-skirt and a famous clothing designer from the 1960s, “What is the point of fashion, and where is it leading?” she replied, “Sex,” and on her homepage, Quant declares, “Women wear clothes to feel good and to feel sexy. Women turn themselves on. Men like to look at women to be turned on—to feel sexy is to know you’re alive.”

How mistaken is Ms. Quant’s understanding of

what it means to “know you’re alive”—like many others around us, sex and the body are her idols, the gods that gives meaning to her life! As clothing becomes skimpier and tighter, society’s obsession with physical appearance increases, bringing along with it everything from booming cosmetic and plastic surgery industries to eating disorders. In contrast to the world around us, we know that to be alive means that one has Christ’s Spirit in his or her heart, and, as noted above, Scripture teaches that the condition of the heart is reflected in the outward appearance. The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul instructs us inwardly to “put off . . . the old man” (Eph. 4:22) to “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14), and outwardly he demands that we adorn ourselves “in modest apparel” (I Tim. 2:9). Similarly, Bible commentator Matthew Henry exhorts, “Those who profess godliness should dress as becomes their profession.”

**So also are we guilty of
committing fornication
when we dress or behave
in way that entices men to
look at us!**

Godly women must also clothe themselves modestly so that they do not offend fellow believers. Brazen Mary Quant is correct in assuming that men are easily visually stimulated—God made them this way, but a man’s eyes were created to gaze upon the body of his own wife, in the privacy of their bedroom. In Matthew 5:28 Jesus declares that “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” So also are we guilty of committing fornication when we dress or behave in way that entices men to look at us! Now that I am a married woman, I am more aware of the power of a woman to entice a man to sin. I clearly remember standing in an airport bookstore, fuming while a flirty, scantily-clad store clerk rang up a sales transaction with my husband of only two days. I suspect that many married ladies among us feel the same way other women dress or act in a way that could cause their husbands to stumble.

Immodesty is a threat especially to young Christian women. If this were not the case, each year’s convention would not have to address immodest swimwear, tight-fitting clothing, and showing lingerie. Not that long ago I was in high school, and I admit that I often

did not dress as modestly as I could have. It was easy for me to convince myself that the stores simply didn’t sell anything else or that the way in which I was dressed was fine because my clothing was not as immodest as that of some of my classmates. Women (and girls as young as three, like my daughter!) desire to look “pretty,” but we must not believe the lie that one must dress immodestly or even unfashionably in order to look nice. My husband currently teaches at a high school in which a very strict dress code is enforced. Attending several of that school’s functions and the weddings of two of his students has persuaded me that there is room for improvement in our churches with regard to the way in which we dress. The clear, simple absolute in Scripture is that we clothe ourselves modestly, focusing not primarily on our outward appearance, but on doing good works. I’m not promoting a strict set of rules regarding clothing, for I realize that personal applications of this principle will be different. It is not our duty to try to convince other women to follow our own guidelines for dressing modestly, but we can and must encourage one another as sisters in the Lord to live in obedience to him. Our intent when we clothe ourselves must be to reveal our desire to honor our Lord and nothing more.

Godly parents must assist their young daughters in determining proper dress, and it is essential that we be open with our children (girls and boys alike!) regarding human sexuality. We provoke our children to sin when we fail them in this regard, for if we do not teach our children about sexual matters, they will acquire a warped view of that which God created to be good from television, the Internet, other worldly media, or even from peers who snicker on the playground or behind closed doors.

**A submissive, humble attitude
is reflected in modest and
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appearance.**

A young woman must be ready to submit to her parents by heeding their wisdom regarding the way in which she clothes herself. It is noteworthy that in I Timothy 2 Paul addresses the apparel of Christian women in the context of a submissive attitude. He, along with

the apostle Peter in I Peter 3, recognized that outward adorning is determined by the inner attitude of the heart. A submissive, humble attitude is reflected in modest and sober, yet becoming, apparel, while an insubordinate, proud attitude is manifested in an immodest, seductive appearance. Sisters in Lord, what does your clothing reveal about you?

A submissive wife cares for her husband psychologically and emotionally by esteeming him and by showing that respect for him in her words and actions. A wife who respects her husband guards her tongue, that little member that is capable of kindling a great fire (James 3). She does not talk negatively of her husband in front of others. She does not nag, but rather encourages him. Young women can prepare themselves to be submissive and respectful of their future husbands by submitting to their parents and by guarding the use of their tongues. Prayer is essential in cultivating the gentle and quiet spirit that our Lord values in the Christian woman (I Peter 3:4). We must pray that God keep the door of our lips (Psalm 141:3) in order that we do not become the contentious woman of whom the Proverbs warn (Proverbs 19:13 and 27:15). Drip, drip, drip...

Contrary to the mantra of the feminist movement and modern media, the Bible teaches us that God created men and women to be very different from one another. As Rev. Overway reminded us at the ladies' meeting, God created Adam to be king and Eve to be his helper, the king's helper. Though I had heard that truth many times before, how hearing it once again struck me and put into perspective my calling toward my husband! I am not "queen" in our home, I am "the king's helper." Our society seeks to erase the distinction between the masculine and feminine roles, encouraging women to pursue their own interests and their own careers. God intended that a woman serve her husband, walking with him his path, with zest and commitment. Many around us—as well as our own human natures—contend that teaching this truth demeans women, but our marriages are called to reflect that perfect relationship of Jesus Christ and his bride, the church. In that marriage we see the ideal of masculinity and femininity. He as king nurtures and protects. She, his bride, reverences and adores. He lovingly stoops to care for her. She is raised to a position of honor by her acknowledgement of his leadership. Is there anything more beautiful, more ennobling, more romantic?

God is glorified in the church by women who express their feminine gifts according to his standard of womanliness. Therefore, Christian women do not seek the offices in the church that God has reserved for men. Instead,

we are called to serve our Lord by showing care and concern for the members of our congregations, just like those faithful women who provided for the needs of our Lord himself. Young women, too, can and must be active members in the churches. As Rev. Haak so eloquently put it in his recent radio address, "The Daughters of Sarah," God designed the woman to be helper not only of the man, but of his church! Some reading this, according to God's will, may never marry. Yet the same virtues that are blessing to a husband are a blessing to the church. All of us, unmarried and married alike, are called to serve Jesus Christ, our bridegroom.

A woman who so loves the Lord that she faithfully cares for her husband physically and emotionally also cares for him spiritually. She respects him as the spiritual leader in their home, and her very attitude toward him is an encouragement to him to walk closer to the Lord. A young woman who desires to be married must be intent on building up her spiritual life through careful study of his word and prayer. After all, there's none better than the one who created womanhood to show us how to live as a godly woman. A husband benefits greatly from a wife who is knowledgeable of the Scriptures and is committed to growing in her knowledge of her Lord.

And so do the children that God may give. That was part of a young woman's hope in setting aside things in her hope chest: that someday she would have not only a husband but also a children, a daughter that would inherit that chest and begin already in childhood to lay up treasures for keeping her own home. We, too, have that hope, don't we? Whether God gives us physical children of our own or not, we pray that by his grace our example will benefit the sons and daughters of the Church, that they, too, may grow to be virtuous servants of the King.

Last spring I attended a Mother-Daughter Banquet at which the "entertainment" for the evening was a show of bridal gowns that ladies from our church had worn. Young ladies donned the cedar-scented dresses that their mothers, grandmothers or family friends had worn to their weddings, and all the mothers and daughters there that evening watched that parade of yellowed gowns with rapt attention. Young sisters in the Lord, we are members of the bride of our heavenly fiancé, Jesus Christ. Let us adorn ourselves with virtues that will prepare us for the marriage that will last for eternity, heavenly treasures in the hope chest of the heart. ❖

Sarah is a member of Doon Protestant Reformed Church in Doon, Iowa.

The Antithesis and Witnessing (2)

by Prof. Herman Hanko

I said in my last article that the witnessing of a child of God, whether young or old, has contained in it the same power that the preaching of the gospel has. By that I mean that Christian witnessing is also used by God to gain others to Christ (Heidelberg Catechism, 32/86) and to harden unbelievers in their sin and rejection of Christ.

* * * * *

It is biblical teaching (Romans 10:13-15) and solid Protestant Reformed doctrine that only preaching by the church through a minister called can save. I do not deny that. The point that needs to be made is this: True Christian witnessing is related organically to the preaching. That word “organically” always causes problems, but here I mean by it that Christian witnessing gets all its life and power from the preaching.

We are walking here on thin ice, and we must be careful—not because the truth itself is thin ice and therefore dangerous; but because this relation between preaching and witnessing can be so easily misunderstood. The preaching of the gospel in church on Sunday in the congregation is not intended to train the members of the church to be witnesses in their lives. It is not a high-powered recruiting of witnesses, sort of like a speech intended to persuade young people to join the army—as many churches today considered it to be with their evening “evangelistic services.” It is not a “pep rally” to get people excited about witnessing. It is not a training camp for witnessing where recruits learn the tactics of witnessing. Let’s at least be clear on that!

The church that gathers on the Lord’s Day is the assembly of believers and their seed. God’s chosen people are summoned on the Lord’s Day as the “beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ.” They are there primarily and even most importantly, *to worship*. They worship by praising God for their salvation.

So church worship becomes many things. It becomes the means God uses to instruct his people in the truth; to feed them with heavenly bread, to equip them for their responsibilities in their homes and families, in their life in society, in their responsibilities in the church, etc. It

is God’s means to give them spiritual strength for their difficult pilgrim’s journey through life: to comfort them in sorrow, to help them bear their afflictions quietly and in godly trust in God’s goodness, and to take up their cross and follow Christ. All kinds of things happen in church on Sunday, but they happen to God’s people, the church, the body of Christ.

When God’s people are fed with the word and strengthened in worship, they carry that word in their hearts as they return to the things that occupy their time in the world. They become, therefore, “witnesses.”

There is something spontaneous about this. I mean, there is something unconscious about this. They do not, as a general rule, leave church and say to themselves and others: “We must now be witnesses, so let us go forth and witness to what we have just heard.” It is not quite like that. They rather say, “We are God’s covenant people who are saved by the miracle of sovereign grace and given blessings the value of which cannot be estimated. We are called to be faithful as God’s covenant people to him—as if we are his bride who are now committed to faithfulness to him who has made us his wife. Let us then get on with our work in the shop, our calling in our families, our studies in school, our life in the world as those who belong to Christ.”

The preaching makes God’s people live an antithetical life. When God’s people live an antithetical life they are witnessing. They are witnessing in the most powerful way one can witness.

* * * * *

There is yet another way in which witnessing is connected to the preaching.

If God is pleased to use the witness of his children to “turn others to Christ,” we then must include in our witness a strong admonition that they must now attend worship services in the church we attend. We must not do what Billy Graham used to do in his “revival” meetings. When people came forward and said they believed in Jesus, he told them that they should now go to church, although it didn’t make any difference to what church they went. This admonition to them to come to our church

is necessary and important. For they must come to a place where the gospel is preached, without which gospel they cannot live.

So, you see how God works. Preaching is the “life-blood” of witnessing, and witnessing has as its goal, to being those who are turned to Christ to the preaching.

The preaching itself must be antithetical if it is to be the source and power of Christian witnessing. The preaching must be antithetical by doing two things: it must sharply condemn all that is the lie, and it must sharply, clearly and emphatically explain the truth. In that kind of antithetical preaching there will be much that points God’s people to live an antithetical, that is, a holy life in the world, and there will be much that warns against the deadly sins of the world. So antithetical preaching creates antithetical witnesses who testify in their whole life of the need to live an antithetical life.

Or, to put it in the words of I Peter 3:15 (see the first article I wrote), the preaching will make it possible for us to “sanctify the Lord God” in our hearts. And to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts is the only possible way to “be ready always to give any answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.”

Christian witnessing. It all begins in church on Sun-

day morning. Don’t sleep in church! Don’t live in your own private world of pleasure and fun while in church. Don’t stifle yawns to cover your boredom. Worship! That’s what you are there for. And, we must add that, for the Bible does: “Don’t be a hearer of the Word, but not a doer. Then you deceive yourself (into thinking you have faith when all you have is a counterfeit faith worth nothing) (James 1:22).

If you do what Christ tells you to do, you are a witness—whether you think about it or not; whether you are conscious of doing it or not; it all is so natural, so much a part of life, so wholly as it ought to be that when the Lord summons you home and tells you: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for...you were my faithful witness in the world,” you will say, “When did we see you an hungered, and ye gave me meat...?” But Christ will say, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:34-40). ❖

Prof. Hanko is professor emeritus of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Our Young People’s Federation

Please Take Some Convention Pictures For Us

While there is nothing that can substitute for a young person’s attendance and participation in the fellowship of a convention, savoring the memories and sharing the fruits with others will add to the benefits. The readers of *Beacon Lights* would deeply appreciate it if someone, or a group of conventioners would take the time to collect pictures and write some memorable, “heart of the convention” sort of comments for publication. Please consider this opportunity to provide a window to the convention. Even if you think you might like to try it, please let me know. I am willing to help and encourage anyone who is interested.

Please contact the editor (see inside the front cover) if you have questions.

Scripture's Teaching Regarding Alcohol (5) The Sin of Drunkenness

by Rev. Douglas Kuiper

*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging:
and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*

Proverbs 20:1

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:
...drunkenness...*

*Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past,
that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Galatians 5:19-21

*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess;
but be filled with the Spirit;
Ephesians 5:18a*

Drinking alcohol, we have seen, is not sinful in itself. Certainly God does not require us to use it in our personal and social lives, but neither does he forbid us to use it.

With two exceptions.

That is, two uses of alcohol God does clearly forbid.

One of these we noted in our second article: any use of alcohol which is contrary to the laws of the state. For young people this means particularly that God considers underage drinking a sin. And for people of all ages this means that God considers driving while intoxicated or impaired, driving with an open container, and other such transgressions of civil law to be sin. They are sin against the fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother," which by implication requires us to honor all in authority over us.

To the second sinful use of alcohol we must turn our attention. We refer to the sin of drunkenness, or the immoderate use of alcohol.

We must emphasize this point.

We must, first, because it is part of what Scripture teaches regarding alcohol. If we overlook Scripture's condemnation of the sin of drunkenness, we have not presented God's revealed will concerning this subject fairly and accurately.

Secondly, we must emphasize this point so that young people do not think lightly of drunkenness. It is, of course, possible to think lightly of this sin. Perhaps some think of it as being cool, a way to prove one's independence from parents, a way to gain the approval of one's peers. So we must know that the person who was drunk or is drunk has not gained God's approval. God condemns drunkenness as sin. He condemns the act of drinking to the point of drunkenness as sin. He hates this sin so much that, as I Corinthians 6:9-10 teaches, he will punish the drunkard who remains impenitent regarding his sin by excluding him from the final perfection of his kingdom.

Do you enjoy drinking beer immoderately? Do you try at times to find relief from your troubles by drinking in excess? Do you think drunkenness is cool?

God thinks otherwise.

* * * * *

To be drunk is to be under the control of wine or strong drink.

To be drunk does not only mean that you have had so much to drink that you are passed out, that you are unconscious of your surroundings or what others are doing to you. When you are at that point, you have been drunk for some time.

To be drunk is to be unable to function normally - to

walk normally, talk normally, think and discern normally. The walk, speech, and thought process of one who is drunk is controlled by alcohol. He cannot walk straight. He cannot always think rationally. He cannot talk clearly. The reason is that his brain is affected by alcohol.

This happens more quickly than one thinks. In the third article, in which we explained what it means to drink a “little” wine, we explained this point.

That such is sin God’s Word makes clear in the passages quoted above, as well as other passages. Ephesians 5:18 is clear: “be not drunk with wine.”

Because it is sin, bodily drunkenness is a picture of the spiritual drunkenness of one not in the kingdom of God. So he who commits such sins without being sorry for them shows himself to be not in the kingdom of God.

* * * * *

But how easy to fall into the sin! The command not to be drunk is necessary, not only because our nature enjoys drunkenness, but also because wine and strong drink are deceitful.

This is the point of Proverbs 20:1: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

In this verse, God portrays wine and strong drink as if they were persons, mocking the one drinking them. Wine mocks, that is, speaks scornfully and arrogantly to the one drinking; and strong drink roars loudly and boisterously at him.

How? By promising to give happiness to the one who drinks, but not delivering on this promise.

We have noted in the past that a little wine has a good effect, cheering the heart and calming the nerves.

To the one who has had a little, and who is feeling the good effects of alcohol, wine and strong drink say mockingly and boisterously: “If a little is good, a lot is better, so have some more! What? You think you are going to stop drinking now? What are you, a wimp? Don’t you know that if you drink more, you will be even more happy? Think of all the fun you are going to miss out on!”

But he who listens to this taunting voice finds that wine and strong drink do not deliver on their promise.

While a little wine cheers his heart, a lot sickens him, leaves him miserable, and can even bring physical death. In addition, it leaves him without the enjoyment of God’s love and fellowship.

**While a little wine cheers
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and fellowship.
This deception has its root
in Satan...**

This deception has its root in Satan, who is a liar, and the father of the lie (John 8:44).

The wise man will not be deceived. Proverbs 20:1 indicates this in the text itself: “whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Ephesians 5:18 indicates this in its relation to the verse preceding: “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

That wise man is not just the man with earthly wisdom; not just the one who learned wisdom from past experience; but the one in whom Christ lives, and who desires to serve God as he commands us in his Word.

He will consider, as he drinks, that to become drunken is sin; that wine is a mocker; and that he will drink to God’s glory, and not be brought under the bondage of wine.

Next time, God willing, we will continue to show that drunkenness is sin by speaking of its physical and moral effects. ❖

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

Trophy of Forgiveness

The sound of a thump came from upstairs. Suddenly Jimmy came running down the steps with tears streaming down his face, "Dad," he cried, "I broke Anthony's baseball trophy."

"How did it happen?" asked Dad.

"I wanted to look at Anthony's new trophy, but it was on one of the shelves. I got a stool and stood on that to get a better look. As I leaned over to look, the stool tipped over. As I fell, I grabbed the shelf to catch myself—and when I did, the trophy tipped and fell off. Anthony is going to be so mad at me."

"Well, if you tell Anthony the truth and apologize, I'm sure he will forgive you."

Later that night Anthony came home after baseball practice and the family had dinner together. After dinner was finished, Anthony went up into his room to put his practice equipment away. When he walked in, he saw the broken trophy on his desk. "Who broke my trophy!" he yelled.

Just then Jimmy walked in the door. "I'm so sorry," he cried, "It was an accident."

"I don't care if it was an accident! What were you doing in my room?"

"I just wanted to look at it, but I fell and knocked it off the shelf."

"I worked so hard to get that trophy and now you broke it. I will never forgive you. Get out!"

Jimmy ran to his room crying. Anthony walked down the stairs and sat down in a chair with a huff. Dad walked in and sat down on the couch. "So did Jimmy tell you what he did?" asked Dad.



"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

"Yes," said Anthony, "I will never forgive him for that. I worked so hard to get that trophy and now it's broke because he went into my room without permission."

"Anthony, God tells us that we must forgive someone when they sin against us. When they come to us in repentance and ask for forgiveness, we must forgive them. Just think, we sin all the time every day and yet God forgives us every time. He showed us we are forgiven by sending Jesus to die for our sins. Now don't you think you can forgive Jimmy for the little thing he did to you?"

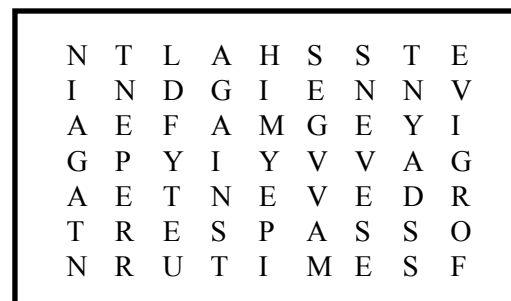
Anthony got up from his chair and ran upstairs to find Jimmy. "Hey Jimmy!"

"Yes, Anthony."

"I forgive you for breaking my trophy, and I'm sorry for getting mad and yelling at you."

"It's okay," said Jimmy, "I forgive you too."

**Find the underlined words in the puzzle below:
"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."
Luke 17:4**



This Kid's Page was written by Justin Van Dyke as a submission from Mr. Scott Van Uffelen's Senior Writing class at Covenant Christian High School, Walker, Michigan. Justin is a member of Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

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Church News

BAPTISMS

"He is the LORD our God: ...He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations."

Psalm 105:7, 8

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to: Sarah Claire, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Aric Bleyenberg—Byron Center, MI

Samantha Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Hoekstra—Calvary, IA

Ty Jamison, son of Mr. & Mrs. Evan Brummel—Calvary, IA

David Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Langeland—Georgetown, MI

Liam David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dewey Engelsma—Grandville, MI

Jayden Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Westra—Holland, MI

Madison Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nick Dykstra—Hudsonville, MI

Levi Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ross Zuverink—Hudsonville, MI

Simon Reid, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rob Andringa—Hull, IA

Clint Bryan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Van Der Zwaag—Hull, IA

Mattias James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Seth Vis—Hull, IA

Micah Seth, son of Mr. & Mrs. David King—Hull, IA

Mason Tyler, son of Mr. & Mrs. Justin Griess—Loveland, CO

Owen Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael DeJong—Peace, IL

Levi Jonathan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Medema—Peace, IL

Owen James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jason Jabaay—Southeast, MI

Bryce Timothy, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tim DeJong—South Holland, IL

Lee John, son of Mr. & Mrs. Les Kamps—Southwest, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." Psalm 119:33

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

Megan Elzinga—Faith, MI

Vonda Kooienga—Faith, MI

Brenda Koole—Faith, MI

Andy Talsma—Faith, MI

Brianna Van Dyke—Faith, MI

Kyle Corson—First, MI

Sean Vander Meulen—Lynden, WA

Michael Orzechowski—Southeast, MI

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. Justus Van Der Walt and Miss Michelle Morley—Bethel, IL

Mr. Luke Engelsma and Miss Crystal Dyer—Georgetown, MI