



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

The Humility to Listen

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Recently I was involved in a disturbing discussion with some good OPC brothers. The topic of our discussion was not supposed to be controversial, though it became so quickly. We were talking about another evangelical theological position that is not in line with Reformed Christianity.

Let me say that I understand the problems with the evangelical theological viewpoint under consideration. I know why it is inconsistent with our Reformed perspective and am not willing to budge an inch on that point. The disagreement with that other outlook was not what surprised or disturbed me.

What caught me off guard was the dismissive attitude expressed toward anyone holding a different and non-Reformed viewpoint. We were not discussing secular materialistic atheism, or Islamic theology, or Mormonism. Rather, we were considering a viewpoint sincerely held by our brothers and sisters in Christ. It was a Christian perspective held by Bible-reading believers.

I was further troubled by what seemed like an attempt to push me into a corner, and make me choose sides in this impromptu conversational tug-of-war. If I didn't immediately rally to the position held by my OPC brethren, then I was somehow suspect. There seemed to be little room for honest and open discussion.

I relate my anxiety over this because there is a danger of being too proud to listen to others. There can be an internal arrogance within our own Reformed community, but it can also exhibit itself

toward other professing Christians.

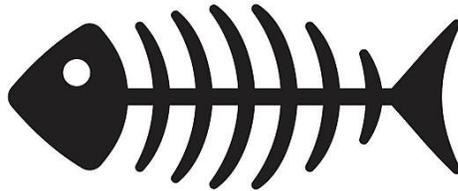
That tendency has been on my mind during my research this summer related to Arthur Perkins. I've had opportunity to talk to all sorts of people who are not necessarily Reformed Christians with an OPC pedigree. As I have talked with and listened to these

various folks, I have learned important information. New insights, and good insights, have come to me through these new Christian friends.

All of this has led me to ponder some worthwhile questions: 1) Am I humble enough to truly listen

to others, even when I know that I disagree with them in certain respects? Or can I only listen to people with whom I already fully agree?

- 2) Am I grounded enough in the truth that I can hear and consider other perspectives, without being swayed into error?
- 3) Am I perceptive enough that I can glean out what is good and right, while rejecting what is bad and false? (Can I eat the fish and spit out the bones?)
- 4) Am I able to learn from other Christians, or do I always need to be "right" all the time? Do other believers have anything to teach me, or have I somehow cornered the market on all true knowledge?



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Mnemonics...

- *Prayer Meeting 9/9*
- *Church Campout 9/10-9/12*
- *Presbytery in Oostburg 9/18*
- *Worldview Movie Night 9/25*

Continued on last page....

Chapter 5: On Patience

PATIENCE is better than wisdom: an ounce of patience is worth a pound of brains. All men praise patience, but few enough can practice it. It is a medicine which is good for all diseases: therefore, every old woman recommends it, but it is not every garden that grows the herbs to make it with. When one's flesh and bones are full of aches and pains, it is as natural for us to murmur as for a horse to shake his head when the flies tease him, or a wheel to rattle when a spoke is loose. But nature should not be the rule with Christians, or what is their religion worth? If a soldier fights no better than a plowboy, off with his red coat. We expect more fruit from an apple tree than from a thorn, and we have a right to do so. The disciples of a patient Savior should be patient themselves. Grin and bear it is the old-fashioned advice, but sing and bear it is a great deal better. After all, we get very few cuts of the whip, considering what bad cattle we are; and when we do smart a little, it is soon over. Pain past is pleasure, and experience comes by it. We ought not to be afraid of going down into Egypt when we know we shall come out of it with jewels of silver and gold.

Impatient people water their miseries and plow up their comforts; sorrows are visitors that come without invitation, but complaining minds send a wagon to bring their troubles home in. Many people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed; they chew the bitter pill which they would not even know to be bitter if they had the sense to swallow it whole in a cup of patience and water. They think every other man's burden to be light and their own feathers to be heavy as lead. They are hardly done by in their own opinion: no one's toes are so often trodden on by the black ox as theirs, the snow falls thickest round their door, and the hail rattles hardest on their windows. Yet, if the truth were known, it is their fancy rather than their fate which makes things go so hard with them. A litany would be well off if they could but think so. A little sprig of the herb called content, if put into the poorest soup will make it taste as rich as the Lord Mayor's turtle. John Ploughman grows the plant in his garden, but the late hard winter nipped it terribly, so that he cannot afford to give his neighbors a slip of it; they had better follow Matthew 25:9, and go to those who sell and buy for themselves. Grace is a good soil to grow it in, but it wants watering from the fountain of mercy. To be poor is not always pleasant, but worse things than that happen at sea. Small shoes are apt to pinch, but not if you have a small foot; if we have little means it will be well to have little desires. Poverty is no shame, but being discontented with it is. In some things, the poor are better off than the rich; for if a poor man has to seek meat for his stomach, he is more likely to get what he is after than the rich man who seeks a stomach for his meat. A poor man's table is soon spread, and his labor spares his buying sauce. The best doctors are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman, and many a godly plowman has all these gentlemen to wait upon him. Plenty makes dainty, but hunger finds no fault with the cook. Hard work brings health, and an ounce of health is worth a sack of diamonds. It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness. There is more sweet in a spoonful of sugar than in a cask of vinegar. It is not the quantity of our goods, but the blessing of God on what we have that makes us truly rich. The parings of a pippin are better than a whole crab; a dinner of herbs with peace is better than a stalled ox and contention therewith. better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. A little wood will heat my little oven; why, then, should I murmur because all the woods are not mine?

When troubles come, it is of no use to fly in the face of God by hard thoughts of providence; that is kicking against the pricks and hurting your feet. The trees bow in the wind, and so must we. Every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful, and every time we complain we miss a blessing. Grumbling is a bad trade, and yields no profit, but patience has a golden hand. our evils will soon be over. After rain comes clear shining; black crows have wings; every winter turns to spring; every night breaks into morning.

Blow the wind never so fast,
It will lower at last.

If one door should be shut, God will open another; if the peas do not yield well, the beans may; if one hen leaves her eggs, another will bring out all her brood. There's a bright side to all things, and a good God everywhere. Some where or other in the worst flood of trouble there always is a dry spot for contentment to get its foot on; if there were not, it would learn to swim.

Friends, let us take to patience and water gruel, as the old folks used to tell us, rather than catch the miserables and give others the disease by wickedly finding fault with God. The best remedy for affliction is submitting to providence. What can't be cured must be endured. If we cannot get bacon, let us bless God that there are still some cabbages in the garden. "Must" is a hard nut to crack, but it has a sweet kernel. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Whatever falls from the skies is, sooner or later, good for the land: whatever comes to us from God is worth having, even though it be a rod. We cannot by nature like trouble any more than a mouse can fall in love with a cat, and yet Paul by grace came to glory in tribulations also. Losses and crosses are heavy to bear, but when our hearts are right with God, it is wonderful how easy the yoke becomes. We must go to glory by the way of Weeping Cross; and as we were never promised that we should ride to heaven in a feather bed, we must not be disappointed when we see the road to be rough, as our fathers found it before us. All's well that ends well; and, therefore, let us plow the heaviest soil with our eye on the sheaves of harvest, and learn to sing at our labor while others murmur.

Church Campout

Our annual church campout is **September 10-12** at Kohler Andrae State Park.

The **Friday** night "pitch-in" supper will be at the De Jong's campsite - #215 on **Friday**, Sept 11 at 6:30 pm.



“O God, we praise Thee for keeping us
till this day, and for the full assurance
that Thou wilt never let us go. “

C.H. Spurgeon

September Birthdays

Howard Voskuil	7th	Stephanie Friberg	22 nd
Mark Berenschot	12th	Joshua Arndt	25th
Elizabeth TenPas	16th		
Kristen Berenschot	22nd		
Virginia Berenschot	22nd		



September Anniversaries

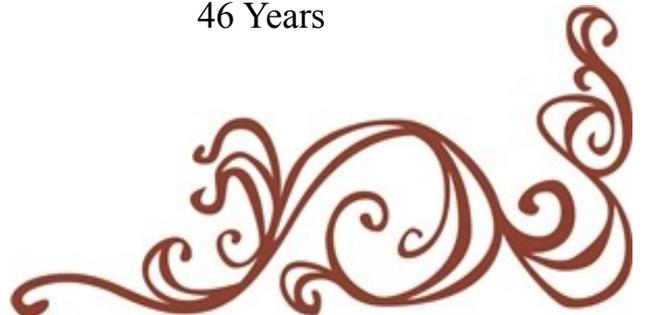
Carl & Phyllis Nyhof September 3rd
54 Years

Harlan and Nancy Harmelink September 4th
62 Years

Roger and Deborah Arndt September 24th
37 Years

Jonny and Alyssa Arndt September 24th
4 Years

Paul and Linda Damkot September 28th
46 Years

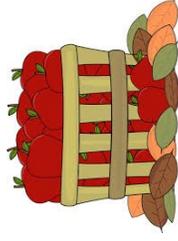




Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

September 2020

Grace OPC



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Prayer Meeting Starts	10 Church Campout	11 Church Campout with Pitch in Supper	12 Church Campout
13	14	15	16	17	18 Presbytery in Oostburg	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Worldview Movie Night	26
27 Lord's Supper	28	29	30			

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“For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!”
1 Corinthians 6:19



Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
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Spurgeon Corner

“The Lord trieth the righteous.”

Psalm 11:5

All events are under the control of Providence; consequently all the trials of our outward life are traceable at once to the great First Cause. Out of the golden gate of God’s ordinance the armies of trial march forth in array, clad in their iron armour, and armed with weapons of war. All

providences are doors to trial. Even our mercies, like roses, have their thorns. Men may be drowned in seas of prosperity as well as in rivers of affliction. Our mountains are not too high, and our valleys are not too low for temptations: trials lurk on all roads. Everywhere, above and beneath, we are beset and surrounded with dangers. Yet no shower falls unpermitted from the threatening cloud; every drop has its order ere it hastens to the earth. The trials which come from God are sent to prove and strengthen our graces, and so at once to illustrate the power of divine grace, to test the genuineness of our virtues, and to add to their energy. Our Lord in his infinite wisdom and superabundant love, sets so high a value upon his people’s faith that he will not screen them from those trials by which faith is strengthened. You would never have possessed the precious faith which now supports you if the trial of your faith had not been like unto fire. You are a tree that never would have rooted so well if the wind had not rocked you to and fro, and made you take firm hold upon the precious truths of the covenant grace. Worldly ease is a great foe to faith; it loosens the joints of holy valour, and snaps the sinews of sacred courage. The balloon never rises until the cords are cut; affliction doth this sharp service for believing souls. While the wheat sleeps comfortably in the husk it is useless to man, it must be threshed out of its resting place before its value can be known. Thus it is well that Jehovah trieth the righteous, for it causeth them to grow rich towards God.

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Evening September 3rd, C.H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded...

It seems to me that if we are so arrogant that we refuse to listen to others, then we must necessarily become isolated in our own echo chambers, only hearing a repetition of what we already believe.

While that may seem safe and comfortable for the moment, it can produce imbalances and skewed priorities, as well as undetected forms of heresy. Furthermore, it is a denial of the Holy Spirit’s presence and work in non-OPC Christians. While we don’t uncritically accept anything and everything that other Christians say, neither should we reject everything they say out-of-hand, because they’re not part of our denomination. Listen with humility and listen with discernment!