BEACON LIGHTS

"Sexuality is a gift of God, a good gift. He has given you this gift not to be used selfishly or romantically. Body and soul, you are not your own. So use this gift for Him. First and foremost we must save ourselves for God.

Read "Sex and Dating"
by Rev. Ron Van Overloop

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Not A Suggestion, But A Command

"And Jesus came and spake unto them saying,
All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
God ye therefore, and teach all nations."
Matt. 28:18, 19a

"Go ye". These two words of Jesus tell us exactly what we must do. They are so simple that everyone that reads can understand them. Ever since Jesus said, "Go ye", the universal church and the individuals in it have gone. No maps or lists of places to go are necessary for the Christian.

Where do we get our power to do this work? Who has authorized this work to be performed? Who has verified that this great expense of the church is worthwhile? Jesus. It was Jesus that said "Go ye, therefore". Why should you go? "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth, therefore, Go ye." I have the power to do everything in heaven and in earth but I will use you to do it. The word must go out. Go ye, therefore. Jesus, the person with the power has authorized us to go. "And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Matt. 28:18,19a

Hyper-Calvinists do not go. A Hyper-Calvinist would take the doctrine of predestination and eliminate mission work. If we believe that we have the doctrines, including that of predestination we will be encouraged to do mission work. How different will we be from Hyper-Calvinists. A complete opposite outlook we will then have of this command of Jesus.

We will go because God commands us to go. What attitude should we have? That of zeal for the glory of God and the love of our neighbor! We praise God by doing mission work and thereby showing and confessing His name. We are not ashamed, but willing to tell others. We have the gospel to tell them. They need not bring anything, but they must come and drink of the waters freely. We must tell them in a way that emphasizes that their life depends on what we are telling them—because it does. Would you casually mention that a brick wall was to at any moment fall upon them and kill them? So too we come with urgency and love for their souls. Jesus commands us to love our neighbor and if you want to follow this command you will easily be persuaded to go out with zeal.

To whom do we go? All nations! Jesus makes the decision of where to go, easy! Go everywhere. And in going to all nations and peoples we must not judge the people. We do not look him or her over to see if there is a chance he or she will believe. We do not get vital information on ethnic background and a credit report of financial success or failure. We do not look at the color of the skin. Black or white doesn't matter to God and should not matter to us. You see, reader, our evaluation of the person's chances of being saved are not necessary and is wrong. If we truly believe that God has chosen people from eternity it wipes out the need for this evaluation. God says leave that to me, but you - go. We love to evaluate the situation of those around us because it makes us feel good. We would limit our interest in this person and as it is said in business "cut our losses". We would not invest everything in a deal that doesn't look good. Imagine our surprise in church when Jesus would go over and talk to a harlot. A prostitute. Today we would judge Him as the people then did saying, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. "(Luke 7:39b) We would not have judged this woman to be a candidate for our mission work.

In 1994 let us remember these two words and their important context. "Go ye".

-Editor

Learned Passivity

In response to Thad Lubbers' article "Learned Passivity" (October 1993), I would like to express my disagreement with the assumption that the Church is responsible somehow for the "learned passivity" of its youthful, middle-aged, and elderly members.

To begin with, I am not certain throughout this article exactly what is meant by "the Church". Is it the minister and the consistory, the entire body of believers, or both? If we must unlearn "learned passivity", who is going to do the teaching? Is it the work of the minister, the consistory, elderly members, middle-aged members, peers or perhaps an appointed "Committee to Combat Passivity" to train members to be active members within the Church of Jesus Christ?

While I can wholeheartedly see that our love and care for one another within the Church is sadly lacking on many fronts, I have seen firsthand that the answer does not lie, either, in the Church having a plethora of classes to help the depressed, the divorced, the widowed, the addicted, etc., and involving her members in the busywork of organizing and running these classes. Making catechism classes "relevant" to today's needs, i.e, dropping a little doctrine in favor of a "loving, caring, sharing" atmosphere isn't the answer either. This leaves youthful members, perhaps, feeling good, but without a spiritual foundation to stand upon when the strong winds of life blow. I am deeply concerned, however, as a member of the Church and as the parent of three teenagers as well as three younger children, that the doctrines taught them by the Church as her mandate from Christ Himself do produce good fruits, within the home, within the Church, within the world. And that is wherein the responsibility lies, I believe - within those of us who are mature members of Christ's Church, whether male or female, married or single, child-blessed or childless, rich or poor, strong or weak. We are examples to our young children and our young people. We model for them what being a living member of the Church of Jesus Christ is all about.

If our faith is grounded in the Word of God as taught to us from the pulpit from week to week, if we follow the example of Christ Himself as he walked among people on this earth, if we truly love one another for Christ's sake, we will be busy people. "True religion and undefiled" speaks the Holy Spirit in the epistle of James, "is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." How much of our daily walk is concerned with just these two evidences of a true religion? What do we teach our children from infancy about our connection to others in Church and world? Is the overflowing thankfulness of our hearts for God's wonderful grace, about which we hear from the pulpit weekly, such that it pours out upon others? Do we show that we love those whom Christ loves - the weak, the sick, the sinful, the rejected, the lonely, the despised ones - by our active outpouring within the Church? Or are we clique-bound, coldhearted, judgmental, passive, apathetic? Can the Church possibly undo the passivity learned within the home? I doubt it.

So, how to combat "learned passivity"? First of all, maintain the doctrines which Christ expounded from the synagogue pulpit. Teach us and our children, pastors, about the sovereign goodness of our God, the grace that chose us wretched, undeserving sinners to live as royalty in the palace of the King, the unconditional love of our Saviour, Who spared nothing of Himself for us, but gave up all the riches of His place in Heaven t become as one of us, that we might live with Him as brothers and sisters one day. Tell us of Abraham, of Moses, of Job, of David, of their spiritual struggles, of all the saints, and prophets and priests and kings who have gone before us as examples of faith. Tell us of the glory that awaits us. Tell us all of it, with conviction in your words. And all of us who "have ears to hear", who are the members by profession of His Church, let us teach at home, in school, and all the way to heaven those little ones and young people how to love one another in word and deed. We will answer one day - for ourselves and for them - that great question "Where were you when I was hungry, poor, blind, miserable, naked, in prison?" and receive that reward He promises to good and faithful or wicked and unprofitable ones.

If we "have Moses and the prophets" (i.e. doctrine) we know, as did the rich man who oppressed poor Lazarus, what to do for the Lazaruses around us. If we know what God has done for us - and we do know, those of us hearing Scripture expounded from week to week - then we are responsible for expressing our thankfulness to Him in the "new" way He has commanded -"that ye love one another". The problem is not so much one of "learned passivity", then, as it is of base ingratitude learned by example.

Thanks, Thad, for providing a springboard for discussion of an important - a crucially important- issue to God's Church and us as members of it.

Suzanne Looyenga
South Holland, IL

Spiritual Youth in a Carnal World - In Dating

by Rev. Ron Van Overloop

What is dating? Why date? What are some of the reasons for dating?

What should we do on a date? How far may we go in our touching and kissing? Where do we draw the line? How do we know where to draw the line?

The theme for this Young People's Convention declares the fact that you are spiritual and that the world is carnal. Do you realize that the future of the Reformed faith depends, to some extent, on your living in the awareness of the difference between yourselves as "spiritual" and the world as "carnal?" This difference is called the "antithesis."

Therefore, a discussion of who to date and how to date is really an application of the antithesis. That means that we, the "spiritual," may not unite with the "carnal" in our marriages, and therefore in our dating. And it means that we do not unite ourselves to carnality. The carnal world has greatly influenced the church concerning sex, dating and marriage.

Do you realize that the subject of sexual purity is not merely a matter of curiosity, but is of essential and eternal importance? The sexually immoral do not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9,10, Eph. 5:5-7). Therefore, a pure life must be the norm for the Christian. Specific and strong guidelines must be given and must be adhered to in order to protect against compromising the standard of purity and holiness which our holy God requires.

Dating

Why do we date?

Dating is of recent origin. Nobody "dated" as we know it. It is a relatively recent, Western cultural development. That is why the Bible says nothing specifically about dating. That does not keep us from using Scripture, for there are several general principles we can find in the Bible which do apply to dating.

I would describe dating as the middle ground in the process of finding a suitable mate. It comes between fellowship and engagement.

It is my experience that you young people send conflicting signals about the seriousness of dating. One signal is that dating is just "for fun," and the other signal is that it is pretty serious. Sometimes you determine which signal to send by what can be used for your advantage at the moment and which will confuse your parents the most. The first signal is usually sent with the mouth. Other times, it is very evident that even while you say one thing with your mouth ("just fun"), but you act quite differently and treat the whole matter as very serious. For example, if Bill had just one date with Josephine, then they are "going together," and no one else should dare ask Josephine, because she is "going" with Bill. Another example is the tears that are shed and the feelings that are hurt.

I and your parents want to respond to both signals you send our way. It may sound like we are contradicting ourselves because you will hear us say that dating is serious business and that it should be for fun. We mean both. And we are not really contradicting ourselves because we are only responding to the two different signals you send. When you act as if dating is pretty serious and sometimes "fall" head over heels in "love," then we say, "Take it easy"; "don't get so involved in just one, look around"; "date in groups"; "don't be alone." But when you say that dating is just for fun, then we say, "Be careful because dating does lead to marriage." When I hear, "0 Dad, it's just for fun," then I say, "But dating is the only thing that leads to marriage."

Because marriage is the goal of dating, you may not date a person who cannot be a life-long mate. Why do you want to go out with an unbeliever, or with someone whom you know you could and never would

marry? Date any personally suitable church-going member of the opposite sex who is in the covenant of grace and is growing in that grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

* * * * *

How ought we to date?

A wrong view of dating is to consider dating individualistically or selfishly. If dating is simply and only a means to personal fulfillment and romance, then dating itself is sin. If the idea is I spent a lot of money on her, so I have the right to. . . , then dating is sin!

Another wrong view of dating is to see it romantically. "Romance" is defined as that which is without basis in fact, fanciful, not practical, dominated by thoughts and feelings of idealistic love and courting. If the guys are more inclined to view dating individualistically, then girls have the tendency to see dating through "romantic eyes." This is opposed to spirituality, which is objective (while certainly includes feeling) and God-centered.

> The question to be answered is not "Who am I?", but Whose am I?"

If dating is romantic and individualistic, then God's Word is placed under feelings. But God's Word must govern our feelings and emotions. The bed and dating are not to be separated from Christ's dominion in your life.

They are to be under His dominion.

Do not quickly conclude that there is no romance in being spiritual. Take the time to read the following passages to learn that the opposite is true: Song of Solomon 1:2b-4a,10,11,15a; Gen. 29:20. But romance does not rule or reign (Gen. 29:31,35); romantic love does not justify everything.

Sex

We must have a Biblical view of dating, of sex and marriage, and a Biblical view of purity.

Human sexuality is a wonderful part of God's creation of man. Consider the fact that Adam and Eve's sinless holiness is described as an unashamed nakedness (Gen.2:25). This clearly implies that no part of God's creation is to be considered sinful, bad & dirty. Human sexuality has been created by God to be a powerful and mysterious force (Song of Solomon 8:6,7). Sexual desires are one of the strongest desires God has created (Prov. 6:25ff). While these desires are strong enough in themselves, their intensity is increased by the prevalence and popularity of the sin ("everyone is doing it"), especially today!

Man's fall into sin greatly affected also this aspect of God's beautiful creation. Just as Adam and Eve's sinlessness is described as unashamed nakedness, so the consciousness of sin came for them through the awareness of their nakedness (Gen.3:7). Their beautiful sexual powers were subject to sin and were now "lusts of the flesh" (Rom.13:14). "Lust" is the wages of sin (God's sentence): cf. the gross sins into which God pushes the willful sinner (Romans 1). Now sexual desires, while in themselves good, are often expressed in perverse and sinful ways. Now sexual sins reveal the deceit and irrationality of sin in a powerful and unique way. And now these sins show great weakness of even regenerated hearts.

God has redeemed sexual desires from shame, but only in the union of those who marry in the Lord. Sex is only allowed in marriage: Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 7:2,7; Matt. 5:27-30. Then sex is most beautiful and wonderful, especially when scars from the past do not come into the bedroom. The seventh commandment is not "dated". It is as relevant today as it was 3000 years ago. You see, God does not change.

The issue is really not only sexual purity, but also that of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The question to be answered is not "Who am I?", but "Whose am I?" I Cor.6:19b,20 teaches that we are not our own; therefore glorify God in your body.

Sexuality is a gift of God, a good gift. He has given you this gift not to be used selfishly or romantically. Body and soul, you are not your own. So use this gift for Him. First and foremost we must save ourselves for God.

Effects of premarital sex

It is beneficial if we consider what happens if we disobey God. If we misuse His good gift of sexuality, are there consequences?

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The girl feels used and cheated, for she has "lost" a most precious possession: her virginity. "Lost" is not the right word, because she gave it away cheaply. Virginity is a gift God gave her and she can only give it away ONCE. After that she can never get it back, and she can never give it to anyone else. Today very little is said about the pricelessness of virginity. To the contrary, TV, movies, romances make virginity cheap. However, I am convinced that girls do prize it, but they give it away out of pride. They do not want to be "odd", or they want the feeling NOW, or they use sex to get love.

The "man" (I put that word in quotes because such a male is not a real man) too "loses" something.

He gives away cheaply a priceless gift. He loses the gift of a proper understanding of the holiness and mystery of sexuality (a matter "too wonderful" - Prov. 30:18,19). When he uses a girl as a sex object (no matter how much he thinks he "loves" her and no matter how much he tells her that he "loves" her), then he has lost a sense of that mystery and glory which is meant to be highly prized. Premarital sex is entering into a holy of holies in a degrading and profane manner, violating the will of God. And the only reason for rushing in is so terribly selfish!

I have been asked, "But what if we are engaged to be married? Is it not alright then? We are really committed to each other." All reasons for premarital sex are selfish: for fun or self-gratification, the desire to be loved (a most powerful force), the fear of what the other party will think. To those who have asked me this question, my answer is in the form of a question: Can you justify it with an open Bible? Do it, if youcan do so to the glory of God. Besides, early sex steals from the intensity and wonder of the act (as we save desert for last and we save presents for Christmas Day). In addition, do not forget that not all who are engaged to be married get married. Then if you fulfill your selfish desires together before God says it is alright, you will later enter into marriage with scars. Remember, God will not be mocked. Do not be deceived.

Sex before marriage?

What is to be our motivation?

Our motivation may not be one of fear: fear of being found out, fear of pregnancy, fear of a disease, fear of the opinions of others.

A proper motivation is that of love of our neighbor: my neighbor's wife or daughter. Also my neighbor whom I must love can be my future wife, or my parents, or my future wife's parents, both of whom I would hurt terribly when my sins were discovered.

However, the main motivation is to be that of love of God and the salvation He freely has given. Loving God out of gratitude for all He has done for me, drives me to strive to please Him in all of my conduct, including my conduct with my date.

If God created the sexual desires and they have now become powerful lusts, are they controllable? God has provided an escape from the tyranny of lust. There is hope for both those who desire to maintain the gift of the purity He gave. And there is hope for those who have already violated God's pure gift of virginity. First, the power of God's sovereign grace removes the guilt of all sin, and it delivers us from the filth of sinful flesh. We can no more get our virginity back (even though we shower and dress) than we can remove a hole after pulling out the nail. But God graciously cleanses. This not a sin which cannot be forgiven. Sexual sins and temptations must be treated like all other sins and temptations. They are part of the normal, sinful Christian life. Where there is sin, there must be repentance accompanied with the prayer for forgiveness and for God's grace to pursue holiness. Then there may be the assurance of God's gracious forgiveness, and the assurance that He will give us the grace to walk in holiness. We cannot retrieve our virginity, but we can retrieve our chastity and purity before God.

Secondly, the Spirit of Christ brings with salvation deliverance from sin's power and the gift of self-control

The way to fight this sin and temptation is to "flee" it (I Cor. 6:18), just as Joseph did

(called "temperance" in Gal.5:23). Sexual energies and desires are controllable. As powerful as they may be, they can be controlled. The Bible teaches that we are not helpless before these lusts, for "Christ strengtheneth us" (Phil. 4:13). We can break with sinful self-indulgence. And we are called to move progressively toward Spirit-filled self-control. Jesus spoke of some who were eunuchs for the kingdom's sake (Matthew 19:12). We must practice self-denial, just like our Master.

The way to fight this sin and temptation is to *"flee"* it (I Cor. 6:18), just as Joseph did. This temptation cannot be met with firm resistance. To be "brave" before this sin is to be a fool. The only way to be faithful to God in regard to this sin is to flee. To control sexual desires, realize that you need more wisdom than Solomon had as well as more wisdom than he used. This admonition has the clear implication that we must be very careful not to overestimate our self-control or spirituality. Rather we are admonished to "make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." One of the best ways not to make provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts is to "be alone with others, never all alone." Another way is not to date so frequently.

We fight the temptations of this sin by making a conviction to be pure before we date. This means that you must draw a line as to how far you will go.

I would not say this except I have seen how fast some of you "operate" and I have heard how some of you talk about those of the opposite sex. For many of you it does not seem to take very long to get from learning each other's names to the giving and receiving of hickeys.

We need to draw a line because the Bible attaches physical attraction and intimacy with romantic love between a man and a woman (read the Song of Solomon). We cannot have developing romantic love without having increasing pressure toward consummation. It is abnormal to become more and more intimate mentally and emotionally, and not want to consummate that union. We are walking on hot coals if we keep getting closer and closer together when not ready to marry.

We need to draw the line before we date because wavering at the outset often results with falling in the end. In obedience to your Savior and Lord draw the line and make a commitment not to go over it.

Finally, realize that you can stop what you are doing. If what has been said earlier pricks you, then realize that you can stop what you are doing, by putting the relationship in submission to the will of God. It is not that God wants to deprive you of something that is good for you. Real love will say, "No! I will not go further." Real love is restrained and controlled until God says, "Yes". Besides, it can be argued that it is better (more powerful and beautiful) when it is restrained.

Conclusions

I am not going to set forth rule upon rule. Rather it is my intention to leave you in the custody of your conscience as awakened by the Word of God. You must judge whether you are aroused, whether you are committing adultery in your heart.

Do not forget that the woman at whom you look to lust after in your heart (which is adultery) can be your girlfriend - cf. Matthew 5:28.

Consider that you can come to wedding night without ever having kissed and not lost anything. Many have lost much who kissed on the first date and kept going from there.

By the grace of God, hold fast to God's Word, striving to be pure as the Lord our God is pure. Purity or chastity is losing your life (your desires) for Jesus and having the promise of finding it (Matthew 16: 25). Be willing to lose your life (of sexual satisfaction) for the sake of Christ. It is worth saving yourself.

God made your body and in it He gave you the gift of virginity. And He gave you His Son to redeem your soul and body both of which are His (I Cor. 6:19,20). God's gift of virginity you can only give away only once. Keep it for your God-given mate.

Believe God's promise of joy and fulfillment. Great shall your reward be in heaven.

Rev. Van Overloop is pastor of the Bethel Prot. Ref. Church in Elk Grove Village, Illinois.

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The Content of Authoritative Preaching

by Rev. Russell Dykstra

[Thus far in this rubric, The Binding Power of the Word, it has been noted that authority in the Church of Christ is the right from Christ to speak the Word of God, and several areas of authority found in the Church were noted. The first area examined was that of the preaching, which has two aspects: the right of the preacher to speak the Word of God, and the authority of the word spoken. The preacher, we learned, has been called by Christ to be His official spokesman - a herald and ambassador of the King, and therein lies his authority to speak the Word of God. Now we turn to the authority of the word spoken.]

Must we listen to [and obey] the preaching? What really IS preaching? Why should it have any authority over us? The answer simply put is this: It is the Word of God. That being stated, however, some explanation is required. We understand the Bible to be the Word of God. It is has authority over us exactly because it is the infallible, inspired Word - word for word, GOD's Word. At the same time we say that the preaching is the Word of God to us, but we can feel a certain difference between the two. Is preaching infallible? No. Is preaching inspired. that is, does the preacher receive the sermon as Moses received the Law, from the hands of angels, or as he received the words, "In the beginning God created..."? Do preachers receive their sermon themes and divisions from God, and the body of the sermon by special revelation so that we can say that they speak as they are moved by the Holy Spirit, as Peter says was true of the inspired prophets (I Peter 1:21)? Again the answer is, No.

Yet preaching is the Word of God because the content of preaching is the Word of God - taken from the Bible. That is the connection between the preaching and the Bible, and is at the same time the source of preaching's authority. Again, what is preaching? Preaching is an authoritative proclamation of the gospel in submission to the Bible by a called and ordained preacher. Preaching is not a mere reading of the Scriptures, even of a passage which contains a part of a sermon of Jesus or the apostles. Preaching is an explanation of the Bible. A sermon explains the truths of a particular passage in the light of the whole Bible. Such Biblical preaching draws its ideas, its definitions, its application, many of its illustrations, and even its form from the Bible.

Understood in that light, the mechanics of sermon making is not some deep mystery. After translating the text in order to get a sharp understanding and a firm grasp of the words of the text, the minister sits with his Bible and his concordance and develops the concepts in the text (as for example, holiness, sin, predestination or forgiveness) from the other places such words are used in Scripture. Next he shows how the concepts are related in this particular text, and looks for the proper application. Finally, he seeks to write the sermon in a logical form to help God's people take hold of the Word. In all this, the sermon must show how this text reveals the wonder of salvation in Christ, His cross and resurrection.

At the same time, understand that the work of making a sermon is intensely spiritual! It is not the same as explaining a passage from Shakespeare's plays or some other work of man. The main reason for this is that the Bible is God's work; the Holy Spirit is the Author of the Scriptures. The minister approaches the Scriptures with reverence and awe. He knows the Scriptures to be infallible, as well as perfectly consistent in all passages from Genesis to Psalms to Romans to Revelation. Thus in interpreting the Scriptures, the faithful minister (called an exegete in this work) does not impose man's ideas on the text, either his own or others. Rather he seeks the meaning of the Holy Spirit in the text. He does this by interpreting the text in light of the rest of Scripture (note the use of the concordance above). He does this through continual prayer for the Spirit. seeking His wisdom and His guidance in order correctly to explain this particular text. Remember, the minister has been called by Christ and endowed with His Spirit to equip him for the task.

The end of such spiritual work and struggle is the

birth of a sermon, which sermon is preached! Here the Spirit uses the "earthen vessel" - a weak and sinful man - to describe the glorious truths of our Savior God and the kingdom of heaven. And the Spirit is at work in the preaching! Through His work the delivery becomes the lively preaching of the Word. Spiritual truths and relationships become sharper in the mind and speech of the preacher. Sometimes a particular point which did not occur to the preacher in the study becomes obvious in the pulpit. The Word of God, as

> . . . the content of preaching is . . . not the philosophy, the opinions, nor the reasoning of men, no matter how brilliant and godly the men might be

studied, developed, and delivered by this particular preacher, is set forth and applied in a particular congregation at a specific time, and the Holy Spirit applies that Word to the hearts of believers. Preaching is the Word of God to us.

The above explanation of how a sermon is made and preached certainly may be criticized as being oversimplified. But the purpose is to demonstrate that the content of preaching is (must be!) the Bible, The content is not the philosophy, the opinions, nor the reasoning of men, no matter how brilliant and godly the men might be. The content is the Bible. Nothing may ever be said in preaching that the Bible would not support.

That being the case, it is easy to see the great authority the preaching has over us - it is the authority of God's Word, and thus of God Himself!

But all should recognize that preaching has God's authority only when its content is from the Bible. When a preacher strays from the Bible to opinions, such preaching carries no more authority than your personal opinion. (It may be wiser, but not more authoritative.) If he should delve into areas outside the scope of the gospel - into politics, ecology, or the economy, for example - he has lost the right to say, "Thus saith the Lord."

This is what makes the minister tremble as he mounts the pulpit. He must speak as an ambassador of Christ. He must speak nothing of his own word; he must speak the Word of Christ. This is what drives him earnestly to seek the Spirit's meaning as he interprets the text. The preacher fears not the judgment of the people; he will be judged of the Lord!

As the believer sits under such preaching, he listens with reverence and awe to the Word of Christ. He recognizes the voice of the Good Shepherd. He detects the ring of authority in the preaching - not a powerful oration, but faithfulness to the Bible. He searches the Scriptures. to be sure, to know the certainty of the Word he hears. But he receives it as the very Word of God to him. When it condemns a particular walk and exposes his own sins, the believer, by God's grace, humbles himself before God's Word. When the preaching defines the blessings of salvation in the cross, he rejoices in them, personally. When it expounds the joys of salvation and eternal life, the believer tastes the glories of heaven. He listens, he believes, he obeys. It is the Word of God to him.

Fellow saints, especially youthful saints, is it so with you?

* * * * *

But what if you have disagreements with the preaching? This we will discuss next time, the Lord willing.

Rev. Dykstra is pastor of the Prot. Ref. Church of Doon, Iowa

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Watching Daily At My Gates

by Skip Hunter

January 1 — **Psalm 90:1-9** Is Jehovah your dwelling place, young people? Many times I have seen this confessed by an elderly saint, but not with just their mouths but with their lives. A dwelling place is a home. Are you at home with Jehovah? As a dwelling place Jehovah is secure. He will not be carried away with a flood like our earthly homes. It is a great comfort to return to the warmth of a home after a day out. It is more comforting to know that Jehovah is our dwelling place. Because we know He is a comforting dwelling place, we can rest assured that He will protect us from whatever evil 1994 may bring to us. We know that even the evil of the year is for our good. Sing or read Psalter 245 especially stanzas 1 and 2.

January 2 — **Psalm 90:10-17** The words of verse twelve are addressed to all people of God. Each of us must count our days and see if we have applied our hearts unto wisdom of which the beginning is the fear of Jehovah. What about you, young people, are you ready to pray, "Return, O Lord."? Is your life in order? If it isn't, you should prepare it now. We do not know God's plan for our individual lives. But we do know that we must live each day to his honor and glory alone. We must ask God to establish the work of our hands, for only then will it be pleasing to Him. Sing or read Psalter 246.

January 3 — **Romans 14:1-9** In this chapter Paul gives instruction in how we are to act toward our brother. The idea of Christian liberty is introduced to us. The key to our actions with regard to our brothers is found in the last three verses of today's reading. We live unto the Lord, and we die unto the Lord. That principle and that alone should govern our lives. We all will appear at judgment before Christ because He is the Judge by virtue of His death and resurrection. We will appear there bodily with all our works spread out before Him. How will you appear? Sing or read Psalter 161 especially stanzas 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9.

January 4 — **Romans 14:10-15** Children and young people love to judge each other. Sadly enough older people do too. This is not the judging to see if a person is fit company to be with. We need to do more of that. We judge a person to show that we are better than he is. This ought not be. The command from God is to love the neighbor as we love ourselves. Only by doing this can we keep the first commandment that we love God. We need to work at upholding our friends in Christ and not delight in tearing them down. Only then will God be pleased with our walk. Sing or read Psalter 369.

January 5 — **I Kings 17:1-7** Who was this Elijah? We do not know much about him except that he was not liked by Ahab and most of those in authority with him. He was not liked because he brought them the Word of God, and they did not like it. Their sins rose up against them, but they liked those sins. What about us? When God's Word is brought to us against sin, do we humble ourselves or harden ourselves? Sing or read Psalter 170.

January 6 — **I Kings 17:8-16** Elijah was a bold man. He had the audacity to walk up to a strange woman and ask for her last meal. We must see that Elijah had the boldness that comes by faith. True, Elijah's faith was strengthened by the fact he knew of his calling of prophet before God. But the woman's faith was just as strong. She gave her last meal away to a strange man dressed in camel's hair. Is our faith in our God this strong? Do we who have been fed by His Word for most of our lives have this kind of faith? Pray for it, people of God. And pray with confidence that your prayers will be answered. Sing or read Psalter 387.

January 7 — **I Kings 17:17-24** Just when things seemed to be going well, the widow's son died. She knew her sin and was troubled that her sin caused the death of her son. Elijah by a great miracle restored life to the child. The widow's response was that now she was sure in Whom she believed. What about us? We have knowledge of the great miracle. Christ came to the earth in flesh, died, and rose again the third day. Do we have the assurance of faith like the widow? If we are truly believers we should, and we must. Sing or read Psalter 202.

January 8 — **I Kings 18:7-18** Are you the troublemaker? How often don't we say words like that when our sins are found out. We have more indignation against those who try to help us flee our sins than we do with ourselves. Quite often that person is ostracized from our "group" and the sinner is glorified. This happens everywhere. Instead of persecuting that person we should thank him because he has concern for our soul. Where do you stand, young people, with Elijah or Ahab? Sing or read Psalter 61.

January 9 — **I Kings 18:19-24** Do you "halt between two opinions?" Do you serve God on Sunday, but the rest of the week are you out enjoying the things of the flesh? Do you serve God as long as you are in church, but the rest of the day are you no different from a worldly person? We can not live that kind of life long. Why? God will not let us. He will make us choose. Sometimes it will have to hurt to say, "The Lord He is God!". But that hurt, too, is for our good. Sing or read Psalter 59 especially stanzas 1-4.

January 10 — **I Kings 18:29-37** What was your worship like yesterday? Was it the way God has commanded in His Word? Israel had disregarded the right "way" to worship God. Elijah had to reminded them of the "way". He did this by making his sacrifice at the time of the evening sacrifice. He did this by building his altar of twelve stones. He did this by praying quietly and reverently to God. It is God's worship that we perform. We must not ever be so bold to place our wills over God's and decide how to worship Him. We must worship him in Spirit and in truth. Sing or read Psalter 419 especially stanzas 1-3.

January 11 — **I Kings 18:38-46; James 4:17 & 18** The second passage is the New Testament commentary on the first. James tells us that because of the fervent prayers of Elijah, God first withheld rain from Israel and then sent a storm. These prayers were answered because they were the will of Jehovah. We, too, must pray to God fervently. Our prayers, too, will be answered when we pray for things that are in God's will. How do we know what is God's will? We must study the Bible, and ask for His help in knowing what is His will. Sing or read Psalter 386 especially stanzas 1-3.

January 12 — **I Kings 19:1-10** It was a long way from the heights of faith upon Mt. Carmel to the depths of discouragement under the juniper tree. How could this happen to Elijah? Elijah became discouraged because he saw no instant result because of the work on Mt. Carmel. In fact his own life was in danger. We must not look for instant results. We must see that all things are carried out in God's time. We also see a major part of the problem in verse 10. Notice the importance of the word "I" in that verse. Elijah's pride got in his way. Does it get in ours? I am afraid so. Let God work and in His own time, and we will be much happier. Sing or read Psalter 388.

January 13 — **I Kings 19:11-21** God had to show Elijah that his work was not in vain. He did it very graphically. He showed Elijah that God's work is not carried out by way of mighty and majestic things. God's work is a still small voice in a wilderness. We, too, need that reminder. We do not need to fill stadiums with thousands of people to feel successful in doing evangelism. We have the word of Jesus that where two or three are gathered together, He is there. God had a remnant in Israel. Elijah had the responsibility to minister to the seven thousand. We must not look for great things, but we have the responsibility to minister to God's people no matter how many there are. Sing or read Psalter 362.

January 14 — **II Kings 2:1-11** After years of work, Elijah's days on this earth were finished. As with all good and faithful servants, Elijah was rewarded for his work. His reward was more instant than most; he was taken into heaven before he died. This had a purpose more than rewarding Elijah, however. Elijah could have gotten his reward by dying like most saints. But this was for Elisha's instruction and for the good of the church. It was not just Elijah's leaving him that impressed Elisha; it was the way he left. It was impressive because he could see the hand of God in it. We must look for the hand of God in all things and know that His hand is in all things. Sing or read Psalter 30.

January 15 — **Mark 9:1-13** We conclude our study of Elijah by looking at his appearance in the New Testament. Elijah was first of all the picture of John the Baptist. He was prophesied of in Malachi. People were watching for the physical not the spiritual and so they missed him. God also sent Elijah to earth to comfort Jesus as he began the last days of his ministry. Elijah as the picture of the Word showed Jesus that

He must fulfill the words of prophecy by the way of the Cross. We must look to the spiritual not to the physical or we will make the same mistake as Peter and want heaven on this earth. Sing or read Psalter 300 especially stanzas 1, 9, 11, and 13.

January 16 — **Mark 1:1-11** The book of Mark is concerned with bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The first few verses set forth that gospel which is the remission of sins through Jesus. John was the forerunner of Jesus. He preached until the time Jesus made his appearance and John baptized him. God the Father showed His pleasure at the baptism with the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Spirit also added His approval on the scene by His appearance. That is the gospel we must follow and after which we must pattern our lives. As is spoken elsewhere in Scripture, we must hear Him. Are we listening? Sing or read Psalter 41 especially stanzas 1-3.

January 17 — **Mark 1:14-20** Jesus came to four fishermen and commanded them to leave their work and follow Him. They obeyed and immediately left their boats and followed Jesus. Such was the power of His word. Are we ready to follow Jesus? Are we willing to leave the path we are following and go where Jesus says to go? This is never easy, but it is always right. It quite often isn't what we want to do, but it is always God's will. We must learn to hear the call, and we must learn to heed the call. Sing or read Psalter 64 especially stanzas 1 and 2.

January 18 — **Mark 1:21-28** When Jesus preached, the audience knew that there was something different here. They could tell that His message was not like they were used to. This was because He spoke the Word not man's desires. That is what we must hear on Sunday and in catechism. We must hear the Word preached. Then we must follow that Word. If we diligently study that Word, we will recognize it when we hear it. Sing or read Psalter 163.

Janaury 19 — **Mark 1:29-34** Jesus healed many people. Do you know why? If it was because there were many sick around Him, then shouldn't He do this through the ages? No, His miracles always pointed to something far greater. His miracles were always founded in grace. Sickness is a picture of sin. God placed sickness in this world to remind us of our sins. Even as sickness robs the physical body of its vitality, sin robs our souls of its life. Jesus used the miracles as the proof of the power of salvation. Do we embrace that salvation and flee from sin? Sing or read Psalter 324.

January 20 — **Mark 1:35-45** Jesus had an extremely arduous task on this earth. He had a human nature with all its frailties, sin excepted. He needed strength in order to carry out His calling. In this page we see the hard task but also the source of needed strength. Jesus would go to His Father in prayer. This is our example. If Jesus needed to pray often, surely how much must we go to Him in prayer? If answers are coming slowly, maybe we are not going to the right source of those answers. Sing or read Psalter 72.

January 21 — **Proverbs 1:10-19** "Consent thou not," young people, to walk in sin's ways. The opportunities are numerous for us to walk in the way of destruction. Satan would destroy us in sin so that he could bring reproach to the name of God. In our lives we can find many ways to walk in sin. We can do this at school, at work, as we date or live in marriage, or in many other ways. God's Word is "Consent thou not." This word is active. We do not passively fall into sin! We run up to it and embrace it. From this activity we must flee and walk in wisdom's ways. If we don't? Read verse 19 again. Sing or read Psalter 41 especially stanzas 1, 4-6.

January 22 — **Proverbs 1:20-27** God's wisdom crieth out in every aspect of our lives. There is no activity in which we don't see God's wisdom either approving or disapproving of our actions. When we walk in sin, we can hear His voice warning us of the dangerous path we are treading. The drunkard knows what may befall him. The adulterer or fornicator knows of the possible results of his or her actions. But unless we make God the center of our pleasure, we will ignore all warnings and persist in having our fun. We also see His approval when we walk in ways pleasing to Him. What is your pleasure, people of God, you alone - or God and you? Sing or read Psalter 333.

January 23 — **Proverbs 1:28-33** Today's passage is a continuation of yesterday's. There is a beautiful contrast found in verses 29 and 33. In verse 29 we see those who hate the knowledge of God. These are people who know better but wish not to do the things of Jehovah. Verses 30—32 tell of their end. Their end is the clamor of hell. In verse 33 we see the humble child of God. He listens to Jehovah's wisdom and he walks in a way pleasing unto Jehovah. His reward is the safety and quietness of heaven. Which will you choose? Sing or read Psalter 107.

January 24 **Ephesians 1:1-6** Predestinated according to God's good pleasure. For what more could we ask? When we know that God loves us from eternity, we can have great peace. Why did He do it? Was it because He had seen some good thing in us? I hope not, for then I am doomed to destruction. We know that all have sinned and come short of God's glory. He did it for His own glory! Can you imagine that? I can't either, but I am glad it is true. We need to give praise to God for such a truth and bless Him for it. Sing or read Psalter 279.

January 25 **Ephesians 1:7-14** These verses as well as the preceding three are a long section about the work of salvation. They proclaim many truths about our redemption in Christ. We see the whole work of salvation as it is carried out by the Trinity. God calls us, Christ redeems us, and the Spirit is the fulfillment of the promise. All of these things were done for us and without us. We see that it is hard to comprehend such a gift. But we do not have to, we must just be thankful for it and live lives that show our thankfulness. Sing or read Psalter 368.

January 26 **Ephesians 1:15-23** Do you know what the hope of your calling is? Sometime we fail to see the value of years learning catechism, hours listening to sermons, lives demanding us to deny ourselves the pleasures of this world. That is, I believe, because our focus is wrong.If we see in the above activities a needed earthly reward, we will be sadly mistaken. The above activities are our expressions of gratitude for the gift of salvation. We should not try to get out of catechism. We should not try to miss church. We should not try to ignore a life of sacrifice. We should try to increase those opportunities. When we do that, we increase the joy of our salvation and only then will we understand the hope of our calling. Sing or read Psalter 175.

January 27 **Psalm 57:1-6** This Psalm may have been written while David was fleeing from Saul and was hiding in the caves from him. We see in these verses a cry for help by a God-fearing man in distress because of the wicked around him. We must learn to make this our cry as well. In the last days our persecution like David's will come from those that once were part of the church. We need to cry for deliverance. Notice how David wants that deliverance. He wants God to be exalted not himself. Is that our cry? Are we concerned for the glory of God's name or ours? Sing or read Psalter 154.

January 28 **Psalm 57:7-11** David finishes this Psalm with words of praise for his God. He says that his heart is fixed or prepared for this. Is your heart fixed in this matter? Can you praise your God because His mercy is great, and His truth is boundless? If you can, then you must make that known. David gives the manner to do this as well. He tells us to sing God's praises among the nations. Are you singing praises when you sing? Sing or read Psalter 255 especially stanzas 1-3.

January 29 **Psalm 95** It is well that we consider this Psalm on the day before we go to God's house. First of all we see the admonition to go and sing unto Him. We are called to sing the songs He has given to us to sing-the Psalms. Secondly we are given the reason for singing. Our God is a great God and above all else. Thirdly we are His people but people who are like sheep who need a shepherd to lead them where they should go. Finally there is the solemn warning and example of those who did not heed the call of their Shepherd. Not heeding the voice of the Shepherd leads to certain destruction. Are you ready for church? Sing or read Psalter 254.

January 30 **Psalm 92:1-9** My Bible has a heading that says that this is a Psalm for the Sabbath. It is well fitted for that as it tells us how good it is to praise the Lord. That is the active role that we can take as we go to God's house to day. We can lift our voices up in praise to His most holy name. Are you glad because of the work of salvation wrought in you? If you are, SING! The wicked do not have such words of comfort as we see in the last section of today's passage. Go to His house with a song in your hearts and on your lips. Sing or read Psalter 251.

January 31 **Psalm 92:10-15** In the last part of yesterday's passage we see the dire straits of the reprobate. Today's section starts out with the word but. This is a powerful word in Scripture. It signals to us that something different is coming. In these verses we see the beautiful reward of the elect. I count nine different phrases which show our reward. The rewards come throughout all of life. Young people you have your rewards, and the oldest saints have theirs. What great blessing we have when we praise the greatness of our God. That is how the Psalm ends. Take these words and the words of yesterday's sermons to heart and live them in your lives. Sing or read Psalter 407.

Marcion - The First Bible Critic

by Bruce D. Hugg

One of the major figures in the history of second century Christian thought was a man named Marcion. His doctrines were so distinctive that he formed a school of thought call Marcionism, after his own name. Marcion and his followers maintained that there was no agreement whatsoever between the revelation of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Old Testament. Although Marcion "won an immense number of converts," as he spread his doctrines "throughout the whole race of men," according to Justin Martyr, yet he remained a heretic to the church of Rome in his day, and has been regarded a heretic ever since.

Marcion was raised in Sinope of Pontus, a province in Asia Minor. He was the son of a bishop, "and gave in his first fervor his property to the church." However, he was later excommunicated by his own father "on account of his heretical opinions and contempt of authority." About the middle of the second century, Marcion made his way to Rome after he had encountered much controversy with many church leaders of his native land. Around the year 140, Marcion presented his peculiar views to the presbyters at Rome. These proposed doctrines of Marcion raised much opposition, and in direct consequence to the church of Rome finding the beliefs of Marcionism "utterly unacceptable", Marcion withdrew himself from their communion and established a community of his own within Rome.

As mentioned earlier, Marcion believed that there was no possible manner in which the revelation of Jesus Christ could coincide with the teaching of the Old Testament. In the writings of the apostle Paul, Marcion "found the irreconcilable antagonism between law and gospel, justice and grace, and Judaism and Christianity." He expounded upon these views in his work called Antithesis. This antagonism between the Old Testament and the New Testament formulated the backbone of his system, Marcionism. Hence, Marcion repudiated the Old Testament altogether as well as the authority of all the apostles of Jesus except Paul. The other apostles, he held, "had corrupted the pure teaching of Jesus by mixing it with their old Jewish beliefs." Furthermore, Marcion produced a canon of holy scripture to supersede the Old Testament canon. This self-proclaimed canon consisted of two parts: "The Gospel" (a suitably purified edition of Luke's Gospel) and "The Apostle" (a similarly purified edition of the first ten Pauline epistles). The theology of Marcionism explained this "irreconcilable antagonism" between law and gospel, Old and New Testament, by introducing a second God, the Demiurge. The Demiurge was "the creator of the world and the lawgiver, under whose curse the whole race fell, since no one could keep the law." Consequently, a higher God, unknown to man, "of free grace resolved to redeem the condemned race of men." This God sent the Redeemer, the "Saving Spirit", who was the clear manifestation of the true and good God. This "Saving Spirit" neither was born nor did he grow, but assumed the appearance of a full grown body. The Demiurge eventually became angry with the "Saving Spirit" and caused him to be crucified. However, he died only a seeming death. According to Marcion, only the soul shares in salvation. Moreover, there is no resurrection of the body. In fact, Marcionism preaches that Christ Himself did not rise again from the dead. Finally, Marcion believed that not all men would be saved, but only those who attended themselves to his gospel.

As the Christian studies a man such as Marcion, he understands most assuredly why Marcion has been considered a heretic by the church of Christ since the time he originally presented his doctrinal stance.

For in the first place, the Christian, through the study of the Word of God, knows that both the revelation of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Old Testament are certainly in conformity with one another. When we read, for instance, of the virgin birth of our Savior in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, we are aware of the fact that His birth has been prophesied in a passage such as Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Or when we read Isaiah 53:3b, ". . . and we esteemed him not," we confess with the apostle John in John 1:10 and 11, ". . . and the world knew him not. he came unto his own, and his own received him not." In these prophesies as well as in the types and shadows of Christ in the Old Testament, it is evident that the Old Testament saints knew and awaited the same Lord Whom we worship as Christians today. This issue of the coherency of the Old testament teachings and the revelation of Jesus Christ remains utterly important to the Christian today as well. The Belgic Confession of Faith Article XXV reminds us of this when we read the Reformed position concerning this matter: ". . . we still use the testimonies taken out of the law and the

prophets, to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel, and to regulate our life in all honesty, to the glory of God, according to his will." Hence, the faith of the Christian becomes even the more stout because of this inseparable bond between the Old and New Dispensations. For the same Lord and Savior of Whom the Old Dispensation speaks has come in the flesh and has fulfilled all of the promises of the Old Testament which pointed to Him in order that we, who have been freely granted grace to believe, might be confirmed in our faith because we know and trust the one true Jesus Christ whom the entire Scriptures harmoniously teach.

Secondly, the introduction of the Demiurge and the "Saving Spirit" given by Marcion is irrefutably a conjuring of one's imagination in order to grant validity to the erroneous doctrine of the "irreconcilable antagonism" of the Old and New Testaments. The Christian stands firm in believing the one eternal God of the Scriptures. At no time ever have two Gods been revealed to man. In Isaiah 43:10 and 11, we read, ". . . before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour." It is obvious from this text, that a second God such as the "Saving Spirit" is not even remotely necessary for the redemption of the Christian, for this passage profoundly explains that the God of the creation is indeed the same God of salvation for His saints. We also read of the Triune God in I John 5:7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Although the God of our worship has three distinct personalities, we are assured in the latter portion of this verse that our God is one God. Never is the child of God presented in the Word as one God Who is overcome by a second God who has over a period of time become wroth with that first God. Redemption and justification are not offered to mankind simply because a God arises and feels that he is more loving and gracious than a former God who is seemingly harsh. But on the contrary, Jesus says in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." In this very chapter of Scripture, the topic of salvation is being taught by Christ Himself. Christ expounds the relation of the Godhead with respect to salvation in this text. The Biblical truth that God has predestinated unto Himself by Jesus Christ an elect remnant according to the good pleasure of His will and that none of the members of this body are able to be plucked out of the fatherly hand of God is here poignantly summoned forth. Thus, the Holy Word of God expresses only one God whose purpose concerning the salvation of His people has been, is, and forever will be immutable.

Finally, the heresy of Marcionism preaches a Redeemer, "Saving Spirit", who possesses certain attributes that are perilously related to particular characteristics of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, of the Christian. The "Saving Spirit" was neither born, nor did he grow. He did not die an actual death. Accordingly, the "Saving Spirit" could not rise from the dead, for his death was only a seeming death. It becomes clear upon a sound collation of both the "Saving Spirit" and Jesus Christ that the similarities of the two are seen in that the Redeemer which Marcion propagates is in fact in direct opposition to the Jesus Christ of Holy Writ. For, as formerly discussed, the Christian cleaves to the Redeemer of the miracle of the virgin birth as found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Secondly, the child of God cherishes the Christ of the gospel according to Luke 2:40 which teaches that Christ was at one time a child, and then also that He veritably grew. In like manner, the believer in Christ clings to the true Savior who suffered the actual, cursed death of the cross as taught in John 19:30-34. In close connection to the truth of the crucifixion of Christ, the Christian in love and in faith also adheres to the doctrine of the resurrection of his Lord which a text such as Matthew 28 supremely inculcates. Therefore, the Christian must always be on his guard in order that he might be able to rightly and confidently differentiate between the false teachers, such as Marcion, of whom Scriptures speak and the infallible Word of God.

As a result of the teachings and writings of the system of Marcionism, reaction among the leaders of the apostolic churches of the second century was inevitable. The Catholic Church, for instance, was stimulated by the canon of Marcion to define more precisely the New Testament, not to supersede but to supplement the canon of the Old testament. Another reaction to the doctrines of Marcion is a list of New Testament books, the Muratorian canon, which most probably represents the canon accepted by the Catholic Church at the end of the second century. This list omitted Hebrews, James and 2 Peter. Later in the fourth century, the New Testament in its entirety was enumerated by Athanasius in Alexandria (367) and by Jerome and Augustine in the west. Although the basic principle of Marcionism, and repudiation of the Old Testament and the God of the Old Testament, has manifested itself on numerous occasions throughout the course of Christian history, the Sovereign God in His infinite wisdom and mercy has efficaciously worked in the hearts of His children throughout the ages so that they might know and defend the truths of both the Old Testament and the New Testament alike and the resolute unity thereof.

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An Urgent Call To Fight

by Rev. John A. Heys

When one says that he is fighting a certain person or thing, that person reveals his hatred against that person or thing. But when the apostle Paul in I Timothy 6:12 calls Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" he is not calling him to fight against that faith. He means that Timothy must fight against all that, and all those, who are attacking him, and fighting against him in order to take his faith away from him. He calls such fighting to be the good work of faith. That fighting to keep one's faith in God is not an evil fight, but a good fight

Paul himself realized that truth. Before our God had in His grace converted Paul, and had worked faith in him, he had been fighting against the faith in those wherein God had implanted it. Look up Acts 9, for therein we find Paul "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." But in His grace our God had converted Paul and had given him faith in His Son, our Savior. Having that blessed gift of faith in his Savior, Paul exhorted Timothy - and by His grace exhorts us - to fight against all that which Satan uses in his attempt to get believers to fight against faith, rather than for them to fight for the keeping of faith. That faith our God, through Paul, calls us defend and use for the enjoyment of our salvation.

Let us take heed of this command given to us as well as to Timothy. Let us fight the good fight of faith, and realize how necessary and serious this calling is today. God is here speaking to us, who live in a world full of subtle temptations, and in a time when Satan has many devices, tools and unbelievers whom he uses to try to make us stop fighting the good fight of faith, and of living as those who love God, and are thankful for salvation.

There are so many things today that Satan can and does use to make us stop fighting that good fight of faith. Let us, Young People, ask ourselves how many minutes on the Sabbath Day do we fight the good fight of faith? Fighting the old man of sin, who is in us?

How often do you have God in your thoughts? The world uses His name in its curses and swearing, to defend themselves in sins which they committed. Does it bother you when they do that in your presence? And is the Sabbath Day a day that fills you with spiritual joy? How many minutes do you spend on the Sabbath Day dealing with spiritual matters?

How often do you consider what our God through His Son realized for you? Compared with the other hours and minutes, when we have been in church on Sunday, is it that Sabbath Day all day, or just when you were in church? How much do you on the Sabbath Day enjoy spiritual food, compared with the earthly food prepared for you that day? How often do you on that day discuss and talk cheerfully about the truth presented in the sermon? How many minutes of the Sabbath Day are you active in spiritual matters, learning the answers of your catechism lesson, and preparing for your society meeting wherein you discuss God's word?

Is the Sabbath Day one used chiefly for physical rest, or for growth of your spiritual life? Does spiritual growth mean more than physical growth? Do you agree with David when in Psalm 27:4 he wrote: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple"? Or does physical comfort and joy mean more to you?

Since Paul could exhort Timothy to fight the good fight of faith, does the command come to you,

and to all of us church members? Read both of Timothy's epistles, and see how he is exhorted by Paul to do this and that. By all means take note of the fact that to Timothy Paul says,"Fight the good fight of faith." He calls one who preaches God's word to continue to fight the good fight of faith. We ALL must do that!

Very plainly, Young People, this call to fight the good fight of faith comes to you in God's grace. It comes because in that grace God has begun faith in you. Paul reveals that to Timothy. In fact he even wrote to Timothy that he should: "Lay hold on everlasting life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good confession before many witnesses." Timothy was called to faith, and had revealed before many witnesses what God had begun in him. However, he who in this life claims to be perfect shows his imperfection. He shows that he is fighting against the good faith, and not fighting for it.

All of us, not simply you young people, are called to fight the good fight of faith. For, from a spiritual point of view, we are already holding on to everlasting life. And Paul, who wrote this to Timothy, confessed his own need and calling to fight the good fight of faith. In Romans 7:24 he Paul, wrote: "0 wretched man that I am: who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then in the next verse he states: "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Because God is using him to fight the good fight of faith, he presents this command that comes, not only to Timothy, but to all believing church members.

The sooner we are taught to fight the good fight of faith, and we heed that call, the stronger our spiritual life becomes. And this call of God through Paul comes to you young people, because God loves you. In that love He calls you to fight the good fight of faith. He calls you to fight all the deviltry of the flesh that moves you to fight for the things of this world, not for the blessedness of salvation.

We should fight the good fight of faith. Do not, Young People, turn away from God's word which He presents through Paul. Lay a strong hold on that everlasting life, which God began in you, and keep yourself seeking the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness. Fight your old man of sin. Fight Satan in all his devilish temptations.

Rev. Heys is a minister emeritus of the Prot. Ref. Church. He attends Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church

"Prayer is but another way of receiving sustenance and strength and vigour and power. Prayer not only means petitions; prayer means, primarily, communion and fellowship with God. Christ says: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. This is not an evangelistic statement, it is addressed to the Church, to Christian believers. He is ready to come in and to sup with us. That is the meaning of prayer. It is not just sending up your petitions and taking your requests to God. It means opening the door, and Christ comes in and sits at the other side of the table and has a meal with you and you talk as you are taking the meal. Fellowship and communion! And as you are talking to Him and supping with Him you are receiving strength and power from Him. You are making your requests known unto Him, and He is telling you things about Himself and His concern for you and His care for you. Prayer is communion, having fellowship, having a conversation with God the Father, God and Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That is the way to be strong."

The Christian Soldier
p. 81, 82
D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
Baker Book House, 1977

Tuning Our Gereformeerd Voerhoren

by John Huizenga

The Dutch had an interesting description for those in the church who were very sensitive to doctrinal issues. Such people were said to have Gereformeerd Voerhoren. "Gereformeerd Voerhoren" means "Reformed Antennae." You might want to ask your parents how to pronounce this if they know any Dutch. If not, just remember that "V" in Dutch sounds like an "F" in English. The idea of voerhoren may require some imagination on your part. Perhaps the Dutch pictured a person with feelers sticking out of the top of their head, waving slowly in the air, straining to detect a whiff of heresy.

But the idea also has a more positive meaning. Think once how insects use their feelers. Not only do they use them to detect danger, they also use them to guide themselves along a safe path and to find food. Without feelers, insects would be lost and quickly eaten up by predators. It is the same way with us spiritually, if we do not recognize spiritual enemies, or seek the way of truth and spiritual food, we will soon be in serious spiritual trouble. But it is also much more than this because the ultimate purpose is that we are led to know God and have fellowship with him.

So turn on your imagination. Think of voerhoren as the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin of the soul. Then faith is the spiritual seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling which we experience in our soul and which results in a certain knowledge and bond of fellowship with Christ. Voerhoren are the ears that hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us, the eyes that perceive the Word of God, and the tongue that tastes the blessings of God.

We must not expect, however, to hear mysterious voices or see visions. That is the dangerous trap of mysticism which leads only to confusion. Our bodies are much different than our souls and we should not expect the same sensation in both body and soul. Yet the Holy Spirit often uses the analogy of spiritual eyes and ears throughout the Scriptures. I intend to use the analogy in connection with the idea of voerhoren to demonstrate how we can become more sensitive spiritually.

The first thing we must consider is the source of knowledge. Our voerhoren need something to "detect." What does God use to guide us into his fellowship? Psalter 322 asks this very question and gives the answer: "How shall the young direct their way? What light shall be their perfect guide? Thy word, O Lord, will safely lead, if in its wisdom they confide." God has given us his word as light for the spiritual eye: our voerhoren. Notice also that this light will lead only if they confide in its wisdom. Putting our confidence in its wisdom can come only after regeneration which gives to those who formerly craved the lie, a spiritual appetite for his Word. Regeneration is indeed a radical change as Jim Laning pointed out in his article about regeneration in the November issue.

Consider now how the Bible stands in relation to the believer. Think of the Bible as a full orchestra composed of many different instruments. Each instrument has its own unique sound and place in the orchestra and together they play one piece of music. Regeneration has placed in our heart a longing for this music and our goal is to know the piece of music and to live our lives in tune with it. Regenerated children of God perk up their voerhoren at the sound of it and gravitate towards it. Children are able to hear the music at a very young age and it resonates in their hearts with a pure and simple knowledge.

But this music does not come floating across a peaceful lake, we are in the middle of a cruel war against Satan. Sometimes Satan makes so much noise that days go by when we scarcely hear even one note of God's word to us. From one direction we are blasted with a tantalizing tune that rouses up the evil lust to serve ourself. Then with some surprise we hear quite clearly what sounds like what we're looking for. A happy tune, but after searching long we find that it is a man made forgery that in essence glorifies man and not God. In our frustration Satan's mocking laugh sends chills of doubt up our spine.

We turn back tired and hungry. On the way we see others contentedly bathing in the blue glow of their television. Others are filling their souls with worldly activity. True knowledge and fellowship with God just does not seem worth all the work. And besides, we are young, for now it would seem nice to sample something else. On Sunday we go to church where the truth is heard loudest, but Satan works even harder to drown out the sound with a lazy

buzzing in our souls and the continuous replay of worldly music. Sunday night we are still weary, hungry and despairing. At last we can do nothing but fall on our knees and confess our helplessness. We confess that our appetite for the Word has grown very weak. We ask for forgiveness, a strong appetite for the Word, and strength to seek after the music of the Word. This happens often in the lives of God's people and we must fight against spiritual laziness. Our regeneration must be followed up by work on our part.

Spiritual appetite is a part of faith and is inseparable from a desire to know. Just as love for someone is inseparable with a strong desire to know that person, so love of the music of God's word does not come without a strong desire to know the music and explore its depths. In doing this we are seeking to know God personally. Our love for God must fill us with a desire to know God and to listen to the Word which he speaks to us in the Bible.

This requires much work, as does any relationship. Our friendships require much sacrifice on our part, marriage partners give their lives to each other and share them. But this is not always easy and we know how even the love which God has placed in our hearts so easily falters. But the more time we spend listening to God, the stronger that love becomes and the more we seek to know God. God strongly assures us of this in Hebrews 11:6. Look up this verse in God's love letter to us and take it to heart. From now on look up every Bible reference you come across in your reading. This will be a lot of work, and I confess that this has not always been my policy, but God will certainly reward that work.

Even more rewarding is diligent attention to the preaching because preaching is the chief means of grace (Romans 10:13-15). Before we can really appreciate this, we need to get the bad connotation of preaching out of our heads. Preaching is not a derogative lecture from a good man to evil people. Preaching is the proclamation of God's Word to His people. Preachers are the mouthpieces of God. God fills the preacher with his Spirit and speaks intimately to his people through the preaching. Through the preaching God calls out to his people and comforts them in their distress and failure to love Him. He tells his people about his promises and faithfulness. He tells them about his nature and being. He tells them through preachers whom God raises up so that they might expound the unified music of the Gospel from the point of view of one text. Through the preaching, the children of God come to know the music one note at a time.

But preachers live in the same noisy world in which we all live. Their studies are not free from Satan's heckling, deceptive music, and distracting annoying interference. But God has not left us without help. This help comes by way of a simple clear sound; a distinct note that penetrates the din. This sound is produced by an instrument that has been carefully crafted by our church fathers and handed over to us for our safe keeping and use. This instrument is a tuning fork composed of the creeds and confessions. A preacher is very arrogant if he can find no use for this instrument as he makes his sermons, and we are very foolish if we ignore this instrument as we study the Scriptures.

The tuning fork of the musician or physicist is a horseshoe shaped piece of metal. The metal is a special alloy and the shape is precise so that when the fork is struck with a hammer, it produces a sound with a precise frequency. As long as the tuning fork is free from damage, it will produce the same sound every time it is struck. It is a standard sound to which musical instruments can be tuned.

As long as the tuning fork is free from damage, it will produce the same sound every time it is struck. It is a standard sound to which musical instruments can be tuned.

The musician uses the tuning fork to tune the various instruments in an orchestra, but it is the other way around with the Scriptures because theological engineers use the Scriptures to make and tune the creedal tuning fork. They did this by synthesizing the various teachings of Scripture into their basic ideas and formulating them into concise statements of faith. The theological engineers listened very carefully to the various instruments within Scripture (books of the Bible, doctrines, parables, etc.) and crafted the tuning fork so that it would be in tune with the whole of Scripture. Their work produced the Heidelberg Catechism which serves us with a broad range of application. The Canons of Dordt and Belgic confession are designed for more specific application.

So we now have an orchestra, a few good tuning forks, and ears; i.e. the Scriptures, the creeds, and our voerhoren. If we listen to the orchestra and strike the tuning forks, we hear a remarkable similarity. The only difference is that the orchestra is infinitely rich and deep while the tuning fork is rather plain and uninteresting in comparison. Nevertheless, these tun-

ing forks are very valuable. They have been tried and tested and have served the church well ever since the Reformation.

We as Reformed young people have listened to the orchestra of Scripture and heard the tuning forks ever since we were children with the result that our voerhoren have been tuned to the Reformed faith. They have become Gereformeerd Voerhoren. Gereformeerd voerhoren make us sensitive to doctrinal issues. We grow to love the Reformed faith, because it quickly brings us past false doctrines and the ideas that we seek by nature and straight to the only doctrines that can comfort sinners who know how weak and frail they are. Gereformeerd voerhoren lead us directly to the sovereign God of grace and mercy, whose love is irresistible. The God who loves His children and places in their hearts the assurance that He will find every one of them no matter how far they stray. Our churches have gradually incorporated the powerful tool of the creeds right into our voerhoren through faithful catechism and Reformed preaching. This is an amazing thing; a wonderful blessing; and we must strive to maintain and use them.

Now that you know something about your Gereformeerd voerhoren, try them out. Warm them up each morning with prayer to God. Listen carefully to what God tells you as you read the Bible for devotions. Ask to be filled with the Spirit so that your love for God is reflected in love for others. When you read the Beacon Lights or any other literature, keep your voerhoren alert. Tune in to the upcoming series in the Beacon Lights about TULIP: the five points of Calvinism which were written to refute the five points of Arminianism. Feed your souls on Reformed doctrine and strive to understand how these doctrines lead us into closer fellowship and clearer knowledge of Christ our Savior.

If, in the course of your reading,your voerhoren are agitated in any way, sound the available tuning forks in order to pinpoint the problem. Do the same in Bible discussions and in fellowship with one another. If you work hard during the week, you will be tired and eager for a good dose of heart warming preaching. If your voerhoren begin to droop, hide yourself from the world awhile and pray to God. Look forward to the time when God will surround us with the sound of his music and fellowship in heaven.

John Huizenga, a first year seminary student, attends Southeast Prot. Ref. Church. He was formerly a member of the Randolph PRC.

Not Growing Old

"They say that I am growing old,
I've heard them tell it times untold,
In language plain and bold -
But I'm NOT growing old.
This frail old shell in which I dwell
Is growing old, I know full well -
But I am not the shell.

What if my hair is turning gray?
Gray hairs are honorable, they say.
What if my eyesight's growing dim?
I still can see to follow Him
Who sacrificed His life for me
Upon the Cross of Calvary.

What should I care if Time's old plough
Has left its furrows on my brow?
Another house, not made with hands,
Awaits me in the Glory Land.
What tho I falter in my walk?
What ho my tongue refuse to talk?
I still can tread the Narrow Way,
I still can watch, and praise and pray.

My hearing may not be as keen
As in the past it may have been,
Still, I can hear my Saviour say
In whispers soft, 'This is the way.'
The outward man, do what I can
To lengthen out his life's short span,
Shall perish, and return to dust,
As everything in nature must.
The inward man, the Scriptures say,
Is growing stronger every day.
Then how can I be growing old
When safe within my Saviour's fold?

E're long my should shall fly away,
And leave this tenement of clay.
This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise
To seize the 'everlasting prize' -
I'll meet you on the Streets of Gold,
And prove that I'm not growing old."

Free Tract Society

Rightly Dividing The Word of Truth

by Matt Medema

What does "rightly dividing the word of truth" mean to us young people of the church? This text in II Timothy 2:15 is not easy to understand for us relatively immature believers who need direction and guidance.

In an attempt to unravel this subject, let's begin by asking what place the Bible has in our lives. Is it replaced by worldly novels? by sports? by entertainment? by self-pleasure? Fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, these things ought not to be so. How can a born-again Christian be stagnant in the things of the world?; how can one born into the truth of righteousness live in the lie of wickedness?

Of course, every one of us hears the preaching of the Word every Sunday. We ought to know that our human natures are still heavy upon us, causing us to sometimes remain in our sinful "habits". But we also ought to know that the power of God within us is far, far stronger than that sinful nature. How then are we to show ourselves "approved of God"?

This verse sets priorities with its first word: "study". How often do we really study this precious gift God has given us? Do we begin and end each day reading a portion of the Scriptures? Do we attend Bible studies or hold our own studies? We need to search the Scriptures, comparing, examining, and meditating upon them, something that is not always easy to start, let alone to continue. However, with the proper attitude, this can be maintained and benefited from greatly!

One thing that amazes me about new believers is their steadfast reading of the Bible. Why is it so hard for us who have grown up in the faith to have this kind of zeal for reading the sourcebook of our instruction? We can always learn more from this wondrous book. Shouldn't this be the chief means of "getting wisdom", as the author of Proverbs puts it?

Verse 15 also mentions not being ashamed. We as young people must step forward on this issue. For example, what do we do when confronted by the unbelieving neighbor? Are we too embarrassed of the gospel to make a stand? We need not be ashamed; we have the almighty God on our side. Another example is our actions when we get together. Do we tempt each other and encourage each other in all kinds of wickedness? The Bible calls us instead to build one another up by speaking of Him who has redeemed us. We should talk of what God has done in our lives. We need to speak out against sin, and the pleasures we sometimes take in enjoying those sins.

Finally brethren, rightly dividing the word of truth can be applied by prayer. Sadly enough, our lack of this requirement probably outweighs the presence of i amongst us. It is also hard to pray and to remain vigilant in prayer. But prayer is especially important in two aspects of our lives: temptation and spiritual growth. When we are tempted, do we rely on our own strength (which is nothing but weakness), or do we call upon our Father as our shield from all the fiery darts of the devil and his host? In allowing Satan to tempt us, God is trying our faiths. He is, in effect, telling us we need to grow in specific areas. Ought we not to express to Him that we can only make it through His trials with His help?

Prayer is not only necessary to overcome the sins stemming from temptation, but it also will cause us to grow spiritually. Can we maintain a steadfast study of the Bible on our own without a good prayer life? Can we be ready to always explain the hope that is in us without talking to Him who provides that hope? Of course not! We need to daily ask God for more grace to carry on. In these ways, we, as the future of the body of Christ, can be strengthened to carry on the good fight. Then we will be able to discern between right and wrong and use the principles of this Word to the glory of our merciful Savior.

Matt Medema is a member of Bethel Prot. Ref. Church in north Chicago. He is a graduate of Dordt College.

The Faith of God Restored

by James V. Mc Elroy

Before embarking into my thesis on "faith," I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself. For approximately thirty years I was employed in the computer field, most of which were in managerial positions, followed by six years as a Baptist preacher. During my pastorate I was caring for an elderly father who was much in need of more and more attention, which led me to discontinue my pastorate. Having additional time to study I began searching the Scriptures in some areas of teaching that had bothered me for years. Through my intense love for Jesus Christ, the study of the Word eventually led me into the truth of the Reformed faith, as taught by the Protestant Reformed Church, which my wife, Jennie, and I now embrace. Living about thirty miles east of Seattle we drive 210 miles round trip each Lord's Day to worship at the Protestant Reformed Church in Lynden, Washington where we are members of that local Body of Believers.

My venture in writing a reference work to defend the King James Version of the Bible (which is presently on hold) put me in touch with several organizations that were also advocates of the KJV. While speaking with the men from these groups they each encouraged me to call the Protestant Reformed Seminary. Upon calling the seminary I spoke with Professor Engelsma who graciously sent me several books on the Reformed faith as taught by the PRC.

I couldn't put these books down, especially the book by Prof. Hanko entitled "God's Everlasting Covenant of Grace". I had spent about four years prior to this studying the covenant because I believed that I had been taught wrongly in that it was a conditional covenant. I was thrilled to say the least, to find there were others that believed the same on the covenantal teaching.

There were other doctrines that also needed to be addressed, i.e., pedo-baptism, eschatology, faith, grace, and why it was that I had been taught that we no longer live by the Law but by grace and grace alone. After reading the material Prof. Engelsma sent me, I knew that I was on the right track, that God was finally revealing the Truth of His Word to me and all I had to do was to have the faith to receive it.

During my pastorate I preached several messages on the "Sovereignty of God" and really didn't understand what I was preaching. Then I came upon a book by A. W. Pink with the same title. This spun me around and I really began to question the teaching I had received in Bible college and from years from the pulpit. The doctrinal teaching I questioned the most, with the exception of the return of Christ, was faith.

My life started to crumble as more questions began to surface. One of them was, why did man have to make the first move so God could save him? If God was Sovereign, as Pink wrote, then man had removed God and he was in control of his own salvation. Eph. 2:5 states that "Even when we (God's Elect) were dead in sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)" I began to see the teaching I had received was contradictory to this verse of Scripture and many others that I found that supported the Sovereignty of God. I saw this as a mockery of the Word of God. I already knew that man had corrupted the Word of God with the many modern translations of the Bible. Yet, this really troubled me.

With the aid of my computer I searched out the word 'faith' to find that it is used 247 times throughout the Bible, 2 times in the OT and 245 times in the NT. The word 'faith', as I soon found, had various meanings. In its simplest form it means to have confidence or trust in a person. It is belief that is not based on proof. It means to be loyal or obligated to a person or religion. It means to give credence to allegiance. It is the vital link between our soul and the Sovereign God of our Salvation.

Why had I been led astray, as so many Christians have been today? And the answer is quite simple. I placed my faith in the teaching of man and not the Holy Scripture. I had looked to my professors and my former pastors. I had let man take center stage over the Sovereign God that saved me before the foundation of the world. Although I accepted their teaching over the teaching of the Bible I questioned my professors without receiving satisfactory answers.

I was so broken that I found myself on my knees crying out to God to forgive me and to restore the joy of my salvation. Then the glory of the Lord began to fill me to the point where I thought I was going to burst and the praises of my heart began to surface and I

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knew without a shadow of doubt that God had restored my life that lay in pieces at the foot of the cross. The faith, the trust, the confidence that I possessed as a young Christian began to manifest itself again. I was ecstatic about what God did and now I knew the answer to a question that surfaced during this critical time, "Why did I have to go through all the turmoil?" I hope that through this article you can see the pitfalls that lay ahead if you are not grounded in the Word and are not willing to accept through the gift of faith that God has put in your heart to know without a shadow of doubt that you belong to HIM. I began to see and to understand that faith is yielding, submitting ourselves to the authority of God. It is absolute surrender of our lives and our wills to Him. It is casting ourselves on Him.

I saw the faith of Abraham who the Apostle Paul called the father of the faithful, and wrote of in Rom. 4:5, 16 "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace;" Over and over I found throughout Scripture that faith is needed to be saved and that this faith is the way we lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ.

My wife and I every day give thanks to our Sovereign God for giving us the faith to place our trust in Him that led us from the icy grip of Arminianism and their teaching of universal salvation that all men are lost in Adam and that also all men are saved in Christ.

God gives His Elect the means of faith to receive the benefits of Christ. Faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit and when man thinks that he can save himself then he is fooling himself. There is no way man can graft himself into Christ because the Holy Spirit grafts God's Elect into Christ and we become true Israelites. Christ is the husbandman and we are grafted unto the main plant.

Once again as I look back upon my life as one of God's anointed, I had to open the Bible for proof of my salvation. I had been taught that this was wrong and unnecessary. However, I believe that it does a child of the King good to do so as it enhances his faith and reconfirms who he is.

Young people, you have been raised with a silver spoon in your mouths as God has blessed you with parents that love the Reformed faith and pastors that love and preach the unmitigated gospel of the true Christ of the Word of God. Do not become disgruntled and dissatisfied. Do not look elsewhere for the truth o God's Word. The Protestant Reformed Churches is one of the last bastions that has not fallen into apostasy.

Let me leave you with a nugget of truth from the King James Version, the preserved Word of God in the English language. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Beloved it is so important to do as this passage of Scripture instructs every Christian to do and by doing so he will not be confused by false prophets that wrongly divide the Word of Truth. Stand up for your faith in Jesus Christ and let no man discourage you. God will never leave you or forsake you. Call upon Him in time of need and most importantly call upon Him to give honor and praise to the God who saved you by grace and gave you the gift of faith to believe that you are saved. Eph. 2:8,9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast." Rom. 8:29, 30 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; *and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*