BEACON LIGHTS

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 5:16.

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Narrow-Minded

by Tom Bergman

The time spent in catechism is for instruction concerning the Reformed faith. All those years studying the faith help catechumens see how to apply instruction toward a holier walk. Doctrine and life always go hand in hand. But what if someone questions your faith and asks, "How can you believe in the doctrines of total depravity and reprobation? It makes you too narrow-minded in your life." How do you answer? Can you answer?

Narrow-mindedness is the tendency to see things only one way. A narrow way of thinking is to make decisions from a single, biased viewpoint. For example, the super-racehorse Man o' War wore blinders in a few of his early races. Blinders are part of a hood that fits over a horse's head. It shields the eyes and eliminates all peripheral vision. While the horse is running, it can see only one thing—the dusty track ahead of him. Nothing to the right or to the left will bother that speeding thoroughbred. The blinders hide everything else from sight.

Narrow-minded thinking is much like wearing a hood with blinders. The secular world despises blinders. Man should be able to endorse all world views presented and make logical, conscientious decisions regarding what is right or wrong for self. Everything should be allowed in public schools, all forms of theory are taught (and learned) and the students are supposed to decide what is best for themselves. Blinders would hinder this freedom of thinking and reason. An open mind is the key.

Followers of Christ should also be open-minded. All the options must be weighed in the balance. Matters of doctrine/life are very carefully considered. However, the decisions of faith—often called beliefs—are not based on what we think is best for ourselves. That places far too much emphasis on man's uncanny ability to reason out the best for himself. No, we say that Scripture is our answer. The Word of God is the only rule for faith and life. Yet all the possibilities are cautiously pursued, then with an open mind, the careful study of catechism and the preaching of the Word provides the answer.

With an open mind, we consider some controversial options: absolute depravity, innate goodness of man, total depravity, etc. With the eye of faith, we look to the revealed Word of God for proof. As it turns out, the Bible clearly backs the truth of total depravity. Since we have found proof texts, we rest assured with the decision and stick to it. It is **not** narrow-minded. It is not a narrow mind that holds unshakably to certain beliefs when the proof texts are so readily available.

However, with a hot-iron brand, children of the Reformed faith have been tagged as narrow-minded. When the call is sent out for open minds, the outer world says, "Keep an open mind to all views," but actually means, "Endorse our godless, liberal views." Although the church's Scriptural views are not narrow-minded, others would have the church give up century-old beliefs in exchange for a new, liberal way of thinking. The whole time, man cites the need for open minds. In his estimation, the church has a narrow mind on dusty, old, doctrinal issues. To be sure, there **is** great need for an open mind, yet all they really want is for us to be narrow-minded **far to the other direction** along with them.

The church is not narrow-minded, certainly not to the extreme level of narrow-mindedness in the far liberal extreme. Members of Christ are equipped with true, open minds that are cinched tightly and securely with the answers and beliefs from the Word of God. Let the accusation die in its effort.

Yet as a reminder to open minds that doctrine and life go hand in hand, and that beliefs learned in catechism are nothing to be ashamed of...

...Next Month's Issue Is Not For You!

The *Beacon Lights* staff works hard on your magazine. My fellow staff members deserve your thanks and appreciation for many days and nights of effort put into the publication. Officially, the staff works hard to bring to your home a helpful, spiritual magazine—a magazine written for developing Christians to help them grow in their spiritual life. The call is for constant struggle for a holier walk before God and an antithetical pilgrimage on this earth.

Therefore, next month there is a planned activity for our intended readers visibly to go out and fight against the accusation of being narrow-minded, the accusation of being cold and "cliquish"—living strictly within our own circles. Let us show others how we have true, open minds *in our everyday walk*. The idea is not merely to shake things up a bit. There are two good reasons for this special issue. First, it involves the actual activity of going out and physically handing a copy to a new reader. This could be a valuable moment to share ideas about faith and life—hardly reminiscent of the alleged narrow-mindedness! Secondly, by the Lord's hand, the staff feels the material is good enough for the benefit of potential new readers. **The focus of our periodical will not be restricted to a static set of subscribers.** If more will join, D.V., let them read! Whoever they are, wherever they live. Incidentally, the *Beacon Lights* is currently mailed to 11 countries worldwide, and 28 states in the U.S. Although quantitative expansion is not the key, the branching out to a broader spectrum of people is encouraging.

So, the October issue of *Beacon Lights* is not for you. Of course, you are entitled to read it, even keep it. However, the staff encourages you to give this special issue away. Hand it to someone new and the special issue will have reached a dynamic new readership. For this we owe you our thanks. But let the utmost thanks and praise go to our Lord on high Who has provided all things for us.

"Thou art my God, and I will praise thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good:
His mercy endureth forever."
(Psalm 118:28-29)

Please remember, the October issue is not just for you. Pass it on.

Guest Article

Those True Disciples of Christ

by Rev. John A. Heys

From a physical point of view, Young People, the human race is divided into many different kinds of people and kingdoms. But from a spiritual point of view, the whole human race is divided into only two kingdoms, in which each has only one kind of people in it. The Kingdom of Heaven has citizens in it who believe in God, and love Him. The other one, The Kingdom of Darkness, has unbelieving citizens, who hate God and love Satan, as their king.

We have a very striking evidence of the work performed by the citizens of that kingdom of unbelievers. According to the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John we read that Judas Iscariot, who to many was considered to be a disciple of Christ, actually showed himself as a disciple of Satan. He betrayed Christ in order to get thirty pieces of silver, for the enjoyment of his flesh.

However, take note of the fact that Christ Himself, in John 8:31 and 32, calls the citizens of His kingdom to be His disciples. There we read: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Now that the citizens of Christ's kingdom are called "disciples indeed" means that they very truly are citizens in His Kingdom. There in Scripture that kingdom is called The Kingdom of Heaven. Now the Greek word, which John uses here and in the King James Version of the Bible is presented as "indeed," we can well translate as "truly" rather than "indeed." By God's grace we are truly disciples of Him as our Savior. We are truly His disciples, if we continue in His word.

Here in these verses, wherein our Savior speaks to us, we have the comforting truth that we were made to be His disciples. We came into this world, being born in it as those who have not, and could not cause ourselves to become His disciples. We all are conceived and born in sin. We do well, however, to take note of the fact that our Savior here reveals that we are called to be His disciples, if we continue in His work. We, by Him, are freed from Satan's powerful hold upon us. We are caused to know the truth in our hearts as well as in our minds. We have been turned around, and now can continue in God's word.

What will reveal that we are such citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven is our walking and continuing in God's Word, not walking against what He reveals in that Word. Many will call the Bible to be God's Word. Yet they dare to present false doctrines, and even defend them by their words. Just look into your telephone book. There you will find churches listed by many different names. But in many instances they will reveal rivalry against churches that do maintain the truth of God's Word. They do not simply go against other churches. They go against God. They dare to call their churches Christian churches. But they are going against God. They dare to call their churches disciples of Christ. Yet they boldly present what Satan says, rather than what God declares in His Word. Through Arminianism they will teach that God depends upon us, and that we can turn our hearts and help God save us.

But let us look carefully and seriously at what God wrote, and is recorded in Ephesians 2:8-10. There we read: "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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We do not earn our salvation. We do not make the decision as to whether we will, or not will to believe what God wrote in Scripture. We are saved through faith, and not because of our faith. We are not born physically because we asked our parents to bring us forth. It is not our decision even as to whether we would be born as a boy or a girl. Our parents may have wanted to decide what we would be, their son or daughter; but we came forth as God eternally decreed. And that we were born spiritually as God's son or daughter was His eternal plan. As members of the body of Christ, we have our place

eternally decided by God. Just look up Romans 8:28-30. God works all things together for our good, as members of the body of Christ. He predestinated us to become conformed to the image of His Son. And He did so that we might be the firstborn among many brethren. Our place in the body of Christ, His Church, was eternally decreed, and each member of that body has its decreed place, so that we all, in our place, work together in The Kingdom of Heaven.

God does not depend upon us. We, for our place and work in Christ's coming kingdom, depend upon God's decision as to whether we are elect members of the body of Christ, and where we are in that body. And hold on tightly to that truth that we are saved by God's grace. We do not earn our place in the Kingdom of Heaven. We do not plan where we are going to be as a member of that body of Christ. In Ephesians 2:8 we are taught by God that we are saved by God's grace, through faith, not because of a faith we started in our lives, but because God began it in us in His grace.

Plainly every part of our salvation is God's gift to us. We cannot give God anything physical or spiritual. All things are His possession, and arrive as gifts to us in His grace, so that we owe Him everlasting thanks. Just look up Psalm 139:14, where we read: "I will praise Thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."

Take note of the fact that as presented a moment ago, our God Himself through His Son said that we are truly His disciples. And being disciples means that God uses us. This means that we do not give God something that He does not have. The truth in Scripture makes us free from all the false doctrines that Satan uses, trying to get us to believe that we are gods, that we can and will let God save us through His Son. True, salvation will bring to us the desire for salvation, as well as the salvation. The day when Adam and Eve fell into spiritual death as enemies of God, they could not want to serve God, and live before Him in love. And, Young People, by no means let Satan let you believe that you can let God save you by fulfilling a condition. Hold on tightly to the truth which Christ Himself presents to us, when He said that truth shall make us free. We do not free ourselves from Satan and his lie, and the sinful deeds which he works in us.

That word "disciple" means one who is taught and trained. And God teaches and trains His elect to be Christ's disciples. Sing that truth every day: "All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom Lord hath fashioned me; I give my Maker thankful praise, Whose wondrous works my soul amaze." Psalter number 383, the first stanza.

When then you do with your heart praise God for that gift of salvation, what Christ said is so very true. Satan got us to fall into sin, and to die spiritually. But as our Savior, Christ gets us to be His disciples. And when we can and do sing God's praises for salvation, we rejoice in that truth that we have been made free, by the truth that we are His disciples.

And now, as we rush to the end of the world, Satan is clearly and severely trying to get us to turn from Christ and His work, not interested in being His disciples. But if God has begun that salvation in you, get down on your knees, and pray daily to Him for strength to resist and be made free from Satan, and from our natural love of sin, as faithful disciples of His Son, our Savior.

Then your name will not merely be "Christian." Your mind and soul will be freed from the lie, and you will have the joy of being a disciple of Christ, rejoicing in the power God has given you to be disciples of Christ.

How about it, Young People, has God freed you by the truth which He has given you through His Word, through catechism teaching, Christian School education, and Beacon Lights copies, to strengthen you in faith as one who is a disciple of Christ? Do you find joy in this truth which Christ presents, and gives for our comfort? When we know the truth in heaven, and in the New Jerusalem, when Christ returns to usher in the Kingdom of Heaven, we will appreciate and enjoy fully all the blessedness presented in God's Word, and which in our text is called truth. And we will not merely be freed from what we suffer in this life in body and soul, by the hatred of those who are not disciples of Christ, but tools of Satan. But we will also be freed from all the misery that came into this world, because Satan got the whole human race to hate God.

Salvation is that blessed gift of God through Christ Jesus, His Son in our flesh. Appreciate that gift of God; and in your thankfulness, which He in His grace has wrought in you, sing this blessed truth:

Sing a new song to Jehovah
For the wonders He has wrought;
His right hand and arm most holy
Triumph to His cause have brought.
In His love and tender mercy
He hath made salvation known,
In the sight of ev'ry nation
He His righteousness hath shown.
Psalter Number 261 based on Psalm 98.

The "Re-Baptizers"

by Daniel Kleyn

It is important that we remember the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. When we do so, not only is it important for us to consider the Reformers and their work, but we also need to be reminded of the great and seemingly unconquerable enemies of the Reformers. It is our purpose in this article to consider one of these enemies of the Reformation, the Anabaptists.

Whenever we consider any aspect of the Reformation, we realize anew that the Reformation was not an accomplishment of men, but a wonder work of God. The Reformers were indeed great men of God, but they could do nothing by themselves to overcome their enemies and to bring about reform. By taking note of the struggles of the Reformers, we are able more fully to appreciate the great heritage of the Reformed faith which we have received.

ENEMIES OF THE REFORMATION

In the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Reformers, by God's grace and guidance, overcame two kinds of opposition. Both of these opponents were a threat to the cause of the Reformation and thus the success of the Reformation depended upon the success of the Reformers in overcoming the opposition.

But what were these two major enemies which the Reformers faced? Are you able to mention them?

Perhaps the one that first comes to mind is the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholics, in many ways, continually attempted to halt the progress of the Reformation. Yes, overcoming the Roman Catholics was essential to the Reformation. Perhaps we would even say that the most important battle of the Reformation was overcoming Rome and its errors.

But there was still another and perhaps more serious enemy—the radicals.

The Reformers not only faced the antagonism of the Roman Catholics on the right, but they also encountered opposition from radical movements on the left. It is here that the Anabaptists (the "Re-Baptizers") fit in, for they were one of these radical groups.

NATURE OF THE ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT

The Anabaptist movement (as was true of most radical movements) arose from within the Protestant party. At first these radicals appeared to have a valuable contribution to make to the Reformation, for they were strong in their opposition to Rome and its errors and even seemed to stand for the right things.

Anabaptists were, however, a serious threat to the Reformers and the Reformation. Anabaptists were unhappy with both the direction and the pace of the Reformation and desired to bring about reform in their own ways—ways based upon a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Scriptures.

The Anabaptist movement was not, however, a unified movement. Some historians state that there were at least seven different kinds of Anabaptists, with some being more radical than others. Although the Anabaptists had certain beliefs on which they all agreed, in most areas they disagreed violently among themselves. This resulted in many schisms within the Anabaptist groups.

TENETS OF ANABAPTISM

The name "Anabaptist" (meaning "to re-baptize"), was given to the Anabaptists by their opponents. Although those who came up with this name perhaps intended it to be somewhat derogatory, it was nevertheless a true and appropriate title. The Anabaptists were not, however, fond of this title, for they maintained that they were not "re-baptizing." They believed that their initial baptism as children was invalid and that their baptism as adults was the only true baptism.

The two main errors of the Anabaptist movement, errors which all Anabaptists held in common, were their heretical doctrines of a pure church of believers and of adult baptism. They believed that the true church was the church which contained only true believers. This meant that only adults, those who confessed their faith, could be members. Infants, being unable to repent and believe, should not be baptized. It was necessary, therefore, to reject infant baptism.

Great diversity and disagreement prevailed, however, concerning the other beliefs and practices of the Anabaptists. For example, certain groups of Anabaptists were far more radical than others and even took up arms in order to defend themselves and to promote their cause. Other groups, such as the Swiss Anabaptists, were far less radical than the movements in Germany and the Netherlands and were known for their simple piety and strict morality.

Although many disagreements existed among the Anabaptists, yet it is easy to see from a consideration of their beliefs that the Anabaptists were a dangerous threat to the cause of the Protestant Reformation. The errors of the Anabaptists struck right at the heart of the Reformed faith—God's *covenant* of friendship and fellowship with believers *and their children.*

CONCLUSION

It is never pleasant for the church to have to face and fight enemies. But God is sovereign. It is God Who sends the enemies to the church and He does so with a purpose. In God's providence the Anabaptist heresy served to strengthen the Protestant Reformation.

The positive outcome of the rise of Anabaptism was the spiritual strengthening of the Reformation and of the Reformers.

The rise of the Anabaptist errors compelled the Reformers to find a Scriptural defense for infant baptism. The Reformers were thereby led to a better understanding of the important place of the children of believers in the covenant which God establishes with His people.

The confrontation between the Anabaptists and the Reformed is a wonderful testimony of God's preserving His church and leading that church into the truth. It was God, not the Reformers, Who, by means of the confrontation, brought about the strengthening of the church and the development of the truth. And it is God Who has given this heritage of truth to His church of today.

Let us remember the Reformation. Let us remember the Reformers. But let us also remember this enemy, the Anabaptists, first, so that we are wary of those who hold to these views today, and secondly, so that we appreciate more fully the wonderful heritage of truth that we have.

Daniel Kleyn, a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, is in his second year of seminary, studying for the ministry in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

On July 24 the sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered in Faith Protestant Reformed Church to Colin Melvin, son of Joel and Jory Mulder, and to Whitney Lynn, daughter of Jim and Amy Mol.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Skip Hunter

September 1 — **Deuteronomy 6:1-7** For most of us school has or will begin soon. Because of the covenant all of God's people have a responsibility to see that the covenant seed are instructed according to God's Word and law. As parents and grandparents we must teach God's Word to our children. That is the command of verse seven of this passage. We have no other choice but that. And we must be always teaching. That is the meaning of verse seven. There is no time in which we should not teach our children the ways of Jehovah. Let us do that diligently during this next school year. Sing or read Psalter 214, especially stanzas 1, 3, and 6.

September 2 — **Proverbs 4:1-9** Yesterday I addressed the older members of God's church. Today I wish the students to pay close heed to the Word of God. Parents must teach; of that there is no doubt. Just as sure is the fact that children and young people must learn. When you go to school and hear your teacher's instruction, you do not have an option to ignore his instruction. You have the obligation to get Jehovah's wisdom, and then after you have gotten it not to forget it but to use it. It must be something that you love very dearly. It is the principal thing according to Solomon. Students, heed God's Word in this new school year and seek His wisdom. Sing or read Psalter 322.

September 3 — **II Thessalonians 2:1-5** Do you remember all the words of Christ that have been told you? That means do you remember His words as they have been brought to you in catechism, in church, and in your own reading of the Bible? That is what Paul is asking in verse five. True, he is just writing of one aspect, but we can extend that idea to include all the words of Christ. Hearing Christ in catechism and in the preaching lays a tremendous responsibility upon us. Therefore we may not take those things lightly. We must prepare to hear Christ and we must reflect upon what we have heard. Hear Christ, people of God, and remember His words. Sing or read Psalter 333.

September 4 — **II Thessalonians 2:6-12** In these few verses we are reminded that not every person in the world, in fact not even the large majority of the world's people, is a child of God. This will become more evident as the day of Christ's return draws nearer and nearer. That should affect the way that we live with these people. That should tell us that we should not fellowship with them except in ways that are necessary to our daily life. That should guide our entertainment in that we are not entertained by their music, their movies, their television programs, or their books. As we go to the haven of worship today let us ask God to help us be vigilant even as we await the day of the return of our Savior. Sing or read Psalter 92, especially stanzas 1 and 8.

September 5 — **II Thessalonians 2:13-17** From eternity we are called by God to everlasting life. He has carried out this calling through His Son Christ Jesus. Because of that calling and Christ's sacrifice for us, we can have much comfort even in this world of sin and wickedness. We do not have to doubt our salvation. By God's grace we can say with confidence that we are children of the King. We have the hope that Christ will return and take us to heaven to reign with Him there. That is our comfort, and that is the means which can strengthen us through whatever we do. Let us pray to our heavenly Father for a full measure of His grace to receive such a wonderful comfort. Sing or read Psalter 202.

September 6 — **Habakkuk 2:1-8** Children of God, do you wait to see what God will say unto you? That is what Habakkuk had to do. He had to watch for the word of the Lord. In verse three he confessed that the vision of God would both surely come and would not lie. Is that our way in this life, or do we run ahead of God and try to do things before we should? If we have done this, we also have met failure. Things done in our time and in our strength have no hope of success. Things done in God's time and by His strength have every hope of success. Ponder this idea and pray for this to be our guide even as we wait for the return of Christ. Sing or read Psalter 100.

September 7 — **Habakkuk 2:9-14** This portion of Scripture continues with the idea that it is foolish to try and carry out our wills and our sinful desires. Verse fourteen gives the reason why these attempts are foolish. Here we see that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah. At the end of time all men will see that God's glory was what should have been sought after. Not the glory of a single man, a single family, or even a single nation. God's glory is what we must seek after. We must do this now in every aspect of our lives. This is our calling even as we wait for His return. Sing or read Psalter 76, especially stanzas 1, 2, and 4.

September 8 — **Habakkuk 2:15-20** Do you know where Jehovah's temple is? Is it just the church building where you hear His name proclaimed? Is He just in His temple on Sunday as we listen to the sermon? The answer to these questions is a resounding no! We know that God dwells in the whole world. We also know from Scripture that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. Because He is always before us, we must always keep silence and listen to Him. We may not try to change the Bible to say what we wish it to say. We must listen to His Word and obey it. We have no other choice if we wish for peace in this life as well as the life to come. Sing or read Psalter 266.

September 9 — **Matthew 18:1-6** What a question is asked in verse one! Do we dare ask such a thing? Sadly, I believe the answer is yes. This question is asked out of the greatest of pride-filled thoughts. The sin of pride has caused many evils in the church of the past and present. By the sin of pride whole churches have been torn apart. By the sin of pride men have left the church not wishing to bow before the teaching of Scripture and the will of God. To be a citizen of the kingdom takes extreme humility on the part of the child of God. Let us pray for that humility so that we may have peace in our churches, in our families, and in our own souls. Sing or read Psalter 232.

September 10 — **Matthew 18:7-9** Are you willing to remove from your lives that which causes you to sin? That is the instruction Christ gives the church in these verses. We must put away that which in itself may not be wrong; but yet because of the use to which we put it, it causes us to sin. Christ here speaks of offending body parts, but I think we can extend the meaning to things in our lives. If we can not glorify God in our use of something, it better have no part in our lives. This could be painful if we must rid ourselves of some prized or expensive possession. This could be painful if we must tell some people that we can no longer associate with them because they are preventing us from glorifying the God of heaven and earth. But this must be done if we are to escape the torments of hell. Sing or read Psalter 179.

September 11 — **Matthew 18:10-14** No matter what age we are, what a blessed comfort we have in verse 14! Because of our heavenly Father not one of His children will perish into hell. When we fall into sin, sometimes we might be inclined to doubt our salvation. We might wonder if God wants such sinners as we are into His kingdom of perfection. Here we have the comfort that from a baby we are under the care of almighty God. This should give us incentive to live lives pleasing to Him. We should want to walk in ways that meet His approval day by day and hour by hour. Let that be our goal. Sing or read Psalter 358.

September 12 — **Matthew 18:15-20** In these days in which fellowship between believers becomes more and more precious, verse twenty can prove of utmost comfort. Sometimes I hear that our young people have trouble finding friends. But yet in this verse we see that it only takes two or three God-fearing people to insure God's favor with His presence. Is this your goal when you get together, young people? Are you wanting God's favor on your gatherings? Adam found great companionship when he walked with God in Eden. We cannot have that feeling because of the fall, but we can strive for a small beginning here on earth of the fellowship we will have with God in heaven. Sing or read Psalter 421, especially stanzas 3 and 4.

September 13 — **Matthew 18:21-35** Young people, do you try to forgive your brothers or sisters in the Lord? Do you do it on seventy times seven occasions? Jesus' teaching in these verses does not allow us to hold a grudge against a fellow believer no matter how much we feel they have hurt us. We must be forgiving people. And this forgiveness must be expressed to the person who has wronged us. As young people, you must do this, too. When someone offends you, you might be quick to figure out ways to get back at him. This is not the teaching of Jesus Who forgave all of our sins. You must go to him and forgive him. And you must do this over and over again. Christ forgives us until the day we die; we must follow that blessed example. Sing or read Psalter 349, especially stanzas 3 and 4.

September 14 — **Psalm 89:1-7** How often do we take the words of verse one on our lips? How often are we found praising the mercies of the Lord either in song or just by means of words? Are we found making known Jehovah's faithfulness to our parents, grandparents, or those younger than we are? Sure, we sing of Jehovah's goodness in church or in school programs, but do we do this spontaneously? God's goodness is more than we can understand even if we spend much time pondering it. It is something we should praise often even if we only have a little knowledge of the good things He has done for us. As we go through our lives let us speak of God's faithfulness to others. Sing or read Psalter 241, especially stanzas 1-3.

September 15 **Psalm 89:8-14** How often do we ponder the fact that our God is great and almighty? If we think of this fact, do our lives show that we know what this means? As we live in this world, do we let the greatness of God shine in our lives? Or do we often rely on the greatness of self? Most of us know that our salvation is not dependent on our strength. Do most of us know that the rest of our life is not dependent on our strength either? Do we make plans which ignore the greatness of God? Let us pray for the grace to let God's strength rule our lives, and let us pray with the confidence that He will hear our prayers and bless our lives. Sing or read Psalter 317, especially stanzas 1, 2, and 4.

September 16 **Psalm 89:15-21** People of God, do you feel as if the waves of despair are crashing all around you? Do you have a situation from which you feel there is no escape? Has a loved one died, or a child gone astray, or the world seems to take away your joy? These verses should bring tremendous comfort. First of all we must know that we are the people of God. Then we must believe that He will help us and cause us to have much joy. How can we have this confidence? Verse eighteen tells us that Jehovah is our defense and king! What more do we need? He will help us in any trouble. Let us pray for the blessedness of those who walk in the countenance of Jehovah. Sing or read Psalter 242.

September 17 **Psalm 89:19-28** Here we have a beautiful prophecy of Christ. He is to be like David—the man after God's own heart. But yet He will call God His Father because He is the Son of God. He is higher than all kings on earth, and He will rule over all nations. He will fulfill the covenant that God has made with His people. What a comfort this Psalm can be for us. We can read these words and realize how great Christ is. These words can give us great hope as we wait for Christ's return to deliver us from this valley of the shadow of death. Because we are the seed of Christ, we know that we will enjoy eternal life in heaven. Sing or read Psalter 243, especially stanzas 1-6.

September 18 **Psalm 89:29-37** Even though these words seem harsh and sorrowful, they are full of comfort. We know that we fall into sin. We have felt our Father's chastening rod often. But yet we know that the covenant of grace is sure. We know that because of Christ we will never perish into everlasting torment. God will not break His covenant with us. That is as sure as the sun and moon in the heavens. God's Word is truth, and that we can always believe. Sing or read Psalter 243, especially stanzas 7-9.

September 19 **Psalm 89:38-45** Here we see that we do not get away with our sins. Even as Israel was spoiled by enemies because they fell into grievous sin, we too will be chastened by God when we do not walk in His ways. We must keep the commandments as they are written. When it says "thou shall not...." we must obey that strictly. There are no situations which allow us to put aside a commandment of Jehovah. Israel tried it, and they had plenty of reasons for their actions. God took them into captivity. God will also bring to us grief when we fail to heed His law perfectly. Sing or read Psalter 140.

September 20 **Psalm 89:46-52** The psalmist, bowed under the weight of his and the nation's sins, asks when will he be delivered. But then he finishes with the beautiful words of verse fifty-two. Is that our confession? Do we bless the Lord daily? Do we make the comfort that is found in the covenant ours? That comfort will only be found by daily confession of our sins. This is only found by repentance from the sins we have committed. This repentance is only obtained through the blood of the Lamb. Yes, God's covenant is sure. Let us bless the Lord daily for all of the benefits He gives us. Sing or read Psalter 243, especially stanzas 12-15.

September 21 **II Corinthians 7:1-7** Young people, do you strive to cleanse yourselves from all manner of evil? Notice that Paul speaks of evils both of the flesh and the spirit. These concern both tables of God's law. We must not be evil in how we love God, nor must we be evil in our dealings toward our neighbors. Most of us have heard the promise of the gospel from a very young age. Now we must put what we have heard into practice. This is a daily work. Each time we make a decision to do something we must make sure that that activity is cleansed from evil. We must work at perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Make that your desire as you strive to serve God all the days of your life. Sing or read Psalter 271.

September 22 **II Corinthians 7:8-12** People of God, do you practice godly sorrow for your sins? Corinth was a very wicked city, and the church had sin in it as well. Paul repeatedly had to show them the way of repentance. We need that as well. Notice Paul speaks of two sorts of sorrows here. There is the sorrow that leads to salvation, and the sorrow that leads to death in hell. The one is the true sorrow which causes the Christian to cry out, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." The second type is deadly. It looks for excuses and ultimately blames God for its problems. Be sorrowful, people of God, and you will be comforted with the blessings of salvation. Sing or read Psalter 159, especially stanzas 1, 3, and 4.

September 23 **II Corinthians 7:13-16** Titus had been received by the Corinthian church with great joy. This reception must have been spiritual by nature seeing the joy that Paul received from it. What about us? Do we receive God's servants with great joy? Are we willing to listen to them as they bring the words of Christ? Do we

receive them with fellowship seeing that they are the shepherds sent to us by God? Sometimes we must go without a minister for years in order that we see the privilege that we have in having a shepherd who cares for our spiritual needs. Let us receive them that their spirits and ours be refreshed with the fellowship that is only possible among believers. Sing or read Psalter 214, especially stanzas 1, 2, and 7.

September 24 — **Exodus 32: 1-6** Moses had been gone from Israel for forty days and forty nights. During that time Israel began to think that he was gone from them and that God too had left them. They decided to take matters into their own hands, and they demanded that Aaron give them a God. Do we do this sometimes? Do we think God has left us, and that we find solutions for our cares in our own strengths? I think we sometimes feel that God's Word is not good enough for us, and we use the devil's solutions to problems that we have. If we do, we are guilty of having other gods before us and we deserve Israel's punishment. Sing or read Psalter 42.

September 25 — **Exodus 32: 7-10** Is God justified by being so angry at Israel? Is God justified by requiring that we walk according to His Word? The answer is an unqualified yes! God cannot abide sin in His people! Why not, we may ask? Why is God so strict that we must strive to be holy? The answer is because He is holy. Because He is holy those that He has chosen must be holy as well. This should not make us throw up our hands in despair. No, this should make us strive to work out more and more our own salvation with fear and trembling. We wish to please our earthly fathers; how much more should we wish to please our heavenly Father. Let us walk in God's ways and escape His wrath. Sing or read Psalter 162.

September 26 — **Exodus 32: 11-16** Is there anyone standing at God's side turning His anger away from our sins? Do we have someone like Moses who pleaded for Israel's very existence? Is there anyone who will plead with God on the basis of the covenant for us when we walk in sin? The answer, of course is yes! We have a mediator Who pleads for us before the Father. We have an advocate Who pleads our cases before Him Who demands justice. We have the propitiation sitting at God's right hand looking out for us. This mediator, this advocate, and this propitiation is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. Moses stood before God's wrath for Israel; Christ bore God's wrath for all His people. Thanks be to God for Him. Sing or read Psalter 303.

September 27 — **Exodus 32: 17-20** The people of Israel had to see their sins. They also had to suffer the consequences of that grievous sin of seeking any God but Jehovah. Moses' anger was hot as he burst into their wicked party and destroyed the golden calf. He recognized their songs as those sung by the ungodly in Egypt. He recognized their nakedness and their play as the immoral entertainment they had witnessed in the picture of hell. He realized that the law had been broken and symbolically he broke the table to shock them into sensibility. Are we not guilty of the same sins? Shouldn't we be reminded of what we do when we follow the ways of the world? Sing or read Psalter 290, especially stanzas 1-3 and 11.

September 28 — **Exodus 32: 21-24** "I didn't do it; it was his fault." How many times as parents, elders, or teachers don't we hear those words? That was Aaron's defense when confronted by an angry Moses. Aaron quickly saw his guilt, but he was quick to pin the blame on someone else. It was the people's fault. This defense should never fall from our lips. We must acknowledge our guilt, bow before the Lord in humility, and confess our sins. Only in this way will we find the comfort which comes when we know our sins are forgiven. Let us take responsibility for our actions and go to our God in prayer and ask His forgiveness through Christ. Sing or read Psalter 189.

September 29 — **Exodus 32: 25-29** "Who is on the Lord's side?" What a stirring call! Do we dare answer it? Can we say yes we are on the Lord's side and do His bidding? Can we answer that call while enjoying the movies, music, television drama, and other worldly amusements? Can we answer the call even as we put aside God's law so that we can have our own pleasure? Can we answer the call as the Levites and be zealous for the name of God? If we want God's blessing in this life then we must answer the call and do whatever He has commanded us in His Word. Are we on the Lord's side? Sing or read Psalter 321.

September 30 — **Exodus 32: 30-35** Once again Moses went into the mountain acting as the type of Christ that he was. Once again he went into God's presence to plead for mercy that only God can give. He offered his own salvation as he confessed the sins of the people of God. What a comfort we have in Christ as He offered Himself upon the cross for our salvation. We, like Israel, deserve to have our names blotted from the book of life. We, like Israel, receive the mercy of God in that our names are kept in that book forever. Let us give thanks for that mercy with a walk that is pleasing to our holy God. Sing or read Psalter 291, especially stanzas 1, 11, and 12.

The Planted Seed Preserved

by Bruce Klamer

Our Lord Jesus Christ, during His ministry, taught through many parables, signs and wonders. In the parable of Matthew 13:24-30, Jesus tells us of the farmer that went and planted wheat seed in clean ground. While the farmer was away from the field, an enemy came and sowed tares in the same field. The farmer did not see this until both began to grow. Wisely, the farmer would not allow his helpers to take out the tares until the wheat was ready for harvest. After all, taking out the tares at harvest ensures that the wheat will not be mistaken for a tare, as could happen when both are just beginning to grow.

In this parable, Jesus makes a distinction between two different kinds of seed. The farmer did not plant a seed that could be either wheat or tares. The wheat that was planted could only grow up to be a wheat plant; just as the tares planted by the enemy could only grow and become tares. The tares cannot grow into a wheat plant. God has created each plant to bring forth seed of its own kind; when germinated, each must grow into its own kind.

Each one of us has a seed planted in us. Those that have been given to Jesus our Lord have had that seed of regeneration implanted in our hearts. Through this seed of regeneration and the death of our Savior, we have our salvation and that promise and surety of our place in heaven.

This seed planted in our hearts can only bring forth the fruit of the seed that was planted. Since the fruit of this seed is our salvation, we can take comfort knowing that once we are children of God we will always remain children of God. Our Father Who has planted that seed in our hearts will preserve that seed as it grows and matures and is ready for the harvest.

Our salvation in Jesus Christ is something that cannot be changed. Just as a kernel of corn cannot grow into a flower, the seed of regeneration can only grow into our salvation in Jesus Christ. The saints are preserved unto Christ in the perseverance of that work of regeneration begun in our hearts. Our salvation is preserved since God will not have that work He has begun in us go undone.

How humbling. We are not saved by our own work or of any merit in and of ourselves. None of us can plant the seed of salvation in our hearts. This seed that has been planted will show the fruit of the seed. We cannot change what that fruit is, or will become. Each saint that is predestined to eternal salvation through Jesus will be preserved in Him.

We must be careful in the knowledge that no matter what we do our salvation is preserved. We must not sin, thinking that once we have been seeded unto salvation we are preserved. It is terrible if we think it is all right to do what we will because we think that once we are children of God we will always be such.

Each seed brings forth fruit after its kind. As an acorn will not grow into an onion, the seed of regeneration will not grow into sin. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:16-20: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Therefore, we show which seed is within us by living a life of thankfulness to Him by praising and glorifying His name in all that we do.

What a beautiful gift we have been given through Jesus our Lord! That seed of regeneration begun in our hearts will be preserved. Our salvation cannot be lost. The seed planted can only and must only bring forth the fruit of what has been planted. As children of God we must be joyful in the gift of our salvation. Once we are saved, we are preserved in Christ. Satan and his host of devils cannot make a good seed bring forth evil.

Though Satan can tempt us to fall into sin, ultimately our Savior, through the Holy Spirit, will bring about repentance and forgiveness. Because we are saved, we are preserved in Christ, Who will bring us to our eternal heavenly home.

Bruce Klamer, a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, lives and farms in the Byron Center area.

Correspondence

An Editorial Comment on "Erasmus of Rotterdam."

The Editorial Staff.

I am writing in response to the article which was printed in the August 1994 issue of the *Beacon Lights* titled "Erasmus of Rotterdam." I do not agree with what the author of that article wrote concerning Erasmus. For that reason, I have several comments to make concerning the article and some questions for the author of that article.

In the first place, the rubric under which the article appeared, namely "Winds of Doctrine," is a rubric which deals with heretics that the Church has confronted, and ***condemned***, in history. You did not, however, treat Erasmus as a heretic, but as a fairly good man. Do you really believe that Erasmus was a man who aided the church and who should be an example for us to follow?

I do not! Erasmus was a heretic. Erasmus, being a Humanist, believed in the dominance of reason over and above faith. Erasmus sought to synthesize faith and reason, and this is not possible. Doing so is attempting to synthesize the church and the world, Christianity and Humanism. How can this man be an example to follow and teach us that "Christians must argue in love?"

Secondly, you point out in your article that disagreement existed between Erasmus and Luther. That is correct. But you paint a picture of Erasmus as the good guy, and you call Luther a "radical" who "wanted to split up the church." You even imply that Luther argued in "evil ways."

I find this to be an unfair attack on Luther. Luther was indeed vehement in his speech, but he was so in defense of the truth, and not for any other reason. To Luther the truth was everything, and he could not and did not tolerate the errors taught by Erasmus and others. It was Luther whom God used to bring about the much needed Reformation of the church. Luther had to stand alone against the whole Church of his day. Only a man with Luther's strong personality could, from a human point of view, do this. God used a man with Luther's strong personality to accomplish His purposes in reforming His church.

Another point which I would like to clarify is in connection with what you say in your article concerning the dispute between Calvinists and Arminians over free-will.

You state that Erasmus believed that Augustinian determinism (I understand you to mean by this, Augustine's view of God's sovereign determination of all things) means that there is no human responsibility and that everything happens by fate. And you add that "this objection to Augustinian theology has never been answered sufficiently by any theologian." You also state that this objection is something that Calvinist apologists have ***tried*** to answer throughout the centuries.

Is that really true? Aren't you ignoring the whole Reformed tradition from Augustine through Calvin, the Synod of Dort, and to the present, including our own history as Protestant Reformed Churches? The Reformed faith has always opposed and answered the notion that man has a "free-will," for it has always had to refute the idea that man has a choice to make in his salvation. At the same time, the Church has always maintained human responsibility. Indeed, much has been said and written concerning this objection, and I believe it has been sufficiently answered.

What about our confessions and creeds? What about Canons of Dort, Second Head of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors 3 & 6? What about Article 14 of our Belgic Confession of Faith which points out that man does not have a free-will, "since man is but a slave to sin: and has nothing of himself, unless it is given from heaven?"

And what about our own P.R. preaching and teaching? We believe and teach that God is sovereign, that man has no free will, but that man is nevertheless responsible. Take a look, for example, at Herman Hoeksema's *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America*. In Part Two, Section 5, Question 16 of that book, Hoeksema answers thoroughly the following question: "Do you, however, by so strictly maintaining the sovereignty of God over all things, not deny the responsibility of man?"

Luther was correct, and not Erasmus. Luther, as you pointed out, believed that man is in bondage to sin and can only choose sin. Yes, "God predestines everything that occurs" and "humans are not the first cause of their choices." Fallen and sinful man does not have a free will, for he can only sin.

If, as you say, Erasmus held to and defended the Arminian view of man having a free will, Erasmus was a heretic!

If we wish to talk about examples to follow, I would much rather have the courage of a zealous Luther defending the faith than be a "gentleman and a chicken" like Erasmus.

Be Still and Know That I Am God

by Mary Brummel

Contentment can mean different things to different people. According to Webster, contentment means "happy enough with what one has or is; satisfied." Many people of the world are content with what they have and what they are. They are satisfied with their jobs, their families, their houses, etc. But when life does not bring them their wants, they begin to grumble and complain. They are not content.

Sound familiar?

Remember the Israelites when they murmured to Moses in the wilderness? No food or water, you brought us here to die, they complained. They wished to go back to Egypt where they lived as slaves! When they did reach the promised land, they were afraid and refused to enter the land that God had given them through Abraham, their father. God had promised to conquer the land. They were punished by the curse of having to wander in the wilderness for forty years, during which many died without seeing the promised land.

Like us?

We can wonder why Israel was so foolish not to trust their God. Why were not they content to obey Him? Look at all the wonders God had shown them. Their deliverance from Egypt, providing them with manna and water in the wilderness and much more! Israel is a picture of us.

"Be still and know that I am God."

As long as our lives bring us what we need and want, we are content. But when we have a day in which things are not going "right," we complain. We become impatient and irritable. Remember the Israelites?

Oh! But to be content with each day no matter what it may bring.

Yes, young people, we must learn to be content. It is not natural, by our "Old Man of Sin," to be content.

Listen to Paul in Philippians 4:11b: "for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Who taught Paul to be content? Paul was busy persecuting the Christians when one day God stopped him, struck him blind, and then led him into the wilderness to instruct him. Paul was to preach to God's chosen, not to persecute them! This would not be easy for Paul who was known as one who hurt God's people, not helped them. God sent him to preach to the Gentiles in places where he was not always welcomed. He was shipwrecked how many times? How about beaten? Yet Paul was continually content. How? Paul was submissive to God's will for him.

"Be still and know that I am God."

> "There is much blessing in serving our God in contentment and one experiences peace already here on this earth."

Paul had learned to be quiet and listen to his God. He did not rely on his own strength. He often prayed that his heavenly Father would give him the strength to carry forth his calling.

Paul's contentment is different than the contentment of the world. Paul's contentment was a godly contentment.

Godly contentment is defined in the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, "What is thy only comfort in life and death?" Read the answer, young people. Memorize it! You and I belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. There only do we find contentment! We belong to Him! We are His most precious possession. Think of how much your most valued possession means to you. That can not compare to how much you mean to God. He bought you with His only begotten Son.

God owns you! He has the right to send whatever He wills into your lives—the death of a parent, brother or sister, divorced parents, or financial struggles and the such. Our comfort is that He sends these trials out of His love for us. How unfathomable is His love! Within that love we find contentment.

"Be still and know that I am God."

How does God teach us contentment?

As you grow spiritually, your learning in contentment will also grow. Your training in catechism and attending worship services on the Sabbath is a preparation for a life of contentment. Study God's Word to learn God's law for our lives and walk in obedience to that law. It is in living God's Word and law that we come to know God.

Prayer is a necessary requirement in learning to be content. As young people, you must learn to pray daily, asking God for guidance in your lives. He will not always reveal His will to you as quickly as you would like to know. But contentment involves patience, which most of us have little of. When you ask for guidance, then you must patiently wait in confidence for God's sovereign plans for your life. That is not always easy!

It is not easy to pray "Thy will be done," and then be content with God's will for our lives. It is easy to complain about the "evils" that befall us. Things are not going as I had planned. Being young people in this wicked world is not easy. Walking in God's law is not easy. It is much easier and more "fun" to go along with the wicked world. If I do not, I'll be mocked and lose my friends.

"Be still and know that I am God."

When life is difficult, we do not understand "why"—why do not I date, why can not I be smarter, why can not I be popular? Bring these questions to your heavenly Father in prayer. Leave them at His throne and ask for grace patiently to wait on Him.

When God answers your prayers, it may not be in the way you wanted it. God's way may be difficult, yet we must cheerfully walk that way, content that our Father is leading us.

There is much blessing in serving our God in contentment and one experiences peace already here on this earth. Peace with the knowledge that our God is in control of all things and "all things work together for good unto them that love God; to them who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.

As the end of time rapidly approaches, young people, it is going to be harder and harder to serve our LORD. With all the temptations surrounding us, this world is getting to be a smaller place for God's people. But these times are also in His control and we can be assured that He will give us the grace to be content during these difficult days.

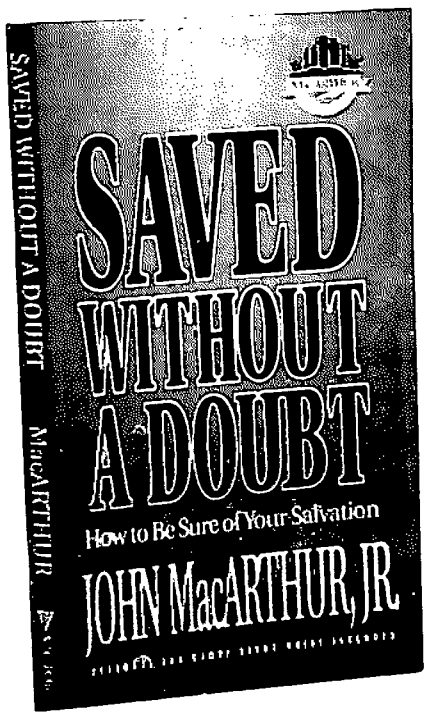
"Be still and know that I am God."

Mary Brummel with her husband and six children attend Grandville PRC. Her youngest child being in kindergarten, she keeps busy by teaching pre-school three days a week.

The *Beacon Lights* staff wishes to recognize the faithful work of Jim Van Overloop (typesetter) and Thelma Westra (proofreader) who are resigning from their posts.

Jim, a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church, has been typesetting the *Beacon Lights* for approximately twenty years. Thelma, also a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church, has been proofreading for several years.

The *Beacon Light*'s staff is always striving to improve the magazine and we sincerely appreciate Jim and Thelma's long hours and dedication to the magazine!



Saved Without a Doubt

How to Be Sure of Your Salvation

Reviewed by

Tom Bergman

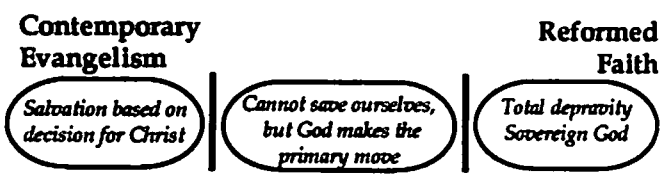
MacArthur, John Jr.
Saved Without a Doubt:
How to Be Sure of Your Salvation.
Wheaton: Victor Books, 1992.
187 pp.

Confidence in God's promise—This is the theme of John MacArthur's book *Saved Without a Doubt.* To provide a secure salvation, "the Father's sovereign decree, the Son's intercessory ministry, and the Spirit's seal" work together (21). Being assured of this is not arrogance. It is confidence in His promise.

The author begins by describing the work of salvation in terms of God's working hand. The first chapter tells how the high-priestly work of Christ is in perfect harmony with the will of the Father. Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name." The excellent quote from John 17:11 gives a glorious testimony. The Holy Spirit is the divine pledge of this work. MacArthur writes that the Greek word for "pledge" is *arrabon*—originally referring to a down payment. A form of the word "came to be used for an engagement ring" (20). Such background study provides wonderful depth to the book. The words "refuge" and "tribulations" are also supplied with richer meaning by means of colorful explanations of the Greek.

In the later chapters, we read of the lasting nature of this salvation, including a head-on treatment of "troubling" verses. Some verses tend to make a believer doubt for a time. They seem to make assurance not so sure. However, MacArthur handles these with a credible exegesis of each one.

The rest of the book treats the matter of how we can know whether we are Christians and how to experience assurance of this. It is a difficult subject, but one treated with pastoral concern and Scriptural comfort—all quotes coming out of the New American Standard Bible. Although he relies heavily on the book of Romans, MacArthur suddenly appears to undermine his own *forte:* reliance on God's sovereign decree. On page 54, we find a confession of the wonderful truth of God's complete sovereignty. But on the very next page, MacArthur states that Christians are regenerated by the will of God, but secondary to this decision, they also have to receive Christ—a weak explanation of Acts 4:12. It is a suspicious statement. The reviewer suspects that the author's ideas lie somewhere between **contemporary evangelism** and the **Reformed faith**. Throughout the book, he does not seem to be totally committed to either side.



A few other weaknesses show up in this book. MacArthur mentions a millenial period on page 30 and hints at the notion of resistible grace on the same page. Aside from these, the book is quite well done. The reading is very smooth. The issues are intensely personal and treated with love and concern. In most places Scripturally accurate, ***Saved Without a Doubt*** is a worthwhile book for any Christian. It is a book worth picking up, reading, and spending some study time with. At the very least, it renews the awesome wonder of God's great work of salvation. MacArthur puts spirit into his writing that inspires rejoicing of the heart and the mind in our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, he speaks with a voice of quiet reverence about God's abounding grace. May God be praised for His name alone is great!

Both the reverent and joyful moods expressed in this book make it a profitable experience for the Christian reader. The author should be complemented for putting together this helpful study, but let the reader still beware of the discrepancies. With all pros and cons about MacArthur's book aside, confidence in God's promise is a beautiful thing. Read about it.

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Look for the October issue of the *Beacon Lights*. It is a "special issue" for you to read and then share with a new reader, whoever that might be: co-workers, schoolmates, neighbors, or anyone not so familiar with your Reformed beliefs. Pass it on!

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"LITTLE LIGHTS" . . . LET IT SHINE!

Chicken Feed

The sky was blue and the air felt crisp and clean. What a beautiful day to spend in the country! Uncle Ned and Aunt Jo had invited their nephew and niece, Jason and Julie, to their farm for the day. Jason began his stay by helping Uncle Ned in the barn, while Julie helped Aunt Jo feed the chickens.

"Oh Aunt Jo, these chicks are so fluffy and cute! I'd love to have one for a pet!" Julie sighed.

Aunt Jo chuckled as she spread cracked corn over the ground. "They are sweet, aren't they? But cute little chicks grow up into big ol' chickens soon enough. I don't think your mother would care to have one running around your yard in the city."

Soon the morning chores were finished, and it was time to sit down and enjoy a hearty breakfast. But just as the bacon and eggs were being passed around, everybody heard a commotion coming from the chicken coop.

"Oh no," said Uncle Ned. "Hope it's not a raccoon. Strange time of day for one to be there though. We better check it out."

All four hurried over to the coop. At first it looked like everything was fine, but then Jason spotted a young chicken lying by the edge of the fence. At closer inspection, they could see it was bruised and bloody, and nearly dead.

"I don't understand. What happened?" asked Jason. Julie lost her appetite at the sight of the poor chicken.

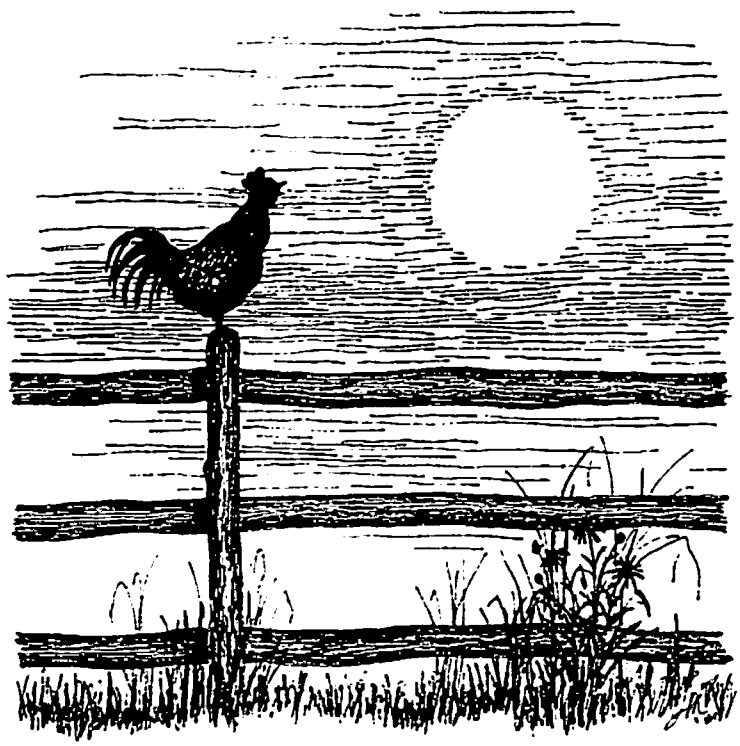
"Well," Uncle Ned explained, "chickens will sometimes gang up on another chicken, maybe because they see a weakness of some sort in it, and then they'll keep pestering and pecking at it. They've been pecking at this one quite a bit lately."

"How awful!" Julie exclaimed.

"Yes, it is," Uncle Ned replied. "But sometimes children do the same thing at school, don't they? Other kids think someone has big ears or walks funny, or whatever. And then they pick on that person until on the inside, they look just like this chicken. How awful."

Jason and Julie nodded. The sight of that chicken would stay with them a long time.

by Connie Meyer



You will find every word of Matthew 7:12 in this puzzle:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

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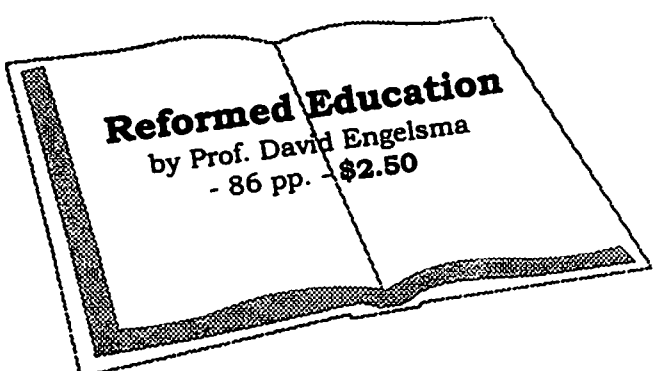

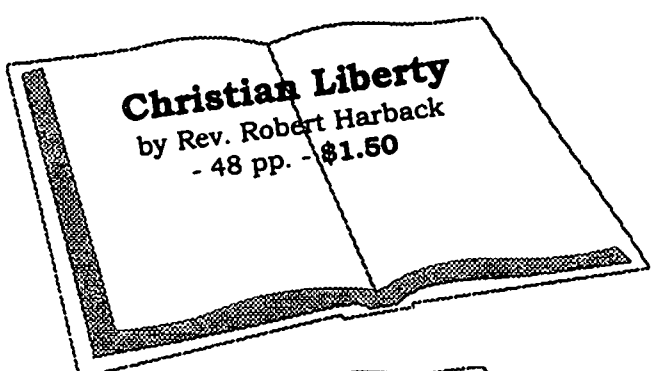

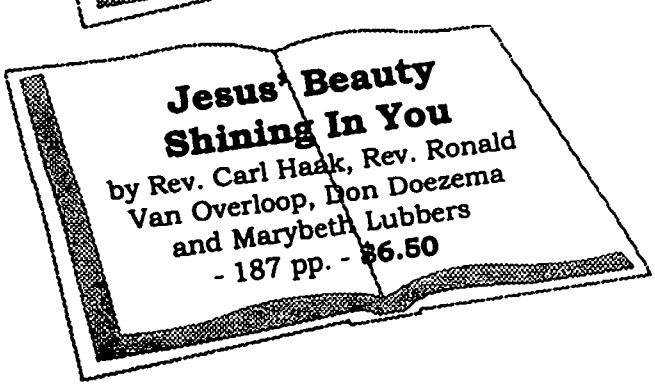

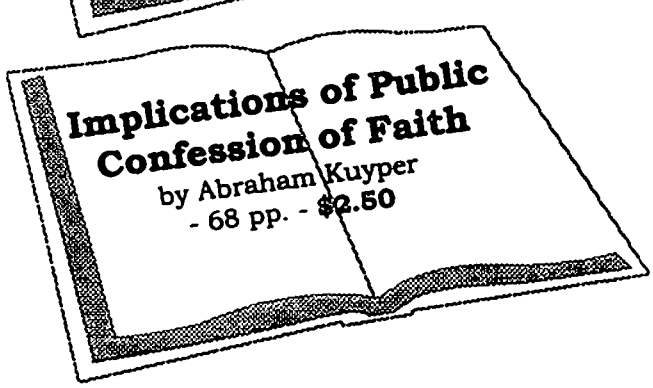

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