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Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

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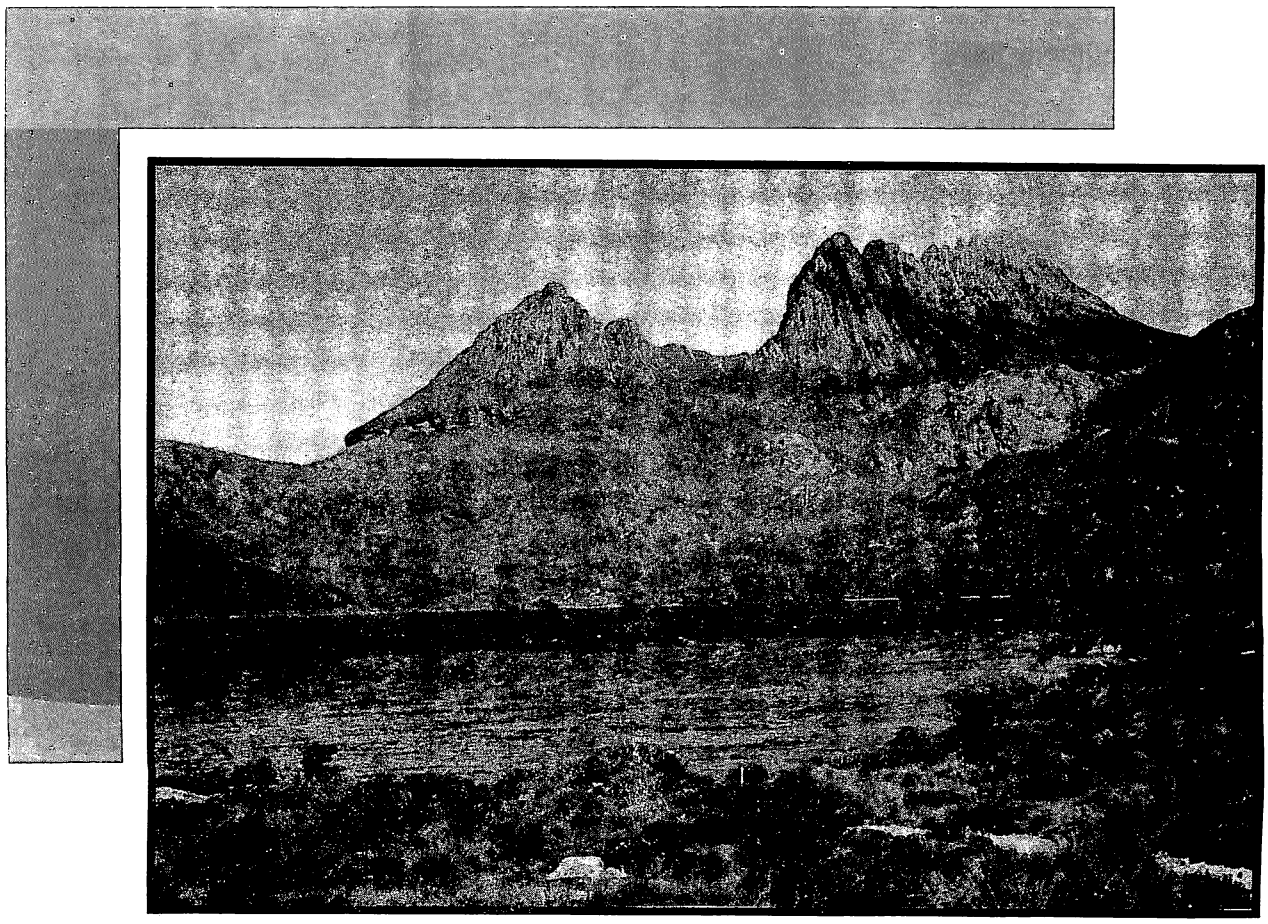

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Proverbs for Christian Teens

by Nathan Brummel

Young Christians, you are in a tumultuous stage of your life. You are growing up, maturing, and taking on greater responsibilities. In this time of your life it is appropriate to pay attention to some of the proverbs in the Bible that speak to your situation.

As you become older it becomes clear that your parents are not always going to be around you to help you make the right decisions. One proverb that your parents have heeded in bringing you up was Proverbs 22:6 where it says:

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

Even though you teenagers are in a stage where you are becoming independent it is wrong to think that your parents no longer are responsible for training you. They must help you to grow and mature in the Christian faith.

As you attempt to follow after Christ you are confronted by many temptations in high school, at home, and with friends. Let us look at some temptations and sins that are addressed by the writers of Proverbs.

One temptation for many teenagers is that of drinking alcohol and getting drunk. But God addresses this sin in Proverbs 20:1:

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

You are not wise to get drunk, because it causes many sins. Do not be deceived by friends who attempt to portray drinking as a wonderful thing, because you will be shown to be a fool by being deceived by it.

Proverbs also addresses another common temptation of teenagers, which is to gossip about other acquaintances.

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue
keepeth his soul from troubles. (Proverbs 2:23)

Keeping your mouth and tongue means not saying the wrong things. And part of this would be gossip about other people. This means that Christians may not talk in negative ways about other people who are different from them in some way or are perceived as "strange." The positive side of this proverb is that you will avoid trouble by controlling your tongue.

Many young Christians seem to act as if nothing bad will result from their sins. They seem to rush after various sins without a thought to the consequences. However, Solomon states in Proverbs 22:8:

He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity:
and the rod of his anger shall fail.

But there is a wonderful incentive to young people to follow after righteousness and holiness. Solomon states in Proverbs 21:21:

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy
findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

It is impossible for you young people to follow after righteousness in your own power. It is only by the grace of God that you can overcome sin. Through the power of Christ you are enabled to follow God's commandments.

Pray to God and He will give you strength to live a holy life. Our final proverb testifies to the fact that God will be attentive to your prayers that are prayed in true faith. Solomon states:

The Lord is far from the wicked;
but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Therefore, petition God for strength to live a life of love to God and your neighbors.

Thy Word My Lamp

by Rev. C. Hanko

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119:105

The figure that is used here suggests a dense, black darkness, a path through the darkness that leads to heaven, a lamp or a lantern, and a person who is walking in the light of the lantern to his eternal Home.

Remember that this is a confession; a confession made, let me say, particularly by you young people. I say, particularly by you, because as young people you stand with your whole life spread out before you. Your future is unknown; in fact you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. Nor are you aware of the many dangers that lurk along that dark pathway. You young folk are urged to take this confession on your lips, and even more, to live it.

A great expanse of darkness lies before you. One reason for that is that you have not traveled this way before. You may try to imagine what lies ahead; you may dream pleasant dreams of the future, but you do not know. In fact, that future is bound to be different from anything you can now imagine. If the Lord delays in coming, the future will bring new discoveries, new inventions. New vistas will open up. The world keeps changing. And God has deemed it wise to hide the future from us. We take one step at a time into the unknown.

The darkness that reaches out before us includes the wickedness of this present evil world that crowds in on our lives every day. We see it, we hear it, we read about it in the news. We experience it in our contact with the world of sin, blatant wickedness, cursing, swearing; speech and actions that make us shudder. We realize that as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven we are pilgrims and aliens in a world of sin and death.

All this would not be so dangerous for us, if it were not that we ourselves are still by nature sinners, prone to all evil. The devil tempts, the world either threatens or lures us, and the sin that wars in our members opposes us.

My lantern is "Thy Word."

I believe that the Bible is the divinely inspired, inerrant Word of God. I believe that "all Scripture is given by the 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," (II Timothy 3:16). I also believe "that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (II Peter 1:20, 21). I believe that because the Bible itself says so, and the testimony of the Spirit in my heart confirms it.

Are you not thankful that we have that Word as our guide, and that we can freely read and study it? There was a time when the common people were not allowed to read the Bible.

The Roman Catholic Church kept the Bible chained in the monasteries. That "Church" still maintains that only they can interpret the Bible for you, so that the "Church" will tell you what they want you to believe. The battle cry of the great Reformation, among other things, was, "sola Scriptura," only the Scriptures. The church cannot tell us about God; only the Scriptures can do that.

I am thankful to God for that stand of our fathers ever since the Reformation. I am also thankful that we belong to a church where the truth of the Scriptures is faithfully preached and maintained.

That Word is the light that penetrates the darkness of our present night. It shows us the way that we must go, the path that we must walk to reach our eternal Home.

The path that reaches out before you is that particular road that you must travel to attain to your place in glory. Jesus speaks of the narrow way that leads to eternal life. It is *your* way, which you must walk to attain your eternal goal. It has enemies lurking that will seek to lead you away from the truth of God's Word and from a godly walk. There are rugged areas, steep slopes to climb and to descend. You will have to be alert every moment, careful at every step you take, straining every muscle of your body. Your backpack will weigh heavily on your shoulders, every muscle of your body is bound to ache. At times the way may seem to be too difficult, so that you ask yourself, "Is it all worth while?" Along with your fellow travelers you sigh,

O send the day of joy and light,
For long has been our sorrow's night;
Afflicted through the weary years,
We wait until Thy help appears;
With us and with our sons abide,
In us let God be glorified.

This is the way that God in His love and wisdom has planned just for you. It is the only possible way to prepare you for your place before the throne in heaven. How could you ever find that path in the darkness of this present world without the lantern of God's Word. Our God assures you, "I will instruct thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with my eye," (Psalm 32:8). We can confidently say, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow in His footsteps as He leads the way.

Our Lantern does not spread its beam far and wide and into distant future, but it leads us one step at a time. No matter how dark the night, no matter what enemies may lurk in the darkness or what dangers may threaten, this Lantern is our sure guide. We need that, for our spirit is willing, but our flesh is weak.

As young people with the future looming up before you, you have some very important decisions to make.

You live in a sex saturated environment, where promiscuity is condoned, if not encouraged. Gradually many even in the world begin to recognize the fact, that many teenagers have the guilt of murder on their consciences, or are child-mothers with the responsibility of rearing a child. Realizing these consequences they are encouraging young folks to "say *no* to sex." They give various reasons, but you as followers of Christ have the best reason of all. You can say, as Joseph did to Potiphar's wife, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Your goal is to be a true picture of Christ and His church, the pure Bridegroom and His holy bride.

You have a calling to take your own divinely appointed place as steward in God's house. Certain gifts and talents are entrusted to you as to none other. Those you are to use in a manner pleasing to God. To enjoy your future you must be able to use those talents to the best of your ability. Well may you pray daily that God direct you to the task for which He has fitted you.

What could be more dependable than the divinely inspired, infallible Word of God as your guide? Taking the truth as God reveals it to us in Jesus Christ by the enlightening of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we can safely walk our pathway with confidence and joy.

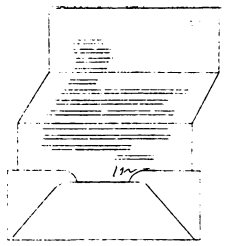
Your parents made great sacrifices to give you a Christian education in a Christian school that bases all its instruction on the Scriptures. Your church has faithfully taught you in the catechism classes ever since you were able to read. And you still have the truth of the Holy Scriptures brought to you every Sunday by your minister.

We still have available to us the instruction of the church, not only in the preaching and catechism, but also in our societies. We do not walk life's pathway alone. We walk in the company of our fellow saints as a support and comfort to one another. We should not only attend these societies, but also take an active part. A lively society depends on the input of each member. A worthwhile contribution requires study and preparation. Is it worth it to you? What are your priorities?

We sing with the church of all ages, "Thy Word, O Lord, will safely guide, if in its wisdom we confide."

We confess, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path." Do we live it?

Rev. C. Hanko is a retired minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches. He lives in Hudsonville, Michigan and is a member of Hudsonville PRC.



Letter to the editor:

I am concerned that Nathan Brummel fails to grasp the significance of the vague language that he used in his article "What Must You Do To Be Saved?" (Oct., 1994 *Beacon Lights*). I had thought that upon reflection he would see that his explanation of Acts 16:30ff not only leaves open the *possibility* of an Arminian interpretation. Because of the lack of clear, precise explanation of the doctrines of sovereign grace, such an interpretation can hardly be avoided.

Perhaps I failed adequately to address the issues in my former letter (December issue). When I stated that Nathan led us into the murky waters of Arminianism, I was not pointing to any specific statement as heretical in itself, nor accusing my young brother of being himself an Arminian. Nor was I saying that we may not, as Reformed Christians, use "if...then" statements. I would expect a Reformed preacher freely to preach the whole counsel of God, including the many conditional statements in Scripture—none of which make salvation dependent upon man. I would expect such preaching to be done clearly and in light of the rest of Scripture. In my letter, I was attempting to point out the consequences of Nathan's lack of clarity in his overall approach to the issue with which he was dealing. I assume that Nathan is not and does not want to be Arminian. I assume that he also wants to make very clear that he stands firmly upon the foundation of biblical (and therefore Reformed) truth.

His response to my open letter in the December issue skirts the issue that I attempted to address. I am thankful to see that he interprets his reference to Christ taking away the sins of the world as referring to the whole world *of the elect*. But that is not the primary issue. He had already stated the same in his original article. I only asked for his interpretation of that statement because the last two or three paragraphs of his article left his interpretation of the extent of Christ's atonement very much open to question.

The question remains: Does the author believe that we can make a general promise in preaching either to the church or on a mission field, which promise is coupled with a condition? Does he believe that God promises to every man that *if* he believes (or "hears His words and keeps His commandments"), *then* he *will be* saved? The original article was sufficiently vague and the truth of Scripture so poorly defined that this question must be raised.

The author's response only adds to the confusion. I refer especially to the closing sentence of his response, where he speaks of bringing the gospel message to strangers by using this "Scriptural language." Every Arminian will use "Scriptural language." It is exactly their use of such language that brings so much confusion to the multitudes. The question that we must face is, How does Scripture interpret its own language, and do you submit to that interpretation? The calling of the Reformed preacher and believer is to understand clearly and to convey precisely the gospel of sovereign, particular and irresistible grace. To say to a stranger that "Christ died for the world; and if you believe, then you will be saved," is exactly what an Arminian evangelist would freely preach. And although that statement is not a quotation from Nathan's article, he should make clear that he does not intend to teach that. As it stands, there is nothing in his original article with which an Arminian would disagree.

He must also explain how his statement, "If you hear His words and keep His commandments *then* you *will be* saved," does *not* make one's salvation dependent upon his own works. To quote John 8:51 is to skirt the issue. John 8:51 does not make man's salvation dependent upon his own work of keeping Christ's saying. It simply states a fact of the Christian life. In the context Jesus said to the Jews, "He that is of God heareth God's words." If, therefore, I am of God, I hear His words and walk in His ways. The result of those fruits of Christ's work in me is

the assurance that I shall not see death. That is something far different from saying to an audience of strangers, "If you do this, *then* you will be saved."

Nor does the author's reference to Romans 10:9 provide support for his conclusions. Romans 10:9 speaks of the *certainty* of our final salvation, which shall be perfectly realized in the day of Christ. According to Scripture, when one confesses with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believes in his heart that God has raised Him from the dead, he *is already* saved. The point is, when his life is marked by the confession of that salvation, he may be sure that God will not forsake him. The accuracy of this interpretation is seen in verse 11: "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (For a thorough exposition of this passage, I refer the reader to H. Hoeksema's book *God's Eternal Good Pleasure*, p. 160.)

The author is correct when he says that "If...then" statements are Scriptural. That is obvious. Many such conditional sentences are used in Scripture to define the *way* to the experience or enjoyment of God's blessings. I preach from such texts without hesitation. We who are Reformed may certainly use "if...then" clauses without being Arminian. It is probably even possible to give the statements in Nathan's article a biblical and Reformed interpretation—though he has not yet done so. But we may not misuse such conditional clauses to confuse the wonderful truth of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of His people. Salvation is not a matter of man fulfilling certain conditions and answering certain questions correctly. Salvation is far more wonderful! Salvation is a work of God's sovereign, particular and irresistible grace.

How do we who are Protestant Reformed answer this question: What must I do to be saved? Do we say, "My friend, you don't have to repent and believe; but just wait and you shall be saved?" *Of course not.* On the contrary, as did Paul and Silas, we preach the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in Him as the only way of salvation. But we do not preach that man must fulfill a condition (the act of believing) before he can be saved. Paul and Silas didn't either. Rather, we command in Christ's name, *"Believe!"* And we recognize the power of God's sovereign, irresistible grace in the call of the gospel. What a wonderful word that is when Christ says it. For Christ works the wonder of His sovereign, particular, efficacious grace by the power of the preaching. You see, it was not merely Paul and Silas who were speaking to the Philippian jailer. *Christ* spoke. Through the proclamation of the gospel *Christ* said to the jailer, "Believe in me and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And the jailer believed. Why? Because when Christ speaks to His elect, He speaks irresistibly with the power of His grace. And they respond, "I believe!" Salvation is all of God!

There is one other matter in the article to which I did not call my attention in my first letter, but which added to the general confusion of the article. The statement was made concerning the Philippian jailer and his family that "*the whole family was baptized...because they believed in Jesus Christ.*" What if there were infants present? The language used left the impression that only believers are baptized. This also fits with broad evangelical and Arminian thinking. We must be careful not to fall into the error which denies baptism to infants. The children of believers are baptized, not because they believe, but according to the command of God and on the basis of God's covenant promises. This is another issue, but related to the core issue of God's sovereign, particular grace.

I pray that Nathan (and all our young people) can see the urgency of clearly understanding and stating the Reformed truth when expounding Scripture. Almost the whole evangelical church world today runs after Arminian thought and conditional theology, to the destruction of the gospel. Our own Protestant Reformed Churches must never enter that futile race. We must not lose the gospel, which is God's power unto salvation to everyone who believes (Roman 1:16). We must have the truth of God's sovereign, particular grace in saving to Himself a people that will enjoy His fellowship forever. The future of our churches and the furtherance of the gospel, as well as our own enjoyment of comfort, depends upon the faithful maintenance of that truth.

Pastor Steven R. Key
Randolph PRC
Randolph, Wisconsin

Response:

Dear Rev. Key,

I would like to apologize to you and to other readers about the unclarity of my statements in the article in question. I do not believe that salvation is conditional on the faith of a person. I believe that salvation is by grace alone and that God saves His people by giving faith to them. God sovereignly saves His elect by giving faith to them through the work of the Holy Spirit.

In Christ,
Nathan Brummel

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Tom Vander Woude

February 1

Young people, one of the areas in your life in which you must take care is who you take as your friends. The friends which you surround yourself with now can have serious impact on the rest of your life. If you seek after worldly pleasures you will find yourself associating with unbelievers. As you progress down a wicked pathway you will find your life intertwined with the life of unbelievers. If you befriend yourself to those unbelievers and your friendship continues to develop over a period of years, you may find yourself in a dire predicament. One day your conscience will be troubled to the point that you are driven to repentance, and you will have to make major changes in your life-style. You will find yourself in a situation in which you must now deny these friends in order to serve Christ. This is a nasty situation which can be avoided if you are careful now about who your friends are. **Read Deuteronomy 13, especially verses 6-10.**

February 2

Will the friends that you now have be with you forever? If the great tribulation was upon us, would your friends stand at your side as you deny the Antichrist and face certain persecution? Would they suddenly disappear from your side, only to reappear on the other side with those who taunt and ridicule you for your confession? Beware of those who are your friends only for the "good times" or because you give them something that they want, only to forget you when your usefulness wears thin. **Read Genesis 40, especially verse 23.**

February 3

The closest friend that we will ever have will be the one that we take as our husband or wife. If we seek after our mate in our own wisdom we will utterly fail in this quest. If we seek out our lifelong companion on the basis of physical attributes we will surely be disappointed in the end. Anything that is built is only as strong as the foundation upon which it stands. Seek after your lifelong mate through prayer to God. God will reveal the right one to you in His appointed time. Learn the hard lesson of the strongest man ever to live made weak because of the woman that he chose in his own wisdom. **Read Judges 16.**

February 4

Who should be our friends? How do we know who is our true friend and who is a false friend? The answer is readily available. Turn to the Word of God for therein is wisdom. Does your "friend" turn away from you when you discuss the Word of God with him? Then turn away from him. True friends will be excited by the Word of God, they will accompany you to the house of prayer on the Lord's day. They will give their very life in order to save yours. **Read John 15, especially verses 12-15.**

February 5

Is there anything on this earth that can be compared to the holiness of God? Is there anything in this creation that can make us truly glad? The line at the Lottery counter grows longer as the jackpot increases, and man becomes excited at the prospect of winning the prize as if this would finally make him truly happy. What folly! Man boasts of the riches of this world and tramples underfoot the Word of God at the same time. In doing this he turns away from the only source of true joy. Seek the kingdom of God, especially on this Lord's day. **Read Psalm 4.**

February 6

The pathway unto which God has directed us is not an easy pathway. The wicked follow an easy pathway. They live each day as they please, doing whatsoever their wicked hearts desire. But the righteous person follows a narrow pathway. He cannot do whatever he desires. The Spirit that dwells in the elect strives against the lust of the flesh. The sinful flesh of the elect strives against the Spirit. The Bible spells out for us what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit. Which pathway do you walk? **Read Galatians 5, especially verses 19-26.**

February 7

Amusements and worldly pleasures belong to the works of the flesh. Galatians 5 spelled this out for u Notice that drunkenness and revelry are included in the list of those things which manifest the works of t flesh. It may seem like harmless fun to party (revelry). This is an easy pathway to follow. In fact, you could spend the rest of your life "partying" and "having a good time". But remember this lifetime is only for a moment. It is as a wisp of smoke that appears for a moment and then is quickly whisked away. Flee from the works of the flesh and spend your time growing strong in the Spirit. **Read Job 21, especially verses 12-13.**

February 8

You cannot live your life as you please. You cannot seek after worldly pleasures all the week long and then visit the house of God on Sunday and expect that everything will be all right. God will vex your soul if you live in such a manner. There will be no peace in your heart, and you will doubt your own salvation. Worldly pleasures choke the Word of God in the heart. Pray each and every day for strength to turn away from worldly pleasures and busy yourself in the study of God's Word. Then you will bring forth good fruit. **Read Luke 8, especially verses 14 and 15.**

February 9

Oh, to be like the rich and the famous! If only I could be as smart and successful as the powerful business man, then my life would be full of pleasure. If only I could be as talented as the famous athlete or as well liked as the popular movie star. I could then live in a beautiful mansion and enjoy all the riches and glamour. My life would be a dream world come true. Just think of what I could do with all that money! I could get all that I ever wanted. I could mingle with great people and enjoy parties that would blow your mind. Then the Word of God slapped me in the face and I woke up. **Read Proverbs 21, especially verse 17.**

February 10

Seeking after worldly pleasures is a dangerous business. To profess yourself to be a Christian by going to church on Sunday, but then living the rest of the week serving the lusts of the flesh is fooling yourself and blasphemy to God. You cannot grow spiritually as long as you live this way. In fact, you will grow in sin the longer you walk this pathway. Sin has a snowball effect. Once you excuse one little sin in your life you start the ball rolling. As you continue in this sin your excuses for it become easier to find and the transgression becomes your knowledge. You begin to disregard the judgements and works of God, and you lose His knowledge. **Read Isaiah 5, especially verses 11-14.**

February 11

The wicked man will never admit that he is a fool. On the contrary, he makes himself out to be a wise man. He is extremely confident in the pathway which he has chosen. He makes himself out to be a happ man. He ridicules the idea that his way is sin and there will be a price to pay. He is quick to find "mistake in the Bible and then quickly sets it aside as though it could not possibly be a factor in his life. But deep down inside his heart he knows otherwise, for God has put the knowledge of His wrath into the heart of every man, and every man knows that one day he will have to answer to his creator. **Read Isaiah 5, especially verses 11-14.**

February 12

It's Sunday again. This is a great joy to those who have been busy this past week denying the lusts of the flesh. For those who are serving the lusts of the flesh and yet professing to be good Christians, this day comes as somewhat of a nuisance to them. They must now take time out from their "fun" and visit the house of God so that they may appear to others as though they walk uprightly. It soothes their troubled consciences, but the preached Word quickly leaves them, and they are lost again in their sin as long as they remain unrepentant. If you are serving the lusts of the flesh and are troubled by a guilty conscience, turn to God in prayer of repentance from the heart. Meditate upon His law day and night, and He will give you the strength to turn away from sin (no matter how great you think the sin is) and to walk uprightly. Then that unspeakable joy will fill your heart and you will be at peace. **Read Psalm 1.**

February 13

If you are considering taking up a certain act that you know is sinful, seek God for strength to turn away from the temptation. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you can enjoy the sin for a time and then turn away from it later, before it has serious consequences in your life. Do not deceive yourself by believing that because you are still young you may enjoy sin, since you will always be able to turn away from it when you are older and more responsible. Sin always leads to greater sin. That's why Satan always tempts first with small, simple sins, and once you're in that sin's grasp he is able to tempt you into even greater transgressions. **Read Matthew 14, especially verses 6-10.**

February 14

The world says "Don't worry, be happy!" and "If it feels good, do it!" But if we live our lives according to the instruction of God's Word, we will find that the world's recipe for the good life is folly. This is because the world attempts to gain happiness through worldly pleasure. The world stresses the good times. The wicked always want to appear to be happy. Mourning, to him, is not a good thing, and the talk of death is to be avoided at all time. But God gives us good things, and He also gives us adversity. Therefore, a wise man will consider both and will realize that man can gain nothing by his own strength. He then turns to God in all things and is satisfied with His way. **Read Ecclesiastes 7, especially verses 2-4.**

February 15

The news is not good for those who have given themselves over to worldly pleasures. In the day and age in which we live there is much to be sought after in this world of high technology. But consider the end of it. For the end of a man of the 90's is the same end to which the men of old came. It is amazing how some people will strive to make great gains here on this earth, only to leave it all behind in the matter of seconds it can take to die. So lay up for yourself treasures in heaven and take heed to the words of judgement delivered by Isaiah against those who have given themselves over to worldly pleasures. **Read Isaiah 47, especially verses 8-15.**

February 16

What can we say then? Are we to walk as prophets of doom and gloom? Are we all to walk with sober faces, never able to crack a smile? Are we never to enjoy life and its earthly pleasure? Not at all. For there is a time and a season for all of these things. But it is all a matter of priorities. Certainly we can enjoy some of the pleasures of this present life, but it must be done according to God's instruction as it is found in His Word. We must first seek after Him and His kingdom, not after our own heart's desire, for that is when we run into trouble. So go ahead and enjoy what God has given to you, but do it according to His rules, not your own. **Read Matthew 6, especially verses 19-21 and verse 33.**

February 17

Sometimes it is easy for us to worry about the welfare of the Church. We become concerned for the pure preaching of the gospel which we have as it has been handed down from generation to generation, especially in the day and age in which we live. Apostasy abounds all around us. False churches spring up everywhere and threaten the truth of Scripture with all their popular, heretical teachings. But we need not worry, for our mighty God holds the Church in the palm of His hand. He has determined the course of the Church and its entire history from beginning to end since before time began. Predestination and the preservation of the Church are great works of God's almighty hand. Although the devil battles against it and even, at times, appears to be close to wiping the Church out, he will always fail. God's plan will be completed without change as He has planned it from eternity. **Read John 10, especially verses 27-29.**

February 18

One of the greatest crimes of our time is the abominable act of abortion. To hear of the horrible stores of how abortions are performed is enough to turn one's stomach. We are told how the unborn are literally torn limb from limb and removed from the womb. We hear horror stories of botched abortions and terrible complications, both physical and mental, for the mother who has fallen into this sin. The killing doctor stands tall in his pride before the face of God and proclaims that this is not murder. He tells us that the baby he pulls from the womb is not human, but only a mass of tissue. Obviously he has rejected God's infallible Word and gives no heed to the origin of the soul. God knows us all from eternity, and I believe that it is at conception that we receive our soul. **Read Jeremiah 1, especially verses 4 and 5.**

February 19

Go to God's house today and give Him praise for He is greatly to be praised. The heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing, even as the earth quakes all around them and though they are surrounded by the signs of God's judgement. Yet they imagine that they will somehow escape the inevitable end which is to come. They imagine they will create a new earth, an earth in which everyone lives in peace and harmony. They imagine they will solve all of the problems which plague this present day, and they will succeed. But that will be the day in which they all bow before the Antichrist. That will be the day when Christ will come in great glory and mighty power to crush their wicked kingdom like so much dry clay. Put your trust in God and His everlasting Word. **Read Psalm 2.**

February 20

We tend to be quite rebellious in our teenage years. This is a trying time in a young person's life. For many years we have been totally dependent upon our parents for everything that we did. Now we are at that point in our lives where we re-evaluate ourselves and our surroundings. We wish to be independent, but we lack the resources that are needed to live on our own (which would be a foolish thing to do anyway) so we feel as though we are stuck in our situation with nowhere to go. So we rebel. We disobey our mother and father and the rules that we are still obligated to obey. Some of us fall into grievous sins such as drunkenness, riotous living, pot smoking, adultery, etc. Check yourself. You may have embarked on a dangerous pathway, a pathway that may swallow you up and waste many years of your life. Repent and read how harsh God's judgement is on those who do not. **Read Deuteronomy 21, especially verses 18-21.**

February 21

The world certainly does hate the truth that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth. It detests the idea that there is more to this world than meets the eye. It will not admit that there is a heaven and a hell. It battles against the truth that every person will live forever, whether it be in eternal damnation or eternal communion with God. The world says that you are born, you live, and then you die, end of story. It creates its own theory of the origin of all things. It comes up with this ridiculous story of how all things came into being on their own in a natural process that has been taking place for billions of years. Wicked man is lost in his pride, for he esteems himself to be so great that he is even now able to determine by his own technology the very creation of the heavens and the earth. Wicked man is a fool. A wise man fears the LORD.**Read Proverbs 1, especially verse 7.**

February 22

We are all as the foolish, wicked man in our natural state. However, God has wrought a great work in us and has delivered us from the blindness of the reprobate soul. I thank God each and every day for this wondrous work that He has performed in me. My hope is that you thank Him also continually for the work that He has wrought in you. But, we are still in our sins while we are yet on this earth, so there is a great struggle for us to face every day. Each day I find myself in danger of being carried away in my own pride. This is why we must go to the Word of God every day, to be reminded of our weakness and His strength which He has given unto us. We must humble ourselves anew every day and seek God's instruction. We must trust in the Lord and not in our own wisdom, which is foolishness. **Read Proverbs 3, especially verses 1-10.**

February 23

God hates the wicked. This is a hard statement, especially when we take into consideration the heretical teachings that abound today. Many there are today who say God is love. They say God wishes to bestow His love on all men. If only wicked man would open his heart, change his own will, then God would love him too. But this flies in the face of what we find in the Scriptures. Read the Psalms! Read Proverbs! God does not wish for the wicked to be saved, only to be denied by the wicked man's decision to turn his own face away from God. The reprobate sinner is lost due to his own disobedience and sin, and he has his appointed place in hell. **Read Proverbs 15, especially verses 8, 9, 11, 26, 28, 29, and 32.**

February 24

Apostasy abounds all around us. Most of the false churches are easily identified because they have departed so far from the truth. Others are not so easy to identify because they appear to be very pious and righteous in their walk and talk. But the one thing that is always a dead give away of false teaching is the denial of the true Jesus Christ. Those who proclaim that God loves all men, that Christ died for all men, that His atonement is for all if only man would make the decision to accept it, set up before themselves a false image of Christ. God has great love. God is Love. But God's love is for His elect, those whom He has foreordained to eternal communion with Him, namely, His Church. God's hatred rests upon the wicked. Those whom he has fore-ordained to eternal damnation He leaves in their sin and misery. Be thankful, young people, for the place that God has given you in the Protestant Reformed Church where you may hear the pure preaching of the Word every week. Do not despise it, but grow strong in it that you may be ready to answer those who say that God loves all men. **Read Romans 9, especially verses 10-18.**

February 25

The wicked man is lost in his sin. There is no way he could ever make the choice to let Jesus come into his heart because his heart hates Jesus and has fully rejected Him. The wicked man has the knowledge that there is a God and that this God hates sin and will punish sin; but due to the totally depraved nature of his heart man cannot, of his own power, ask Jesus to come into His heart. God saves, and God alone, by His grace and mercy. Wicked man rejects God and serves Satan. He cannot receive spiritual things because the Spirit that reveals these things to the heart of man is not in Him. When the wicked man finally stands before the judgement seat of God he will bow down before God and acknowledge God's righteousness. He will then go to his appointed place knowing that he is worthy of it due to the guilt of his own sin. **Read I Corinthians 2, especially verse 14.**

February 26

Once again we are glad to go up to God's house on this day to give praise and glory to His name and to hear the pure preaching of His Word. Be glad for the heritage which God has given us. Pray that He will maintain the pure preaching that we have in our Protestant Reformed Churches. It did not come about by some coincidence that we have this pure preaching in our midst. Our mighty God has preserved the truth for us from the days of old. This truth was bought for us through the blood of many faithful servants of the Lord. Do not take it for granted, but hold it dear to your heart and grow in it. **Read Psalm 145.**

February 27

Each and every one of us must busy ourselves each and every day in the study of God's Word. We must busy ourselves in prayer every day, asking God for wisdom and instruction as we study His Word. We live in a day and age when many are led astray by false teachings and worldly philosophy. Do not be fooled into thinking that you will be able to stand in the evil day that is to come by taking lightly today the study of God's Word. The anti-Christian kingdom will come with a powerful, persuasive, man-pleasing, worldly gospel. If it were possible, it would deceive even the elect. So prepare yourself today by faithful study and prayerful meditation on His Word. **Read II Corinthians 11, especially verses 3, 4, and 13-15.**

February 28

The anti-Christian kingdom will come, for God has told us of it in His infallible Word. We see the workings of it already round about us. There is a striving for universal peace and a universal church. It no longer makes any difference how you worship or whom you worship. As long as you accept the worship of others and their gods, your worship and your god is okay too. But we, His true Church, know that there is only one God, and He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Therefore we are called by Him to reject the worship and the false teachings of those whose religions do not follow the one truth of God's Word as it is revealed to us by the working of His Holy Spirit in us. Now is not the time to be making changes to the Word of God. Now is not the time for "renewal" or "revival", but it is time for reformation. It is time to turn away from worldly doctrines and time to return to the Truth as it has been handed down from generation to generation. We must cling to the teachings of our forefathers, not looking for new doctrines that please worldly men. **Read II Thessalonians 2, especially verse 15.**

The "Marrow Men" and the Gospel Offer

by Allen Baird

The Marrow Controversy sprang up as wild fire in the Scottish Presbyterian Church in 1718 through the re-publishing of a book called "The Marrow of Modern Divinity." It was originally published in England in 1646, and was written (most probably) by a Gloucestershire scholar and gentleman called Edward Fisher. The book was really a compilation of Reformed writing including extracts from Luther, Calvin, and English Puritans, along with the author's interpretation and development of them in dialogue form. But so dangerous and divisive did the Church of Scotland consider this book that the General Assembly decided to condemn and ultimately ban it in 1720. However, the teaching was already out, and twelve ministers petitioned the Assembly to remove its condemnation. They were known as the "Marrow Men."

In the Black Act of 1720, the Assembly levelled five charges against the *Marrow* with regard to doctrine which they believed to be clearly contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures and the Westminster Confession of Faith. The main points the Assembly faulted the *Marrow* for teaching include the following: that assurance of salvation is of the essence of faith, that the atonement is universal or unlimited, that holiness is not necessary for salvation, and that believers are not under the law as a rule of life. While all of these charges are most serious, and some of them of a fairly technical theological nature, only the second point is directly relevant to this historical examination. And so, the issue of the extent of the atonement and its relation to the gospel call, which is of most interest to us, will alone be developed more fully.

So what exactly did the "Marrow Men" believe concerning these matters? Well, there are many phrases in the *Marrow* which a Reformed believer would find obscure and puzzling, if not downright heretical. For instance, the *Marrow* teaches, among other things, that Christ has somehow "taken upon him the sins of all men," and that every individual who hears the gospel has the right to say that "whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, He did it for me." But the most notorious and infamous statement in the *Marrow* is the claim that "God made a deed of gift and grant of Christ to all men."

To put it simply, while they held to a particular purchase of redemption for the elect out of God's special "electing love," they also held to a universal 'giving love' of God to all, and by this a general reference of the atonement. They said that, while Christ did not die for all, that is, to save all, yet He is available for all, was dead for all, if they would but receive Him. In other words, Christ died to remove the legal obstacles in the way of salvation for all mankind by making a perfect satisfaction for sins. As such, every man has a natural right to claim this pardon on condition of faith, and this is the basis for the universal offer of salvation.

And what, then, is to be our response to this teaching? Will we, along with Louis Berkhoff, accuse the "Marrow Men" of being guilty of nothing more than using "dubious language" in their "desire to establish firmly the warrant of the universal offer of salvation?"[1] When considering this matter, we would do well to listen to the words of a Scottish minister who lived a century after the Marrow Controversy, but who found himself still fighting its erroneous teachings. His name was Dr. John Kennedy, and he was better placed than anyone else accurately to analyze the teachings of the *Mar-*

row. Dr. Kennedy was one of the few men in the British Isles to stand against the revivalism of D.L. Moody (which, by the way, he referred to as "hyper-evangelism: another gospel"), and was accused by many of his contemporaries of not preaching the free offer of the gospel. On this latter point, at least, his short-sighted critics were correct! He said:

> I believe that, in the *Marrow* definition of faith, there was the germ of all the errors which have been developed into (modern) Amyraldianism.... That definition implied that the sinner, before believing, has a certain right of property in the Gospel salvation, because of "a deed of gift and grant" from God. This mistaken idea...has carried them to the universal reference of the atonement, and to their dreamings of universal grace.[2]

Here, in conclusion, lies the heart of the matter. The "Marrow Men" were guilty of the heresy of Amyraldianism. This has sometimes been called "Universalistic Calvinism," but this is a clear contradiction, as true Calvinism, almost by definition emphasizes the particular over the universal. It has also been referred to as 'Four Point Calvinism.' This, too, is inaccurate, because, as we have already seen, there is much more at stake here than a simple denial of the 'L' in TULIP (limited atonement). All those modern Presbyterian believers and theologians who favour the "Marrow Men" would do well to remember this, and that the Spirit of truth, who was given by Christ to His Church to guide it into all truth, directed His Church to reject the teaching of the *Marrow* as false, all those years ago.

[1] *The History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 193.
[2] *Union and Unionism*, p. 22.

Allen is from N. Ireland and currently attends our mission services there at the Covenant Reformed Fellowship.

A Dad's Love

by Elaine Koop

Our footsteps echoed quietly through the waiting room and on to the elevator. There was no need to ask for directions; we had gone this way many times before. The sights and sounds were all too familiar. The elevator carried us up to the 6th floor and we quickly found Dad's room. The antiseptic odors spilled out into the hallway and the beeping of the ever-present heart machine greeted us at the door. Family members were sitting and standing in various areas of the room and the usual, "How ya doings," were quickly dispensed with. Dad was glad to see us, almost relieved. Our drive to the hospital was approximately 100 miles, and we didn't get there as often as we would have liked.

Stepping closer to the bed, I realized this was not what I expected to see. His white-grayish skin against the white sheets and the outline of only bones beneath the covers, almost took my breath away. It took me some time to find words to say what I was feeling. He had been my Dad for some 49 years, and it was hard to see him this way. He had always been there for us seven children and I could see that he wouldn't be with us much longer.

"It's hard to see you this way," I muttered through my tears. And then I added, "I love you Dad." Dad answered me with words that took me by surprise; words that I knew all my life to be true, but had never heard him say.

"I love you too," he replied, his voice weak, "We love all you kids."

Memories flooded through my mind, as I reflected on our conversation. Why had he waited until he was on his deathbed to say what he felt? I had never thought about it too much while growing up and I don't think it ever bothered me. But I knew that he loved me. I knew because I experienced that love every day that I was his daughter. My six brothers and sisters knew it, too. They had shared experiences with me that told me that. We knew, because his whole life, and everything he did, reflected what he believed. He was our Dad, and his calling as our Dad was his first priority in life.

His strong spiritual beliefs dictated everything he did, from the way he raised us kids, to the way he did his job. Church attendance, twice a Sunday, was a part of our lives that we never questioned. Catechism lessons, which were memorized word for word, were considered no less important than school work.

Compromise was not part of Dad's personality. When the union was voted in at the factory where Dad worked, he refused to join. He believed that union membership was rebellion against authority, and his answer would remain the same even if it would cost him his job. His uncompromising spiritual strength always seemed unshakable.

His quiet strength and patient ways had a way of keeping order in a household of seven children. Dad did not argue. Dad spoke. His sense of right and wrong was never watered down, or put to one side, for any reason. It was always front and center. I remember all too well the time I copied some schoolwork from a girlfriend. His way of seeing through me, and the look in his eyes to tell me he did, was a discipline problem taken care of, without raising his voice, or his hand.

His dedication to his family was always evident, but even more so, when one of us was sick. I recall the incident of my younger sister being very ill. We all knew how sick she was, simply by the worried look on Dad's face. After gathering the family around the supper table, all my Dad could do was cry, instead of eat. His concern and patience left no question in our minds, that this was a father who cared very deeply about each and every child that he had been given to bring up to be responsible and caring adults.

We lived by the words, "It's for your own good." This was always his final "edict" to anything that we had to have permission for, which was just about everything. It was on this simple theory that we obeyed him. I am sure that it took some time and many years of growing up to accept this as his way of showing love for us. But there was something in his way of telling us, even then, that we knew this to be true.

As I stand by his bed, I think of all the weeks and months of Dad's final years that have been spent in hospitals. I look at the machinery and I.V. bottles that are attached to his worn-out body and realize that I can't begin to count the operations, blood transfusions, and other medical procedures that he had to endure. He had accepted the pain and suffering with more grace than any of his kids did for him. Visits to this hospital and many others, have become a way of life, for the whole family. Dad was always glad to see us and was quick to inquire about one of the grandchildren, or a sick acquaintance that he might have been concerned about. This was Dad's way. His way of showing that he would be concerned with his family, as long as he could be with us.

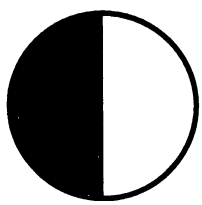
Within minutes of our conversation, Dad passed away. I will always remember our conversation, but I will remember even more his life of dedication and love that he gave to his family. His life spoke volumes. Volumes of love that were there for all of us to see every day, anytime that one of us needed confirmation and assurance, that he truly did love us.

Elaine Koop submitted this article as a guest article.

The Antithesis

by Tom Bergman

Here is a diagram of the antithesis. What is the antithesis? It means that for each child of God, the Word of God supplies a rule of life that separates the Christian from the ungodly. Each

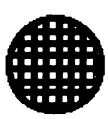


Christian is called to live this life of antithesis, life of distinction. Everything that you say must identify you as belonging to Christ, not the devil and his hosts. Everything you do should reflect your place in the light, rather than in the darkness.

What you wear, *how* you wear it, who you hang out with, where you go with them, which school

you attend, how you act at school, what you tell your parents, *how* you say it to them, who you date, why you date them, and what you do on your dates. All this should distinguish you as clearly inside the clean, white half of the antithesis. It is a distinction for which God deserves our praise. By our morning and evening prayers, the Lord sustains our efforts to walk *antithetically* by His grace. Let me ask you, Did you ever hear your preacher say, "Faith and doctrine go hand in hand?" Of course, it is the antithesis that lays out that beautiful harmony of faith and doctrine in your own personal walk. Consider *your* soul, your life—in terms of black and white.

This is the antithesis from a watered-down Bible (which is no Bible at all). Tucked in between the stark black and white is a soft gray area that cushions the sharp distinction between the two. This is the rule to live by in many churches today. You do not have to be so pious, go to church so often, or avoid foolish entertainments. It is much more simple than that. All you have to do is say that you are a Christian, show up at church a couple times a month, avoid the basest pleasures, and try not to kill anybody. This way, when you go out on dates and to alcohol parties with friends, you find yourself with the luxury of more lee-way. The gray area frees you to do more, to have more fun! With more room to move, life is not so strict. Without those restrictions cramping your life-style, you *certainly may blur that church identity* with the world's. Use the convenient gray area. It has fewer rules from a harsh, strict, and outdated Bible. More rights = more fun.



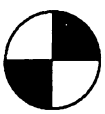
A more realistic depiction of the antithesis would have each portion of white, each church member, surrounded on all sides by darkness. That is really the way it is for each member. Despite friends and fellowship, we all find ourselves assaulted by worldly things left and right. All day, every day. You cannot hide. You cannot find asylum in a church building. You might try! You could pretend to be the helpless calf in the middle of the herd, inside a formidable ring of adult elephants, safe from predators. But, you are not protected like a tiny, innocent calf. Given the spiritual equipment to fight for the kingdom, you are supposed to wage *WAR* with the evil that lies in front, behind, and on both sides. With prayer, grace and strength from God alone, you do this all day long until you are exhausted. In this war, when you as a "white square" interact with those "black squares" around you, "*Do good to those who hate you*" and stay inside the godly half of the antithesis. But, "*reward evil with evil,*" and you have stumbled into the dark side.

To the left, you see a close-up view of the checkered diagram. Zooming in, it becomes a lone white square encompassed by darkness, as if looking at it under a magnifying glass. It is a striking picture! It reminds me of the story told in II Kings 6. Back in the days of Elisha, the king of Syria (Benhadad) went to war against Israel. He approached the nation of Israel with an army of swift and blinding power. But, by the time he invaded, the king of Israel was waiting for him. Enraged by the ambush, Benhadad demanded to know who had leaked military information to the Israelite army. No one had done so. And upon hearing that it was no double-crosser, but a certain prophet Elisha who was warning the King Jehoram, Benhadad sent a dispatch to fetch Elisha. Late at night, this large host of Syrians surrounded the town where Elisha was staying. At break of dawn, Elisha's servant woke up and found himself staring at a Syrian force of horses and chariots. "Alas, my master! How shall we do?" (verse 15) Elisha calmed him down, reminding him of the power of God. Elisha then uttered a prayer, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see." As soon as he said these words, we read that the Lord *did* open the young man's eyes, and behold, "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (verse 17). The lesson? When the pressures of the world overwhelm, pray that you may see the Lord's hand, His merciful guidance—His protecting angels in their chariots of fire.

David wrote many of his psalms in times like that—times when his soul was troubled. However, you probably will not read any of these in a public school. Not Psalm 13. Not Psalm 22 or 42. Nothing... from Genesis to Revelation. Note that the *whole circle* at left is just one big, gray unit. The giant gray area symbolizes the public school system that does not allow the Psalms of David. By law, our public school system will not allow the antithesis—our Christian identity—inside its walls. A man named John Dewey had a lot to do with this. Back in the 1920's, he had public schools emphasize the *process* of learning over the knowledge acquired. Basically this means, it is not *what* the children learn, it is *how* they learn. It is a teaching system resting on student self-expression. And since the Christian faith is prohibited by law

from being that basis... when it comes down to conveying moral education to the children, each student is taught how to choose his own value system. No facts, No principles, No law of God.

Formulate your own opinions. Be yourself! This is the essence of public education: total absence of black and white. The whole business is a pale, cloudy gray that envelops the system like a suffocating smog.



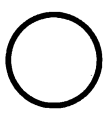
Having our own Christian schools, it may seem relatively easy to avoid this gray area. Terribly expensive maybe, but still possible to avoid blending into the world's identity and schools. But, are there other things we get our grimy hands into that dirty up the clean, black-and-white antithesis? This diagram, divided up into black and white quarters, is a picture of a Secchi disk. A Secchi disk is used on research boats for water testing. When it is tied to a string, the disk is lowered into the water. Someone measures the depth at which the two white quarters are still visible. When the water is crystal clear, the Secchi disk reading can be quite deep (4-5 meters). In spots of muddy water, the reading is very shallow (0.5 - 1 meter).

Try using a Secchi disk on yourself. Fasten a rope to it, and dip it into your life. Drop one right into your day. Send it deep, about 4-5 meters down, and then look at it. Can you still see it? Do the white quarters show up distinctly? Is the antithesis obvious in your life? Or, is there a lot of muddy water that blurs a shallow Christian identity? The antithesis requires each of us to be able to measure a clear, deep recording. Yet still we often tend to wallow in the brownest, murkiest waters.

We might try to ignore it and lie by saying that we are like soft pools of glass, with scarcely a ripple. However, the gospel does not reach those who feel no need for relief. The gospel does not heal the people who refuse to admit having any muddy water in their lives. The comfort of the gospel is for those who *understand* the miserable water conditions and desperately seek help and forgiveness.

No fictional character ever understood this better than Christian, the pilgrim in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. He suffered and suffered under his burden until he was able to drop it at the foot of the cross. Once he did this, he saw the way of obedience before him. It was a straight way, the narrow path. And it was full of traps and snares. No walk-in-the-park, by any means. But, the Lord of the way guided him down that straight, white path. He led him safely down the road, with dangers of darkness on either side which pulled at his clothes, mocked him, deceived him, and even tried to murder him. This is the antithesis we find throughout Bunyan's story. It is a black-and-white portrayal of the antithesis as a pilgrimage on earth. There *is* a valley of the shadow of death in this life. Yet, the Word of God lights our way on the narrow, white path—right through the valley's traps. In the end, it leads Christian to the Celestial City to praise the Lamb of God.

Christian made it safely, but not without trials and troubles. He had his failures—those times when he was disobedient to the Lord of the way. Remember his near-fatal encounter with the giant Despair at Doubting Castle. He spent some time off the pathway, in the antithetical *dark*ness. The way was never obstacle-free for Christian.



Wouldn't it be so much better if it was obstacle-free? That way, Christian could have done a nice, easy trot up to the celestial gates. An obstacle-free pilgrimage would be much easier on us, too. No trials, no tribulation, no persecution. Right before the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, there will be a rapture... (or so goes the heresy of premillenialism). The raptured ones will be with Christ in the air for seven years, before coming to reign with Him in the old Jerusalem for 1000 years. This way, believers get to miss the great tribulation.

Miss the great tribulation? Is this how the Word of God has it? What does this tell you about the premillenial "antithesis"? There is not a single black spot on it. No obstacles, just all white. It sounds silly, but the problem is not that it is too nice, too easy. The real problem is that this is not the Word of God. God reveals to us in His Word that Christ will come at a time of intense persecution for the *church*! The church will not be raptured; we will suffer! This is God's good pleasure in the way of saving His church. The idea of an all-white antithesis is foolish. Some of it is black; some is white.

Live as the Bible teaches us to live. Dwell inside the white goodness of God's favor in obedience to Him. Dwell beneath His caring wing. Despise and fight against the black filthiness of evil in and around you. *That...is...*the antithesis of the Word of God.

Tom Bergman is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. He is studying at Grand Valley State University to be a school teacher.

Antithetical Walk

My neighbor and I set out one day
To travel the road of life.
The path was wide and beautiful—
Sunshine and gladness were rife.

Onward we journeyed, then saw on our path
An old man, tired and ill,
Unable to gather strength to get
To the inn at the crest of the hill.

My neighbor rushed past with never a glance;
But I knew what my Saviour would say—
"As thou hast done it to the least,"
Yea, Lord, I will obey.

Then past the hill, my neighbor paused
In a valley, cool and green.
But ere I approached it, a fork in the road
Led me to a different scene.

A signpost had shown that the path labeled "Pleasure"
Led to the valley so fair.
And the pathway to heaven was rock-strewn and hard,
But my Lord was awaiting me there.

So mile after mile the bright way he chose,
And his pathway was pleasing to see;
While mine was beset with trials and cares—
Yet through all, God was strengthening me.

And then as I watched, his path was a slide;
Down he plunged—Satan's pathway so dire—
He could see where the road led, and fain would he stop—
But its end was unquenchable fire!

My road still was hard—but I viewed through the clouds
An unspeakably beautiful sight:
The reward of the righteous—the gift of God's grace—
The land where the Lamb is the Light.

Thelma Westra

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

. . . LET IT SHINE!

by Connie Meyer

Who Is Wise?

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

Tim tried to steer his sled to the left and then to the right, but finally he slid completely out of control. Snow and ice bit into his face as his ride abruptly ended in a bush at the bottom of the hill. Wiping the snow and a few branches off himself, Tim stood up and inspected his sled. Sure enough, one of the runners was bent. His father had told him to stay on the right side of the hill, but the left side looked so much steeper—and more fun.

Tim supposed the sled could be fixed, but by the time he would get back to the hill again, it would be too dark to sled. With a sigh he picked up the sled and marched home, determined to conquer that side of the hill tomorrow.

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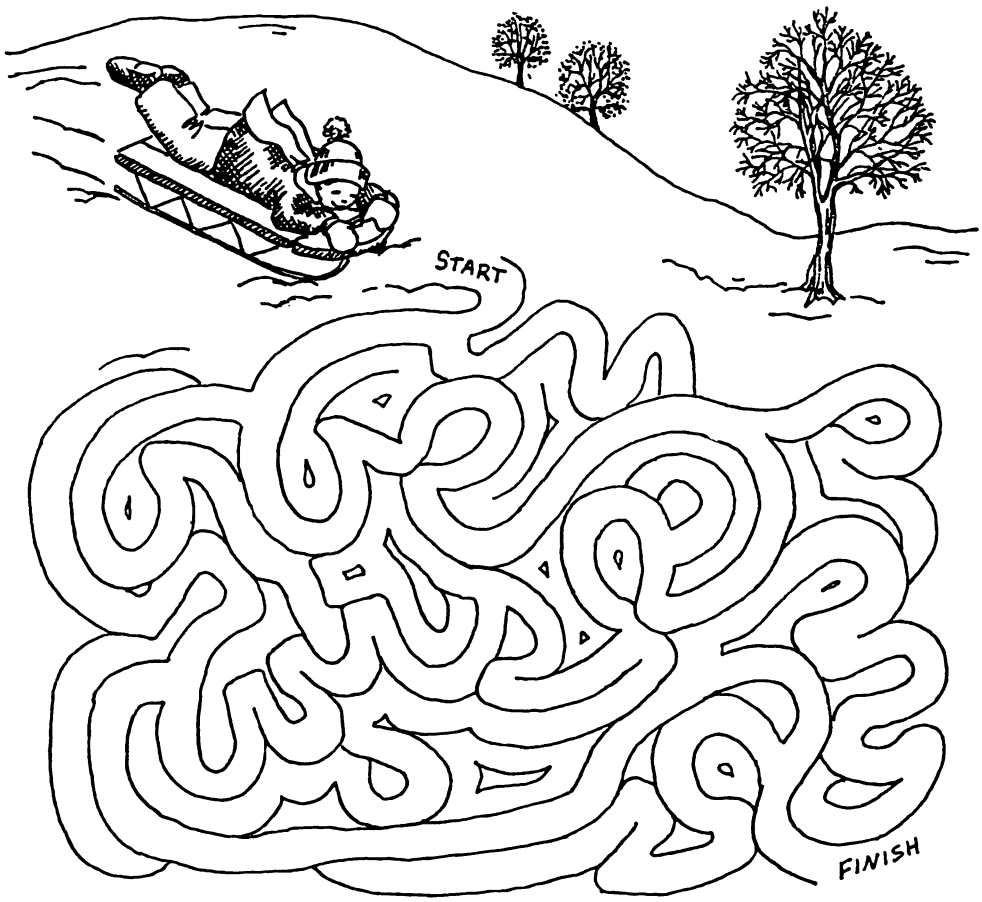
From the top of the hill Tom stood holding his sled, surveying the scene in front of him. It was a beautiful winter landscape with snow-clad trees and bushes to his right, and a perfect sled run to his left. His father had told him to stay on the left side of the hill, and though it was sometimes fun to make a new path, the well-traveled slope looked like it would give a good ride. Tom looked to the right once more, appreciating the view that his Creator had made, and with that he turned to the left, set his sled down, and hopped on. What a ride!

Tom slid down the hill time after time, until he was finally too tired to have even one more ride. Slowly he walked home. Not only was he tired, but he was content too, savoring the time he had enjoyed on this winter day.



Connie Meyer is the mother of 5 children and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

Young People

Plan now to attend the

1995 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention

hosted by Grandville Protestant Reformed Church,

August 7-11 at Hope College.

Speeches will be given by

Rev. Terpstra, Rev. Mahtani, and Mr. Cal Kalsbeek.

Look for more details in following issues!