BEACON LIGHTS

And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

Ezekiel 43:2

JUNE/1995
Volume LIV
Number 6

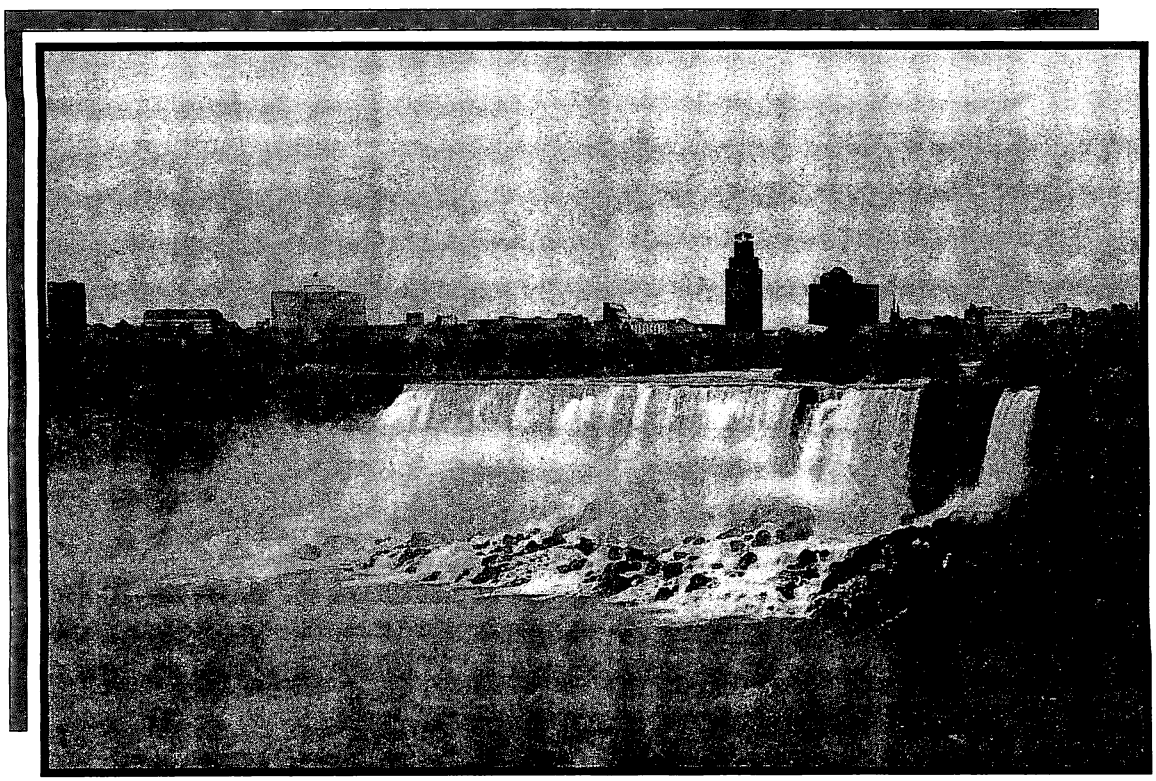


Table of Contents

EDITORIAL
3 **Music and Worship**

WINDS OF DOCTRINE
5 **Dr. Ralph Janssen**

GUEST ARTICLE
6 **Defending and Preserving our Creeds**

GUEST ARTICLE
8 **A Message for Our Covenant Youths**

GEM OF THE MONTH
10 **My Father**

DEVOTIONAL
11 **Watching Daily At My Gates**

GUEST ARTICLE
15 **It Is Borrowed**

FAMILY TIME
17 **The Place of the Mother in the Home**

GUEST ARTICLE
19 **Learning from the Aged**

GUEST ARTICLE
21 **A Christian Perspective on Play and Sports**

PRAYER
22 **Praying in Accordance with God's Will**

KIDS PAGE
23 **Tale of Two Teapots**

BEACON LIGHTS

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF

Editor-in-Chief
Peter D. Faber

Associate Editors
John Huizenga
Daniel Kleyn
Bruce Miedema

Finance Manager
Brian Kuiper

Secretary
Mindy DeMeester

Correspondence Secretary
Sharon Kleyn

Tom Bergman
Nathan Brummel
Steve Faber
Mike Feenstra
Jack Huizinga
Melissa Huizinga
Jeff Kalsbeek

EXECUTIVE FEDERATION BOARD

President
Matt Van Overloop

Vice-President
Brian Vander Kolk

Secretary
Leesa Yonker

Treasurer
Marc Kuiper

Librarian
Alison Huisken

Vice-Secretary
Kirsten DeVries

Vice-Treasurer
Scott Koole

Youth Coordinator
Brad Dykstra

Spiritual Advisors
Rev. R. Cammenga
Rev. A. Spriensma

All information and letters pertaining to the contents of the *Beacon Lights* mail to:

EDITORIAL OFFICE
Peter D. Faber
1730 Mont-Rue
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Subscription Price: $10.00
For a subscription or an address change, please write:
Beacon Lights
P.O. Box 375
Jenison, MI 49428

EDITORIAL POLICY

The articles of *Beacon Lights* do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

The *Beacon Lights* encourages its readers to contact the editorial office with any questions or comments. Letters may be edited for printing. We will not publish anonymous letters, but will withhold names upon equest.

If any material of *Beacon Lights* is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source and forwarding the printed periodical to the Editorial Office.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES

Music and Worship

by Bruce W. Miedema

Today, as in any age, various styles of music abound. It can rightly be said that more styles exist today than ever before simply because music doesn't necessarily die, it just gets older. It is understandable that most of the earliest forms of music are not available to us today; however, since the invention of preservation techniques and mass production and reproduction many forms of music are with us and can be used and performed indefinitely.

In the popular secular venue, music styles change frequently. And today, in the religious venue, music styles change nearly as quickly. Some claim this to be the result of influence exerted by "contemporary Christian music." This style of music follows the general fads which are popular in secular music. One such example of this is a now already "old" song called, "Like a Bridge Over Troubled Waters." This song, in its entirety, has been adopted from the secular scene into the contemporary Christian scene.

Influenced by rock-n-roll, as well as by charismatic TV preachers, today's religious music and church music is little more than something nice to listen to. Religious music is losing its meaning and church music is becoming too popularized. In many churches Psalms and Hymns and Gospel Songs are being replaced by "Scripture choruses." These choruses, normally accompanied by catchy music, are basically a few phrases, such as "Let's Just Praise the Lord," repeated over and over again.

Corporate (church) worship and smaller group settings are caving in to a peer pressure which over stimulates the emotions. The result is a clouding of the proper balance between the emotions and the intellect. Therefore, the way in which Scripture choruses are commonly used is exploiting the emotions of those who participate in worship.

Worship of the God who has become one's Savior and Lord does require his/her emotional involvement and preparation. The use of choruses prior to church, family, or personal worship can be an effective way to prepare one's self. In the same way these choruses are useful in bringing one down from the demanding heart of worship at its conclusion. Therefore, with a clear understanding of the proper use of Scripture choruses the Christian can make effective use of them in his/her worship.

In the past hymns were written to express and teach doctrine and their use along with psalms in churches was based on a "Word-centered" form of worship rather than "feeling

or emotions-centered" form of worship. At heart then, this whole concept of worship is being lost.

Fewer and fewer people want to work when they worship. More and more people are becoming engaged in observation rather than participation. Many don't seem willing to think about or grapple for their faith.

When Christians stood to sing such hymns as "How Great Thou Art" and "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," they stood along with thousands of believers who have gone before. These larger hymns call one to adoration and they recall the magnificence of God.

In our less literate age, because there is minimal desire to think deeply, meaningful and profound liturgical statements are being reduced to words that everyone will read and understand immediately. I suggest that this should be a profound concern to all of us. Parents, church leaders, and teachers must be called upon to lead the people and children to the Word and to a deeper understanding of their faith through study and reflection.

Bible-based words and poetry can reach people at the deepest levels of their being. If Reformed people cannot comprehend this in the music that we sing and if there is no desire to comprehend this then the Reformed faith as we know it is in jeopardy of bankruptcy.

I plead with you to read the poetry of the Psalmist, David and of the great hymn writers. Good song books are compact handbooks of theology in poetry form. Therein are contained noble forms of prayer, adoration, thanksgiving and dedication.

For a subscription to
the Beacon Lights,
mail a check for $10.00 to:

Beacon Lights
P.O. Box 375
Jenison, MI 49438

Dr. Ralph Janssen

by Phil Van Baren

In the era preceding World War I, there was a spirit of change. New ideas were springing up in science, culture, medicine and ideals. Liberal thought and morals had gained prominence over the more conservative thought of the last century. Unfortunately, the church was also affected by this spirit of change. The catalyst for the upheaval in the Christian Reformed Church was the views of Dr. Ralph Janssen and his defense of common grace.

Ralph Janssen was born and raised in the Zeeland and Holland area. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1898, and a Ph.D. in 1902. After serving for several years in the Calvin Seminary as Professor of Old and New Testament, he went back to school and earned a Th.D. in 1908. Then in the year 1914, he was again appointed as Calvin Seminary's Professor of Old Testament. At first the students and faculty liked him because of his dynamic style and new perspective on Scripture. But soon, they started to notice serious discrepancies between Janssen's views and the truth of Scripture.

What were these views? Put simply, Dr. Ralph Janssen believed in "higher criticism" and an incorrect view of the inspiration of the Scriptures. "Higher criticism" is the idea that since God used men to write the Scriptures, there may be the possibility of error. They refer to this as the "human element." They contend that we must be critical of the Scriptures and discern which part of Scripture is God's Word and which part is man's speculation and opinion.

How could Dr. Ralph Janssen hold to these views, and still claim that the Bible was the infallible Word of God? Dr. Janssen time and time again heralded his belief that the Scriptures were the infallible Word of God. But Dr. Janssen contended that we would be denying the sovereignty of God if we said that God could and did not use "folk lore" in the Scriptures. He looked at the Scriptures from a scientific viewpoint. He contended that the historical information that influenced the origin of the Scriptures should be studied. Therefore, the law that is set forth in Deuteronomy was taken from Hammarabi's Code; the historical facts of the life of Samson are not verifiably true; and that Israel borrowed much of its culture, laws, and traditions from the surrounding countries of Egypt, Babylon, and other pagan nations. Janssen believed in what is called "organic inspiration." This is the belief that you can hold to the infallibility of the Scriptures, but still admit that the *whole* of Scripture may not be infallible.

How could Dr. Janssen prove these beliefs? He defended his beliefs using the doctrine of common grace. It should be noted that common grace was not a new idea. It was an under current in the churches for quite some time. But it was ignored, up until this time. There are some people that say that Dr. Janssen used the issue of common grace as a "red herring" to move the spotlight *away from* his ideas. This may be true, but it can not be denied that throughout the controversy, Dr. Janssen claimed that common grace was the true Reformed tradition, and therefore the proof for his views.

Clearly, Janssen's beliefs were heresy. II Peter 1:21, "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 Timothy 3:16, 17, "*All* (emphasis-PVB) scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Throughout the whole of Scripture, this truth is expressed. Once one starts to pick apart the Word of God, and decide for himself what is truth and what is not, the church is open to all sorts of heresy and false doctrine. On this premise, evolution can take the place

of creation; homosexual behavior can be deemed permissible in the church; women can take office of elder, deacon, and minister. God's Word is a unit, every part complementing every other part. But once one part is severed, it losses its strength. "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophesy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:19).

Even though Dr. Janssen was deposed from his position on the Seminary staff by the Synod in 1922, the chain reaction had begun. The common grace issue had been voiced, and it had to be dealt with.

We as young people and adults should defend the unity and infallibility of God's Word with every fiber of our being. It is a sacred Word. It is a complete Word. It is an infallible Word.

Sources:

Herman Hanko, *A Study of the Relation Between the Views of Prof. R. Janssen and Common Grace* (unpublished dissertation, 1988).

Gertrude Hoeksema, *A Watered Garden*, RFPA 1992

Phil is a member of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois.

Guest Article

Defending and Preserving Our Creeds

By Rev. Thomas Miersma

There are certain errors in the Christian community and repeatedly they confront the Reformed believer. One of these is the challenge to the very existence and use of our creeds and confessions. This is sometimes expressed as the slogan "No Creed but Christ." This expression is not new, but has been used since about the middle of the last century. Its implication of course is that the speaker believes only in Christ, while those who have creeds believe something else. "We just believe the Bible," is another of these slogans, which of course suggests that those who hold creeds and confessions believe something other than the Bible.

Assuming the speaker is sincere, such a pronouncement reveals a profound ignorance of the spiritual reality of the church in the world. Such statements are not pious, though they may be piously intended. Every church, sect and cult, from the church of Rome to the Mormons, claims to believe in Christ in some sense, as their creed. Every sect from the Jehovah's Witnesses to snake-handling Pentecostal sects in the Appalachian Mountains claim to believe the Bible.

The fact is, that as soon as one begins to answer the question, "Who is Christ?", one forms a creed. The Apostle Peter's statement of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," in Matthew 16:16 involves a doctrinal confession. Creeds and confessions are simply the corporate expression of our faith in Christ, in obedience to the calling to confess our faith before men (Matthew 10:32).

This is not only our calling personally but also as the church of Christ (Jude 3). Likewise our approach to the Bible is founded on the fact that as the Word of God it is to be believed, preached and taught according to the command of Christ to preach and teach the gospel (Matthew 28:19). Now as soon as one opens the Scriptures to preach or teach, he is explaining the doctrine contained in Scripture in the words of men. He is, in fact, setting forth a creed or confession. If it is improper to set that teaching down in writing in creeds and confessions, then it is also improper to preach the gospel. We should just read the Bible. Certainly creeds and confessions are the writings of men. They are not infallible. Nor do they stand above the Word of God. Nor does any writing, preaching or teaching of men. The very fact that the Word must be preached and taught however, testifies that the Scriptures themselves are not a ready-made handbook of doctrine.

What this means for us is important. The man who says, "I just believe the Bible," must be required to prove it. The man who says, "I have no creed but Christ," must answer this question: "Which Christ? The true Christ of the Scriptures or a false Christ of your own imagination?" The Reformed believer in fact makes both these statements: "I believe in Christ alone as my only comfort in life and death" (Lord's Day I, Heidelberg Catechism) and "I believe just what the Bible teaches," and he can add, "And here is the proof, our *Three Forms of Unity*. This is a clear statement of what the Bible in fact teaches us to believe and in it is contained a full statement of Who Christ is, what He has done, and how we are saved by Him."

Slogans like "No Creed but Christ," and "I just believe the Bible," are just that—slogans, but with no substance. They have always been a smoke screen for a whole system of doctrine which those who hold to these slogans hesitate clearly and plainly to state, lest it be exposed for what it is, a corruption of the truth. Similarly, the accusation which often accompanies these arguments, that creeds and confessions separate the church of Christ or are the cause of divisions in His body, is false. It is not the presence of creeds, but of false doctrine, which divides the body of Christ. Creeds exist to preserve and teach the truth, to confess and defend it over against the lie, to expose error (I Timothy 1:3; 4:6; Titus 1:9; 2:1). They form the basis of a genuine unity of the church, a unity founded upon the truth of God's Word, not upon the artificial mergers of men.

All of this underscores the need for us to know our confessions and their contents. They are a statement of our faith, hope and confidence in Christ over against serious errors that would take from us the gospel. They are the fruit of the work of the Spirit of truth in the life of God's believing people who have fought the battle of faith before us in the world (John 16:13). They are not Scripture, but set before us in summary what we believe is the unity of the truth of God's Word. They do so clearly and precisely, with careful wording, that by them we might give a faithful confession to the whole counsel of God. We live in an age of ignorance, ignorance of God, of Christ, and of the wonder of His grace. It is not less precision, a vaguer understanding of the truth, a simplistic conception of God's Word and works, but a thorough grasp of the truth in all its aspects which is needed by us today.

Why then do young people need to know the creeds of the church, to know them well and with increasing understanding? The reasons are many. Here are but a few:

1. They are the confession of *our* faith, not just mine or your parents' but *yours*.
2. They set forth the whole counsel of God in Jesus Christ, Whom to know is eternal life.
3. They are a summary of the central teachings of the Scriptures, the *unity* of the truth found in the Bible, the fruit of the church's study of the Word of God in the past upon which we build, and the antidote to doctrinal ignorance.
4. They protect us from falling into the errors of the past, that we might continue in the heritage or inheritance of the doctrine of God's covenant which we have received and communicate it to our children, also yours to come.
5. They point to answers in the Word of God for the reason for the hope within us, our faith and practice.
6. They address the spiritual problems with which God's children have always struggled and point us to the answers for them in God's Word. Our problems are not unique.
7. They expound the basis of the reality of sin, grace and gratitude in the Christian life, direct us to the principles of God's law, the way of godliness and the limits of Christian freedom, and to the way of prayer as the chief part of gratitude.

It is in this way that our creeds will be preserved, not as dead documents, but as the living confession of God's people.

Rev. Miersma is home missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches. He is presently laboring in the San Luis Valley in Colorado.

A Message for Our Covenant Youths

by Rev. John A. Heys

From a physical point of view, Young People, we divide the human race into different kinds of people. What are born are called baby boys or baby girls. They grow up to become, and be called, young men or young women. Then, later on, they are called adult men or adult women. What is more, all men or women are divided into different races, and their skin is white, yellow, red or black.

However, from a spiritual point of view, the human race is divided into only two kinds of people. They are believers, or they are unbelievers. They are called born again children of God, or children of Satan who are born spiritually dead. They are called elect or reprobate, and that they are called reprobate means that they are loathed, despised, unbelieving people, who are on the way to everlasting punishment in hell. Just look up what we find written in II Corinthians 13:5. There we read: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves . . . how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

What is more, in Ecclesiastes 11:9 we read: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

You Young People, and all of us, who were born again as children of God, have a calling to rejoice in spiritual matters. By the way, the words "O young man" refer to young women as well as to young men. The Hebrew word that Solomon uses here in this verse, does at times in Scripture refer to young women as well as to young men.

Take note, therefore, of the fact that our God, through Solomon, commands all of us to be concerned with, and sincerely to consider, that our God, through Solomon, presents a command in this verse that refers to all the elect, the young women as well as young men.

First of all, we do well to take note of the fact that you are called to let your hearts cheer you spiritually. What Satan has in mind, and tries to prevent you from doing, is rejoicing in holy, spiritual matters. In a sense, what Solomon here calls you to do is also presented to us in Psalter Number 261:1 and is based on Psalm 98. We are in this Psalter Number called to "Sing a new song to Jehovah; for the wonders He has wrought." That is what Solomon does here call you young people to do; but also for all of us comes that calling. We live in the world of sin, and have the pleasure that the old man of sin wants and seeks. Satan does all in his power to get us to walk in sin; and he does have clever ways of striving to get all of us to do that. And we do have that calling of God that is presented in Psalter Number 383:1, and is based on Psalm 139:14. We do sing, as based on that Psalm: "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."

In these Psalter Numbers, and in Scripture, upon which they are based, we have our calling presented by wise King Solomon, as he is used by our Covenant God. You Young People must not only receive this command to rejoice in holy, spiritual matters, and in the calling to thank God for salvation, and to praise His Name in joyful appreciation of His gift of salvation. You must live that way every day, and every hour, from the moment you wake up in the morning until, after you have also thanked God for His gift of salvation, you fall asleep. The Almighty, everywhere present God, presents this

calling through Solomon. It is not simply Solomon's wisdom that tells you to do this. It is God Who commands you through him.

What is more, we may not deny God in His work of salvation. He is going to reveal to every elect child of God how rich salvation is. What is sometimes questioned, but is taught elsewhere in Scripture, is the truth that God is going to have all His elect appear before Him, in a way that will make every one of His elect appreciate fully the salvation which is given him. Our God does that in order to fill our hearts with thankfulness for the salvation which He realizes through His Son.

We find that literally in II Corinthians 5:10 where we read: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Note then that when Paul wrote this, he included himself, using the pronoun "we." The reason why God will have us appear before His judgment seat is to cause us to be thankful for our salvation, and to see from what God saved us, and how much punishment we really in ourselves deserve. Likewise, that we see how He caused us to do good works, He will cause us to be thankful, and appreciative of what He enabled us to do.

By all means, Young People, you must find, in the days of your youth, those works of love which God enabled you to perform. For in the days of your youth it will come much harder for you to walk in love toward God. Satan is then trying much more than in your childhood to stop your walk in love toward God. The temptations are more and more tempting. And in the days of our youth we do not fully understand our sins; and we often consider them to be good acts. There are so many temptations today that were not there in ages gone by. By means of what was invented, and man is able to do, there are, for example, so many things we are tempted to do on Sunday; things that set it aside from the day in which we are called to worship and serve God. With automobiles, radio and television we are tempted to commit sins that our grandparents never were tempted to do.

A truth for you to consider, and a call which you Young People must maintain is that God, through His grace, kept on maintaining what today is truly maintained as Reformed. We were cast out by a group of churches that insist on that error called "Common Grace." That false doctrine teaches what Scripture clearly condemns. The Almighty God, Whose name is Jehovah, which means I AM, does not temporarily in this life deal graciously with those that He is going to cast into hell, when they die.

That doctrine of "Common Grace" presents God as One Who changes His attitude against those whom He did not eternally choose in Christ. He sends the reprobate into hell, when they die. But He does not in this life deal graciously with them.

Grace is an aspect of God's love. In Genesis 6:8 we read that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." But at that time God showed His hatred, rather than His grace, upon the hundreds of wicked who hated Him. Them He destroyed by that flood. Jehovah, the I AM, did not change His mind or attitude against those that hated Him. Just look up Genesis 6:8 once again. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord; but His grace did not come down and deal with those whom He killed by the flood. God hated those sinners whom He destroyed by the flood. Nothing had come upon them in His grace. His grace is never common, but very, very particular, being only upon all those chosen in Christ, and redeemed by His cross.

In Psalm 146:20 we read: "The Lord preserveth all them that love Him: but all the wicked will He destroy." And by God's grace we love God because He loves us. The world, and every reprobate in that world, hates God, and is hated by God. As we read in Romans 9:13: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Where is there any "Common Grace" then that was falling upon Esau? How could Jehovah, the I AM, be gracious to some people in their earthly lives, and stop it when they died? Why did He let them die?

Take hold, Young People, of the truth that Jehovah, the I AM, loves those whom He eternally loved; and for whom He sent Christ to die and earn their salvation.

In no way, and not for one minute, does God deal in His grace upon those not chosen in Christ. As Jehovah, the I AM, He never becomes the I Was, or the I Will Be. He deals in His grace only upon those whom He eternally chose in Christ.

We are Protestant Reformed Churches, because in God's grace we, for more than 70 years, have maintained that God is gracious only to those whom He eternally chose in Christ. There is NO "common grace" that falls on those not chosen in Christ. God does not for one split second deal graciously with those not chosen eternally in Christ. And Christ did not die for any but those eternally chosen as the members of His body. That "common grace" maintains that there is a grace of God upon the world of unbelievers, who were not eternally cho-

sen by God to be saved, and never want the true salvation, which Christ earned only for the elect.

But the awesome truth is that God's Name is Jehovah, which means I AM. Hold on tightly then, to the truth which God maintains in our Protestant Reformed Churches. God Himself gives us in Psalm 7:11 this truth: "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." Get that! He is angry *every day* with the wicked, that is, those whom He did not choose in Christ to be made righteous.

Do not deny God's name Jehovah. As the I AM He is graciously unchangeable, only to those eternally chosen in Christ. Those not chosen in Christ will never receive that smallest part of God's grace, which comes only upon those whom God chose eternally in Christ. Those not chosen in Christ will never, for a split second, receive the smallest par of God's grace.

Be thankful, Young People, that although the Christian Reformed Churches cast us out, because we denied "common grace," God in His grace enables us tightly and graciously to hold on to the truth that God's grace falls only upon those He eternally chose in Christ; and that they believe in God; and love Him, because of what He did in them and for them in His unchangeable grace.

Rev. Heys is a retired minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches. He is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

Gem of the Month

MY FATHER

My father would lift me and hold me up high
To show me a scene or a parade passing by.

My father would lift me and hug me so tight
When I'd scrape up my knees or I'd just had a fright.

My father would lift me; I'd sit on his knee
And hear of his childhood, when he was like me.

My father would lift me – instructing my mind
In the fear of the Lord and the love of mankind.

My father would lift me from gloomy despair,
When things seemed all wrong – he always was there.

My father still lifts me – he lifts me in prayer
Commending my ways to our dear FATHER'S care.

I'm thankful to God that He gave unto me
A father whose likeness to Jesus I see.

Thelma Westra

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Cornelius Jonker

June 1

Read Psalm 103:1-5

This Psalm begins with an exhortation for us to bless the Lord. To bless God means something quite different from God blessing us, for God is no creature, and to bless means basically to call well or good. We cannot add anything to God, but we can say that He is good and we must say it with our inmost being. Do not forget all His benefits, especially the forgiveness of our sins for in this our salvation is begun. Sing or read Psalter 277, verses 1-3.

June 2

Read Psalm 103:6-12

What comfort and assurance we have by knowing that our God executes righteousness and judgment for all the oppressed. Sometimes we are oppressed too. Not to the extent the Israelites were oppressed in Egypt under the heavy hand of their taskmasters. But if we stand up for the truth today, the world and even the so-called church will often mock and ridicule us. But as God made His ways known to Moses and His acts to the children of Israel, we can be assured that He is merciful and gracious to us and will execute His righteous judgments on all the evildoers. Sing or read Psalter 13, verses 1, 5 and 7.

June 3

Read Psalm 103:13-18

If you are parents, and your children experience some great sorrow in their lives, aren't you overwhelmed with pity and can't wait to take them in your arms, comfort them, and wipe away their tears? Or if you are a child, or remember when you were, and some great hurt or grief happened to you—where did you turn for comfort? To your father or mother, didn't you? This is a picture of how our Heavenly Father takes us up in His spiritual arms, pities us and comforts us with His love and mercy as we turn to Him in faith. Sing or read Psalter 278.

June 4

Read Psalm 103:19-22

Today is the Lord's Day. We are exhorted to rejoice and be glad in it. We worship a great God. He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. This portion of the Psalm tells us that God has prepared His throne in the heavens and His kingdom rules over all. All creatures in heaven and on earth are commanded to bless the Lord. Even as the angels in heaven hearken unto the voice of His Word, we also have the blessed privilege in this day to gather in church and hear God's Word. Are you prepared to hear what God will say to you? Pray that the Word may speak peace to your own heart. Thank God for the gift of salvation based on Christ's perfect work of redemption. Sing or read Psalter 40, verses 2, 3 and 6.

June 5

Read Ephesians 6:1-9

Today is the beginning of another week of work activity for most people. What is your attitude on a Monday morning? Are you grumpy and displeased with your lot in life? Perhaps your job seems unpleasant or your boss is not always fair. Yet it really is a privilege to work if we do so with the right attitude. We are told to be obedient to our masters as unto Christ. Don't labor just to please men, but in singleness of heart doing the will of God. Employers are also exhorted to do good to their servants or employees since they also have a Master in heaven Who is no respecter of persons. Thank God that whether we are a busy mother in the home, or labor daily at our place of employment, we have the privilege to exercise our calling as faithful stewards of God. Sing or read Psalter 250, verses 1, 2 and 5.

June 6

Read Ephesians 6:10-17

It is so easy to become spiritually complacent in our daily lives, isn't it? We are tempted to emulate the world, imbibe what society offers on television, become engrossed in books that cater to our carnal desires, and slack off on our personal devotions. The devil knows how weak we are by nature, and is always ready to make war against us. That's why we are told by our Commander Who is God, to put on the whole armor of God. Our defense equipment is a girdle, or belt of truth, a breastplate of righteousness, heavy shoes and guards for our feet and legs which is the preparation of the gospel of peace, a helmet of salvation for our head, and a shield of faith. Our weapon of offense is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Diligent use of this armor will make us stand firm in our daily spiritual battles. Read or sing Psalter 71, verses 1, 2 and 5.

June 7

Read Ephesians 6:18-24

How did you begin your day today? There's an old hymn that starts with these words: "Ere you left your room this morning, did you think to pray?" That's really the way to get out of bed "on the right foot." Stop for a moment to thank God for another sunrise and ask Him for wisdom and guidance. The Word of God in this passage tells us to persevere in prayer and make supplication for all saints. Are your prayers narrow in scope or do you pray for all God's people? Remember too, to pray for your pastor and the officebearers in your church who watch for your souls as they that must give account. Read or sing Psalter 92, verses 1 and 8.

June 8

Read John 6:1-14

This passage describes the miracle of Jesus' feeding the five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish. Did you know that the word "bread" appears over 360 times in the Bible? It was a universal food in Jesus' day, and it is a universal food today. But the Bible also uses the word bread in a wider aspect. We are taught to pray in the Lord's prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread." That can mean food of course, but it teaches us to rely on our Heavenly Father for our bodily needs for each day. He may even be pleased to withhold from us something that we may deem necessary today. But He Who numbers the hairs on our heads and will not let a lowly sparrow fall without His permission, will surely care for us, His children. May our prayer be: "Lord, give us today whatever Thou knowest is best for us to have." In this way of committing our needs to our all-wise Heavenly Father, we have peace. Read or sing Psalter 87, verses 2 and 3.

June 9

Read John 6:15-21

Jesus had just performed the great miracle of feeding the five thousand. When He saw that these people were determined to make Him their king, He disappeared from their midst and sought refuge on a mountain alone. His disciples meanwhile embarked on a ship on the Sea of Galilee to go to Capernaum. They soon encountered a great storm which threatened their very lives. But Jesus appeared, walking on the water, and said: "It is I, be not afraid." What a comfort for us too, that when we have storms of doubt and fear, we turn to our Heavenly Father and cast all our cares upon Him. My wife and I often sing this chorus of one of our favorite duets: "The billows of sea or of sorrow, sweetly obey His will. And stormy seas of trial, List to His peace, be still." Read or sing Psalter 152, verses 1-3.

June 10

Read John 6:22-32

The multitude was determined to take Jesus and make Him their king. This kind of king they wanted—one who had supernatural powers, one who was capable of fulfilling their earthly needs. They found Jesus on the other side of the sea and asked Him how He came there. Jesus did not satisfy their curiosity, but rebuked them and exposed their carnality. He tells them not to labor for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endureth to eternal life. They were offended when Jesus said in answer to their next question that if they wanted to truly work the works of God, they should believe on Him Whom God sent. How must you and I labor today? Do we set our affections on the things below and pursue them to the exclusion of everything else? I dare say, of course not! But it is so easy to get caught up in the pursuit of riches, so easy to make ourselves so busy, that we neglect our real calling in life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." Read or sing Psalter 246, verses 2 and 3.

June 11

Read John 6:33-44

Jesus begins His discourse on the bread of life. The people respond: "Lord evermore give us this bread." When Jesus states that He is the bread of life, they murmur and show their unbelief. Jesus tells them the underlying reason—all that the "Father giveth me shall come to me," and that no man can come to me except the father which hath sent me draw him. As you worship today, you will by God's grace eat of this bread. It is a spiritual act, but it is no less real on account of this. Eating His flesh is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is the action of one who knows he is guilty before God and therefore reaches out to Christ as his redemption. May the living Word work that faith in us today and always. Sing or read Psalter 203, verses 1, 4 and 5.

June 12

Read John 6:60-71

The true gospel was no more popular in Jesus' days than it is in ours. A huge crowd had witnessed the amazing miracle or the loaves and fishes. They were so enthusiastic, they wanted Jesus as their king. But when He preached the gospel to them, His disciples "went back and walked no more with him." Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples then, and said to them: "Will ye also go away?" We then hear those beautiful words of Peter, "Lord to Whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." God always preserves a remnant. Don't be discouraged if you feel that God's church is small and despise by the world. Remember the words of our Savior, "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Read or sing Psalter 200, verses 1 and 4.

June 13

Read Psalm 89:1-22

As *I* write these words, I look out of my window on a winter scene. As *you* read these words, you look upon a world that is lush and green. Again, as *I* look upon the barren fields, the leafless trees, the leaden skies, I see gloom and the hand of death all around. But I know also, as *you* read these words, that the earth has sprung to life. Winter has given way to Spring, and I am reminded of the faithfulness of our Creator. Out of death comes life, out of the curse comes the promise, out of our spiritual death comes the new life of regeneration. We are new creatures in Christ. Let us then today, and every day "show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Read or sing Psalter 311, verses 1 and 2.

June 14

Read Lamentations 3:22-26

The prophet Jeremiah was overwhelmed with the misery of God's judgment upon Jerusalem and his own calamities. The first nineteen verses of this chapter are graphic pictures of his afflictions. Yet he breaks forth with a beautiful confession of the Lord's mercies. God will not consume us, because He is a Father Who pitieth His children. His compassions cannot fail, and are renewed each morning because of His great faithfulness. And who are the recipients of those wonderful blessings? It is to those that wait for Him, for those who seek him, those who have hope and quietly wait for the salvation of

the Lord. Those whom He has chosen from all eternity in Christ. Let us then seek Him today with all our hearts, praising Him for His abundant mercy and thank Him for His unspeakable gift of salvation. Read or sing Psalter 277, verses 1, 3 and 6.

June 15

Read Lamentations 3:27-36

Who has not experienced grief in their lives? All of us, sooner or later will encounter sorrow. Usually the deepest sorrow we experience is the death of a loved one, whether that one be very close to us as a family member, or a dearly loved friend or fellow saint. It is certainly natural that we grieve and sorrow as these earthly ties are broken. Yet we have the promise that though the Lord causes grief, yet He will have compassion on us according to the multitude of His mercies. When God calls one of His children home, we can smile through our tears, never giving way to despair, and pray for the comfort of the Holy Spirit that we may all look forward to the hope of the final resurrection. Read or sing Psalter 28, verses 1-4.

June 16

Read Matthew 6:1-4

In this passage, Jesus deals with our attitude of heart when we give of our money to relieve the poor and to support the church. He does not say "if ye give," but "when ye give," so it is our duty and privilege to give to God's kingdom. Jesus tells us to search our deepest motive for giving. Is it to be seen of others so that we may expect a pat on the back and be praised for our benevolence and liberality? That's what hypocrites do, and Jesus said that they receive their reward, namely the glory of men. But what does God say about our giving? This is a matter between you and your God, coming from a heart with pure motives. Lest we fall into the error of giving to be seen of men, be so scrupulous to avoid that temptation, that if it were possible, don't let one of your hands know what the other is giving. What a calling we have as faithful stewards! What a privilege to give to the church! What a responsibility is ours to teach this to our children also. Read or sing Psalter 98, verses 1 and 2.

June 17

Read Matthew 6:5-8

In close connection with yesterday's meditation where our Savior instructed us how to give our alms, we are given a similar pattern for our prayers. Many eloquent prayers have been offered I'm sure, since the dawn of time, with choice words, perfect grammar and dramatic inflections of voice. But without a sincere heart, and with a motive only to impress men, these prayers never even penetrate the ceiling of the room where they are uttered. In contrast to this, Jesus tells us to have quiet communion with our Heavenly Father in secret. We don't have to burden Him with endless petitions. He knows our needs, and when with a true heart we pray as Jesus taught us, He will surely grant our request. Read or sing Psalter 9, verses 1 and 2.

June 18

Read Psalm 118:17-24

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Every day we should echo these words, but especially on Sundays when we can gather in the communion of saints, sing praise to God, give our offerings, call upon Him in prayer, and, above all, hear the preaching of the Word. I'm afraid that sometimes we take this great privilege for granted. I'm sure I didn't always appreciate it as I should until I was deprived of it. Because this is the chief means of grace, we are exhorted not to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Come to church, prepare yourself for proper worship, pray for your pastor and officebearers, and ask for a blessing upon yourself and your fellow worshipers to the end that God may be glorified. Read or sing Psalter 349, verses 1-4.

June 19

Read Matthew 6:9-15

In this passage Jesus instructs us in the holy art of prayer. We have been taught earlier in this chapter that prayer must not be an outward show, but must be from the heart. This model prayer is a perfect prayer, certainly not a vain repetition of words, but extremely brief. Yet it is a beautifully complete prayer incorporating in it all things necessary for our soul and body. It also emphasizes that we must take our brethren along with us to the throne of grace. The spirit of forgiveness and love of the brethren must be in our hearts according to verses 14 and 15, for our heavenly Father will not hear our prayer for the forgiveness of sins if we do not forgive men their trespasses. May we constantly ask, as Jesus' disciples did: "Lord teach us to pray." Read or sing Psalter 174, verses 1, 2 and 4.

June 20

Read Matthew 6:16-18

In these verses, we are given instruction by our Lord in the practice of fasting. There are many instances of fasting recorded in Scripture. The Jews fasted often and usually it meant an expression of grief accompanied by the abstinence of food for a certain period. The hypocrites of Jesus' day were condemned because they assumed expressions of unfelt sorrow and made their outward appearance look as if they were the paragons of piety. They wanted men to see how holy they were, but God despises a mere show. Jesus said that when we fast, we do not do so in appearance, but from the heart. We should live a life of fasting, really. We must grieve with holy sorrow for our sins and plead for forgiveness constantly. In this way, the peace of God which passeth all understanding should keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Read or sing Psalter 64, verses 1-3.

June 21

Read Matthew 6:19-23

How timely for our instruction today are the words from our Savior's lips uttered almost two thousand years ago. Don't devote all your time and talents to amass a fortune of earthly goods. Our carnal nature desires more and more of this earth's treasures, and we are inclined to spend an inordinate amount of time and effort to accumulate them. Don't you realize, Jesus says, that where your treasure is, there will your heart be also? This is not to say that the proper acquisition and possession of riches is wrong, but our one goal in life must be to lay up treasures in heaven. We are exhorted to lay hold of eternal life, seek first the kingdom of God, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling, having the assurance that it is God Who works in us and gives us the victory. Read or sing Psalter 97, verses 1 and 2.

June 22

Read Matthew 6:24-30

Have you ever tried to work for two bosses at the same time? Probably not, but try to picture that situation anyway. And then to compound the difficulty, one of your bosses is fair and the other is unfair. You would soon learn how impossible it

would be to serve them both. So it is, says Jesus, when we try to serve both God in heaven and the god of riches on earth. O indeed, we must labor to provide for our family and to support the kingdom of God. But don't set your heart exclusively on the things of this life. If God can care for and feed the birds of the air, He will surely provide for His children who are so much more precious in His eyes. We must live out of the principle of faith and set our affections on the things above. Read or sing Psalter 135, verses 1, 2 and 4.

June 23

Read Matthew 6:31-34

We found the following words written by my mother and placed on her night stand just hours before she died in her sleep: "Children, if you worry, you don't trust; if you trust, you don't worry." This, I believe, is a synopsis of verse 34 where Jesus tells us not to be concerned for tomorrow. Don't increase the cares of *this* day by borrowing trouble respecting the future. Live one day at a time in an attitude of trust. The morrow may have cares and anxieties of its own, but God will also provide for them as they may occur. The world cannot claim this comfort. They try to drown their troubles by drugs, drink, and riotous living. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness." Read or sing Psalter 396, verses 3-6.

June 24

Read Psalm 119:9-16

This passage begins with a question—"How shall a young man cleanse his way?" It is a question that could be addressed to each of us regardless of age. We must all walk in a clean and wholesome manner before God each day. But it speaks specifically to a young man. To him who is in the prime of his life, he who is strong physically, ready to take on almost any challenge. He who is beginning his career in life, he who is looking for a fate. How important this admonition becomes. Many a young person has succumbed to the temptations of the world. To overcome this, he must be firmly grounded in the Word of God and live a godly life. Pray for our young people that they may remain faithful to this holy calling. Read or sing Psalter 322, verses 1-4.

June 25

Read Psalm 119:17-24

As you have the privilege to worship in God's house today, pray that your eyes may be opened to behold wondrous things out of God's law. God's law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. It teaches us that we have a sinful nature and works in us a desire to have our sins forgiven and to strive for the righteousness of Christ. Listen carefully as God's law is read and pray that we may have the grace to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourself. Read or sing Psalter 333, verses 1-4.

June 26

Read Psalm 119:25-32

The sin of lying is no stranger to us. We read about it everyday in the newspapers and find that this sin is no respecter of persons. In our own lives, we encounter it, whether it be in our children or even in us. Ever since Satan, the father of lies told a lie to Eve in the Garden of Eden, causing our first parents to sin, men became liars by nature. The Psalmist recognizes this, and hence the prayer: "Remove from me the way of lying." The remedy is to walk in the way of God's law by His grace. Then according to the new man in our hearts, we choose the way of truth. Pray for grace to walk in the truth, love the truth, and speak the truth. Read or sing Psalter 135, verses 1 and

June 27

Read Psalm 119:33-40

We have all walked on paths whether we are young or old. There are paths in the woods, there are paths next to streams, paths that lead us through valleys and over mountains. These are some of the natural paths. Men also walk each day on other kinds of paths. One is a pathway to destruction and the other to eternal life. The world rushes on this former path, and the way is broad and relatively easy for them. But the Christian prays "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." This path is not the easy way. There are many pitfalls, steep climbs, and rock strewn passages, but with God's commandments as our guide, we will arrive at our heavenly destination, safe and secure. Read or sing Psalter 68, verses 1-4.

June 28

Read Psalm 119:57-64

What kind of company do we keep? Who are some of our best friends? Sometimes we become real friendly with our neighbors or with those we meet in the workplace, even though they do not show themselves to be children of God. Beware lest they become an evil influence to us or to our children. God's Word says negatively "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers." In this passage we are dealing with today, the Psalmist declares positively "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." This is our calling, and in so doing, we can build up each other spiritually. Seek your friends and your children's friends among those who show by word and deed that they love the Lord. Read or sing Psalter 32 verse 4.

June 29

Read Psalm 119:105-112

Have you ever walked down an unfamiliar path at night without a light to guide you? Your feet can stumble so easily on roots or other obstacles in the way causing you to suddenly fall. I recall during the second world war in England, that I had to walk back to my headquarters just one short block away. But it was night and a blackout was imposed because of the bombers of the enemy. It was quite a terrifying experience because I became disoriented and literally had to feel my way. So it is on our walk as pilgrims on this earth. Without God's Word as a lamp to our feet and a light upon our path, we become spiritually lost and wander in the darkness of sin. Read the Word, study the Word, and walk in the light. Read or sing Psalter 334, verses 1 and 4.

June 30

Read Psalm 119:169-179

Have you ever been lost? Most of us have suffered this experience at one time or another. Who hasn't made a wrong turn on a trip simply because they failed to consult a road map or else didn't read it carefully enough? In the last verse of this Psalm, the writer declares that he too has gone astray like a lost sheep. God's people are often compared to sheep, and sheep by their very nature are prone to stray. They are unable to find their way back and if it were not for their shepherd who seeks and finds them, they would die. So it is with us who constantly stray from the paths of righteousness. Pr constantly to the Good Shepherd "I have gone astray like lost sheep: seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." Read or sing Psalter 221, verses 1-3.

It Is Borrowed

by Rev. C. Hanko

"Alas, master! for it was borrowed." II Kings 6:5

The young man was not concerned that the axe head had come off. That could be replaced. Nor was his concern that without an axe he could not work on beams for building the house. He likely could borrow another. But his concern was: The axe he had used was borrowed. It belonged to someone else, and had been entrusted to him.

You know the story. This took place in the days of Elisha, the prophet in Israel. The sons of the prophets needed larger quarters and had suggested to Elisha that they build a larger house near the Jordan River. Elisha had consented to accompany them and the work was in progress. Likely trees had to be cut down and shaped into beams and boards. Then they had to be properly sized for their position in the building. The sons of the prophets were working together on this project. But now one of them had the sad experience that while he was working with his axe the head broke off and fell into the river. And it was borrowed. No wonder he cried out to Elisha, "Alas, Master! for it was borrowed."

Did you consider recently that all that you are and all that you have belongs to the Lord your God? He declares, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." We and all we claim as our own belong to Him.

From Him is our life, our breath, our being. We exist every moment only by His almighty power. He determined the time and place of our birth, our parents and our place in our families. He gives us sleep and rest at night, and awakens us every morning. Scientists say that it is not surprising that we can sleep, but the fact that we wake up is far more marvelous. After all, God wakes us up. He gives us the strength for the day. He directs our path, determines the duties of each day, and provides for all of our needs all the day long. Our cares are His concern. For He cares for us.

Our eyes, our ears, our mouth, our hands, our feet, yes, our whole body belongs to Him. They are borrowed, as it were. Our possessions, whether few or many belong to Him and are entrusted to us for a time. You cannot lay your finger on anything you have and say: "This is mine!" But you must say: "It is borrowed, entrusted to me from the Lord."

We are stewards in God's House. Each of us is given the necessary ability to serve in our particular place and calling. That is how God made you. Each of us is also entrusted with certain talents, either one, or two, or five, to fulfill our calling, to perform the work that is entrusted to each of us in this life. Christ's work is being accomplished here on earth for the gathering of His church and the coming of His kingdom to the glory of God's Name! Christ works through means. It is our calling to serve in our small way toward the coming of God's kingdom.

No, that calling does not wait until we are grown up, are fully matured. Also as teenagers and young people in the church you have that calling. You are to use all that God has entrusted to you as good and faithful stewards before the face of the Lord. You are to do that at home with your parents, brothers and sisters. You are to do that in school, in your studies and with your classmates. You are to do that when you engage in sports and other forms of relaxation. Whatever you do, you are to do it to the glory of God!

The son of the prophets lost his axe head through no fault of his. He was busy working when suddenly that axe head broke off, sailed through the air and landed in the water. The worst of it was that it was borrowed. It had been entrusted to him, and now it was out of reach in the water.

We should be deeply aware that when we sin we sin with the body that belongs to God, that He

gave us, and that He sustains. He gives us all things as means to serve Him. Those very means that God gives us to serve Him we use to sin against Him. That is what makes sin so grievous for a child of God. Paul says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: wherefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Every day we lose precious time, maybe hours. This could be through no fault of ours, but more likely it is our own fault. Every day we fail miserably to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. We do not always love our neighbor as ourselves, and do not show it. Dislikes, jealousies, resentments so readily arise among us.

What miserable stewards we are. Every day we must confess: "Alas, Lord, I wasted Thy time and Thy gifts." In fact, we may well admit that apart from His grace we are not and cannot be good stewards in God's house. We need that grace day by day and moment by moment. Each morning upon awaking we may well pray for strength and faithfulness for the day.

The prophet Elisha threw a stick in the water, and the axe head did swim. It was retrieved and the work could go on. There is forgiveness and mercy, far beyond our comprehension. That, too, is obtained through prayer.

O my soul, bless thou Jehovah.
All within me bless His Name;
Bless Jehovah and forget not
All His mercies to proclaim.

He forgives all thy transgressions,
Heals thy sicknesses and pains;
He redeems thee from destruction,
And His love thy life sustains.

Rev. C. Hanko is a retired minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches. He is a member at Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Engagement Announcements

Bride: Carmen Vanden Burg
Loveland PRC

Parents: Harold & Jeanette Vanden Burg
Doon PRC

Groom: Timothy Griess
Loveland PRC

Parents: Gilbert & Luella Griess
Loveland PRC

Wedding Date:
August 4, 1995
at Loveland PRC

Future Address:
653 W 38 St.
Loveland, CO 80538
(303) 669-7140

Belmont Farm, Homebush Road, Courtenay
R D 1 Christchurch

We are Happy to Announce

The Engagement

of our younger daughter

Lucy
to
Theo

the younger son of Mr. and Mrs. Keith De Klerk
of Ashhurst

Dr. & Mrs. D B Watson

How Excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God!
Psalm 36:7a

The Place of the Mother in the Home

by Judy Meulenberg

Why is it so important for mom to be in the home? I would say the greatest rea son is that children learn from example more than from word. Not always, but usually when a girl gets married and starts a home, she imitates the home she came from. That's why when a young couple starts talking about marriage they should have many discussions about the strengths and weaknesses of each of their homes. In doing this, they can establish godly goals for their own new home.

We are teaching more than we realize in our daily living. We are models of what we want our daughters to be, and of what we want our sons to look for in a wife. We should have reasons for them also, why we are the mothers we are. They should see it is directly related to the Word of God. Do you have the home you want your daughter or son to have, regardless of how rich or poor you are? Remember, too, that God controls our paychecks just as much as He controls the air we breathe, and His trials come in many different forms. How willing are you to trust Him? Are you afraid God might place you below the living standards of your friends, or even make you poor? "Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." (Proverbs 15:16, 17).

Does your daughter see that the love of God and doing His will is of greater value to you than house, fame, fortune, or especially reputation or pride? Are you teaching her that godliness with contentment is great gain?

Home is mom's place to teach her daughter the principles of a happy home, not only by teaching and disciplining with God's Word, but also by a living example. How about it mom? How often does your daughter see you contemplating God's Word? How many times does she see you showing acts of mercy and kindness to people, especially the members of God's church, teaching her that if one member suffers, we all suffer. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Philippians 2:4). How often does your daughter see you happy and fulfilled keeping your house neat and clean for your family? Do you speak of your calling with joy?

Mom, what receives the greatest interest in your life? What do you do with your time? Have you asked God to direct you with regard to the dates on your calendar? Are you doing what you think God would have you do, or are you filling your time and life with little value? Are you seeking to do God's will in this area also? How can you meet a goal if there's no time in which to do it? I think Satan knows that if he can keep us very busy we will not have time for our true calling.

Are you teaching your daughter the hard lesson of submission to the man in her life through your example? I've heard it said that the best thing you can give to your children is to love and respect their father. Are you showing her a "meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:4b). Also, "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

What about prayer? Do you pray for their dad, for each of them, for other members of your denomination, and for the church universal? Do you teach them to cast all their cares upon Him because He cares for them?

Do you compliment and encourage your husband, your children, and others while they struggle along their pilgrim's journey? Be sure that they know they can talk to you about any of their prob-

lems. You may know that you love them, but do they know?

Are you delegating jobs to your children so they know what co-operation, love, and sharing is in a home? Do you try to have a place for everything in your home in order to make things easier for your family? Are you teaching them how to organize especially their own rooms? Do you work hard yourself? Do you make your bed the minute you get up, if it is possible? Do you put a load of wash in the washing machine right away, if it is possible?

Do you kiss and hug your children, read to them and find time for them? Do you sing and memorize Bible verses with them and teach them how these verses help them in their daily life? What about catechism? Do you sneak in their memorization just before they go to bed when you are usually crabby and worn out and they are not at their best? Or, do you try to make catechism a happy, enjoyable, learning time? Can they see you love that Word of God? This takes time, organization, determination, and a very real struggle against our sinful flesh.

Are you teaching your children to deny themselves for the kingdom of God's sake? Are you practicing this self denial in a way that they can see? What about T.V.? What about furnishing your home? What about clothes? What about cars? What about sports? What about the little things you buy? What about eating out? Are you encouraging your children to set a goal for their life on this earth? do they know loving service and good stewardship is your goal? Do you live your goal? "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

This is a big responsibility in the kingdom of God, that we might be seen as those in which the Word of God dwells and lives. It is joy to do God's will and later to hear from our Lord, well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord. Can your children see the joy of your Lord in your life? What kind of attitude does your family see in your life? Attitude is basic to a Christian home. How we know, moms and dads, how a bad mood can change the mood of the entire family and vice versa. The fruit of the Spirit of Jesus Christ should clearly be seen in our attitude. Do your children know how important they are to you? Do you want to be there for them? Does your family know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the reason you smile, try, love, work, play, live and move and have your being?

When God gives us children He places on us a great profession. The world would have us believe that the profession of motherhood is easy; in fact, so easy, that moms can take on the schedule of a man and then in her extra time fit in the needs of her home and children. Who pays the price? The world knows nothing about being a "keeper at home" and a "weaker vessel," but we do through God's Word. We should never be ashamed of that Word. May our prayer be that God give us strong homes with time for Him, His children, and His church. May He help us to nourish our children spiritually and physically in the ways of Christ Jesus their Lord by word and example. May He help us "to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1).

It was good for me to have been asked to write on this subject and to be reminded again of my calling. It was good for me also to see my failing to seek the Lord's forgiveness, and then to strive again to glory and virtue. Don't give up before you start but strive "according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3). "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (II Peter 5:10).

The calling is difficult, the joy is great. "I have no greater joy that to see my children walk in truth" (III John 1:4).

Judy is a mother of 9 and is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

From the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee:

Prospective teachers and ministers seeking scholarship money please call Sarah Ondersma at (616)669-0966 for an application and essay topics. Deadline for applications is June 15.

LEARNING FROM THE AGED

by Shari Faber

The aged. What do you know about them? You know that the extremely aged often live in a nursing home, where they receive care from the staff. You know that they are old, and that they have lost the abilities that they once had. You know that sometimes we pray for the aged. Yet, do you realize much else about them? I would like to tell you more about the elderly, as well as what they have taught me, so that you may be better able to understand the aged as well as apply what I have learned from them to your own life.

I work in a nursing home after school. I enjoy working in the nursing home, and I have talked to various people about my work there. However, from their response I often receive the impression that they do not like nursing homes. I realize that a nursing home may not be a very pleasant place to visit. It may remind the visitor of unpleasant things, such as old age and death. Yet, is this proper thinking for the child of God concerning the aged?

We must try to know and understand the elderly. We must try to understand what they go through. The aged are afflicted. This is true physically. They suffer pain. The elderly may have been diagnosed with a terminal disease which causes them to suffer. Some suffer the effects from a heart attack. Many times, patients are only able to use one side of their body from the effect of a stroke. Many patients are also in wheelchairs. Some patients cannot breathe very well, and as a result, they need an oxygen tank connected to them. Intravenous feeding is also done if they are unable to eat through the mouth. Many of the patients are weak, tired, frail... This makes them unable to take care of themselves.

Seeing all these things in the nursing home forces me to think how weak man really is of himself. It is God who gives us our strength and abilities. One must be thankful for this. So often we take it for granted, as if our strength is our own. Without God, man can do nothing. The child of God must be mindful of this. He must realize that God is in control of his life.

The child of God can also be weak spiritually. He too, loses his strength and needs to be strengthened. David knew that he was weak. He prayed to God in Psalm 6:2: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me..." Remember Jesus also when he prayed with the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, while the disciples slept. Jesus told them in Matthew 26:41 to "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." The child of God ought also to make this his prayer.

The aged can also be afflicted mentally. They might easily get confused. This may be because of their age, or maybe specific reasons such as hard hearing or blindness. Patients might not understand everything anymore. They can easily forget what was just told them. Also, they might ask the same question over and over again, not comprehending the answer given to them. Some patients do not recognize their relatives when they come to visit. This shows that their mind does not comprehend as it once was able. They are unable to learn because of their condition.

Yet, interestingly enough, many of the aged do remember their past. They speak of their past as if it were yesterday. It is what they learned in their youth that many remember. A good example of this is the Scripture verses and songs that they have learned. Often I can sing them a song and they will

sing with me. This comforts the aged. I have even heard the childhood prayer "Now I Lay Me" spoken by a patient before he went to sleep. They have learned in their youth.

Let us apply this to our own life. We have the ability to study the Word. God has given this ability to us. We have the opportunity to learn in catechism, society, school... in our daily life. What we learn now in our youth will stay with us for the rest of our life. It will guide us in our walk. Proverbs 22:6 makes this plain for it states, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." How easy it is to push our own devotions aside in the busyness of our tasks. Yet, what else can be so important!

The elderly are also lonely. Many of them are widows or widowers. Many of their friends may also have passed away. They are separated from their family, children and grandchildren. They realize this. This is but another affliction, a trial that God has given them to bear.

The calling for the child of God in this regard is to visit the lonely. James 1:27 teaches us, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction..." Yes, the child of God must visit the elderly. Visiting the elderly benefits both the visitor and elderly himself. You can learn from the elderly, who love to talk of the history of the church which they have lived. Visits can benefit the elderly also. They see that you care about them. Your visit gets their thoughts off themselves. It is uplifting for them. I think of the time before Christmas when groups of people come and sing carols to the aged. It occurred almost every night until Christmas. Even a couple of patients who do not talk much sang along. To describe their gratitude! One of my patients could not stop talking about it hours after they were gone. Are the aged forgotten after the season though?

One ought to see the commitment of some family members of the aged. Certain people who come every single day just to see their loved one in the home! Some just talk, sometimes they feed the aged, take them outside, or read to them. In these cases I not only know my patients but their families as well.

How easy it could be just to forget about the aged, and go about ones many tasks. Yet, some of these families; spouses, children, even grandchildren come so often! How faithfully they show their love for their neighbor.

I also am reminded by these faithful visitors of the great commandment in Matthew 22:37-40. It states that one must love God, and also the neighbor. We are commanded to love Him and our neighbor. We must show this in our daily life. The family member who visits the lonely is just one example of this.

When I have new admission patients, I am always shocked at how little they possess. The aged do not have many belongings, whether they came from home or the hospital. They do not seem to need many possessions. They are satisfied. How can this be, to work and get gain in ones life only to have to leave it? This seems to be rather difficult.

I Timothy 6:7,8 states, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." This explicitly tells the child of God that it is wrong to set our hearts on earthly possessions. Rather we ought to take a hold of what Christ taught us in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness..."

The aged face death. We all face death. Yet, the elderly know they are going to die soon. This may be the hardest aspect of living in a nursing home. Other patients may be dying. A patient may know another one has died. It is not easy. It is not easy to comfort the family of whom a loved one died, especially if they do not accept it as God's will. It's hard for me to see someone for whom I have cared for a long time, die. I miss him or her. The next day a new patient may be in the same bed. Grief. Despair. Joy? Hope? What are one's thoughts at a time such as this?

Romans 14:7, 8 tells us, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." We must take this view to our own life. We know that our life is not our own. How do we show that we know that? By realizing that it is God's will. Read the book of Job. He went through much loss. Yet, he said "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." We also ought to be able to say this.

The work that I do with the aged forces me to appreciate my own life. Life. God has given it for a time. Thus, we must use it to glorify, praise, and honor Him! He is the Giver of life! This must show forth in our actions, in our speech ... in our daily walk. You can see how I have learned from the aged. Pray for the aged. Visit and learn from the elderly, and apply what you learn to your own life.

Shari is a senior at Covenant Christian High School and a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A Christian Perspective on Play and Sports

by Rev. Bruce Davis

This is the final part of a four-article series. The full title which the author gave to his articles was: "On Developing and Implementing a Christian Perspective on Play and Sports." In the previous articles of this series the author presented his views on the development and understanding of Christian play and sports. In this final article Rev. Davis presents "Practical Tips for Implementing a Christian Perspective of Play and Sports."

Practical Tips for Implementing a Christian Perspective of Play and Sports

1. Parents, this begins in the home through your own teaching and examples. May the Lord be pleased to give you these convictions in your hearts so that you will teach them to your children by word and deed. Show your children how to play in a Christian way as you yourselves grow in this area of Christian living. Do not lead your children by telling them to do as you say and not as you do. Do not expect your children to develop as godly players if you are not leading them in the desired way by your own testimony. Spend regular time with your children showing them how to play in a Christian way.

2. Do not permit your children to play in a worldly way. Call them to the righteous standards of God's Word in their play, and be diligent to administer appropriate corrective discipline if necessary. Draw the line for their play where God draws the line in His Word.

3. It is my opinion that keeping score in games should be out of the question for very young children. They are not yet equipped to deal with winning and losing from a Christian perspective. In their sinfulness they already know how to be bad winners and bad losers. By God's grace parents must train them to be "biblical winners" and "biblical losers." This is only possible as they get older and mature in the Lord. Keeping score is not a part of many games and even the traditional games for which scores are kept can be played without keeping score. Much play, if not most play, should be noncompetitive in nature.

Even with older children it is often good to play games without keeping score. To play "just for fun" is usually less of a hassle and less of a temptation to sin in different ways than it is to play while keeping score; but if you are going to keep score, keep it with a biblical perspective. It is possible to use scorekeeping to determine how long a game will be (i.e. We'll play until one team scores five points), but I do not recommend doing this all the time or even most of the time.

4. Protect and keep your children from influences, coaches, and teams that will not reinforce what you are trying to accomplish in this area. The world will try to undermine our influence and authority in our children's lives, and we must protect them from this.

5. Do not let children choose teams. It is better for the adult in charge to choose the teams in order to make them as equal as possible and to keep certain children from being hurt by not being chosen until the end because of their lack of popularity or poor skill levels.

6. Continually evaluate your own leadership in this area (your example, the structure of the activities, your instructions, your expectations, your discipline, etc.) and the attitudes and conduct of your own children and those entrusted to your care for play and sports. Seek wisdom, skill, and courage from the Lord in order to make whatever adjustments are necessary in order to grow in being thoroughly Christian in our play and sports.

Rev. Bruce Davis is the minister of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church of Standale, Michigan.

Praying in Accordance with God's Will

By Kris Moelker

Prayer is an important aspect of the life of a Christian. It is a wonderful gift that allows us to communicate with the living God. We are able to talk with our Heavenly Father in any situation and at any time.

In order for a Christian young person to pray properly, he must learn how to pray in accordance with God's will. I am sure that many of you are struggling with this. You know you should pray and you do pray, but it may be the case that you aren't happy with your prayers because they seem meaningless.

If you are facing this problem, you should not become discouraged and give up. I Thessalonians 5:17 instructs us never to stop praying. Even in difficult times we must not avoid prayer, but we must be diligent in coming to God and talking to Him about our difficulties.

Some of you may be questioning the importance of prayer in your lives. The Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 45 states that prayer "is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us." If you are thankful for all that God has done for you, then you will remember to tell Him how grateful you are for what He has been pleased to give to you. Thank Him for giving you a new life in Jesus Christ, thank Him for the work He has called you to do, thank Him for your family and friends. From my own experience, I feel that we need to work on expressing our thankfulness in our personal prayers.

Another area of our prayers that I feel is of great importance is our duty to praise our Lord. Do you express praise to your Lord when you bow before your Maker? Or, are you so caught up in your needs that you forget about this very important duty?

As children of our Heavenly Father, we should have a strong desire to praise Him and to make this praise a part of our prayers. Psalm 150 is a passage which beautifully addresses praising our Lord. Verse 2 calls us to praise God "for his mighty acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness." We do praise God by singing the songs He has given us to sing, and we must also remember to praise Him in our prayers.

A child of God who has learned how to praise his Lord in prayer will then be able properly to present his needs before the throne of grace. He will be able to bring his needs into God's presence in the consciousness that, as Matthew 6:8 states his Father already knows his needs.

From my own experience, I have found that even bringing our needs before the Lord requires faith. Unless you have faith, you cannot bring your needs before the Lord in such a way that you believe He will hear and answer your prayer. A child of God must make his faith also a matter of prayer. Follow the example of the apostles, who in Luke 17:5 asked Christ to increase their faith. Each child of God, no matter who he is, must be aware of how important it is to live in the consciousness that his faith in Christ needs to be strengthened constantly. Be diligent in considering your faith as one of your needs when you come before God in prayer.

As I stated at the beginning of this article, prayer is a wonderful gift of God. Grow in your prayer life. Make prayer a very important tool now as you struggle with the difficulties that each young person struggles with. God will hear you and assist you, leading you through life to eternal glory in Heaven where you will communicate perfectly with Him forever.

Kris is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

. . . LET IT SHINE!

by Connie Meyer

Tale of Two Teapots

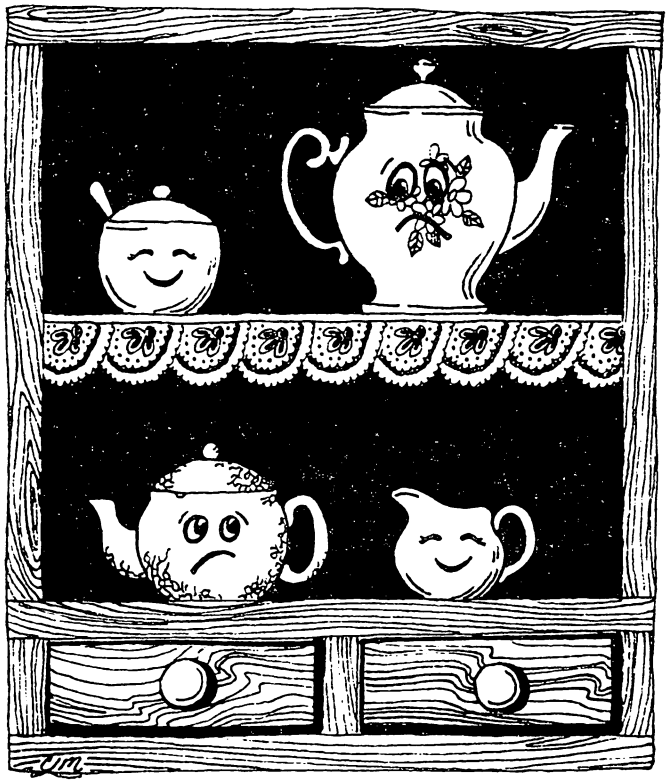
Mrs. Pekoe often made tea. She kept a plain little teapot on a low shelf near her stove and brewed a cup of tea in it for herself every day. She kept a larger fancy teapot on a higher shelf, and whenever guests arrived, she made some tea in the fancy pot for them. Mrs. Pekoe needed both of her teapots, and she enjoyed using both of her teapots—she loved tea!

Unfortunately, her teapots were not very happy. In fact, they were miserable. Every day the plain little teapot looked up with envy at the fancy teapot. It saw its graceful curves arching above, its hand-painted flowers, and its gilded edges. Then the plain little teapot would look at itself and see its own dull color with only chips and a crackled glaze for decoration. If only it could be beautiful like the fancy teapot!

But every day the fancy teapot looked down with envy at the plain little teapot. It saw its position on the lower shelf where it could be easily reached, and saw how often Mrs. Pekoe would take the little pot down and make a cup of tea in it. Then the fancy teapot would look at itself and see its own hand-painted flowers and golden edges merely gathering dust while it waited to be used. How important that little teapot must be to be chosen so often!

****

If only the teapots really knew . . .



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

In the following text find every underlined word in the puzzle at the right:

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit:

For the body is not one member, but many.

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

I Corinthians 12:13-18

F	B	B	P	L	E	A	S	E	D
O	A	A	O	G	N	E	M	R	O
L	P	T	Z	N	L	L	E	O	G
Y	T	E	R	I	D	O	L	F	N
N	I	F	T	R	L	H	L	E	I
A	Z	N	R	A	Y	W	I	R	J
M	E	M	B	E	R	O	N	E	E
G	D	N	A	H	E	D	G	H	W
O	Y	B	O	D	Y	S	M	T	S
T	O	O	F	A	E	V	E	R	Y

1995 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention

hosted by
Grandville Protestant Reformed Church
August 7-11
at
Hope College
Holland, Michigan

Convention Theme:

Courageous Christian Youth

Speakers:

Rev. Mahtani	*"Daniel—A Faithful Prayer Life"*
Rev. Terpstra	*"Daniel—A Bold Witness"*
Mr. Kalsbeek	*"Daniel—Godly Choices"*

Discussion Group Topics:
Devotions—Private and Public
Respecting Authority
Choosing Friends