
Beacon

November
1998

Volume LVII
Number 11

Lights



Knowledge and Reverence

by Aaron J. Cleveland



“According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth.” (Psalm 48:10). “Wherever God becomes known, his powers cannot fail to be manifested; might, goodness, wisdom, righteousness, mercy, truth - these should captivate us with wonderment for Him, and impel us to celebrate His praise.” These are the words of John Calvin in his *Institutes* where he explains the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer (3.20.41). How true these words are. Wherever God is known, His sovereign powers are clearly seen.

What we must also notice is that the opposite is also true. Where God is not known, or where the truth of God is mixed with the lie, God’s powers are obscured and His name is not revered. But the truth which we must understand and put before us is this: Where there is true faith in God, which is a knowledge of God and assurance of salvation, God’s power will be known and His name will be properly feared and revered.

All around us in the church world examples of this reality can be seen. Those churches which do not hold to the Scriptural truth that the complete work of salvation is God’s, and that man has no part in it, have corrupted the truth of the word of God and have obscured the power and sovereignty of God. The result is a lack of reverence for the very name of God. This lack of reverence manifests itself in the worship services of these churches, in the prayers they offer, the songs they sing, the language they use in referring to God, and in the lives of the members of their congregations. This lack of reverence exists because there is no faith in God and no true knowledge of God, which are necessary for a proper fear and reverence of God.

Scripture teaches us that we are to have the deepest sense of reverence for God. In Matthew 6:9, we are instructed to prayer using the words, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” The name “Hallowed” carries with it the idea of holiness and consecration. Another example of the proper reverence we ought to have for God is to be found in I Samuel 2:1-10 where we read the prayer of Hannah. In this prayer of Hannah, we can see the faith-wrought knowledge of God that is necessary for reverent prayer to God. In the first few words of this prayer, Hannah extols four glorious attributes of God.

In the first half of verse two, the holiness and purity of God are extolled. “There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beside thee.” In the second half of that verse, the almighty power of God is praised, where we read, “neither is there any rock like our God.” In verse three the wisdom of God is acknowledged with the following words: “for the Lord is a God of knowledge.” At the end of verse three, God’s justice is confessed with the words, “and by Him, actions are weighed.”

At the end of her prayer, Hannah praises God as the God to whom belongs the complete work of salvation (verses 6-8). In verse nine, we see also that God preserves His people so that they never fall away.

It is these attributes of God and great works of God’s Spirit in our hearts that arouse us to a deep reverence for God. God rightfully and justly deserves all our praise and adoration because we have a heart-felt knowledge of these powers in us.

All throughout Scripture it is plain to see that the way of wisdom is reverence. In Psalm 111:9,10 we read, “He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant forever: holy and reverend is His name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever.” A proper fear of the Lord will direct us to speak to God and of God as we should. We can also see from these verses that we are not wise until we properly fear God.

In Ecclesiastes 5:2 we read, “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.” This verse instructs as to what we ought to consider when approaching God in prayer. We must understand that between God and us there is an infinite distance. God is in heaven reigning in glory, and we are on earth. We must approach God in all humility, sincerity, seriousness, and reverence.

Another striking example of the proper reverence we ought to have for God is to found in Psalm 89:6,7. Here we read, “For who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him.” If we read all of Psalm 89, we see that the whole Psalm is devoted to praise of the sovereignty of God. It is important to understand that we must first know the sovereign powers of God before we can properly reverence God. Knowing God and reverencing Him are inseparable.

To see the connection between the work of the Spirit in our hearts and our reverence for God, we need only to look at Mary’s prayer. In Luke 1:49 we read, “For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name.” These ought to be our words, for great works are being done in us.

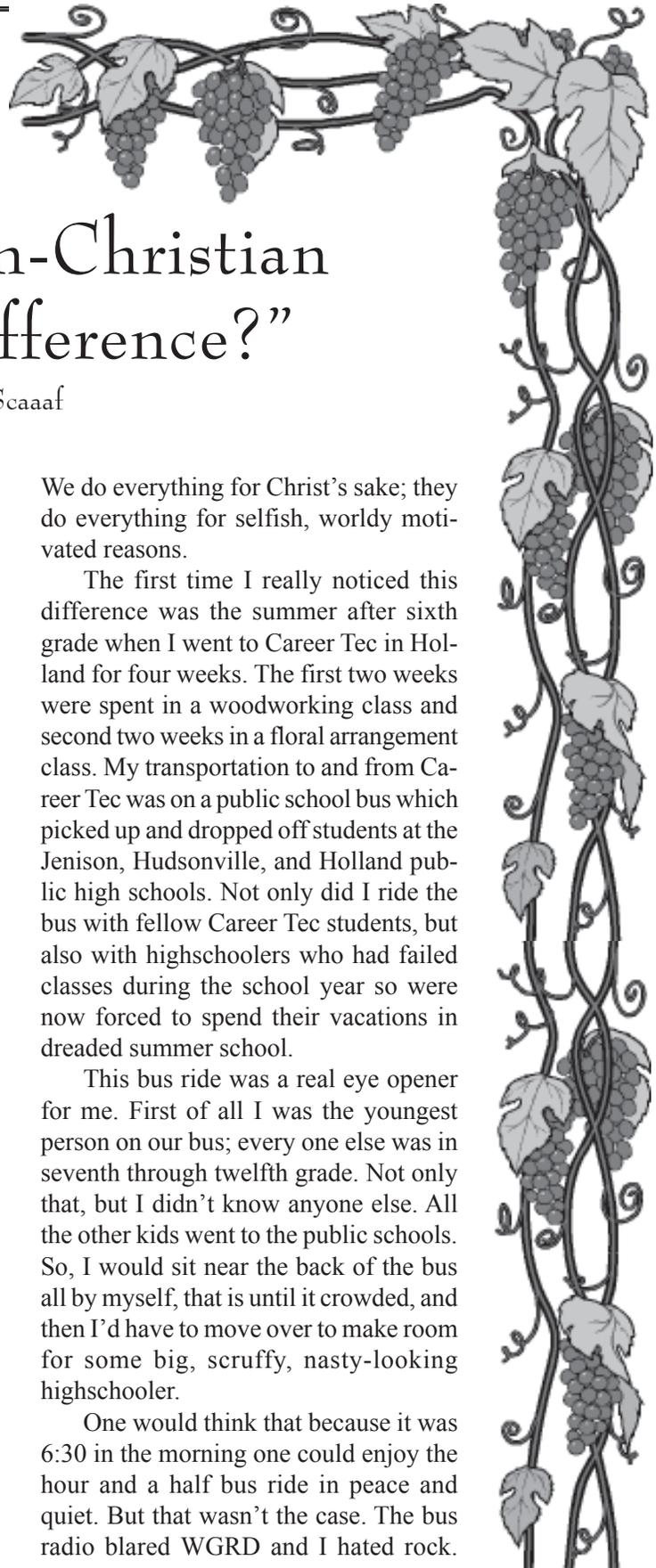
Finally, in Isaiah 57:15 we read of God as “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy.” Once again when we read the surrounding verses we can see that God’s name is connected with His works. His works attest to His holiness and power. Where God’s works are known and experienced, there is a reverence for God.

But this reverence is never separated from the work of God’s particular grace. Grace is necessary to produce the faith and holy fear needed to acceptably worship God. This comes across very strongly for us in Hebrews 12:28, 29 where we read, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.” Let us remember that it is only by God’s gracious work that we are able to serve Him acceptably. Neither let us be fooled into thinking that there is a proper worship of God apart from His grace. This is an impossibility. Nor may we think that God is pleased with any other worship than that which He has put before us in His word, for this is a dangerous error that many have fallen into today.

More and more is it the case that so-called Reformed churches are falling away from the true worship of God and heading in the direction of a false and irreverent worship of God. Never must we be tempted to worship God in any other way than He has commanded. Our prayers, our singing, our giving, our reading, and our preaching must be based upon the knowledge of God that He has revealed to us in His word. When this is the case, our worship, our singing, and our prayers will be reverent.

When our preaching, singing, prayer, and giving are not founded on a sound knowledge of God’s word they will become irreverent, for the works of God will be obscured and His name will be held in contempt. One only has to listen to Arminian preaching, prayer, and singing for a short time to see this. An Arminian robs God of His glorious work of salvation by claiming that he first must seek God and invite God into his heart. It is frightening to hear the hopelessness of an Arminian prayer, the begging, the pleading, and the lack of hope in the sure promises of God. It is also disheartening to hear Arminian singing for it goes no farther than man’s work. In reality, the Arminians worship a god that does not exist and cannot save them.

By God’s grace we continue to grow in our knowledge of God, through the reading of His word, listening attentively to Christ in the preaching, and prayer. And in our growing in the knowledge of God we continue to grow in a proper reverence for the name of God. ❖



Christian or Non-Christian “What’s the Difference?”

by Audrey Vander Scaaf

“Hey Kyle! What ya doing this Saturday night!”

John shouted to his neighbor.

“I’m going to a pool party at my friend’s house.” Kyle replied.

“I bet you have to be home already at 11 P.M. Am I right?” John asked mockingly.

“Of course, I have church the next morning.”

“Guy, I’m sure glad I’m not in your shoes! I’m going to this big beer party which is going to last *all* night long.”

There is one main similarity and difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. The similarity is human nature; the difference is saving grace.

Human nature is something that every man is born with, whether elect or reprobate. The effect of human nature is that every man is prone to sin. That is, we are all dead in sin and are incapable of doing, trying, or even wanting to do any good. (Romans 3:12 states “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”) So, by nature, we all want what is best for ourselves; we are selfishly motivated. We want to serve ourselves and not God.

So, if all mankind is born with a human nature that allows him to do no good, how are we, as Christians, different? Only by grace are we different. For it is only by grace that we can do any good. Grace is a gift of salvation, given by God to His elect people only, and He has chosen them before the foundations of the world. We, the elect, did nothing to deserve God’s grace. Election is based on nothing but God’s good-pleasure and the purpose of election is God’s glory. Election makes a new people, a people whose lives are no longer self-centered, but God-centered. Out of thankfulness for salvation, the Christian strives to glorify God. This is what makes us, as Christians, so different from unbelievers.

We do everything for Christ’s sake; they do everything for selfish, worldly motivated reasons.

The first time I really noticed this difference was the summer after sixth grade when I went to Career Tec in Holland for four weeks. The first two weeks were spent in a woodworking class and second two weeks in a floral arrangement class. My transportation to and from Career Tec was on a public school bus which picked up and dropped off students at the Jenison, Hudsonville, and Holland public high schools. Not only did I ride the bus with fellow Career Tec students, but also with highschoolers who had failed classes during the school year so were now forced to spend their vacations in dreaded summer school.

This bus ride was a real eye opener for me. First of all I was the youngest person on our bus; every one else was in seventh through twelfth grade. Not only that, but I didn’t know anyone else. All the other kids went to the public schools. So, I would sit near the back of the bus all by myself, that is until it crowded, and then I’d have to move over to make room for some big, scruffy, nasty-looking highschooler.

One would think that because it was 6:30 in the morning one could enjoy the hour and a half bus ride in peace and quiet. But that wasn’t the case. The bus radio blared WGRD and I hated rock. Also, since all the highschoolers sat be-

hind me, I had to listen to their pathetic conversations. They would brag and joke about how drunk they had gotten at whatever wild party they had gone to over the weekend. They even fought about who had gotten the drunkest or who did the dumbest thing while intoxicated. Movies were another favorite topic. Even though all the movies they told about were disgustingly rated either R or X, the teens would go on and on about how “good” they were. I was shocked at all this. Where were their priorities? All they cared about was having a good time; they didn’t care about the results of their actions. The more “daring” they were the more they bragged about it. It was almost as if their conscience was seared.

I think the thing that bothered me the most was their language. I wish I was exaggerating when I say that almost every other word that came out of their mouths was a swear word. They continued to take God’s Name in vain, never thinking twice about the terrible sin they were committing.

It was kind of sad how pathetic their lives actually were. They had nothing to look forward to. They had no hope. One day on the bus I heard this girl, Mary, telling her friend how her dad used to beat her and her mom, so they left him. Now her mom had a live-in boyfriend and not only did this guy get drunk every night but he also started slapping her mom. Mary didn’t know what to do. She didn’t know where she could turn for help and guidance. She felt helpless and had no hope. She had no one but herself to depend on.

Another time this kid was asking everyone if he could stay at their house for a couple of weeks. His dad had kicked him out of the house because he refused to obey him. The kid went on and on, swearing at his dad and how he wasn’t going to let anyone boss him around. I could tell that more kids felt this way toward authority. They didn’t want anyone telling them what to do.

Behavior in the summer school classroom wasn’t much better. Many times while passing their classrooms I couldn’t help but notice that half the students were either sleeping at their desk or lying on the floor. They didn’t even attempt to stay awake. Saying they had no hope and reason to live, except a momentary pleasure, could sum up many of these teenagers’ lives.

How different my life is from these teenagers’ on the bus. From birth I have been taught by my Christian parents that “I am not my own but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.” Yes, there were—and are—many times that I, like the highschoolers, chafed against my parents authority and wanted my own way. Like every

two-year-old I, too, had a favorite word—No! And even now there are times I don’t have proper respect for those in authority or desire to seek God’s will and pleasure. An example would be the long prayer during Sunday worship service. It is much easier to blissfully nod off than to carefully concentrate on the words the minister is saying and bring true worship to God.

But the difference is that God loves me and I love God. I know that I am an important person and God has a purpose for my life. Because He saved me I have the desire to live my life to His Name’s honor and glory. One way I can do this is by not going to the movie theater. Another way I can show glory to God’s Name is by my language, not only by refraining from swearing, but by speaking only good things about others. Whenever I hear someone take God’s Name in vain, it bothers me and feels like a slap in the face.

Having compared the life of the Christian and the life of a non-Christian, one must conclude that Christ’s saving grace makes all the difference. It’s not that Christians are so much better and deserving, for by nature everyone is sinful and deserves God’s condemnation. God’s grace touches the believer’s life so he seeks not his own will but the will of his heavenly Father.

The unbeliever’s only hope is in this life, and its momentary pleasures. The Christian isn’t seeking for riches which “rust and corrupt,” but is searching for a better city whose maker and founder is God. ❖

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Nothing Is Unimportant

by J.P. de Klerk

Julie Walker had suddenly lost her job as a secretary of the manager of a warehouse which had gone bankrupt. The local economy was not doing very well in the town where she lived with her parents and younger sisters, so during a fortnight she tried in vain to find a similar job.

She was not afraid of doing something different, so when she saw an advertisement in the newspaper, asking for a person willing to help with the sewing of saddles, she went to see the shop and got the job as an apprentice. She asked for the help of the Lord, and soon she was able to do this work very well.

However, the day came that she remembered her previous job and she said to herself, "What an unimportant work am I doing! It is inane. Anyone can make saddles and get tender fingers. Nobody cares that I am doing this."

That afternoon it felt like a mental test. But just a few minutes later she heard a lot of noise coming in from the village green and there were people screaming. She jumped to her feet and rushed to the door of the shop, to see what was going on.

There was a horse with a wagon, nobody on the box, and the horse had obviously been frightened and bolted.

"This is terrible," said Julie to herself. "In a minute the children will come out of school!"

While she went outside, she saw a young man sprint to the horse and clutch the bridle.



"O Lord, let the bridle be strong enough, let his hands also be strong enough to hold on, or else he will fall under the horse," she prayed.

Clasping her hands she saw the young man fall, but hanging on scratching his feet over the surface of the street. The horse had foam on his mouth and made strange sounds, trampling and stamping with his feet. But then he gave up and stood there, trembling.

"Bravo!" Julie shouted, and together with other people she went to the young man, who spoke calming words to the horse and tapped gently his neck. The eyes of the nervous animal looked wildly around yet, and you could hear his breathing.

A farmer with white hair and a beard came forward, stroked the head of the horse, gave a lump of sugar and said, "If the headstall had not been so *well made* by the saddler, young man, you could not have held fast my Buddy. But thank you very much for what you did. People could have been killed. Such a horse does not know anymore what he is doing, you know. Praise the Lord that you acted so quickly. What is your name?"

Harry Molhoven, Sir. I am a guest of the Rosmans."

Julie went back to her work and said to herself, "I learned a lesson. *Nothing* is unimportant in the eyes of *God*. I am a small wheel in a big wheel-work. I will always do what He wants me to do. He gives me the health and the strength."

She felt very happy. ❖

J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from Ashhurst, New Zealand.

In Everything Give Thanks!

by Rev. Richard J. Smit



Once a year on “Thanksgiving Day” is not the idea of the title. Our duty of thanks is not fulfilled only on this past October 12 for our young people in Canada, nor is it fulfilled only on November 26 for our young people in the United States of America. That Word of God sums up our duty as God’s children for our whole life.

The Apostle Paul was writing in I Thessalonians to a church surrounded by persecution. Most difficult were their circumstances as they lived in and out of their hope. The Apostle comes to correct some of their false ideas, but also to direct them in the right ways. As they suffer patiently in the expectation of Christ’s return, the Apostle in I Thessalonians 5 reminds them of their duty. Even in their deep suffering, they must not neglect their duty of thanksgiving to God. He writes in I Thessalonians 5:18,

In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

The Word of God here commands us to “*give thanks.*” To whom must we do this? We ought to thank our friends for their acts of kindness towards us. We ought to thank our parents for their instruction, discipline, and kindness unto us. But, is that what the text means?

When we compare this text with many passages in the Psalms, we learn God is the sole object of our thanks. We read of that in Psalm 100:4-5,

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.

When we give thanks to God we acknowledge His goodness to us. God is good in Who He is. He is the overflowing fountain of all good. That goodness He reveals in what He has made. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth very good. That first good

creation was an earthly picture of the new creation in Christ Jesus which is very good indeed. God is good in that goal He has set for the works of His Hands. God is good in directing all things to the good purpose of revealing His glorious goodness in the preeminence of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is Lord of that new creation. God is good in revealing His goodness to and in only those chosen in Jesus Christ from before the foundation of the earth.

God’s goodness to His own chosen people saves them from their total corruption and guilt through the wonder of salvation. God is good in having sent His only begotten Son to die upon the cross to make the atonement, reconciliation, and the complete satisfaction for our sin. God is good in having made Christ a curse for us to die the accursed death so that we might have only blessing and life. God is good in having exalted Christ through the resurrection and ascension unto His position at the Father’s right hand. God is good to draw us unto Himself into the sanctuary of heavenly glory through Christ our Mediator. God is good in having sent His Spirit into our hearts to apply that salvation Christ has won for us. God is good in having sent His Saviour to save us, His people, from our sin unto everlasting immortality and life with God. God is good in His mercy, His grace, and His love towards us in Christ Jesus.

As one grows in the understanding of those truths, he learns by the Spirit to thank God in heart, mind, soul, word, and deed in worship and in prayer. He learns to confess concerning himself: “my God has given me everything good in Christ for absolutely nothing I am or have done. In fact, for everything that I have done and am of myself, I am worthy that God would never reveal His goodness in Christ to me. However, truly God is wonderfully good to His people whom He has chosen and united into Jesus Christ!”

Because God has in His infinite and super-abounding goodness given us all things spiritually in Jesus Christ, we are forever indebted to God. That word “give thanks” means that we have a debt of thanks to be paid to God. We will need the whole of everlasting life to pay off that debt of thanks.

That word “give thanks” means that we have a debt of thanks to be paid to God. We will need the whole of everlasting life to pay off that debt of thanks.

The Thessalonians had that debt of thanks. They were indebted to God for the salvation He granted them and, particularly in preserving them through the fiery trials of persecution and contention for the faith. They had received the hope of eternal life and the expectation that Christ would certainly appear again on the clouds of heaven. Because of that goodness of God revealed in their hope of the resurrection and life everlasting, they were indebted to give thanks to God even in their suffering. Likewise, we are also indebted to give God thanks for all that He has freely made us and granted us in and by the power of His goodness. We must give thanks as we await for the appearing of our final redemption.

Our thanks is made known principally in our worship and our prayers. It is made known in a life of fleeing from sin and wickedness, of fleeing to the cross for forgiveness and grace to persevere, and of living in conscious and humble gratitude for God’s amazing and sovereign goodness.

Give thanks to God for His goodness!

This we must do “*in everything*.” In every circumstance, place, time, and relationship, we must give thanks to God.

Is that really so? Must we give God thanks *in everything*? Are there times or places where we are free from this obligation?

Let us illustrate these questions. God in His goodness has made us His sheep and gathered us into the pasture of life. God has set boundaries for the pasture in which we may enjoy the comfort and joy of the water and food of the pasture. The fence that surrounds the

pasture is the boundary within which we enjoy that blessedness.

Now, the question is does that boundary encompass the whole pasture? Must we as His sheep always live within that boundary? Are there places along the fence where a door opens unto the wasteland that lies without where the Shepherd might allow me to go? May I try to sneak under the fence into a life of ingratitude and ungodliness? Is there the enjoyment of God’s goodness on the other side of the fence? The answers are “No!”

We must give our God thanks always and in everything in a life of godly thanksgiving. After all, we are in Christ Jesus the recipients of God’s goodness and mercy always. We always have a reason to give thanks to God. Because we are never without that goodness of God, a blessed duty and privilege surrounds us “*in everything*.”

God must be thanked for His goodness, even in the understanding that His goodness is sovereign and particular. That goodness of God is never with the unrighteous. Not every human being receives earthly gifts as God’s goodness to them. God’s goodness causes the house of the righteous to flourish spiritually, but in the house of the wicked, there is only the curse of God (Proverbs 3:33). God is good to destroy them (Psalm 74:1,18; Psalm 145:9, 20b).

That truth of God’s sovereign goodness does not cause the believer to become carnally secure and godless. Rather, that life-giving, humbling truth is in the believer the source of humility, godly reverence, and deep gratitude to God for His undeserved goodness. In fact, this truth serves as a incentive unto a constant and diligent desire to obey the duty of thanks to God (cf. *Canons of Dordt*, V, 10-15) that we remain in the enjoyment and consciousness of His goodness.

That blessed duty and privilege is “*the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*.” This is God’s command to us because in Christ Jesus we are renewed unto holiness. God Who hath made us has called us unto holiness. He that despiseth this Word of God, despiseth God Who hath given unto us His Holy Spirit (II Thessalonians 4:7ff).

Even as a young believer you are bound to that duty because that is the command of your Prophet, Priest, and King Who has saved us from our sin unto holiness and gratitude.

Is that duty possible for us? That is a question which brings out the force of the words “*in everything*.” This question and the answer to this question the believer faces everyday.

God commands us to give Him thanks in everything. We learned that this excludes no part or time of our life. When God gives to us earthly blessings of health and strength, we must thank Him!

In times of prosperity, so easily we forget God! We fail to be humbly thankful not just for a supper table full of food, but for the spiritual Table prepared in this wilderness and loaded with the spiritual meat and drink of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the fact that our God seats us at that Table twice every Lord's Day!

By nature we would rather sit in our spiritual easy chairs of a self-centered life. Into that chair of self-gratitude we would sit with our bloated spiritual stomachs after having gorged ourselves at a table with its food of Egypt and Sodom which tantalizes our own pride and flesh. In prosperity, it is impossible of ourselves to thank God.

But, God Who is rich in mercy comes to us sinners who are grossly fat with pride and ingratitude. By the power of the Sword of His Word, He irresistibly cures our spiritual fatness with the necessary left-handed thrust of the "Ehud-diet." The old man of gross pride is slain in order that the new man of humility and gratitude may be revealed to the glory of God.

Equally impossible is it of ourselves to give thanks when God brings adversity. In those circumstances, this command goes contrary to our wisdom and our will.

Must we really give thanks to God in adversity, too? "Blessed be God!" when He gives. But, must we also say "Blessed be God!" when He takes away?

Must the widow give thanks when her husband has been taken in death? What reason does she have to give thanks in her loss? Must one like Job give thanks when God takes away children in death? Must the student give thanks to God when he is sinfully teased and deserted by classmates? Must the young person give thanks in his disappointments, discouragements, and times of doubt? Does he even have a reason to do so?

In adversity, we would ask not only "must we give thanks?", but also "how can we give thanks when all these things are against us?" Where is the goodness of God in my suffering and manifold trials? We immediately object to this duty when it seems that there is no reason to give thanks. We have such little faith, and lack wisdom, patience, and contentment. It is impossible for us to give thanks in adversity.

Yet, the saving Word of God stands: "In everything give thanks!" We must because God is always truly good to His people. For He leads us by His good counsel ev-

Automation

*Indeed it's nice
To push a button on some device,
And then you see,
Things go quite automatically
The robot brain,
Can work out problems hard or plain,
While we just sit
And watch the gadget do its bit.*

*But 'tis not so—
We can't just push buttons and just grow
In spiritual zest,
Or bring forth fruit and do our best.
This takes real work.
So we must strive and never shirk—
For automation
Can never work out our salvation.*

By Simon C. Wallburg

ery step of the way to glory. He is our faithful Father, for Jesus' sake, Who turns the evils, which He sends upon us in this valley of tears, to our spiritual advantage. Hence, though we may feel far away from the goodness of God, yet the truth is that nothing can ever separate us from the goodness of our God. Whether in the valley of tears, in the waste-howling wilderness of an impossible trial, in the pit of despair, in the snare of sin, or under a mountain of guilt, nothing can separate us from the goodness of God in Jesus Christ.

By His irresistible grace alone we learn to see that truth and to live out of that in heartfelt thanksgiving. When the believer receives that knowledge and clearly sees it, he can and desires to do only one thing: give thanks to God!

He learns to give that thanks to God alone "in everything." In both prosperity and adversity, he learns to give thanks as righteous and patient Job: "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; Blessed be the Name of the LORD." (Job 1:21b) ❖

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The Calling of a Young Wife (3)

by Rev. Steven Key

As we have seen from Titus 2:4, 5, the young wives must be taught to love their husbands and children. That love comes to concrete expression by their being discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good. But there is one other thing that young wives must be taught.

Obedient to Their Husbands

The older women must teach the young women to be obedient to their own husbands.

This is the calling sounded repeatedly throughout the Bible's teaching on marriage: the godly wife is to be in subjection to her husband.

That refers, first of all, to the attitude of her heart. She must know in her heart that God gave her husband to her as the head of their home. To live in subjection to him is to live in obedience to God Himself.

The reason is stated in Scripture, in Ephesians 23, 24: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

We recognize, of course, that husbands sometimes are most difficult to deal with. That is why Scripture also addresses the husbands very pointedly concerning their calling to treat their wives as Christ treats His Church, nourishing and cherishing her, giving honor to her out of the deep spiritual love of the regenerated heart. For the young men who read these articles, that is your calling as a husband, for which you will also answer to God. And therefore also you may not ignore your wife, nor refuse to allow her to talk or express her feelings. Marriage is communion, fellowship between husband and wife.

But turning again to the text before us we see that, without exception, the wife who will live in obedience to God must live in subjection to her husband.

You should remember, at the time this epistle was written, the church was full of new converts, many women whose husbands were unbelieving and ungodly.

Peter addressed that issue specifically in I Peter 3:1, when he wrote: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives."

It makes no difference if the husband is unreasonable and disobedience to his calling as a husband. The wife is to show her love for God by living in subjection to her husband.

There is nothing more disruptive to the home than a rebellious wife who will not submit to the rule of her husband.

There is nothing that gives a more disastrous testimony to the wicked world, than a woman who claims to be a Christian, but lives in rebellion to her husband.

What a horrible testimony to the truth of God's Word, when a wife in the church rules in the household of her husband, contrary to her husband's desires!

What tragedy, when the wickedness of the world's women is manifest in households of the church! You wives must be in subjection to your husbands, says the Word of God.

The Instruction of the Older Women

Again, I remind you older women: It is your calling to exhort earnestly the young women concerning these things.

Of all these things that we have heard from this text, not one of them comes naturally. And you young women, as well as you older women, having heard these virtues and characteristics of godliness set before you, recognize very clearly that these things don't come naturally for you, do they.

It takes the grace of God and the fellowship of the Spirit of Christ to enable us to walk in godliness. In all spiritual virtues we must be taught of God. And God uses means to teach us.

It may be difficult for a young woman to receive this instruction from a man. It may also be difficult for you to approach your daughters and other young women

in the church concerning these matters. We are often of a mind to let things be, and hope that they somehow turn out well. But we may not live that way.

You, as godly women in Zion, are to exhort the young wives and remind them that what we have here is not merely the instruction of a self-seeking man. This is the very Word of God, the God Who is all-wise, Who knows what is best for us and for our families and for the Church, the God Who loves us so much that He gave His Son for us, and now shows us how to enjoy the fellowship of His covenant love. We must walk in obedience to Him.

The instruction of this text is as much the teaching of the Bible as is the truth of total depravity, the virgin birth of our Savior, Christ's death and resurrection, and any other doctrine of the faith. And as important as is God's truth and His revelation concerning those doctrines, of the same importance is the instruction given us in Titus 2:4, 5.

This is the life of a young wife that is consistent with the truth of God's Word and the life of a Christian.

A Spiritually Fruitful Obedience

Godly obedience to this high calling is indeed spiritually fruitful.

That is evident from the last part of verse 5, where the focus is on the fruitfulness with respect to God's honor and glory.

Women are to live such a life of godliness, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.

That shows that the way you live reflects upon God.

For one who claims to love God and His Word, and yet who lives contrary to it, that person shows reproach to the Word of God, that it is not in his or her heart.

And when a person walks uprightly, that person shows that the Word of God reflects in his or her life. This brings a seriousness to your calling, doesn't it.

The Word of God is blasphemed by the world when we Christians speak so much about the covenant of God with us and our children, when we claim that our children are God's gifts to us, and then we forsake our calling as Godly parents. We give occasion for the Word of God to be held in contempt. So that those who oppose us say, "The Word of God? It has no power. It doesn't make a real difference in your life, does it!" Sometimes we hear that, don't we. It only takes one member of the congregation living wickedly, and we hear, "You P.R.'s; you claim to have the truth, but it sure doesn't make any difference in how you live, does it!"

But we must remember that this inspired instruction is given to young women who have been born again by

the Spirit of Christ. You who are God-fearing know that there is nothing worse than to live in such a way that we cause God and His Word to be blasphemed. You don't want that! You love the Lord God! And therefore—I know of you—you want God's Word to be praised.

That is why you hear this Word of God. You find your strength and fulfillment in the way of obedience.

Isn't it so?

These matters pertaining to the life of young wives are the things that become, that are consistent with, sound doctrine. And God is glorified in those virtuous young wives and mothers who walk in obedience to His Word.

But in addition, when God is glorified, He also gives His blessing.

Look once again, beloved, at those characteristics manifest in the God-fearing young woman. She loves her husband; she loves her children. She is discreet,

She is discreet, chaste, a
keeper at home. She is good,
obedient to her own husband.

It is those kind of characteristics
that make the women of the
world rage.

...According to God's Word,
those things spell BEAUTY,
spiritual beauty.

chaste, a keeper at home. She is good, obedient to her own husband.

It is those kinds of characteristics that make the women of the world rage. To them such characteristics spell male-domination and bondage, drudgery and suppression. What do those things spell to you?

According to God's Word, those things spell BEAUTY, spiritual beauty. Such beauty is possible only by your freedom in Christ Jesus, freedom to walk in the way of God's will. For we are partakers of God's glory and grace in Christ Jesus.

The young woman who strives to live in obedience to this Word of God certainly rises above the degrading principles of sin and wickedness. That is not to say that

obedience is found to be easy. Nor is it to say that such a life will not result in certain sacrifices and hardships. But when you live according to God's precepts, your life is seen as one of beauty and nobility. It is seen as such by God Himself. But it is also seen as such by God-fearing husbands and children and brothers and sisters in Christ.

When you walk in the way of this Word, though you are so conscious of your weaknesses and sins, you set examples before your husband and children and neighbors that are worthy of emulation. They will know that your life is hid with Christ in God.

And so you also shield your children from the evils and errors, sins and wickedness that surround them. By

your own example of godliness, you warn them against the ways of the world, and show them the higher, more beautiful and worthwhile things of life: obedience to God and His Word, and partaking of the fellowship of His love.

Of the woman who lives in such a way, the writer of Proverbs 31 speaks, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. . . . Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:28, 30). Hear this Word of God, my young sisters in Christ. Walk in His way. And May God Himself so grant you His blessing. ❖

Rev. Key is pastor of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

Book Review

The Basket of Flowers

reviewed by Lisa Baldwin and Carol Baldwin

The *Basket of Flowers* is a Christian novel that is 177 pages long. The book was originally written in French. It takes place somewhere in Europe probably in the 1500 or 1600's. The original author and publication date is unknown. It was republished in 1996 by SAT Publications and can be ordered through Trinity Book Service.

The *Basket of Flowers* is about a Christian girl named Mary. It is an exciting story filled with lots of conflict, problems, and suspense that makes it interesting to children. Mary is falsely accused of stealing. The book is about her punishment and what occurs after her sentencing.

Mary's age is not clear. In the few pictures given she looks about sixteen but in the story she sounds about thirteen.

The author included Bible verses very well. James, her father, often taught Mary using the Scriptures. Mary

thought of Scripture verses during difficult times and that was a comfort to her.

Mary was very brave, God-fearing, and trusted in the Lord in the middle of persecution. She is a good example of persevering in the middle of great difficulties. She is also very helpful and loving even to people who hated her. Mary loved to learn about the Bible from her father and was obedient to those in authority over her. She was also very generous giving away her few possessions that were special to her.

It is appropriate for many ages. (My six-year-old sister and my father both enjoyed it.) I highly recommend this book for boys and girls who like to read good Christian books. ❖

Lisa, 10, attends Carmel Christian School in Charlotte, North Carolina. Carol, her mother, encourages her five daughters to read Christian literature.

Psalter 190— Trustful Entreaty and Praise

by Beth De Vries

We come to a Psalter number that puts our focus on trusting in God in all our life. There are many of these in the Psalter as it seems we need frequent reminders to put our trust in God and not ourselves. The first stanza of this versification of Psalm 71 has us put our trust in God and not be ashamed of this. The world thinks this to be foolishness and wants us to be ashamed that we are not overconfident in our own abilities. We are reminded to trust that it is God's righteousness that saves us through grace. The stanza concludes with a plea for God to hear us and rescue us from our woes of this world. There are many important elements in this first stanza that bring us to God and remind us of our complete dependence on Him.

The second stanza leads us to our rock and dwelling place in time of need. We know that we must depend on God even when life appears to be going well and according to our will. Our rock never becomes sand and shifts from under our feet. We have been chosen by God to receive salvation and not because we are worthy by any merit of our own. What a wonderful free gift from our rock. A far better gift than we could ever give to anyone. May we always give thanks to God for that gift and remember that He is our rock and fortress.

We can become caught up in the ways of the world so quickly and easily that we must seek to be delivered from the wicked. This is the truth that the third stanza presents to us. Satan works through the world to seek to destroy us and our God. We know that our God will pro-

tect us from these evils. He makes us aware of our sins and causes us to turn from them, thus leading us to the rock that is higher than we are.

When we are in our youth we must remember to put our trust in God. It is during this time that we often think we know more than anyone and do not need to depend on anyone but ourselves. We can be thankful that God leads us and will protect us at all times even in our youth. We should watch a small child and how easy it is for him to depend on adults. Children also freely confess that God is their God to everyone with whom they come into contact. May we have a child-like dependence on our God.

We are upheld by God's grace and in His unfailing mercy. Many of us have been taught these things from our youth and throughout our childhood. May we not take this for granted as it is the Rock on which we stand. God has given

the gift of eternal life to us undeserving sinners. It makes the Psalms and Psalter versifications more meaningful when we consider how often these truths are taught in them. We should sing the Psalms with meaning and consideration for the words that we are singing and the praise that we give to God. May we give constant praise to God for His good gifts to us. Sing this and all the Psalms to the glory of our God and Saviour. ❖

Beth is a member of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Standale, Michigan.



The Song of Zion

by Skip Hunter

A Psalter-Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God

November 1 Read Psalm 73:1-12

Psalm 73:1-2 This Psalm is an excellent one for the child of God to use when in despair. Asaph asks the age old question concerning the well-being of God's people. It appeared to him that God had forsaken him. He was so much in despair that it appeared to him that even the wicked were better off than he was. He could understand God's goodness to those who were of a pure heart, but he felt that he was worthless. He felt that he was sliding off the path that leads to heaven. The experiences of this child of God are not unlike those which most people of God experience. Let us explore this Psalm and pray that God will give to us the grace to understand His way in our lives. Sing Psalter 201:1.

November 2 Read Proverbs 18:1-8

Psalm 73:3-5 As Asaph viewed the wicked around him, he forgot one important thing. Do you know what that was? It is something we are prone to do as well. Asaph forgot and we forgot to view the wicked, their lives, and their deaths with God in mind. As we read the news and see evildoers escape with little or no punishment, we are inclined to ask, "What's the use of doing things the right way?" We look at their lives and wish that we were standing in their places. We wish for their wealth or abilities. We wish for their properties or possessions. We wish that we could get away with the things and circumstances as they do. This is their life; should it be ours? We know the answer, but the answer is hard to accept. Let us with Asaph work through this dilemma as we further study Psalm 73. Sing Psalter 201:2.

November 3 Read Proverbs 18:9-16

Psalm 73:6-9 Young people, do you know of people described in these verses? Do you evaluate their lives and wish them for yourselves. Do you make people like this your friends so that you can enjoy their life style and entertainment? The words of these verses describe many sins which belong to the wicked of this world. These sins can very easily be ours if we are not careful. Asaph knows of whom he is speaking. He may be puzzled about God's plan in all of this, but he does know the kind of people he is observing. Do you, young people, recognize the wicked of this world? Do you see them and their sins and then flee them? Or do you join yourselves to them and make their

sins yours. If you do, this is serious. You must repent and further search the Scriptures to find they way you should go. Sing Psalter 201:3.

November 4 Read Proverbs 18:17-24

Psalm 73:10-11 Young people, do you live in the confession that God sees all that you do? Do you believe that he knows your every deed whether it be good or bad? Does that affect the way you live? Does it govern the way you act when parents, teachers, elders, minister, policemen, or other authority cannot see you? God sees all things. He knows all things. The wicked ask the question, "How doth God know?" They do not know the answer. You do. You know that He is the sovereign God of heaven and earth. This knowledge should help you decide how to behave at all times. Think of that even as you are with your friends. Think of it when you are in your car. God sees all; God knows all; God requires that we obey Him. Young people, do you want to know this? Sing Psalter 201:4

November 5 Read Psalm 73:12-22

Psalm 73:12-16 Asaph is about finished looking at the world around him. He is having trouble understanding why God seems to favor the wicked and punish the righteous. Notice I said *seems* to favor the wicked. Asaph thinks that all the good he has done, has been in vain. There was another child of God with the same problem. That man was Job. Do we have that problem? Are we puzzled by God's seeming lack of care for us. Asaph and Job both knew that God was good toward His people. That should be our confession and knowledge as well. We will need to continue our study of this Psalm to find the answer to this painful question. Sing Psalter 201:5.

November 6 Read Job 21:7-18

Psalm 73:17-19 Asaph, Job, and we quite often look in the wrong place for the answer to the painful question of the wicked's prosperity and the righteous's problems. We forget that God is in control. Asaph had to go into God's house to find the answer. While this can and probably refers to the temple, the answer can also be found in the word of God. The answer is God is sovereign. He holds all in His hand. "All things work together for good to them that love God" is the testimony of Romans 8:28. The good is not always the good of this world. The good may seem bad for us. Notice that word seem again. We must put on

the spectacles of faith and look for God's will in His word and in His house. Keeping the Sabbath without faithfully attending the worship services will never give us the answer. In fact it is impossible to keep the Sabbath that way. Go to God's house; find the answer! Sing Psalter 201:6 and 204:1.

November 7 Read Psalm Job 23:8-17

Psalm 73:20-22 As Asaph realizes his foolishness in envying the workers of iniquity, he is ashamed at being brought before the eyes of Jehovah. As children and young people to have Dad find our sins sometimes brings us much embarrassment and shame. To feel this before God is many times worse. We, no matter what our ages, must learn from Job and Asaph. We must learn that God's way is best even when we cannot see what it is. Many sleepless nights can be avoided when we bow before almighty God and confess that He alone is God. He will help us and will do for us all that we need. Sing Psalter 201:7.

November 8 Read John 14:1-6

Psalm 73:23-24 Even as we consider these words of Asaph, we must see their application to our lives. God knows the path that we must take. Christ has shown that He is the "way, the truth, and the life." Through Him we can go and will go to the Father. As we sit in church today let us ponder this even as we prepare ourselves for the eternal Sabbath which is found in glory. As we hear the Word today, let us know that Word is Christ. Let us know that by God's counsel we will go to glory. This is a great comfort no matter what our station and calling is in this life. To have Him hold us by His almighty right hand should give to us unspeakable comfort. Let us be comforted and let us enjoy the Lord's Day as we use the whole day in worship of God. Sing Psalter 202:1, 203:1 & 2, and 204:2.

November 9 Read Isaiah 26:1-11

Psalm 73:25-26 As Asaph comes to the end of this Psalm he speaks the well known words, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" As our elder saints finish their pilgrimage in this vale of tears, these words can and have brought them immeasurable comfort. The young can also profit from these words. Who is there but God to care for us? Elsewhere in the Psalms we read that if our parents forsake us, God will care for us. As we grow older and become aware of the infirmities of the flesh, we can take much comfort in the truth that God will care for us. We can do this because we know that our death is but a passageway into heaven. The father and mother who lay their infant in the grave can know this comfort, and the aged saint who waits for God to take him home can profit from these words. Nothing or no one can care for us like our heavenly Father. Sing Psalter 202:2, 203: 3 & 4, and 204:3.

November 10 Read Psalm 73:23-28

Psalm 73:27-28 As we come to the end of this Psalm, we once again are taught that the life and outcome of the wicked is much different than that of the righteous. The wicked will be destroyed even though he may have much success in this life. What must we do? We must draw near to God. Drawing near to God means we are drawn to Him by Him. Drawing near to God means that we will flee sin and Satan. Drawing near to God means that we will trust Him over anything on this earth. When we draw near to God, we will declare praise to Him and for Him

for all the wonderful works He had done. Are you drawing near, people of God? Do you want to draw near, young people? Trust in Him and He will care for you in all things. Sing Psalter 202:3, 203:5, and 204:4.

November 11 Read Acts Psalm 74:1-13

Psalm 74:1 While Psalm 73 contained thoughts of Asaph on a personal nature, Psalm 74 contains Asaph's concern for the nation of Israel. There are probably many times when Israel was in the straits mentioned in this Psalm. They were in such dire trouble that Asaph felt that God had cast them off. Asaph and we know that God will not neglect His church. But God will use outside enemies for the church's chastisement. What can we do when God chastises us? We must go to Him in prayer, pray for repentance, and vow to live a godly life. God loves His sheep, but in His love He will chastise us when we go astray. This, too, is for the good of the church and the glory of God's name. Sing Psalter 205:1.

November 12 Read Psalm Luke 12:22-32

Psalm 74:2 As Asaph prays to God for deliverance, he does it in the only way possible. He cannot call upon God to save them for any merit they have. He can only ask for deliverance on the basis of the covenant. What more could we want? God's promises are unchangeable! Verse 2 is full of references to Christ. Asaph only knew Christ from prophecy. He did not have the knowledge that we do. With Luke we can confess that it is God's good pleasure to lead us unto eternal life. The road may be rocky in this life, but it leads to eternal glory with our covenant God. Sing Psalter 205:2.

November 13 Read Habakkuk 1:12-17

Psalm 74:3 The words of this verse are unpopular today. Because man wishes to please God on his own and without faith, he does not wish to think of a God who punishes those who are against God. This is a verse which we describe with the word imprecatory. It is a prayer for deliverance by means of destruction of God's enemies. Notice I said God's enemies. We may want revenge upon one of our personal enemies. That is sinful. We may only pray for God to avenge us of those who bring despite to the glorious name of Christ. Asaph is zealous for the house of the Lord. Are we that zealous? Do we pray that God will protect His sanctuary? We should and we must. Because only in that sanctuary by means of faithful preaching can we find salvation and comfort in this world. Sing Psalter 205:3.

November 14 Read Jeremiah 52:4-11

Psalm 74:4-6 Asaph continues with his description of the desecration of Israel and especially the temple. But as we look at these words and consider the words of Jeremiah, we must see that God sent this chastisement upon Israel for the misuse of the house of God. What about us? When we go to God's house tomorrow, will we sleep? Will we not sing from the heart? Will we listen with a closed ear and a closed heart? Have we erected our own idols in God's house. We need to consider these things, people of God. We must see that God has given to us houses of worship where we may worship Him in spirit and in truth. It is good that we pray for deliverance from God's enemies, but we must also examine our hearts and see if they are in tune with God's heart. Sing Psalter 205:4.

November 15 Read Jeremiah 52:12-23

Psalm 74:7-8 Today is the day of the Lord. Did we examine the manner and the motive of our worship? Are we ready to go into the house of our God with thanksgiving? Are we ready to enter His courts with joy? We can destroy the sanctuary of God by our poor attitudes even as the enemy destroyed the temple. The cause would be the same. Israel refused to worship God as He commanded. They refused to keep His Sabbaths in the way that they were told. God caused the enemy to destroy their places of worship because no worship was taking place. People of God, young people of God, go to God's house and worship. Use this day in the way that He has made it. Only then will our God be with us and will bless us. Sing Psalter 205:5.

November 16 Read Matthew 16:1-12

Psalm 74:9 Asaph's worries continue. Not only is the place of God destroyed, but there also is no Word of God. Was this because God did not care for them any longer? The answer is an emphatic NO! We know that God always loves His church. But He removes His Word from them for a time to draw them back to Him. He has not lost us. We have gone astray. What a horrible thing it is when we cannot hear the Word of our God. You believe that, do you not, people of God? You wanted with all your heart to worship yesterday, didn't you? Seek God while He may be found and He will send to you His Word. Sing Psalter 205:6.

November 17 Read Revelation 6:1-11

Psalm 74:10-11 After listing all the terrible things Israel's enemies have done to them, Asaph asks God how long shall they have to wait for deliverance. The reading for today has the martyrs in heaven asking the same question. We may ask this questions as long as we are waiting patiently. Jesus in Matthew 24 and other passages teaches us about the calling to watch and wait. We must wait because God is not time bound as we are. We must wait for His answer to our prayers because He is good and His time is good. The last question in verse ten is rhetorical by nature. Of course the enemy will not blaspheme forever. When their cup of iniquity is full, God will bring judgment upon them. The words of these two verses make a very proper prayer for the child of God. We must pray because it is part of watching. Sing Psalter 205:7.

November 18 Read Psalm 74:1-13

Psalm 74:12-13a Asaph comes to the reason for the request he has made in the preceding eleven verses of this Psalm. He can with confidence ask such things because God is his king. Not only is God king, He has been king from eternity. His reign has at its center the glory of Christ as shown in the salvation of His people. To us this should bring utmost comfort. As we walk through this vale of tears, we know that our God is working out our salvation. He is doing this throughout the earth. For proof Asaph turns to Israel's salvation through the Red Sea. Do you confess that God is your king of old? Does this bring to you the confidence to continue in this life? With God as our king we will never fall. Sing Psalter 205:8.

November 19 Read Psalm 74:13-23

Psalm 74:13b-15 Our God is a God of power. This we see from these verses. The words dragon and leviathan indicate large formidable sea animals. God controls nature, and he controls it

for the good of his people. All things work out for our salvation. Are you having difficulties with matters in this life? Does it seem that life's troubles are beginning to overwhelm you? God's people throughout the ages have had this trial. What is the answer? The answer is prayer. Even as Asaph goes to God in the confidence that He will help, we can too. In fact we must; it is God's commandment. We must confess that our God is a God of power and then wait with confidence upon Him for deliverance. Sing Psalter 205:9.

November 20 Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

Psalm 74:16-17 When God created during the first week, He created more than tangible things. He also created time in all of its divisions. As you use time are you aware that all time belongs to God because He made it? As day and night pass by do you think that these, too, are God's? Living in an area with four distinct seasons with their own labors helps us to understand this fact as well. God is a God of order and time is orderly. All things are in God's hands because He has ordained the very minute that they will happen. This affords us great comfort because we know that nothing happens by chance. All works to our good. Sing Psalter 206:10.

November 21 Read Song of Solomon 2

Psalm 74:18-19 Asaph is coming to the end of his prayer. I wish to call your attention to one word in these two verses. That word is turtle dove. This bird is a tender thing needing much care. Asaph uses this as a picture of the church. Asaph calls God to remember his poor church who is in need of much help because of the onslaughts of the enemy. We must remember that we will always be a turtledove. It is not in God's counsel for the church to be great in this life. Our demeanor and character must be as the defenseless turtledove. But we have the confidence that Jehovah is our defense. Though it appears that Satan will come against us, God is on our side. He will deliver us from all our troubles. Sing Psalter 205:11.

November 22 Read Leviticus 26:41-46

Psalm 74:20 The first clause of the verse is a command. We might wonder how Asaph dares to make such a command. He can do it in confidence because it is God who has established His covenant with His people, and He will keep that covenant. We are blessed because of the understanding of the covenant that God has given to us. But we need to make this much more than an intellectual understanding. We need to understand this in a spiritual sense. We need to live out of the covenant. By doing this we will have the confidence that whatever the situation our God will deliver us because He is our friend and we are His friend servants. By remembering and living out of the covenant of grace the dark places full of cruelty will never harm or disturb us. Sing Psalter 205:12.

November 23 Read Psalm 73:13-23

Psalm 74:21-23 As we come to the end of this Psalm and prayer let us look back at its elements. First we see the psalmist praying for deliverance from an enemy brought by God because of sin. Then we have noticed Asaph's confidence in God the King of old and the God of power. Finally we see him pray in the confidence that God will conquer His enemies as well as the church's. In these last verses we see that Asaph knows that God

will deliver the church and the church will bring praises to its deliverer. He finishes with a final call for help against a mighty enemy. This is a prayer we need to pray today. We need to come to our God and ask for deliverance from the enemies of God. These enemies are here; make no mistake about that. Pray, people of God, and pray with confidence that God will hear you. Sing Psalter 205:13.

November 24 Read Psalm 75

Psalm 75:1 In two days we celebrate our national Thanksgiving Day here in the United States. For what are we thankful? Is it just the bounties of the past year? Is it just health? Is it just peace in family or church? All of these things are reasons for us to be thankful; there is no doubt about that. But the text says that we should give thanks because God's name is near us. Notice that. His name. Why His name? The reason is simple. God's name or names show to us who He is. We can see Him and His names in His creation. Because His name is evident around us, we can be thankful because He is around us at all times. Look around you, people of God, see His wonderful works, and give thanks to Him. Sing Psalter 206:1.

November 25 Read 2 Samuel 15:1-6

Psalm 75:2 Verse 2 makes quite a statement. To judge uprightly seems to be a lost art these days. Everyone seems to have a different sense of what upright judgment is. Is this true of us? Are we guilty of judging in a less than upright manner. We judge the congregation daily. This is not reserved for the consistory or others who are in authority. When we are with our friends, we make judgments about them and their lives. What is our standard? Who is our model? We must seek to model our judgment after that of the Judge our heavenly Father. Let us seek to judge uprightly because we, too, will be judged by the righteous judge of heaven and earth. Sing Psalter 206:2.

November 26 Read Mark Ezekiel 39:1-10

Psalm 75:3 Today is Thanksgiving Day. The whole nation to some degree or another will celebrate. But because of the truth of verse three, they are unable to exhibit true thankfulness. As the society of this earth becomes dissolved by sin, it is only the church who can stand fast in the sight of our heavenly Father. We need to really examine our motives for thanksgiving today. We need to realize for what we must be thankful. True, thankfulness for temporal items is proper and necessary. But if we are not thankful for our salvation, we, too, will be in danger of dissolving. Christ and His church are the pillars. Let us hold them up before the wicked world and truly thank our heavenly Father. Sing Psalter 206:2.

November 27 Read Psalm Proverbs 12:15-23

Psalm 75:4-6 You will notice two thoughts in this section. First of all the Psalmist speaks of the fool. Then he talks about one of the main characteristics of the fool; the pride that is in him. Before we begin pointing fingers, we need to examine our hearts and our lives. Does the word *I* dominate our conversation? Are we bound to promote ourselves over our neighbor or worse over God? Each of these three verses has an important lesson for us. We need to have these lessons because as Solomon in Proverbs says, "Pride goeth before destruction." We are sure

to bring ourselves, family, schools, and churches to ruin if we persist in being foolish and walk in pride. Sing Psalter 206:3

November 28 Read Daniel 2:14-23

Psalm 75:7 Verse seven lets us know that God is judge. He is the sovereign judge. Does this mean anything to us? Are we willing to bow before almighty God knowing that it is He that raises up some and puts down others? These truths have awesome meaning for how we conduct our lives. They should cause us to pray as the publican not daring to look up toward heaven, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." Do we pray this? Or are we too busy with me first. Are our own wants and desire more important than the service of Jehovah? What about our children? What is the most frequent word in their vocabulary? I or you? People of God, the truth that God is judge should force us to live soberly and lead our children and young people to a sober life. Sing Psalter 206:3.

November 29 Read Revelation 14:8-20

Psalm 75:8 In Israel as they fermented wine and preserved it they worked at getting the bitter dregs out so that the wine would be sweet tasting. God, too, wishes the sweet wine of His creation rid of the bitter dregs of the wicked. He will do this. There is a second figure in this verse. Those bitter dregs of wickedness will be drunk by the wicked throughout eternity. This is of great comfort to the child of God. We can know that our God will have the new heavens and new earth inhabited only by the sweet wine of His church. This should also spur us on to new and godly lives lived to the glory of God and His righteousness. Let us remember these things and pray for our heavenly Father to send His Son quickly. Let us begin on this Sabbath Day to prepare ourselves to live the eternal Sabbath in heaven. Sing Psalter 206:4.

November 30 Read Psalm 75

Psalm 75:9-10 Psalter 206 may have been an unfamiliar number for some of us. But it is one full of many truths for the child of God. I hope you have enjoyed singing it and learning a new song of Zion. We see in these last two verses of Psalm 75 two ideas. First of all we see the psalmist declaring that he will speak of God's works forever. This is to be done, not only by the official preaching of the Word, but also by our daily witness. Secondly we see that singing is to be a part of the life of a Christian. Not liking to sing God's praises is a serious matter and needs much prayer and soul searching. Singing is a great gift that God has given us to praise Him. In the last verse we are once again brought face to face with the truth of the antithesis. What is the end of our lives? Will we be cut off or exalted? By God's grace we will not fall but rather be exalted to declare His name now and for eternity. By His grace we will sing Zion's songs forever. Sing Psalter 206:5.

Confession of Faith (4)

by Rev. Ronald Cammenga

Reprinted from the Standard Bearer Vol. 63 pp. 305-307.

“**H**ave you resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine; to reject all heresies repugnant thereto and to lead a new, godly life?”

Last time we dealt with the first question asked of those who make public confession of faith. We saw that the question emphasizes the importance of the knowledge of faith, that faith which has content. We saw that that content is doctrinal in nature. We saw that the doctrine faith confesses is contained in the Old and New Testaments as summarized in the Reformed creeds. We saw that we confess our faith “in this Christian church,” and we considered the significance of making confession of faith in our own Protestant Reformed Churches.

The second question for confession of faith is closely related to the first question. It treats especially two sub-

the faith we confess is antithetical in nature

jects. First, it emphasizes that the faith we confess is antithetical in nature. Confession of faith does not only involve acknowledging the truth, but the rejection of all false teachings that militate against the truth. Secondly, this second question brings up the importance of the godly walk of the one making confession of faith. In response to this question he resolves before God and the church “...to lead a new, godly life....”

Rejecting False Doctrines

The Christian is not only called to confess the truth, but he is also called to reject the lie. Confession of faith not only means that we profess to believe in the truth of the Word of God, but that we consciously repudiate and

condemn all teachings that contradict the truth of God’s Word. Confession of faith is not only positive; it is also negative. The Christian does not only say “Yes,” but he must also say “No!”

The Scriptures emphasize this important aspect of the Christian’s calling. In I John 4:1, for example, we read: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” In II Thessalonians 3:6 the Apostle writes, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” In Revelation 7:2 the church at Ephesus is commended because “...thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

This antithetical calling has always been a part of the Christian life and confession. The first question speaks of the Old and New Testaments and emphasizes that the content of our faith is drawn from the Old and New Testaments. But what is the nature of the Old and New Testaments? Is the faith set down in the two testaments of Holy Scripture only positive? Or is it also negative? Does Scripture only set forth the truth, or does it also condemn the lie? To ask the question is to answer it. Think of the sharp condemnation of the lie that characterized the Old Testament prophets, that characterized the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, that characterized the teaching and writing of the Apostle Paul.

The first question also referred to the faith which we confess as contained in “the Articles of the Christian faith.” The articles of the Christian faith are the creeds, our Three Forms of Unity: *The Heidelberg Catechism*, *The Belgic Confession of Faith*, and *The Canons of Dordt*. Anyone with any familiarity with our creeds knows the antithetical defense of the faith which the creeds give. The truth is set forth, all right, positively and thoroughly, but also the many errors which oppose the truth are iden-

tified and condemned. The Reformed faith is held forth to be a faith which rejects the errors of Roman Catholicism (think of the language of Q.A. 80 of *The Heidelberg Catechism*), the errors of the Anabaptists, and the errors of the Arminians, to mention only a few.

This makes the Christian faith offensive! This is intolerance of the lie! This is what makes the one who confesses this faith subject to the persecution and reproach of the world and the false church—this refusal to

This is intolerance of the lie! This is what makes the one who confesses this faith subject to the persecution and reproach of the world and the false church....

compromise, this refusal to endure views contrary to the Word of God, this rejection of false teaching.

We are only going to “reject all heresies repugnant” to the truth if we are “resolved” to do this. There must be, according to this second question, a firm resolution to live according to the truth. This points out that the truth must not only be in our heads, but also in our hearts. We must not simply know the truth, but we must love and cherish the truth. We are never going to adhere to the truth, we are certainly not going to reject all heresies repugnant to the truth, unless the truth exists as a firm resolution in our hearts.

If we are resolved to adhere to the doctrine of the Scriptures, then we are not only going to confess creation, but we are going to reject evolution. We are not only going to receive the Bible as the inspired Word of God, but we are going to reject every teaching about the Bible that reduces it to the word of man. We are not only going to confess that Jesus is God come into the flesh, but we are going to reject every view of Jesus that makes Him to be only a mere man. We are not only going to confess the truth of marriage, but we are going to reject every notion that makes unbiblical divorce and remarriage permissible. We are not only going to confess the truth of sovereign grace, but we are going to reject the

teaching that salvation is due to the free-will of the sinner.

A New And Godly Life

But there is more involved in confession of faith. Confession of faith is not only knowledge of the doctrines of Holy Scripture. Confession of faith is not even the ability to articulate these doctrines and vigorously to defend these doctrines. Confession of faith also involves the determination to live a life in harmony with that confession. When we make confession of faith, we promise before God and His Church that we will adorn our confession with an upright and holy walk. This is indicated in the second question by the fact that we promise “to live a new, godly life.”

The Scriptures emphasize the importance of the walk of God’s people. Our emphasis on the importance of doctrine must never lead us to disparage the importance of a godly walk. The Apostle speaks, in Romans 6:4, of this “new life” according to which we are to walk: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” In Colossians 2:6 Paul writes, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” To the Thessalonians he writes, “Furthermore, then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.”

By speaking of the doctrines which we confess in the first question, and mentioning the Christian walk of life in the second question, the *Form For Public Confession Of Faith* establishes the proper relationship between these two aspects of the believer’s life.

That connection is, first of all, that sound doctrine is the foundation of the Christian life. Apart from doctrine, knowing, believing, and confessing the doctrine, there is no possibility of living the Christian life. The true doctrine must be what motivates and guides us in our everyday life in the world. This is why the first duty of the faithful minister is to preach the doctrine, I Timothy 4:16. This is why the first duty of the believer is to receive the doctrine.

We see this connection between doctrine and life today. Ignorance of some of the most fundamental doctrines of the Word of God prevails in the churches. People perish for lack of knowledge; there is a famine of the Word of God. What is the result of this? The result of this doctrinal ignorance is unbelievable wickedness in

the lives of the members of the church, disobedience to the commandments of God's law, and unholy living.

But there is another connection between doctrine and life. That connection is that the Christian's walk of life is the proof and evidence of the faith that he confesses. Belief of the truth necessarily shows itself in a godly walk. The true and complete doctrine that we acknowledge must be expressed in our daily life. And if the new and godly walk does not follow, it only indicates that our confession was a fraud.

James indicates this relationship between doctrine and life in his epistle. He writes in James 2:14, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" In verse 19 he says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." The conclusion? "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone," James 2:17.

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That this must be a "new," godly life must not be misunderstood. We must not suppose that the one confessing his faith is now called, for the first time, in virtue of his public confession of faith, to begin living a godly, Christian life. It is not as if up to this point he has lived a godless and disobedient life, but from now on and henceforth he promises to correct this situation and live as a Christian.

Not at all! The word "new" does not strike a contrast before and after confession of faith. The "new" and godly life is something to which

the one confessing his faith has been called long ago and is the life that he has already for some time been living. Instead, the contrast is between the "old" man and the "new" man in the believing child of God. By virtue of his confession of faith he promises to live according to the principle of the new man. He resolves to fight the good fight of faith, to put off the old man with his deeds, and thus to live a "new, godly life."

Next time, the Lord willing, we will finish our discussion of this second question. ❖

Rev. Cammenga is pastor of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

Bible

Wonderful, God breathed

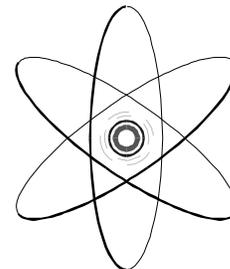
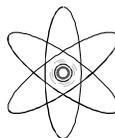
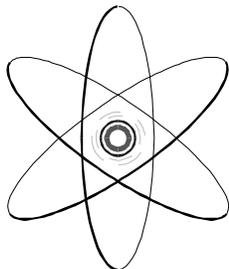
Disciplining, instructing, decreeing

Word of God

Guide to life

by Lisa Baldwin

Lisa, 10, attends Carmel Christian School in Charlotte, North Carolina. This poem is a cinquain that is a five-lined poem without a title. The first line is a noun, which is the subject of the poem. The second line is two adjectives; the third line is three verbs ending in "ing" which describe the subject. The fourth line is a short statement, which depicts the subject. The last line is an imaginative phrase illustrating the subject.



The Elements

by John Huizenga

The huge machinery growled and shook as it ripped hungrily into the earth tearing out chunks of rock. The rock was crushed and loaded onto an endless string of rail cars that carried it toward a city and into an enormous building with rows of smokestacks billowing putrid smoke. Inside the building, conveyers hastened the rock up and into a blistering furnace where the temperature soared past the temperature of your kitchen oven, past the temperature of a bonfire, and up toward 3000 degrees Fahrenheit. At this temperature, the rock began to change; the smallest particles within the rock, the atoms, began to shake loose from the bonds which held them so firmly together.

This rock is called iron ore and consists primarily of iron atoms and oxygen atoms. With this intense heat, the atoms of iron could no longer hold onto the atoms of oxygen. Amid the frenzy of free flying oxygen and iron atoms is introduced a new kind of atom; an atom of carbon which bumped into the oxygen atoms only to trap them into a stronger bond which the heat of the fires could not loosen. On went each carbon atom bearing two captured oxygen atoms leaving the iron behind and floating upward and out the smokestack as carbon dioxide gas.

The iron now left behind was poured into molds where it cooled and the atoms again became “sticky” as the forces which drew them together overpowered the waning energy of heat. Now the force of machinery took over again to push, squeeze, and pull at the atoms until they were just so. Giant rollers squeezed the atoms; another pulled and drew the iron into a long thin shiny wire. High speed rollers fed the wire into another machine that cut, bent, and stacked each piece into a neat row that was glued together and packed in a box. The box was opened again, the wires removed and placed in

a simple hand held device that would press them through the pages you are reading and fasten them together.

Those atoms of iron that make up the staple affixing the pages before you are distinct and unique from the other 109 other known elements of the universe; yet in a way, very similar. Iron is very similar to Oxygen, for example, because both substances are made of just three things: protons, neutrons, and electrons. Everything in the earthly realm of creation is made out of these three basic things. Every known atom consists of a nucleus of protons and neutrons around which a flurry of electrons, equal in number to the number of protons, randomly orbit. The only difference between the various elements is the numbers of these parts. This is quite remarkable considering that in our day-to-day experience, when you have a cup of cereal, a half cup of milk, and a pinch of sugar, you have a bowl of cereal. If you have 3 cups of cereal, a cup and a half of milk, and three pinches of sugar, then you have a very big bowl of cereal, not something entirely different as you do in the atomic world.

In the atomic world the addition of more parts makes something entirely different. Let us consider a few examples. Hydrogen is a colorless gas. An atom of hydrogen contains one electron and one proton. An atom of Iron contains 26 electrons and 26 protons. If you were able to remove ten protons and ten electrons you would have an atom with 16 electrons and 16 protons. The atom you would have would no longer be iron, but would be chlorine, a poisonous green gas necessary for plant life. If you were able to add 11 protons and 11 electrons you would have Krypton, a gas used in light bulbs. Each of the atoms with fewer and more electrons than iron have very unique, surprising, and amazing properties considering they are all made of three basic parts.

The various elements are the building blocks of everything in the created material world. It is like having a tinker-toy set with 109 different kinds of parts and the parts change unexpectedly when combined. For example, the arrangement of oxygen atoms (gas) and hydrogen atoms (gas) is such that two hydrogen atoms attach with an oxygen atom to form water (liquid at room temperature). This is only one of the endless possibilities of combining the building blocks of creation. The study of these atoms and how they interact with one another as well as the manipulation of the elements to make new substances is known as chemistry.

During the creation, God not only made all the electrons, neutrons, and protons, He also fashioned them into the elements and further arranged the elements to make all the living creatures and things necessary for life. The complexity of the arrangement of a few different kinds of atoms into a living creature defies comprehension, and all the various living creatures and the environment in which they live are one harmonious whole. Even today as man thrills to arrange these building blocks into computer chips, plastic, and medicine, they are as nothing in comparison to what God has made. Fallen man tries to imagine that the created world is the natural outcome of a random mixing of all the elements and that his work in chemistry has something of a divine touch that elevates the works of man above everything else. The folly of this is readily exposed by the fact that nearly every chemical “invention” (for example—much of the medicine) of man is really only a copy of what God has already made. The folly of man is exposed by the fact that the very existence of the elements is upheld only by the power of God.

Recognizing the ridiculous pride of man as he plays with the building blocks of creation, let us look at the elements through the spectacles of Scripture. In the first place we see that the very substance of every element, the very electrons, protons, neutrons and energy associated with these were created with the very first creative word of God (Genesis 1:1). All the elements were fashioned into a perfectly harmonious world of living and nonliving creatures that was to be ruled by man for the glory of God (Genesis 1:28).

Looking through the spectacles of Scripture to man and his use of the raw elements of the earth we find “Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron” (Genesis 4:22). Tubal-cain had isolated an element of the earth that would be very useful for his goal in life as well as the goal of natural man ever since the fall—to

control his environment for his own safety and happiness. The original harmony and goodness of the world had been corrupted by sin, so man seeks to create his own world out of the rubble of the original creation. Control has been and still is the driving force behind man’s efforts to fashion the elements for his use. It gives him the false security of viewing himself as a creative god. Looking just at man’s development in the use of iron we find it used in the chariot (Joshua 17:16; Joshua 17:18; Judges 1:19; Judges 4:3), fetters (Psalm 105:18; Psalm 107:10; Psalm 107:16; Psalm 149:8), horns of power (I Kings 22:11; II Chron. 18:10; Micah 4:13), and weapons (Numbers 35:16; I Sam-uel 17:7; Job 20:24; Job 41:7), just to name a few. All these things are displays of man’s power and control.

Though fallen man seeks to make a world of his own out of the rubble of the original creation apart from God, God gives the wisdom of the chemist into the service of His people for the gathering of the church as well. God gave Bezaleel a special understanding of the elements to build the tabernacle and fashion the instruments of worship out of metal (Exodus 37; I Chron. 2:19-20). Later Solomon hired the best worker of the elements, Hiram, to fashion metals for use in the temple (I Kings 7:14; I Chron. 22:3; I Chron. 29:2; I Chron. 29:7). Today the godly as well as the ungodly make new inventions as they learn how to work with the elements. The godly rejoice in the wisdom of God as they discover the wonders of creation and seek to serve God with their gifts of understanding. The ungodly are lifted up in pride to their own destruction.

Taking a broad view of the elements through the spectacles of Scripture we see that God created the elements, He formed them into the present world, and He gave man the power to form new things with the elements. We also get a glimpse of what God will do with the elements in the future. Though man sees in the atoms and elements laws of conservation in which atoms and energy are never really destroyed and difficult to change (recently man has used the “atom smasher” to alter atoms), God will dramatically change the elements. In II Peter 3:10 & 12, we read that the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The meaning of “elements” in these verses means “the first principle and fundamental of something.” The word also has the idea of something orderly in arrangement. These concepts are very much a part of our idea of elements in the scientific realm today. The word “melt” in the original means “to loosen.” The very building blocks of the creation will be so shaken

that not two will be left together as they were placed in the original creation. The fires of God's judgment will be hotter than the very sun and the whole universe will be destroyed.

In light of passages such as Romans 8:22-23, we have reason to believe that the substance of the first creative act of God will be preserved but will be changed into something suitable for heavenly existence. God will not bring to nothing everything He called into existence. We read in Romans 8 "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." This word of God indicates that God's people as well as the whole creation will be preserved.

It will be transformed even as our dead bodies which may be dissolved into separate atoms and become a part of something else will be raised again when Christ returns. When God spoke His first words of creative power, He spoke then already with a view to a transformation and resurrection of that world into the heavenly. When God created the present heavens and earth, He made it for the heavenly. By a wonder of God, the elements will be arranged again into the new heavens and the new earth. The filth and corruption of the rebellion of man which permeated every aspect of creation will be burned away.



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Where We Stand

"Living the Antithesis" (1)

(or, "Living *with* God and *apart from* the World")¹

by Prof. David J. Engelsma

¹*This is the text of the keynote address to the Convention of Protestant Reformed young people at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan on July 20, 1998.*

Of all the opportunities that I have to speak to different groups (other than preaching on the Lord's Day, of course), speaking to you, young people at a Protestant Reformed young people's convention, means the most to me. This is because of who you are: not simply young people, but young people who are God's children and, therefore, precious to God and to me. This is not flattery (the Bible abhors flattery), but the truth.

This truth about you is basic to the theme of the convention, "Living the Antithesis."

If we take as our working definition of the "antithesis" that the antithesis is the real, spiritual separation

that God has put between His children and the ungodly world, it is plain to everyone that the antithesis, and particularly *living* the antithesis by His children, is one of the main teachings of Scripture.

The antithesis was not invented by a few Reformed ministers in the early 1920's; it is not a pet doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches. It is a prominent, emphasized, essential part of the Christian faith and life.

the antithesis is the real,
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and the ungodly world

Deny the antithesis, and you endanger the entire Christian faith. Lose the antithesis, and you can say “goodbye” to the Christian life.

The fifth chapter of Ephesians, from which the convention-text is taken, is all about the antithesis and living the antithesis. Do not let fornication, uncleanness, or covetousness even be named among you (v. 3). Keep yourself from filthiness, foolish talking, and dirty jokes (v. 4). Do not share in the life of the disobedient world upon whom the wrath of God is coming (v. 6). Do not have fellowship even with the unfruitful and shameful *works* of darkness (vv. 11, 12).

What is the Holy Spirit saying to the church and every member today as in the first century? Live in separation from the wicked world! Or, live *apart from* the wicked world! Live apart from the *people!* Live apart from their wicked *deeds*, their *way of life!*

For this reason, I have phrased one part of the topic of my speech, “Living ... *apart from* the World.” Note the preposition, “*apart from*.”

There is another aspect to living the antithesis that may not be overlooked. This is positive. This is the reason why the children of God must live apart from the world. It is that you live *with* God—in close, warm, delightful friendship with the triune, living God. Note the preposition, “*with*.”

This aspect of the antithesis is also found in Ephesians 5. The chapter opens with the words, “Be followers (or, imitators) of God, as dear children.”

**This then is what is meant by
the antithesis, specifically, *living*
the antithesis: you live *with* God
and *apart from* the world.**

This then is what is meant by the antithesis, specifically, *living* the antithesis: you live *with* God and *apart from* the world.

Basic to this is who you are.

Who You Are

You are *children of God*. This is how I must view you tonight, and this is how I must address you. I must urge you to live antithetically, *because you are children of God*. This is the viewpoint of the (well-chosen) theme-

text, Ephesians 5:8: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” First, who we are: “light in the Lord.” Then, how to live: “walk as children of light.”

The Spirit does not say to us, “Live in the right way, and then you may become the children of light,” or, “If you live the right way, God will make you His children.” Rather: “This is who you are: light and children of light. Know this about yourselves! Know who you are! Now, since this is who you are, walk, or live, this way—the only way fitting for such people!”

Light is holiness: separation from sin and devotion to the good God. To be a child of light is the same as to be a child of God, for God is light. He is the God of holiness, entirely separate from sin and devoted to Himself as Father and Son in the Holy Spirit. We are children in the full, real sense: we share God’s life; we have His characteristic; we are like Him in being holy.

This was God’s gracious act. He made us children of light. We had nothing to do with it, anymore than we had something to do with becoming children of our earthly parents. He saved us by His almighty grace in our heart. What moved Him to do this was His own electing love in eternity. The basis was the cross of Jesus Christ.

By this gracious, saving act, God put the antithesis in our lives. He made us light, which is holiness, and holiness is separation from wickedness and devotion to God.

This is who you are. The antithesis is built into you.

The Young People are Children of Light

The great question, though, at a Protestant Reformed Young People’s Convention is this: what right does the speaker have to view a convention of *young people* as light and as children of light? What right do the young people have to know themselves that way?

Why do I not look out over the crowd of young people tonight and see children of darkness, children of the devil, to whom the only thing I can say is, “Repent! Be converted!” and, “I hope that someday some of you may *become* children of light.”

I do not view you this way. I do not address you this way. You may not know yourselves this way. If I did view you this way, I could not exhort you, “Walk as children of light.” At the most I could say, “Try not to live too devilishly,” or, “Try to be a little decent in your outward behavior, so as not to embarrass your family and church.” One cannot call children of darkness to walk as children of light. And if the church insists on telling her

young people, “You are unsaved children of darkness,” the young people will naturally—and certainly—conclude, “If this is what we are, we might as well live this way.”

You are children of light and must know yourselves as children of light, because of God’s grace to your parents and to you in His covenant. You are children of believers, baptized in infancy and trained in the Word of God. God includes you in His covenant. In this covenant He made his promise to you, to make you His children—children of light. And He has kept this promise, regenerating you, sanctifying you, and giving you faith in Jesus Christ by His Spirit. As a rule He saved you in earliest childhood. You are “in the Lord,” as the theme-text wonderfully announces.

Not every one!

God does not elect every boy and girl born to believing parents. Christ did not die for every one. Not every one receives the new birth from above by the Holy Spirit. Nor is every elect child born again and converted in childhood.

There may be some at the convention who are not light, but darkness. They attend the convention for the wrong reason: to raise hell, not to live the life of heaven with other children of light. I hope not, but it may be.

I warn them: hate your darkness; sorrow over it; seek forgiveness in Jesus; walk with the others here as children of light. If you refuse, you face God’s wrath. He knows how to handle you.

The others must reprove them, just as in the life of the congregation at home.

The children of darkness that may be among you do not determine who you are, how you view yourselves, and how I must view you. God has settled that in His covenant with you: children of light. Since this is who

...children of light.
Since this is who you are,
live this way. This makes
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you are, live this way. This makes sense, doesn’t it? *Be what you are!* Be what God has made you! Don’t try to be what you are not. How crazy can we get that a child of light tries to live like a child of darkness, especially when darkness is folly, shame, misery, and death!

To live the antithesis, you must know who *you* are. You must also know what the ungodly *world* is, the world outside the church.

What the World Is

It is important that you know what the world is, because living the life of the antithesis consists of separating yourselves from the world. If the world is good, if it is light too, just as you are, or if the world is not completely evil, why then you need not be separate from it, but may have fellowship with the world, may live *with* it, just as you are to live *with* God.

This is exactly what the world wants us to think about it. Especially the young people make serious mistakes here, to their own misery and to the dishonor of God. We adults have our characteristic sins also, and they are not less wicked and stupid than those that are characteristic of youth. But young people tend to underestimate the evil and danger of the world. This is why I beseech you to get advice from and listen to your parents, your minister, and other older members of the church. *In God’s name and for your own good, listen to your parents, your grandparents, your minister, and your elders!*

**In God’s name and for your
own good, listen to your
parents, your grandparents,
your minister, and your elders!**

The ungodly young man seems so friendly and loving, but his motive is fornication with the young woman in the church. The unbelieving young woman seems so nice, much nicer in fact than the young women in the church, but her intention is to lure the young man of the church away from the church, the truth, and, ultimately, from Christ.

The sexually filthy, violent videos, movies, and television programs present themselves to you merely as harmless entertainment, but their purpose is to control your thinking and feeling, then to capture your behavior, and finally to enslave you.

The anti-Christian education of the state schools, especially in higher education, appeals to you as being tolerant, broadminded, and even as pursuing truth, but its power is to weaken, and if it were possible, to destroy your faith.

You must know what the world is. By the world here I do not mean God's creation, which is good, nor the ordinances of creation, such as marriage and civil government, which are also good. But I mean all unbelieving, ungodly people, whether "decent," or indecent. I mean also the works, or system of life, produced by the ungodly. These works and system of life include music that blasphemes God, promotes disobedience to God, and glorifies what is shameful. This system of life also includes the thinking, advertising, heroes, and way of life of a nation that promote the idea that man's happiness is everything, and that this happiness is purely and simply earthly.

The world is darkness, only darkness, that is, sinful, opposed to God, unholy.

This is the faithful witness by the Protestant Reformed Churches. These churches (of which most of you are members) began some 75 years ago now with a protest against the false teaching of "common grace." This exceedingly harmful doctrine was approved at that time by the church to which the founders of the Protestant Reformed Churches belonged. The doctrine of "common grace" teaches that God works in ungodly men and women, who are outside of Christ, by His grace, to keep them from being totally depraved, to make them good in part, and to enable them to do good works in everyday life.

According to "common grace," the church is light, but the world is light also.

Because the world is good, the people of God may have some friendship with the world, may cooperate with the world, can even learn from the world—learn what the Bible is, learn how the universe came into being, learn how to structure the family, learn about right enjoyment of sex.

Common grace" is the death of the antithesis.

"Common grace" is the death of the antithesis. For the antithesis, by definition, is *separation* from the world.

History has proved that "common grace" is the death of the antithesis. History has proved this in that church from which the Protestant Reformed Churches were put out. "Common grace" has permitted all kinds of friendship with unbelieving people, especially for the young people. "Common grace" has opened that church up to evolution, feminism, and homosexuality, which is the burning issue in that church today. "Common grace" threw the door open to worldly pleasures, such as movies and dancing. "Common grace" has powerfully affected that church's young people's convention. It has introduced non-Reformed, heretical speakers; comedians; rock bands; and, in general, a worldly program.

You must know and embrace and carry on the life-and-death struggle of the Protestant Reformed Churches against "common grace".

You must do so on behalf of the antithesis for yourselves and your children in days to come and, thus, for the continuing of the Protestant Reformed Churches as sound, faithful, true churches of God.

Ephesians 5 gives a clear testimony that the world of the ungodly is darkness, only darkness. According to verse 8—your theme-text—it is either/or: darkness or light. The unbelieving world is darkness; the believing church is light. According to verse 6, not the grace of God but the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience, and this is why we are not to be partakers with them.

Fact is, the world is becoming darker. There is development of unholiness. You can see this today. Ephesians 5:12 teaches that in the time of the apostle the world did certain shameful deeds "in secret." Now they perform these same deeds *publicly*: in the sight of everybody on television. The wicked world is filling the cup of their iniquity. The kingdom of Antichrist is forming before your eyes. There is defiant, shameless, lawlessness.

Know who you are, and know what the world is. Only then will you *live* the antithesis, actually *live* it. ❖

(to be continued)

Prof. Engelsma is Professor of Dogmatics in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Through Strife to Victory

Chapter 10

The Aftermath

by Rev. C. Hanko

Classis East met on August 20, 1924. At the time of this classis, the consistory of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church was still confronted with the fact that there were members of Eastern Avenue who had accused the pastor of being guilty of public sin and heresy and who were, because of this, under censure. This charge of public sin and heresy had been ceremoniously rejected by the synod; in fact, the Synod had declared Rev. Herman Hoeksema to be fundamentally Reformed, be it with a tendency toward one-sidedness. It is with regard to this issue that

Classis East made its first serious mistake. Even though the synod had decided not to discipline the pastor, which was contrary to Reformed Church polity anyway, Classis proceeded to do so. Classis felt that it now had a weapon whereby it could exercise this discipline upon Rev. Hoeksema and began by demanding that the discipline be lifted from the members of the Eastern Avenue congregation who were presently under censure on account of their accusations. For Eastern Avenue CRC's consistory to lift the censure from those members who revealed bitter hatred against their pastor, and in so doing declare that Rev. Hoeksema was guilty of the sin of heresy, was simply something that the consistory could not do. To do so would create havoc in the congregation and would force them to act contrary to their own conviction and conscience. That was impossible!

What did this imply? The refusal of the consistory to lift the censure of those who opposed their minister could have been considered an act of rebellion against the Classis, if it were true that the Classis is a higher ruling body than the consistory. But it should be understood that, according to Reformed Church Polity, the Classis is not a *higher*, but rather a *broader* ecclesiastical body. The authority of Christ rests with the consistory. Only the consistory can depose from office. The Classis or Synod

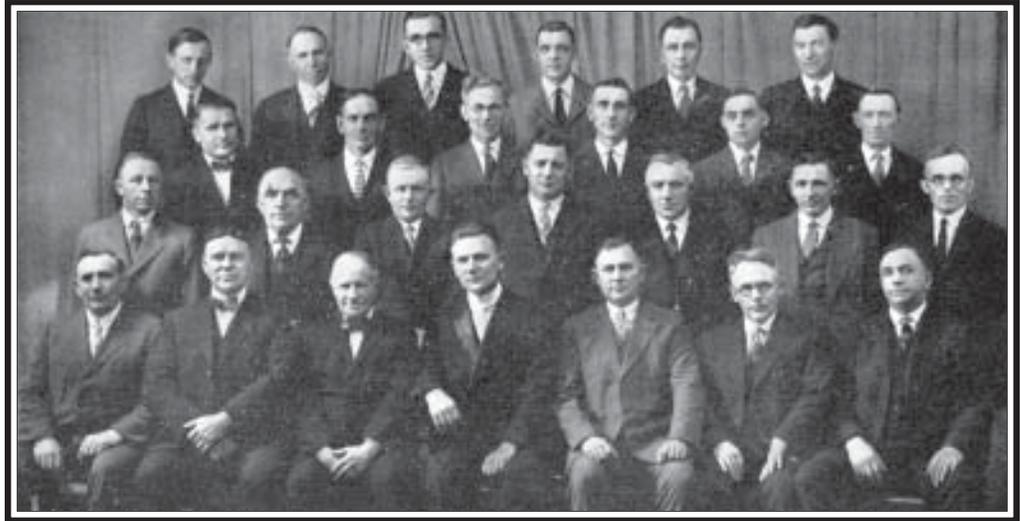


The Bashful Bunch: left to right, Berkhof, Volbeda, Tenhoor, and Heyns.

can *advise* deposition, but never execute it. If a consistory refuses to follow the *advice* of the Classis or the Synod, this consistory can be declared outside of the denomination, but never deposed from office by Classis or Synod.

Because of this decision of Classis, the consistory called a meeting of all the confessing members of the congregation, giving them an opportunity to voice their protest against the Classis. It was clearly expressed that this was no congregational meeting in the formal, official sense of the word. Thus for example, the men and women present were not asked to vote. The members were informed of the crisis that had arisen through the action of Classis East, of which they were deeply involved and therefore, they were also given opportunity to file their protest against this action of the Classis. At this meeting more than eight hundred members of the congregation signed a formal protest to be presented to the next convening classis. Contrary to this, fifty members of the congregation signed a protest against this meeting that was held, charging that Eastern Avenue's consistory had given women the right to be present and to vote at an official congregational meeting. Moreover, this group refused to celebrate the Lord's Supper with the consistory and congregation as long as the "heretical" preaching of the pastor was not condemned.

A direct result of this meeting was that ninety-two members of Eastern Avenue congregation made a request that the classical committee call an early session of classis, because of the situation within the Eastern Avenue congregation. In spite of the objections of Eastern Avenue consistory, the classical committee complied with this request. This was plainly the beginning of the end of the relationship between the Eastern Avenue church and the rest of the denomination. No one in the congregation wondered what the final outcome would be, all



The deposed consistory of Eastern Avenue CRC.

Top row (left to right): S. Veltman, S. Douma, B. Frieswijk, R. Timmer, D. VanderVennen, P. Ezinga.

Second row: R. Doezema, T. Helmholtz, J. Buiten, O. Van Ellen, M. Piersma, E. Korhorn.

Third row: F. Sytsma, J. Pronk, A. Pol, N. VanderWal, M. Koning, J. Hofman, S. Bylsma

Seated: M. VanderVennen, H. Pastoor, S. Bylsma, Rev. H. Hoeksema, S.G. Shaafsma, R. VanDellen, G. Stonehouse.

were prepared for a break, which could no longer be avoided.

The special classis meeting was called for on November 19, 1924, and intermittently meetings were held until December 12, 1924. At this Classis there were three overtures. Two of these were from local consistories requesting that Rev. Hoeksema and his consistory be required to sign the three points as adopted by the previous synod. The third was a request of the ninety-two protestants who opposed Rev. Hoeksema and his consistory on account of their denial of common grace.

The ninety-two presented two contradictory requests to the classis:

1. That classis support them in declaring that Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed consistory had severed themselves from the Christian Reformed denomination, and acknowledge the ninety-two as the real and faithful congregation of Eastern Avenue.

2. That classis demand of the consistory and pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church an unconditional promise to abide by the decisions and declarations of the classis and synod.

One sees the contradiction at once. If the consistory of Eastern Avenue were no longer connected with the Christian Reformed Church, the classis could not and needed no longer to demand of them that they abide by the decisions and declarations of the classis and synod.

Along with the overture, these protestants also requested that classis appoint the professors of the seminary to act as advisors at their meetings which the Classis approved. Because of this, the sessions of classis were somewhat like a correspondence course, since the professors preferred not to be present at the meetings of the classis. First, the consistory of Eastern Avenue presented their answer to the classis. Second, Classis adjourned to give the professors opportunity to study the matter and furnish their advice. Third, Classis would again meet and consider both the answer of Eastern Avenue and the advice given by the professors and make a decision. Fourth, Classis would once more adjourn to give the consistory of the Eastern Avenue church opportunity to furnish their answer. Throughout all of this, the Classis continued to demand of the pastor and his consistory that they sign the three points, even though this was not requested of the other ministers and consistories in the denomination.

By this time both interest and feelings ran high among the members of the Eastern Avenue church, as well as among many others. Whenever the Classis met, the meetings were well attended. Many visitors filled the auditorium, even when the Classis moved from Neland Avenue to Oakdale Church. From early morning until about five o'clock in the afternoon, many women, (taking their needle work with them), students from Calvin College, as well as others, were present to watch the course of the events. In the evening sessions the husbands as well as others would be present, always anxiously and prayerfully awaiting the outcome. The Sunday before the outcome, especially in the evening service, the Eastern Avenue church auditorium had standing room only. Many visitors came, and to accommodate, chairs were placed in the aisles and on the platform. Repeatedly the fire department chief came to send away those who stood in the hallways.

As Classis reconvened after the weekend, it became obvious that the professors who once had appreciated the assistance of Rev. Herman Hoeksema in exposing the errors in the teachings of Prof. Janssen were now ready to help in deposing him from his office. In spite of the fact that Synod had waived all discipline and had declared Rev. Hoeksema to be fundamentally Reformed,

the Classis, under the direction of the professors of Calvin seminary, was determined to carry out the deposition. In spite of the fact that the Synod had declared the entire subject of common grace to need more study, the Classis was determined that anyone who denied this doctrine was worthy of being branded a heretic and thrust outside of the church. In spite of the fact that a Classis, according to Reformed church polity, does not have the jurisdiction to depose an office bearer, (and the ninety-two protestants from the Eastern Avenue congregation had made Classis aware of this), Classis deposed the consistory of Eastern Avenue from their office, and first suspended and then later deposed the minister also.

As reported in the Dec. 12, 1924 Grand Rapids Press, Rev. Hoeksema's final remarks to the Classis before it proceeded to his suspension were these:

If matters were so that I thought as Mr. Veldkamp thinks (who suggested that Rev. Hoeksema should appeal to the next synod and in the meantime be silent about his convictions) I would not hesitate to yield. My heart bleeds at the thought of separation. I assure you again that it is not I who seeks separation. I was born in this church and I love it. Out of reverence for the truth and right I can give you no other answer. Had I thought, had I one hope, could I believe that the confessional standards are not involved, I would yield. But we have followed this course. The synod did not restrain us, it did not ask us to sign these three points at issue, and because they did not it is not incumbent upon us to keep silence.

Does the Classis want to question me on the Confession,—on the Canons, on the Catechism—I am ready. But that is not the case. I was asked to put my signature to the three points, to refrain from preaching and teaching against them. There is no authority for that in the Acts of Synod. I maintain that I need not sign the three points to be orthodox. I cannot remain silent for a year and a half until Synod meets again. Therefore, brethren, take the matter earnestly. I am satisfied in my soul. I am going to speak. Others are permitted to speak, must I keep silent? I go on in my interpretation of the will of God." ❖

Rev. Hanko is an emeritus minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America and is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

One Young Man

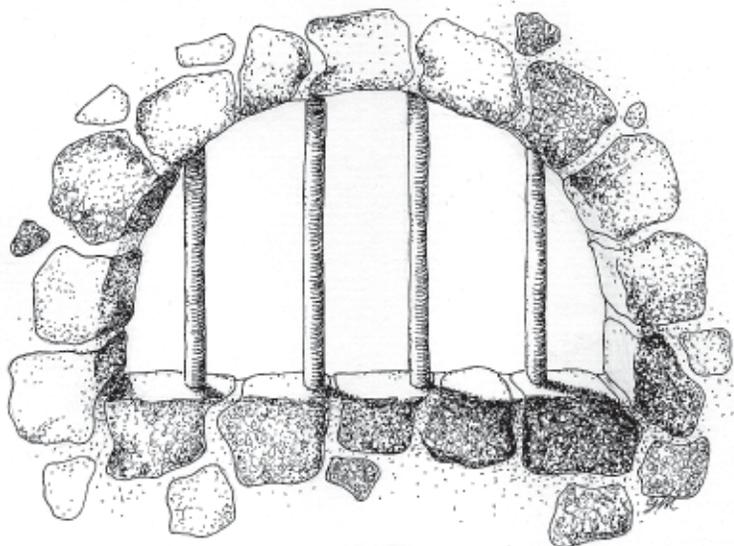
(Psalm 119)

He was a young man, a mere youth, strong and healthy. He should have been out working, learning a trade, and enjoying his family and friends. But he was in trouble. Deep trouble. Chains fettered his ankles, hunger gnawed at his stomach, and the stench of filth and rot continually bombarded his nostrils in the damp, dark prison.

Why? What had he done to deserve such punishment? That's the worst of it. He had done nothing. In fact, he was an educated, respectable, godly young man. Very godly. He loved God's Word above all else! And when princes unjustly accused him, did he strike back? No. He meditated. He meditated upon Scripture and thought about the laws of God. What a remarkable young man!

He did not have all 66 books of the Bible to read and meditate upon, either. Only some of the first ones existed, but these he embraced with his whole heart. Never despairing, never whining, he ever delighted in God's Word. If his soul broke at all, it broke because of his extreme longing for the law of God, not because of the dark, lonely dungeon. Indeed, he was thankful for his affliction. It taught him the statutes of God and kept him from going astray. Besides, poor and destitute as prisoners are, he had what was sweeter than honey and worth more than gold! He had God's Word hid in his heart.

One young man, who loved the Word of God. May we be so rich.



"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

* * * * *

Did you know...

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible? Of its 176 verses, almost every one contains a name for the Word of God. Being in the form of an acrostic, it is divided into 22 sections and each section is called by a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each section also has eight verses, and if you could read Hebrew, you could see that each of these eight verses starts with a word that is spelled with that letter. Amazing pattern and poetry!

Here is a little poem to show you how the pattern of Psalm 119 works:

The A B C's of Prayer

*Always pray o'er all your day,
At your work and at your play.*

*Busy showing forth His praise,
Bring your thanks to Him always.*

*Cast your cares on Him that so
Closer to Him you will grow.*

Can you write a poem, too?

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

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Church News

BAPTISMS

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Tice Gordon, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Lubbers—Byron Center, MI
Gerrit Richard, son of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Tolsma—Edmonton, Alberta
Charity Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Koole—Faith, MI
Trevor James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan VanOverloop—Faith, MI
Samuel Harry, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Bomers—Hope, MI
Meghan Hope, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Vink—Hope, MI
Sarah Michelle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Essenberg—Hudsonville, MI
Heidi Ranae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Loren Gritters—Hull, IA
Mark Brian, son of Mr. & Mrs. Carl Maassen—Hull, IA
Hilary Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Andringa—Hull, IA
Philip Stephan, son of Dr. & Mrs. Slice—Hull, IA
Trevor Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Poortinga—Peace, IL
Joseph Scott, son of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Kunst—Southeast, MI
Lance Mitchell & Lanae Marie, infant children of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Pastoor—Southeast, MI
Rachel Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Bartelds—Southeast, MI
Grant Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Reitsma—Southeast, MI
Sean Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Cleary—Southwest, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 10:10

Public profession of faith in our Lord Jesus

Christ was made by:

Jeremy Hoekstra—Goergetown, MI
Monica Hoekstra—Goergetown, MI
Mark Meinzer—Goergetown, MI
Leah Engelsma—Goergetown, MI
Christine Schipper—Goergetown, MI
Mark Van Vuuren—Goergetown, MI
David Brands—Loveland, CO
Ben Cammenga—Southwest, MI

MARRIAGES *"...and they twain shall be one flesh."*

Matthew 19:5

United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Chris Fisher & Miss Michelle Westhuis—Goergetown, MI
Mr. James Langerak & Miss Mary Rutgers—Grace, MI
Mr. Chris Dykstra & Miss Laura Kamps—Hope, MI
Mr. Daniel Kalsbeek & Miss Tamara DeMeester—Hope, MI
Mr. William Moore & Miss Rebecca Kats—Loveland, CO
Mr. Nathan Pipe & Miss Tanya Haskins—Southeast, MI
Mr. Patrick Lenting and Miss Jennifer Overway—Holland, MI
Mr. Brad Duistermars and Miss Dorothy Kalsbeek—Hope, MI
Mr. Josh Visser and Miss Shawn Hoksbergen—Hull, IA
Mr. Timothy Joostens and Miss Heidi Blok—Lynden, WA
Mr. Brent Snippe and Miss Alisa Ophoff—Southeast, MI
Mr. Calvin den Hartog and Miss Bethany Kuiper—Southeast, MI