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# *Beacon Lights*

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# Obedience to the Authority of God

by Aaron J. Cleveland



**B**y nature, all of us are children of disobedience. We all live in disobedience to God's law. We, by nature, resist the order of God and all of His commandments. This evil disobedient nature which we have is that of our first parents. Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:16,17 and 3:6) disobeyed the explicit command of God not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was this disobedience of Adam that made us all sinners. In Romans 5:19 we read, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." This sinful disobedient nature which we have puts us at enmity with God and affects our thoughts, words, and actions.

We are disobedient in many ways. We are disobedient to God Himself when we refuse to submit to His will for us. Every day we break His perfect law. Every Sunday, when we sit under the preaching, our evil nature sits with us, and we find ourselves criticizing the very words of Christ coming to us. And if it is not the preaching, then maybe it is those who have special positions of authority in the Church that we are disobedient to. While it may not be in action, we surely have had disobedient thoughts and desires.

During the week, we find that we have been disobedient to our parents. We cause strife in the home. We refuse to submit to our parents' admonitions. We show our disobedience through our ingratitude and selfishness. We deny our parents the honor and respect they are due.

And if it is not in the home, then maybe we have been disobedient to our employer. We exhibit our disobedience by performing the bare minimum of work. We constantly complain and slander the "boss" when he is not around to hear us. We can also show our disobedience to the civil officers which God has set over us. We become stubborn when the police officer pulls us over for speeding. We have unflattering names for those who rule over us.

We must understand that disobedience is a terrible sin. It is not a sin, which we may take lightly, as though it counts very little in the sight of God. For disobedience, at its root, is the resistance of God Himself and a despising of His power and providence. We must understand that to disobey is to carry on war with God. This is not a light thing. "No one can resist God but to his own ruin," notes John Calvin in his commentary on Romans 13:1,2.

In I Samuel 15:23, disobedience, which is rebellion and stubbornness, is described in terms of witchcraft and idolatry. This was the description of Samuel to Saul, after Saul had "rejected the word of the Lord" (vs. 23). Witchcraft and idolatry are clearly terrible evils in the sight of God.

The sin of disobedience flows from the sin of self-love. Self-love is the source of many vices. We read of these in II Timothy 3:1-4, where we have a description of the depths of the sinfulness of men in the last days. In verse 2 of that chapter we read, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." In verses 2-4 of that chapter, we are struck by the accuracy of those words. How descriptive of the world and those that surround us those verses are. People today, including even young children, are awash in self-love. It seems as though everyone is lost in the pursuit of self-exaltation. And the vices which proceed from this self-love surround us also. Man has never been so proud. Man has never been so full of abhorrence towards authority. Man has never been so consumed with

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pleasure-seeking. And man has never possessed such a hatred towards those who do good. This is the world in which we live. These are the last days.

But let us not dwell on this gloomy note. And let us remember that we are no longer children of disobedience and under the bondage of sin, but under grace and by grace we put on the new man (Col 3:9,10); the new man which is renewed in knowledge. It is with this new man, renewed in knowledge that we see God as the source of all power and authority. There is no power apart from God.

This is clearly established for us in Romans 13:1 where we read, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." God is the source of all power and it is God who gives power to some and places some in places of authority over others. We read of this also in John 19:11 where Jesus answers Pilate with these words, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

With this understanding in mind, we can see why we are to live in obedience. We are to live in obedience, because all obedience is obedience to God. If all authority is put in place by God, then all obedience to that authority is submission to God Himself. This is true whether the obedience is to parents, Church office bearers, employers, or the preaching. Likewise, all disobedience is rebellion against God Himself.

We have a very high calling with regards to obedience. We are called to obey God and His written word as it is found in Scripture. To disregard His word, is to disobey Him directly. Further, we must submit ourselves to the preaching of His word. The preaching comes to us not as a suggestion or offer, but as a command with authority; the authority of God. Our response to the preaching is that of Matthew's, recorded for us in Matthew 9:9 where we read, "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him."

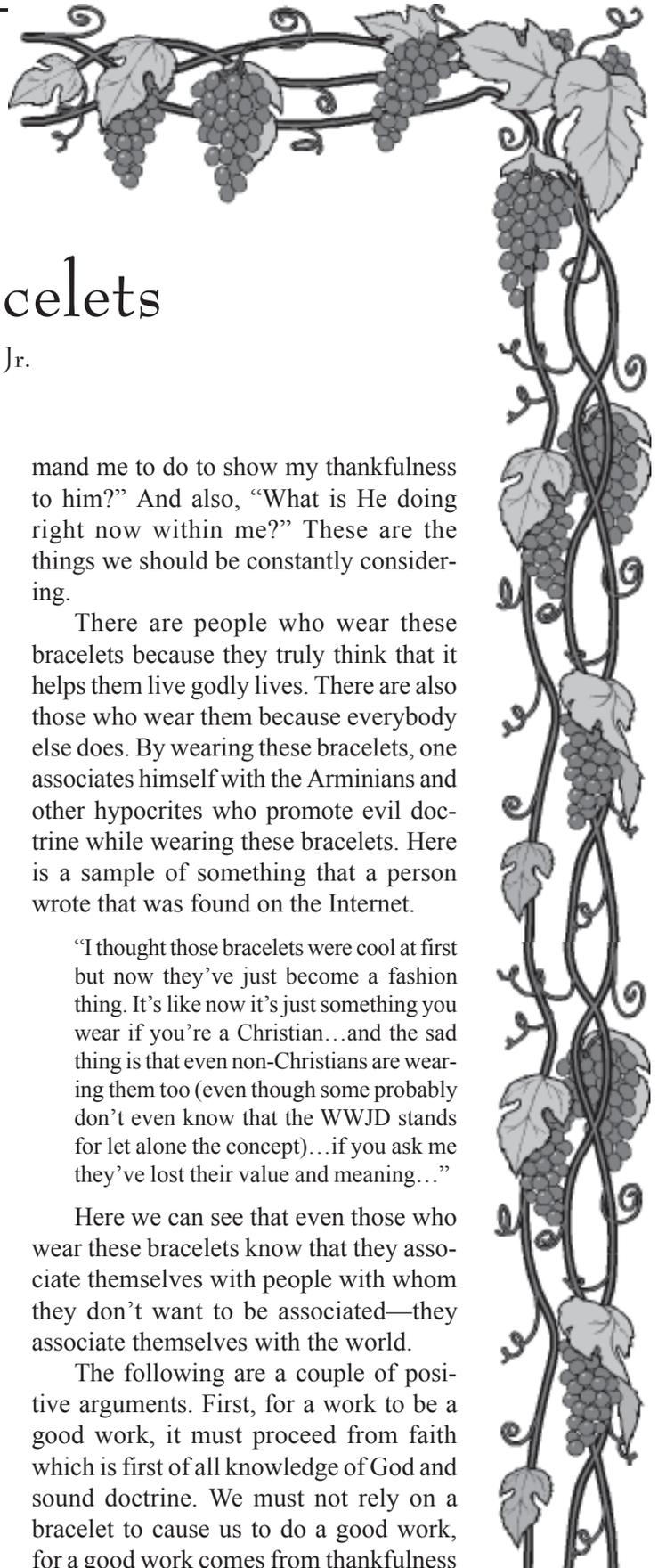
Our obedience is also shown to the special office bearers in the Church. We show our obedience to those men not only by obeying them, but also honoring them. Further, our obedience includes being teachable and having a readiness to obey. There is nothing more discouraging to ministers and elders than to see the ingratitude and coldness of those whom God has placed them over to watch. We must be diligent to guard against this sin of unthankfulness which characterizes so many in the Church today. Likewise, we must as I Thessalonians 5:13 instructs, "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." And in esteeming them highly we must remember that they rule over us "in the Lord" (vs. 12).

Our calling of obedience also extends to the home. We are to obey our parents "in the Lord" as we read in Ephesians 6:1. Once again, the basis for our obedience is the authority given to our parents from God. This is the way that God has seen fit to order His world. It is "well pleasing unto the Lord" when obedience is shown to parents (Col. 3:20). Also connected to the home, is the school and teachers, who stand in the place of father and mother in the schools. To disobey a teacher is nothing less than to disobey father or mother. We must remember this. It is a terrible thing when parents allow their children to disobey and challenge the authority of teachers. Parents who do this, despise their own authority given to them of God and send a terrible message that God is pleased with disobedience, when in reality He despises it.

Our employers also must be given the respect they are due. No matter how unreasonable they may seem to be in our own minds, we are called by God's word to obey them, "not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God" (Col. 3:22). How difficult this is to do.

Finally, we must also live a life of obedience to the civil officers God has placed over us. This can be very difficult because we are quick to see the sinfulness and hypocrisy of almost everyone in civil government. But we must obey them and the laws which they make, because it pleases God to rule and govern us by them (I Peter 2:13-15).

When we live in obedience and humble ourselves "under the mighty hand of God," "He will exalt us. This is an important truth. Our exaltation does not come in the way of self-love, self-exaltation, and disobedience and defiance of authority, but only comes in the way of humility. For it is not in our power to bring about our exaltation, but it is the work of God. It is God who will exalt us in the way of humility and obedience. And it is God who provides us with grace sufficient to live in humility. ❖



## WWJD Bracelets

by John Cleveland, Jr.

**W**e believe that WWJD bracelets are not appropriate attire for the Reformed Christian to wear. This idea for the saying “What Would Jesus Do,” originated in 1886 by Charles Sheldon in his novel, *In His Steps*. The main character in this book wanted the world to be a better place, so he came up with the saying “What Would Jesus Do,” hoping it would make the world a better place in which to live. It hasn’t been until recent years that the initials WWJD have been put on a bracelet for people. Since then these bracelets have been selling by the millions worldwide, with 14 million being sold in the United States alone.

Why are these bracelets something that the Reformed Christian should not be wearing? The following are a few negative arguments. First, they are a temptation to idolatry. Someone is guilty of idolatry when he trusts in anything else besides God for his salvation and protection. Proof for this is found in L.D. 34 Q and A 95, where the question is asked, “What is idolatry?” The answer, “Idolatry is, instead of, besides that one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive, or have any other object, in which men place their trust.” Many who wear these bracelets claim that they will help them from falling into sin. If one trusts in a bracelet to help him, he is guilty of idolatry. This is a violation of the first and second commandments. This is not to say that everyone who wears these bracelets is guilty of idolatry, but rather that there is a strong temptation to fall into the sin of idolatry and therefore they should not be worn.

Secondly, there is a problem with the question, “What Would Jesus Do?” When one asks the question, “What Would Jesus Do?” he asks that question as if Jesus is not there. Jesus is all around us. He is omnipresent by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the question is not proper. We should rather be considering the question of “What has Jesus done for me?” and “What does my Savior com-

mand me to do to show my thankfulness to him?” And also, “What is He doing right now within me?” These are the things we should be constantly considering.

There are people who wear these bracelets because they truly think that it helps them live godly lives. There are also those who wear them because everybody else does. By wearing these bracelets, one associates himself with the Arminians and other hypocrites who promote evil doctrine while wearing these bracelets. Here is a sample of something that a person wrote that was found on the Internet.

“I thought those bracelets were cool at first but now they’ve just become a fashion thing. It’s like now it’s just something you wear if you’re a Christian...and the sad thing is that even non-Christians are wearing them too (even though some probably don’t even know that the WWJD stands for let alone the concept)...if you ask me they’ve lost their value and meaning...”

Here we can see that even those who wear these bracelets know that they associate themselves with people with whom they don’t want to be associated—they associate themselves with the world.

The following are a couple of positive arguments. First, for a work to be a good work, it must proceed from faith which is first of all knowledge of God and sound doctrine. We must not rely on a bracelet to cause us to do a good work, for a good work comes from thankfulness for what Jesus has done for us.

Secondly, when the devil tempted Christ, Christ used the Scripture to fight those temptations. He quoted Scripture and didn't look at a bracelet. One must know the Scriptures so that when he is faced with a temptation he will know how to fight it. How does a bracelet compare to the power of Scripture?

During the time of Jesus, the Pharisees trusted in a phylactery which means "something that guards." This is found in Matthew 23:5, "they made broad their phylacteries." These phylacteries are not different than the WWJD bracelets. The Pharisees were rebuked for showing off their phylacteries and trusting in them. Those who promote these bracelets, promote the same things

that the Pharisees did. They think that God is pleased with an external obedience. They also think that God will be pleased by having His word on the outside rather than in the heart. People who don't have an internal love for God often try to show that they do by external things such as this.

There are many Bible texts that people like to use to show that there is nothing wrong with WWJD bracelets. The following texts refer to having the Word of God on one's hand and forehead: Exodus 13:16, Deuteronomy 6:8, and Deuteronomy 11:8. ❖

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*John is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

## Gem of the Month

# My Father's Cane

by Ed Smooth

*A* year ago this morning, my Father passed away.  
Jesus often calls to Him those we most wish could stay.  
With family gathered round him, the tears began to flow,  
Then he told us just to ease our minds, how much he longed to go.

*F*or he had been a soldier and walked the paths of right.  
The ways of God had always been so precious in his sight.  
And when he went there wasn't much the old man left behind.  
The treasure that he'd laid up was not the earthly kind.

*T*here was no doubt for what I'd ask to remember him.  
It held him up and gave him hope when the path was dim.  
And even when his strength was gone and he felt the pain,  
He still would say so often, "Son, go get my cane."

*M*y Father's cane reminds me that we never walk alone.  
Jesus gives us strength and hope on the journey towards His throne.  
And like my Father who has gone, I too will make that climb,  
I've set my sights on joining him in Heaven so sublime.

*S*o if you see me coming don't worry 'bout my health,  
Don't ask about my future plans or my worldly wealth.  
I'm walking with my Savior, looking forward to His reign,  
And just to keep reminding me I'll hold my Father's cane.

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*Ed is a member of Doon Protestant Reformed Church in Doon, Iowa.*

# Regarding the Virtuous Woman

**Dear Editor,**

I appreciated your modern rendition of Proverbs 31 in your recent editorial. You have hit upon a frightening pattern in our churches; the denial

and reversal of the God-ordained role of men and women. The future of our churches lies with our families and our children. Oh, that we would recognize how indispensable and vital a godly mother is to the lives of our children and our posterity! Young women must not be consecrated to self-satisfaction, college degrees and “fulfilling” careers. Couples must not be dedicated to the prestige of the larger home and the conveniences and pleasures our booming technology offers. They need, rather, consecration to God and dedication to marriage and children. God Himself declares that His Name is at stake in how our mothers behave in this regard: “That they (the older women) may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:4-5).

The cure is young women who marry recognizing their vital importance in the lives of their children. The solution is young men who marry with resolve to fulfil their role as the breadwinner and to lead their wives to the fulfilling of theirs. The help for this departure from truth lies with all of us; from pastors who are ordained to bring God’s Word, to the older women who no longer have young children. All of us are responsible. All this is for the blessing of our families and posterity. For the good of the Church. For love of God and for the glory of God.

*Scott Connerley  
South Holland, Illinois*

**Dear Editor,**

I was very blessed by your new article on the place of mothers. A subject that many fear to tread I fear. Many of us are afraid of confrontation, and the frowns of others. Well you spoke the truth in love, and I appreciate that very much. It is an area of great concern, an area of great significance. If the trend continues, our churches will deteriorate. I pray that God will use your words, and the words of others to impress these truths upon the hearts of our people.

*In our Lord  
Jay Martz  
Peace Church, Illinois*

## Gem of the Month

### Why I’m Here

by Brandyn K. Dykshorn

*My purpose on earth  
Is to walk for the Lord  
To follow His path  
To carry His sword  
To walk not in darkness  
But tread in the light  
To share all the truth  
Of His power and His might  
But if at some time  
I shall fail to succeed  
I will bow down my head  
For it’s prayer I will need  
And my Lord shall forgive me  
From my sins and my strife  
For His son died to give me  
Eternal life!*

*Brandyn is a member of Peace Protestant Reformed Church in Lansing, Illinois.*

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**Dear Editor,**

**I**t was a blessing to see the issue of mother's working opened up and biblically supported in what an honorable place the woman has in the home. If we as PRC women continue to find our work outside the home eventually our head will begin to swell and we will see the women in the elder's seat. I do believe that there is a correlation here as we witness the effects of feminism in the church. Why is the pulpit silent in some of our churches in this matter?! It is a can of worms no doubt. But we have let it become so through the course of time. What evil has prosperous times brought into the church! Our covenant homes are not stronger for it, but as time goes on we will see the effects of working mothers bringing much grief and sorrow upon the church and our individual families.

I have a question or two that I would appreciate your thoughts on. In the 1st paragraph of your article you state that Proverbs 31 does not support the working mother; neither does any other text in the Bible. I agree 100%. My question is, does this issue fall under the category of Christian Liberty or should we be going to our sisters in Christ through Matthew 18 as we see that they are doing something contrary to scripture? If the husband in the covenant home believes that his wife can do justice in the raising of their God-given children and also is able to keep up with her duties, say as a Christian school teacher, should we say then that this is really their business and that they will have to answer to this someday? Our Christian schools are staffed with mothers who have young children at home and who daily are doing their double duty. I have to admit that I do have a soft spot in my heart for our women teachers. Speaking to those who must juggle their time in this situation do indeed have a difficult time of keeping up with their duties at home and school. I do think that there is a time when a mother can teach and that is when her children are grown and out of the house and she feels the calling to teach in our school. Then you are talking of a mother who is in her late 40's and 50's, 60's, not the 20-30 year old moms that are in our schools today. I know too that the older women have an important place within the church as to the guiding of the younger women, but not all women are teachers, qualified to teach children in our schools. Should we go so far as to say that women may not and should not at any time in their lives teach in our schools? Where do we draw the line? May we draw the line?!

As I become older I see more and more the importance and responsibility laid out before me as to how

crucial my place within the home means to me, my husband and children. How in the world can a mother who is in the work place, say only 2 days a week, deal with this situation in such a prayerful way and still do justice to her job?! I think our teenagers especially need us at home in these years in their lives and yet these are the years when many mothers feel the need and ease of mind to get out and work. Even though we might be seeing less of our teenagers at this point in their lives, the times and instances we see them are very crucial. Their world is just beginning to open up for them and they are in need of the guidance of us parents especially at this time. Sometimes the issue can not wait till supertime.

*In the love of Christ,  
Mrs. Deb Portinga*

**Dear Editor,**

**P**ermit me to make a few comments regarding your version of Proverbs 31, written in the July, 98 issue of *Beacon Lights*. I find there some generalities that I cannot agree with. These are as follows: 1. "Proverbs 31 does not support working mothers." The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 does reflect upon modern working women. She was a worker of great endurance and achieved much satisfaction in primarily caring for her family but also active in business activities (verse 14, 16, 18, 24). This is nothing to be ashamed of for she refuses to be idle but finds spiritual fulfillment in laboring while it is day for the welfare of her husband and children. 2. "...mothers who work outside the home are doing so contrary to the Word of God and to the destruction of their home and church." If this is true, there must immediately begin disciplinary work against those mothers who work outside the home. No exceptions! But let's not generalize. Each family has particular situations where there may be a need for a mother to assist in the financial support of her family (including Christian School tuition) and her children sense the need and are appreciative of this labor of their mother to the glory of God. Our Lord may also use this situation for godly friends or grandparents to more fully be an example to the children and thereby receive a more biblical upbringing. A single mother must almost necessarily labor with today's financial obligations. She needs grace and support, not condemnation. 3. "She provides food and clothing producing it right at home. She does not contribute significantly." Generalities—often condemning unjustly. She may more efficiently do some labors at another location and her financial reward may be great. The Lord gives the increase. Just don't neglect

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the needs of your children as they are the heritage of the Lord. It's not necessarily an either-or situation. It's not always the quantity of time spent with your children, but the quality of time spent with them.

The working mother who diligently labors to meet her family needs and still does not neglect her family will be appreciated and praised by most children when they are older and reflecting upon these labors. Then idleness will not be praised.

*Fraternally,  
Frank Van Baren  
Loveland, Colorado*

### Reply

**P**roverbs 31 certainly does command the mother to be industrious; but she must be industrious in the sphere of her home and children, not in the sphere of a corporation or business. In fact, there is more work in a home with children than any one mother can do, and she must be so industrious in the work of her household that she has no more energy to work for an employer and make extra income! Verse 14 says "She is like a merchant ship;" this does not mean she is a merchant; verse 16 says "she considereth a field, and buyeth it;" this does not mean she is a realtor; verses 18 and 24 speak of her merchandise; it belongs to her, she is not employed by another. Her work is within the sphere of her home.

Should the church then discipline mothers who work outside the home? No. Church discipline is not a process of cleansing the church from every sin. Church discipline is the God ordained means for the repentance of one who teaches false doctrine or one who manifests a walk with Satan in such sins as those listed in the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper. Helpful in this issue is the commentary by Van Dellen and Monsma on the Church Order. We read on page 301: When does error in doctrine or life merit discipline? When the sin of the transgressor gives offence, i.e., when a sin tends to lead others into sin, and when the guilty party rejects the admonition offered and persists in his sin. Not every sin and error in doctrine and life calls for discipline in the formal sense of that word. We are all imperfect. We all sin with word and deed, in doctrine and life. These sins should be exposed and condemned in the preaching of God's Word and we should all be admonished by each other as believers, and particularly by the office-bearers as overseers at the time of home visitation or at special occasions. But discipline in the formal sense is not initiated unless the matter is serious and offensive, and un-

less the sinner refuses to repent and change, as we have indicated. The matter of mothers who find employment outside of the home is a problem that is to be addressed in the preaching, by the admonition and encouragement of fellow believers, and by the elders at family visitation.

Scripture leaves no room for a mother to seek employment outside of the home for financial reasons, even if they are without a husband and need to pay for school tuition. On the one hand God says "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house," (I Timothy 5:14) and that the older women teach the younger women to be "keepers at home." (Titus 2:5) On the other hand, God says to those in financial need (especially widows) "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (I Timothy 5:16). God provides for those mothers who are faithful to their calling to stay home with their children. First God calls the immediate family to provide financially, He does not call the mother out of the home to work. For those mothers in the church whose family may be unwilling or unable to help, God calls the whole church through the deacons (Acts 6) to help. Woe is that church which scorns the mother who comes for help! Woe is that church which does not cheerfully support the mother who desires to live according the will of God.

Are there mothers who can have a job and still be a great mother? No doubt there are. There are also women who are great leaders and orators, but God forbids them to be preachers of the Word. We may have all the pious reasons in the world to support what we do, but God says "to obey is better than sacrifice." Saul also thought he knew better than God when he kept the cattle alive for sacrifices rather than destroying them utterly.

Can mothers make money more efficiently by working outside the home? Certainly, and they can even make millions. But God says that their work in the home has a value far above rubies. The world can not see this. By nature we can not see this, but by faith we can and do. The God who makes Himself known by the "foolishness" of preaching is also the God Who fulfills His will by weakest means.

Every mother with children under her wings who thinks it necessary to leave the nest in search of employment had better first prayerfully meditate upon the Word of God concerning her calling. She had better have an answer for God when He asks, "why are you working outside the sphere of your home?" *Ed. ❖*

# After the Storm

by J.P. de Klerk

“We had the nicest house in the village and they still are not yet over the shock, my wife and the children,” said David Wood, looking at the journalist at his bedside in the hospital. He had a broken leg and several stitches in his face.

“Yes,” answered the man of the newspaper. “A rain-storm and a landslide.... Your wife and kids were lucky that they just escaped through the back door.... Half of the hill has disappeared in the sea

“No,” said David. “That is not luck, but God’s almighty hand, who saved them.” And perhaps you don’t know that the psalmist said that we should worship and acclaim His exalted Name, All ye high and lowly; God alone is holy! Are you not a Christian?”

“Well, sir, I grew up with it, but nowadays, we live in a new era.”

“No, on the contrary. I would be nowhere now without Him”, said David.



Anita Wood and the three children, Gordon, Susie and Yvonne were brought to a motel in the village close by. They realized that they had lost everything. It had all happened so unexpectedly and so quickly. There had been no time to pick up anything, while the floor started to move away from under their feet. They had never dreamt even about the possibility that such a thing could happen to them. There had been a terrible noise of breaking and cracking, the back door fell open, glass was breaking. But they realized that at least they were alive and well, except Daddy who lay in the hospital.

There came a man from the local Council to fill in some papers, and another one from the insurance. They assured them that all kinds of arrangements would be made for them. The biggest surprise however was when some people of the Church came with a big box with useful things to reorganize their life as a family. It was an act of love. Practical help. Unpacking the box brought



them in a kind of festive mood. One surprise after another.

They could imagine now how it would have been for people who come out of a war, leaving everything behind, and then receiving gifts from well-meaning people, especially brothers and sisters in Christ. How happy could people make each other, if they wanted to. The manager of the motel brought them a big fruit basket, from a shop in the main street flowers were brought, and a bakery gave a plate with cakes.

“The start of a new beginning, thanks to the Lord,” Anita said. Yvonne, the youngest, looked confused but content that she got a new doll out of the box.

Outside the wind had died down. The newspaper came with pictures that showed the waves that had lashed the coast had been up to ten meters high. Trees, boats, sheds, plus the house of the Wood family were swept away and battered in pieces. The interview with David was also there, and the journalist had left nothing out. It filled Anita’s eyes with tears when she was reading David’s humble testimony. ❖

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

# Catechism: Learning to Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words

by Rev. Richard J. Smit

Every Protestant Reformed young person knows that when the calendar changes to September, there will have been, or this coming Lord's Day there will be, an announcement in the bulletin that new catechism books will be distributed and assignments handed out. For a period of 30 weeks Protestant Reformed young people will descend into their church basements, into specially designated catechism rooms, or enter school classrooms to submit to the preaching of their pastor and teacher in catechism.

Do you know why the Consistory demands you go to Heidelberg Catechism, Essentials, and pre/post confession class? Jesus gave the command for catechism to His Church when He said, "Feed my lambs!" (John 21:15). That text is the central reason, but it is not the only passage of Scripture in which Christ gives us the purpose and reasons for catechism. We also find another purpose for catechism in II Timothy 1:13, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

In light of that text we ask the question, "What Protestant Reformed congregation will prosper in the Reformed faith into the future?" It is that congregation, where by the grace of God alone, the future elders, deacons, ministers, teachers, fathers, mothers, and single adults learn in catechism the form of sound words in their youth and heed the command of Christ to hold fast to the form of sound words.

## What does "the form of sound words" mean?

The Apostle Paul speaks to Timothy when he was a young preacher in Ephesus. In II Timothy 1:13, the Apostle commands Timothy "to hold fast the form of sound words." Because the Apostle speaks an urgent admonition, the form of sound words surely must be something very important and vital to Timothy's work and to God's people. The urgency of the Apostle's ad-

monition indicates that without the form of sound words, the Church will not prosper.

These indispensable forms are patterns and standards to guide our confession and walk of life. To illustrate the idea of the text, here are some examples. The young ladies who sew dresses or other clothes for themselves know what a "pattern" is. The young men who fix their own cars use a car manual as a "pattern" to get the right parts together without leftover screws and bolts, or to tighten the nuts to the right torque. Patterns are indispensable to the cement contractor who is building a foundation for a house. He uses a "pattern" (the blueprint) to plan the size and the exact position of his footings, and he uses "forms" to keep the cement in its proper place for the footings and walls.

The Reformed believer has been given by God a spiritual "form." According to the standard and infallible guide of this spiritual pattern or form, the Protestant Reformed young person may by faith grow properly and wisely in his confession and walk of life. That spiritual form is the Three *Forms* of Unity (the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort). These for us today are "the form of sound words." Though there are "Three Forms," they are not three different ones, but three which set forth the same truth of Scripture. Principally, they are one form in their distinct unity. Together the Three Forms of Unity comprise for the Protestant Reformed young person "*the form of sound words.*"

The Three Forms of Unity speak to us, literally, "words of health." They are words of spiritual health because they faithfully center in the Word of Life Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ. Because the Truth set forth in the Reformed Confessions is centrally the glory of our God in Christ crucified and risen again, the confessions are words of spiritual life and health. To know the Reformed Confessions by faith is to know our Covenant

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God in our Lord Jesus Christ. Such knowledge is spiritual life and health.

Understand, further, that the Confessions are careful *formulations* of the Truth of Scripture. The writers of the Confessions did not dream up what they wrote and confessed. By faith they diligently and wisely searched the entire Scriptures from beginning to end to find what all of Scripture taught concerning the doctrines of the Trinity, the infallibility of Scripture, the divinity of Christ, and so on. The final result is that the Confessions set forth the standard of what Scripture teaches in its entirety on many, many points of doctrine.

That heritage we have been given today is the work of the Spirit of grace in His Church. That means when you learn the Reformed Confessions in Heidelberg Catechism and Essentials, you are not learning something man-made. Man of himself could never come up with the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, or the Canons of Dort. That you have Catechism to teach you the Confessions ought to be an occasion to rejoice in the unfailling mercy of our God. That you have the Three Forms of Unity is the fulfilment of the promise that the Spirit of Truth would lead us into the truth. Therefore, the Three Forms of Unity are the result of the work of the Spirit of sovereign grace in His Church.

When you receive your Essentials book (which follows closely the order of the Belgic Confession), or the Heidelberg Catechism books, you will be learning the form of sound words given to us by the Spirit of Christ. You will be learning the truth of Scripture put together in a form which you can understand and in which you may grow spiritually by faith.

### **Do we need “the form of sound words” today?**

There are objections to the need for instruction in the “form of sound words” today. Some suggest that doctrine and especially Confessional Forms and Creeds are divisive. There are those in the church world who suggest that the Bible alone is sufficient as “the form of sound words.”

But think about that objection for a moment. It seems on the surface to be a very appealing objection. In fact, in a sense, the Scriptures are THE form of sound words. The Scriptures ought always to be the ultimate standard of our faith and practice. Those Scriptures we must search daily to see and to know the Truth taught therein.

However, that idea to have only the Scriptures as our Confession or Creed is not correct when it upholds Scripture over against the Confessions. The Three Forms of Unity are the truth of Scripture. They have that truth because the Spirit of Truth has led His Church into the truth. The Confessions set forth the truth of Scripture only because they are the product of the work of the Spirit in the Church. Because our Reformed Confessions are the truth, they also are the form of sound words and must be regarded as such.

It would be foolish for a Protestant Reformed young person to reject the Reformed Confessions as “the form of sound words.”

Rather, Reformed young people must regard our Confessions as what the Church has learned in the past when facing the battles of Pelagianism, Arminianism, evolution, millennialism, and many more. The Confessions then are a precious heritage from our spiritual forefathers which is now handed down to us so that we might prosper in this age of increasing apostasy. Do you view our Reformed Confessions as an indispensable heritage?

Knowledge of and training in the form of sound words is vitally necessary for the Protestant Reformed believer. To become indifferent towards, and then as an inevitable result to discard the Three Forms of Unity, to throw away our Essentials books or other Catechism books, would be the same as the young lady discarding the dress pattern and expecting to have something decent to wear, the mechanic discarding his manual and expecting his car actually to run, or the cement contractor discarding his forms and expecting a foundation upon which to build a house. For a Protestant Reformed young person to loathe and even to avoid catechism training in the form of sound words, would be like the young lady not even knowing how to thread a sewing machine and

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expecting employment as a seamstress, or a young man refusing to train in mechanics school and then expecting to be hired easily as a automotive mechanic. One cannot expect future spiritual prosperity and blessedness without knowledge of the form of sound words. Catechism training in the Confessions is indispensable to a thorough, distinct, and prosperous confession of the Reformed faith.

Knowledge of Reformed Confessions, in the first place, is an essential tool by which we may understand Scripture. Because we may not have the depth of the understanding of a Guido de Bres, a Dr. Ursinus, or the delegates to the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619), we may rely upon their God-given understanding of Scripture in order that we might grow in the knowledge of Scripture. By learning the Heidelberg Catechism, we grow in a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. That is the result because the Heidelberg Catechism properly guides us into many, many texts of Scripture some of which are listed as proof-texts.

In the second place, the catechism classes will guard you from learning and confessing false doctrine or even heresy. Because we are human and sinful, we can so quickly pick up catchy phrases or ideas which sound nice outwardly. However, before the scrutiny of the Confessions, many songs we think were good, or ideas which sounded so very nice, often prove to be contrary to the Reformed Faith and must be discarded. The Confessions are given by God to correct our thinking and to guide us carefully and distinctly in our knowledge of the truth.

In the third place, the catechism instruction of our Reformed Confessions will help you discover friends of like precious faith. Scripture commands young people, for example, to marry in the Lord. That command implies that immediately young people see whether their dates are of like precious faith. To determine whether you may marry them in obedience to God you must test their confession and walk of life according to the *form* of the Reformed faith. If in due time their confession and walk of life remains contrary to the *form* you are taught in Catechism, you, before the command of Christ do not have a candidate for dating or marriage.

In the fourth place, the Three Forms of Unity are also the necessary foundation of not only our unity denominationally, but also our unity as a federation of young people's societies. That principle is stated in Article II of the Constitution of our Federation. The form of sound words is the like precious faith which binds us

together as societies and members in particular. Without the Reformed faith of our Lord Jesus Christ as our sure foundation, we would have no true fellowship in our society meetings and in our annual convention meetings and discussions in God's Word.

In the last place, you must view your Catechism instruction as a training ground where you acquire and obtain the Reformed Confessions as your sure defense. As young people living closer to the return of Christ, you live in an age when the attacks of Satan against the truth are more and more intense and severe. How will you defend yourselves from the onslaughts of the Lie and the Wicked One? You must view the knowledge of the Reformed Faith as your sure foundation and the sharp sword for defense in the battle of faith.

### **What is your calling, then?**

Christ commands even Reformed young people to "hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me." This is the word of Christ. When you are in Catechism you hear the form of sound words from Him! Christ speaks through your minister in the catechism room. Christ bestows by grace upon His Covenant children the gift of the truth of the Reformed faith. He does that through catechism instruction in a way and at a level that you can understand and begin to grasp. Therefore, what you have heard of Christ Himself in the preaching of the catechism room *hold fast!*

Holding fast means, in the first place, you must work faithfully. Faithfulness in memorizing, filling out your written work, answering the "extra work" questions, and making time to review your notes in order to give thorough answers on the quizzes. With God's blessing upon your faithful work, you will grow in knowledge and assurance in the Reformed faith.

Secondly, holding fast means that you use the confessions. They ought not gather cobwebs and dust in your head. Use the knowledge gained in Catechism to answer co-workers at the restaurant or students at high school or college.

Thirdly, holding fast means further that you must continue to study the Confessions. That means more than faithful submission to the Heidelberg Catechism preaching every Lord's Day. But in Bible Study and in personal study also take the time to read the other confessions. In fact, many find it profitable to take the quiet time before the worship service to read an article or two of the Canons of Dordt, or an article of the Belgic Confession that will apply to the Heidelberg Catechism preaching for that particular service. In these ways with

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God's blessing, the believer will more and more faithfully adhere to "the form of sound words."

But, in all these ways mentioned, how are we to hold fast to the form of sound words? The text says "in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." This means young people must not have as their goal merely to fill their minds full of the right answers to questions on the Reformed faith. Adherence to the Confessions must be living, heartfelt, and confident. The young person must know that the truth of the Reformed faith is not just abstract ideas, but *reality for him before his God*. Thus, the young person must seek that faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Without that, we cannot know the form of sound words, and then will not hold fast to them in our confession and walk of life. For that faith and love, we must humbly seek God in prayer.

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In conclusion then, when you step into the catechism room, you must be conscious that you come to the place where Christ will speak to you through His servant. Christ comes with the command to you: "Hold fast what

I teach you! Never let it go, because in holding fast to the truth by God-given faith you hold fast to Me, the Truth, the Way, and the Life!" Christ, Who calls you and feeds you, is Faithful also by His Word and Spirit of Truth to perform in you, His lambs, what He commands. He Who calls us to hold fast is

Faithful to hold us fast unto Him forever. In that hope and assurance, faithfully and attentively enjoy another year of instruction in thanksgiving to God for all which He has given to you. ❖

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*Rev. Smit is pastor of Doon Protestant Reformed Church in Doon, Iowa.*

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## Church History

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# Churches in Russia

by J.P. de Klerk

Nowadays the Christians in the Commonwealth of Russian states are allowed to gather in the official Russian Orthodox Churches, who strive towards a monopoly. The priests are grumpy about the activities of Protestants from abroad, evangelising in their area. They have said openly that they would like to get them all out of the country. The priests are nationalistic and pro-Communist as well. In various reports it has been mentioned that most members of the clergy are agents of the secret police which regards Christians often as spies or traitors.

The picture is one of the typical Russian Orthodox Churches in Moscow. There has not been a Reformation because there have not been Roman Catholics in the country. ❖

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

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# The Song of Zion

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

### Devotionals for September 1-9 by Mike Feenstra September 1 Read Psalm 69:1-12; Psalm 69:1-2

“With the exception of Psalm 22, there is no other psalm that is quoted so often by the Holy Ghost than this one to describe the suffering of Jesus.” Such were the words of the late Rev. Gerrit Vos in *O Taste and See* (211). Considering that this Psalm was written by David in the Old Testament, we can surely see that the Scriptures are the Holy Spirit’s work to testify of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, as Rev. Vos states, “David suffered something like (Christ’s suffering), and I tremble when I write this last sentence down. The similarity is so insignificant. It may refer to the throne of Israel which he gave up to Absalom, fleeing the while. That entailed much for David: his house, his peace, his wives, his household stuff, his people. But when we look first at David when writing this pitiful tale in Psalm 69, and then at Jesus in Gethsemane or at the cross—words fail us. The first instance is but a shadow, the latter is reality” (215). Sing Psalter #184:1.

### September 2 Read Matt. 27:39-49, Ps. 22; Ps. 69:1-3

O, the suffering of our Lord was an intense suffering: like unto (and even worse than) a weary man caught in deep waters that penetrate the soul so that his only hope is to cry for help between each overwhelming wave and each draining cough. This suffering by way of the insults and condemning words of the world was terrible and wounding to our Lord, but the thought that He was forsaken of God hurt the most and caused Him to cry out the words of Matthew 27:46, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” These words spoken by David in Psalm 22:1 also illustrate David’s wearisome crying in Psalm 69. There he beseeches God to deliver him from his deep affliction: “My constant calling wearies me, My throat is parched and dried; My eyes grow dim while for my God Still waiting I abide.” While on this earth below, this is also our state because we belong to Christ. In our suffering let us learn to call upon our sympathetic Savior Who sustained the highest suffering possible—the wrath of the Almighty God. Sing Psalter #184:1-2.

### September 3 Read John 15:25, I Peter 2:23, Isaiah 53; Psalm 69:4

For today we cite an excerpt of “Absolute Abnegation” from *O Taste and See* by Rev. Vos on the powerful words of Psalm 69:4b:

“Then I restored that which I took not away!

Properly translated from the Hebrew it should read: that which I did not rob!

Jesus never robbed anyone of anything. It was rightfully His.

But as soon as He appeared among us the howling mob of creditors came upon Him. And they never left off demanding from Him. They finally demanded the very heart beat of Jesus. They asked and got His blood. His blessed body, His clothes, His natural modesty, nailing Him

naked on the accursed tree, His life, the few square feet of terra firma: He hung suspended between heaven and earth.

And though He could have destroyed all His enemies, men, and devils, He gave and restored, He returned and surrendered all His possessions” (213). What did He restore that He did not take away? He restored righteousness and life to us, His elect, who are so undeserving (Heidel. Cat. Q&A 17). What a powerful verse! Sing Psalter #184:3. (If you would like *O Taste and See: Meditations from the Psalms* please write the Reformed Book Outlet, 3505 Kelly, Hudsonville MI 49426.)

### September 4 Read Psalm 139; Psalm 69:5-6a

Young People, are we making the same confession as David does in Psalm 69:5? Are we searching our souls to see whether there is any sin in them? Or are we deceiving ourselves into thinking that God can not hear our immoral fantasies or our murderous thoughts? While in deep affliction, David thinks the opposite. He proclaims before God that wherever he flees (See Psalm 139), God is there because God is the All-knowing God. He does not try to cover his sins as Adam tried in the garden of Eden, but he confesses them before God. In that confession, he beseeches God for deliverance from his present distress because he knows that he cannot cover his own sin. That covering can only come in David’s Anti-type, our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, our sins are hid forevermore from God’s eyes so that we may be reconciled to Him. Sing Psalter #184:4.

### September 5 Read Psalm 69:6

David’s petition in the verse for today is that God would save His people from shame. While King David bore reproach at the hands of his enemies (See Verse 7), the temptation to despair and feel ashamed surely came to David’s subjects. “Why do you confess God’s Name when you can see that it will be unrewarded? Look at your King, he is defeated!” must have been the Devil’s temptation to the children of Israel. Knowing well that this temptation was before God’s people, David prayed that he might be delivered from his enemies and vindicated before the world *so that* God’s people would not be ashamed for their confession. Therefore, we must see that David was concerned not about himself, but with those that wait on the Lord God of Hosts. His prayer was for the elect alone. His prayer was that God glorify Himself through the vindication of the elect in Israel *by* saving him. For, “If the king of believers shall find his faith unrewarded, how will the feeble ones hold on their way” (Spurgeon). Praise God that our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, has His reward! Because He has been exalted at God’s right hand forevermore, we shall never be ashamed! Sing Psalter #184:5.

### September 6 Read Romans 15:3; Psalm 69:7-8

Today is the Sabbath day, the day when we go up to God’s house chiefly to worship Him. But, we also go to God’s house because we desire to, “bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please ourselves.”

We are commanded to do this, “for even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproachest thee fell on me” (See verses Psalm 69:7, 9) What an incentive to live a life that promotes the other members of the congregation! Jesus came into this world as God’s Christ in order to give His life for us! His zeal for the holiness of God’s house and God’s glory caused Him to be rejected of all His fellow men. This rejection culminated in his shameful sacrifice on the cross. There He despised the shame (Heb 12:2) and rose victorious. Out of thanksgiving to God, let us follow after Christ by giving God all the glory even though we may be persecuted. Sing Psalter #184:6.

### **September 7 Read John 2; Psalm 69:9**

“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” These were the passionate words of David. The passion that burned in David’s heart was remembered by our Lord’s disciples when they saw our Lord cleansing the temple in John 2. What was that zeal? David’s and especially Jesus’ zeal was exactly for the *glory* of God and the *holiness* of God’s house. Calvin says that Christ, “burned with such zeal, that this single feeling swallowed up every other.” This zeal would not allow *any* pollution in the house of God for God’s House is to be *holy*, that is, separated from sin. In the New Testament reality, this means that God’s Church, which the OT temple typified, must also be characterized by *holiness*. Therefore, we must also have this zeal to keep God’s house holy by insisting that our churches proclaim that great Reformation theme: Soli Deo Gloria. This zeal only flows from God, the God Who *will* glorify His Name in His church. “For though God is sufficient for Himself, and needs not the services of any, yet He wishes that His glory should be displayed in the Church. In this way He gives a remarkable proof of His love towards us, because He unites His glory—as it were, by an indissoluble link—with our salvation” (Calvin). Sing Psalter #184:7.

### **September 8 Read Heb. 4:14-18; 5:7-10; Ps. 69:10-11**

Earlier in our treatment of Psalm 69 we said that Jesus is our Sympathetic Savior. Young People, do you know what that means? Have you experienced what that means? It means that Christ can sympathize with our troubles because he has experienced and endured every sorrow, every pain, and every temptation that we may face in this life. He knows what it means to lose a loved one. He knows what it means to suffer at the hands of wicked men when He bowed His soul with fasting. He has *endured* every temptation that we have in our life. And those temptations to Christ were severe and very serious. Just think of the temptations which our Lord endured at the hands of the Devil in Luke 4:1-13. If this is so, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Sing Psalter #184:8.

### **September 9 Read Psalm 69:12**

If we would describe an upright young man in this world according to the Scriptures, how would we describe him? Would he be one that gets drunk at a wild beer party on the weekend? In his car on a Friday night, would he be listening to ungodly rock music on the radio while he cruises the circuit? Or, would he be a young man whom everybody mocks at the local hangout because he reproves the sin of his fellow men (See Eph. 5:11)? How about a godly young woman? Would she be a woman that seeks to entice men by what she wears? Would you find her at a friend’s house watching the latest movie on video? Or, would she be a young woman who is outcast because she desires to walk modestly and humbly with her God (See Micah 6:8)? Young People, what description do we fit? David was made the song of the drunkards (Psalm 69:12). The same was ultimately true of Christ. If we are called to imitate Christ, will not our walk in this world yield the same results? It surely will. The truth of the antithesis demands this. If this is true, let us therefore walk not to seek the approval of the wicked of this world (See Luke 6:26, Eph. 5:11), but let us seek the approval of God. And if

the world makes us their proverb, let us realize they do so because we belong to Christ (See John 15:18-25; Psalm 69:4, 12). Sing Psalter #184:9.

### **Devotionals for Sept. 10-30 by John Huizenga September 10 Read I Peter 2:18-23; Psalm 69:13**

Today we find a sharp contrast between the believer and the unbeliever, another dimension of the antithesis, a dimension that often breaks down in the weakness of our sinful flesh under the great pressure of wicked men. What do you do when men revile you? What do you do when you suffer wrongfully at the hands of men? The unbeliever will not be able to cool the burning coal of hurt and injustice and will seek revenge sooner or later. He will speak out, protest, revile back, and have no rest until the wrong is corrected according to his own satisfaction. But the child of God is different. While the wicked reviled David, he turned to God in prayer. He prays not on the basis that he deserves to be heard, but on the basis of God’s mercy and saving grace. Our Savior Jesus Christ also is an example for us in such times. We read that He also committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. May we also learn to bear injustice with quiet patience and turn to God in prayer. Sing Psalter 185 verse 1.

### **September 11 Read Mark 14:26-26; Psalm 69:14-15**

Despair and depression can be described as sinking down into mud that is very sticky and dark and bottomless. The harder one struggles, the deeper he sinks and the more hopeless he becomes. The grave itself slowly smothers all life. Such despair is death. Christ our Lord experienced this sorrow in the garden while he prayed. He said His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. That was the weight of our sins pressing Him down as He stood before the righteous and holy God. No matter what the immediate cause of our despair is, all despair ultimately is the result of sin and there is only one way to get out of the mire. No man can pull us out with his own strength, only God is able to deliver. He is the only source of hope and life. He breaks the bondage of sin by the work of Christ crucified. He pulls us out by the power of His grace. Sing Psalter 185 vs. 2

### **September 12 Read Titus 3:1-7; Psalm 69:16**

Why does God look upon the sinner with love and favor? So many who call themselves Christians say He smiles upon those that do good things and frowns upon those who do bad things. Such is a very simplistic, human, and therefore false idea of God. David did not ask God to deliver him because he had done this and that good work. He asked God in prayer to deliver him because of something in God: His mercy. Mercy is the will of God for the weak and helpless sinner to be perfectly blessed in Him; and what God wills, He accomplishes in sovereign power. The believer knows that God wills to save and is powerful to save because God reveals it in His word and therefore the believer comes to God on the basis of His mercy, that’s all! Further revelation of God makes known to the believer that this mercy and power to save is accomplished in the believer through Christ. This truth is clearly taught in Titus 3 as well as all of Scripture. Sing Psalter 185:3

### **September 13 Read Matt. 29:39-46; Psalm 104:29, 30; Psalm 69:17, 18**

The face of God is a matter of life or death for the creature. The showing of God’s face to the creature is the revelation of His favor and grace. The hiding of God’s face is the revelation of His wrath. Apart from the favor and grace of God all is hopelessness and death. The believer, knowing the greatness of His sin and misery, is immediately plunged into darkness when he loses sight of the face of God. The face of God communicates His love for us and forgiveness in Christ. The face of God is the word of God. May God never remove His word from us. It is not enough just to have the Bible in your house. Neither is it enough to read the Bible every day. God must show unto us His face in

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the reading of His word. We see His face only by faith. Let us also pray that He hide not His face. Sing Psalter 185:4.

**September 14 Read Isaiah 53; Heb. 12:1-2; Psalm 69:19**

Reproach is when one puts you to shame. Those reproaching appear to have the upper hand while the one reproached wallows at their feet in shame. David comes before God knowing that He sees the condition in which he is in. Not only does God see His people being reproached, He knows reproach Himself. Christ was despised of men and suffered the reproach of the cross. While He hung on the cross, His enemies surrounded him appearing to have the upper hand as they mocked One Who could save the life of another but would not save His own life. But the enemies of God are absolutely wrong. Christ would not be destroyed in shame; He despised shame and now sits on the right hand of God. The way of the cross was the way for the destruction of the power of sin and death. When wallowing in the reproach of men we come to God where we see and know life eternal. Then the reproach of men means nothing and becomes the way to our salvation. Sing Psalter 185 verse 5.

**September 15 Read Mark 14:35-50; Psalm 69:20**

In this life filled with sorrow and tears, we learn the beautiful truth found in these verses: God will never forsake His people. In our day to day life and interactions with people we may come to learn that even the best of friends can forsake us. It may even be that God sends you through a time when everyone forsakes you and you are completely alone and despised. This is when God opens our eyes to the truth that He will never forsake us. Then this truth will fill us with awe and reverence for God unknown to those who have never been forsaken by men. In the way of despair before men we are brought into closer covenant fellowship with God. We will never be forsaken because Christ was forsaken for us. He took upon Himself the curse due unto us as he languished, forsaken by God upon the cross. Sing Psalter 185 verse 6.

**September 16 Read Matthew 27:33-50, Psalm 69:21**

These words from Psalm 69 are prophetic of the suffering and events surrounding Christ's death on the cross. The wicked fill up the cup of God's wrath when they trample upon that virtue of God so fundamental to His being: His mercy. Sin is essentially a turning opposite to the way of God and opposing Him. The wicked tormenters of Christ mocked mercy itself as they pretended to be merciful only to torment Christ further. May we see the great wickedness of man for what it is that we may be humbled before our holy God. Every sin of ours is worthy of the wrath of God. Every sin of ours was put upon the shoulders of Christ as he bore the suffering there on the cross for us. Sing Psalter 185 verse 7

**September 17 Read Romans 11:1-13; Psalm 69:22-25**

Our God is sovereign in election and reprobation. This truth is denied by most today. While many claim to believe God chooses the elect, they deny the logical conclusion that therefore He also reprobates the others. We need not concluded the doctrine of reprobation by logic alone, for God plainly teaches this in these passages. We also are made to understand by this word of God that reprobation serves election, for it was in the way of the reprobation of ungodly Israel that the gospel went out to the Gentiles. As we saw yesterday, verse 21 is prophetic of Christ dying on the cross. The words of verses 22-25 are also the words of Christ. As He hung there to pay the price for the sins of His people, He also condemned all others to hell. These are the words of our God, if you deny these words, then you deny the God Who also saves by sovereign election. Sing Psalter 185:8

**September 18 Read Isaiah 53; Psalm 69: 26-28**

We read Isaiah 53 again because we read here the truth that God is the one that sends affliction. David hesitates not to confess that it is God that has afflicted and smitten him. While man by nature stands up

in shock and ridicule when he hears that God, Who is supposed to care for and protect His people beats upon them with afflictions, David finds no contradiction or offence. The child of God knows the holiness of God and therefore the wickedness of his sin. He would gladly suffer a life of beatings from God when he comes to realize the terribleness of his sin. The God of the Scriptures is a just God. Sin must be punished. To this God Himself in Christ laid down His life for His people. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Sing Psalter 185 verse 9

**September 19 Read II Corinthians 8:1-9; Psalm 69:29**

Are you poor and sorrowful? God does not address the problem of earthly poverty of goods here, but rather the problem of spiritual poverty of knowing God. In comparison to life in heaven with God, our whole earthly life is one of spiritual poverty. In His loving kindness God gives to us faithful preaching and the Holy Spirit to lift us up and give us a taste of those heavenly riches, but we all the more long for life in heaven. Let us bring these needs before the Lord in prayer. He knows our poverty for He also became poor for us. God came down from heavenly glory, put aside the riches of that glory and took upon himself the flesh of man that we might be brought to God in Him. In our deliverance from poverty we come to know the mercy and love of God. Sing Psalter 186:1 & 187:1, 2

**September 20 Read Eph. 13:1-15; Psalm 69:30, 31**

The Lord loves nothing more than the song of praise that wells up in the thankful heart of a forgiven sinner. A song of praise from the heart of His children is the goal and purpose of all the work of God since the beginning of creation. It is the fruit of His work. A song of praise is so simple, yet so profound. A little child and an old man can sing the same song over and over again, and yet bring new praise to God each time. A song of praise is the melting and fusing together of all your sorrows and experiences from the day of your birth and transformed by the power of God's word into a song of praise. This is a wonder that we will more fully comprehend when we are taken into heaven for an eternity of praise. Let us sing Psalter 186:2 in the knowledge of our wondrous salvation.

**September 21 Read Zech. 9:11, 12; Ephesians 3:1-7; Psalm 69:29-31**

From the moment Adam fell into sin, every man woman and child is a prisoner of Satan. By nature we serve Satan and can do nothing but sin. Many of these prisoners belong to Satan, but not all. Some belong to God; they are God's prisoners. Unlike those who are not God's prisoners, those who belong to God are prisoners of hope. God opens our eyes, He makes us alive, He shows us the Door and by the power of His grace He brings us out of prison. So powerful and complete is this deliverance, that we can never return to that prison. But because the prison of Satan is so big, essentially covering the whole earth, and the child of God is separated from it, it is as though we now enter the prison of God that prevents us forever from ever living freely in the world of sin. Paul gives expression to this wonderful truth when he confesses that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Does this truth make you glad? Sing Psalter 186:3 & 187:3.

**September 22 Read Isaiah 44:21-23; 49:13; 55:8-12; Psalm 69:32, 33**

When we meditate upon the garden of Eden and the wonderful life of Adam and Eve with God, it is easy for us to give praise to God, but when we see the corruption of this world it is not so easy to see the wonder in the unfolding of God's plan for a new heavens and new earth. The salvation of God's people is far more wonderful even than the garden of Eden. The accomplishment of God's purpose is reason for all creation to rejoice because then every part of creation will have

served the purpose for which it was created. All things work together for the salvation of God's people. Everything that moves from the stars to the jellyfish to the vibrating atom is called to sing praise unto God. He has created each one, He upholds the existence and life of each one, and He directs each one to serve His purpose in salvation. In all His works, God reveals His wisdom and glory. Let us join the creation and sing Psalter 186:4 & 187:4.

### **September 23 Read Acts 2:29-40; Psalm 69:36**

The institution of the family is an integral part of God's plan of salvation. God does not randomly choose individuals from the earth as though it were just one big group of people and then bring them into the church to be instructed in the knowledge of God. He does pluck individuals out of non-Christian backgrounds at times, but then He begins to work with them as a graft that can grow and become a family. He is pleased to use the family to provide a godly atmosphere and instruction for elect children who become firmly rooted in the truth from an early age. He is also pleased to give the joy to parents of seeing covenant children grow up in the fear of the Lord. This does not mean there are not branches that are reprobate and eventually pruned off. This brings extreme sorrow, but the joy of our salvation and the faithfulness of God to save His people will overcome all sorrow. Sing Psalter 186:5 with the hope of the Psalmist.

### **September 24 Read II Samuel 17:1-24; Psalm 70:1**

The history recorded in II Samuel 17:1-24 is an answer to David's prayer recorded in Psalm 70:1. That David's prayer was answered does not mean that he was free from all his troubles. Absalom continued to pursue him and it may have appeared to David that God did not answer his prayer. Through it all, God did preserve David and eventually established His throne as a picture of the coming reign of Christ. Christ also prayed to God in the times of His great distress, and God confounded Satan by giving Christ the victory over death. Here too the way was not easy. When we pray for deliverance, we must not expect an answer that makes our life easy. God will always hear our prayer: He will never let His elect slip into the hands of Satan. He will make every attempt of wicked men to harm or lead us astray turn to their destruction and our salvation. Let us sing this prayer with Psalter 189:1 & 190:1.

### **September 25 Read Isa. 41:1-14; Jn. 18:1-6; Ps. 70:2, 3**

The pride which lifts a man against God will always be met with shame and confusion because pride against God is absolute foolishness. This pride is manifest every time we sin. Sin is the willful stepping off the path to which God has directed our steps. Though we all sin and fall in shame and confusion, there is a difference between the reprobate and the elect. The reprobate can be smashed down in shame and confusion, but they get up again and persist in sin to an even greater shame and ultimate destruction. The elect are pricked in their heart and repent. In Christ they are washed clean and made precious in God's sight. They are taken within the covenant fellowship of God so that God brings shame and confusion to those who rise up against His people. The church is gathered for the glory of God, and anyone who would rise up against this work of God will be destroyed. Sing Psalter 188:2 & 189:2

### **September 26 Read John 16:20-28; Psalm 70:4**

In the midst of great distress, David does not only pray for the destruction of his enemies, but he also prays for all believers asking that they may rejoice and be glad. Here again, among other things, we see the great theme that runs through all Scripture, of joy and salvation in the way of sin and misery. We may not always see why it must be this way, but this is the will of God. In this way, and in no other way, is the love of God manifest fully to His people. In heaven we will understand this truth which we now see but dimly. Christ directs our attention to the picture of this great theme in the birth of a child. The joy of receiv-

ing a new child can only come in the way of pain and travail. Our minds forget the pain and suffering of childbirth, but the experience is intertwined forever in the love and joy that we have in the child. May we never forget that our puny created minds will never fathom the depths of the wisdom of the eternal God. Sing Psalter 188:3 & 189:3

### **September 27 Read Hebrews 10:1-37; Psalm 70:5**

We know God does not delay His return to deliver His people, and yet we pray "make haste." We also pray for the forgiveness of sins knowing that Christ has already blotted them out. We pray knowing that God knows everything we need. Would we not be better off keeping quiet and trusting that God will come, that our sins are forgiven, and our needs will be met? Some would have us believe that prayer will cause God to do certain things. We must hold steadfast to the truth that God is in complete sovereign control and unchangeable, yet we must also pray without ceasing because God is a covenant God and we are covenant people. The covenant is a bond of friendship, and there is no friendship without fellowship. In the friendship between the sovereign God of heaven and earth and frail, created, sinful man, such a fellowship in prayer is necessary and pleasing to God. God wills to come quickly, God wills to forgive our sins, God wills to supply our every need, and we confess that our will is knit with His when we ask for these very things. Sing Psalter 188:4 & 189:4

### **September 28 Read I Peter 2:1-10; Psalm 71:1, 2**

We have seen in the Psalms a number of times now where the Psalmist prays for confidence and steadfastness on the basis of his faith and trust in God. Knowing our God to be unchangeable and faithful, like a solid rock that can never be moved, we also pray that God sets us firmly upon that rock. What exactly is that rock? The Old Testament saints had only the promise of salvation as their rock. They prayed for faith to believe that promise. The Rock is Christ. We are delivered from sin on the basis of His death and resurrection. He is the only way to renewed fellowship with God. We are saved in His righteousness which is imputed unto us. He is our only hope. All other ways will only lead to confusion and death. In him we will never be confounded. Sing Psalter 190:1.

### **September 29 Read Revelation 7; Psalm 71:3**

Today we focus our attention upon the words "thou hast given commandment to save me." These words are very personal and reassuring. The God Who commanded the world to come into existence also commands our salvation. Nothing can hinder this commandment. It is a command that has been given from all eternity. The passage from Revelation teaches us that God sends His angels into the world to gather His people in time. The elect are sealed with a seal that distinguishes them from all other and guarantees their entrance into heaven. In this connection God gives to us the reassuring picture of Himself as a strong rock. Not only does He command our salvation, He also gives to us His word to comfort and shield us all our life until we are gathered into heaven. Let us put our trust in God our Rock. Sing Psalter 190:2

### **September 30 Read Romans 15:1-13; Psalm 71:4, 5**

Hope is expectancy or expectation. It is a thing that one longs for with expectation. Hope is not a wish. You might wish that you would find a new car in the garage in place of your old one, but there is no expectancy and therefore no hope. Hope is based on something known for certain. David expected God to deliver him from his enemies because God had done it before and He knew God is a God Who saves. Today we might hope for rain on the basis of a weather prediction for rain, and the fact that it has rained in the past, but we can't be certain because God also sends drought. Hope in God has an absolutely certain basis. God is unchangeable. He reveals Himself as "the God of hope." We are filled up with the hope of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in His hope we have peace and joy. May you be filled with the hope of God. Sing Psalter 190:3

# Psalter 111— Grace and Gratitude

by Kris Moelker

**P**salter #111 is a song of thanksgiving to God for His gracious deliverance. This song directs our attention to Christ who fulfilled the law by giving Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross.

There are times in our lives when we are required to exercise our faith in such a way that we must have a great deal of patience. As we wait upon the Lord we are assured that He is near us. Yes, God may allow us to sink for a time into the miry clay of adversity to show us how dependent we are on Him, but even then He will not leave us in our suffering. He will according to His grace lift us up and place us upon the Rock that is Christ.

“Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust” Psalm 40:1. Only when we trust the Lord can we find the strength to face every joy and sorrow that he sends us in our lives. We know that all things are under His control. We have no reason at all to fear because He is directing our paths and we have the knowledge that all things are for our good.

As we continually place our trust in Him, we cannot help but praise Him for His wondrous works. Who but He alone has created this world. Who but our God gives

breath unto man and every living thing? Who but our God constantly gives us everything we need? Who but our God constantly watches over us day and night? His wonderful works “are more than can be numbered.” (Psalm 40:5)

As we pointed out earlier this song directs our thoughts to Christ. We have the good news of salvation because of His suffering and death. We are free from the horrible pit of sin and death because Christ was forsaken by God Himself. We now have the law in our hearts because He sacrificed Himself on the cross as the fulfillment of the law. We rejoice to hear the gospel which is the good news of our salvation. Thanks be to God! ❖

111 Grace and Gratitude

PSALM 40 L. H. M. DUNSTAN Joseph Baraby

1. I wait - ed for the Lord Most High, And He in -  
 2. A new and joy - ful song of praise He taught my  
 3. O Lord my God, how man - i - fold Thy won - derous  
 4. Not sac - ri - fice de - lights the Lord, But he who

clined to hear my cry; He took me from de - struc - tion's  
 thank - ful heart to raise; And man - y, see - ing my re -  
 works which I be - hold, And all Thy lov - ing, gra - cious  
 hears and keeps His word; Thou gav - est me to hear Thy

pit And from the mir - y clay; Up - on a  
 stered, Shall fear the Lord and trust; And blest are  
 thought Thou hast be - stowed on man; To count Thy  
 will, Thy law is in my heart, I come the

rock He set my feet, And stead - fast made my way,  
 they that trust the Lord, The hum - ble and the just.  
 mer - cies I have sought, But bound - less is their open -  
 Scrip - ture to ful - fill, Glad ti - dings to in - part.

*Kris is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

# The Calling of a Young Wife

by Rev. Steven Key

*(This is the first of a series of articles, the substance of which was a sermon from Titus 2:4,5 preached in Randolph Protestant Reformed Church on February 5, 1995. It is published by request. Although applicable especially to wives and young women who desire to prepare themselves for holy marriage, it is also applicable to older women – whose calling it is to instruct their daughters and younger women in these crucial truths, and to young men, who ought to seek these virtues in a wife.)*

**T**oday I call your attention to the Bible's instruction concerning an aspect of Christian family life. As we have seen often before, God has given marriage for our spiritual good and the good of His Church. We are blessed who receive marriage and family life as God's good gift. But we must also recognize that in order for it to serve for our spiritual good, our family life must conform to the will of God and the precepts of His Word.

As we turn to Paul's epistle to Titus, his fellow minister in the gospel, we find him giving Titus instruction concerning the ministry. Titus must emphasize in his ministry the calling of God's people to put sound doctrine to practice. That is emphatically true when it comes to family life. Satan recognizes the importance of the institution of marriage and the family. For that reason, he levels numerous assaults upon the family, placing many temptations before the children of God.

This second chapter of Titus begins with the connecting word "But".

The Apostle had just referred to the influence of the ungodly world upon the church. The world lives in open defiance of God, shamelessly trumpeting its sin as great fun.

And because of the sinful natures even of God's people, and also because of the reprobate that are found even in the development of the lines of the covenant,

within the walls of the Church, such wickedness in the world has an influence in the Church.

In the very last part of chapter 1, Paul had warned of those who are defiled and unbelieving. He was speaking of those in the Church. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

"But...." In opposition to such and in defense against that influence of evil, "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." That is, speak concerning that Godly life which is fitting with the confession of a Christian, which is consistent with the great truths of God's Word.

And part of that sound doctrine which Titus must preach and teach is the application of God's truth to holy marriage and to family life.

## Teaching Young Women

As we consider the instruction of verses 4 and 5 of Titus, chapter 2, it is striking that the instruction actually belongs to the calling of the older women in the Church. It is not the calling of Titus and other ministers to teach the young women of the Church, first of all, with respect to their calling in family life. But the older women have that responsibility.

Titus must preach sound doctrine and apply that truth to the life of God's people.

But the members of the Church must enter into the application of that truth.

That is an urgent responsibility! The opening words of verse 4 really do not convey the emphasis. But the text says literally, that the older women are earnestly to teach the young women. The word used actually means "to discipline, to hold one to her duty," and therefore to exhort earnestly. That calling belongs to you older women.

When we use the terms "older" and "young," we realize that age is a relative thing. But the text somewhat defines the terms here.

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The young women are those who are married or of age to be married, and include mothers whose children are yet at home and whose life, therefore, is characterized by the tremendous daily responsibility of child-rearing. In that case, we might regard young women as those in their late teen-age years and perhaps well up into their 40's.

The older women, on the other hand, although not exclusive of unmarried women, are generally those who are married and have already borne the responsibility of raising children. That may include those as young as in their mid- to late 30's, as well as those who are older. Their children, if not already out of the house, are older.

These women, who have grown by experience and also have some spiritual maturity, are to show concern for the younger women of the Church by teaching them the ways of God-fearing marriage and motherhood. You are to set before them, not only the pattern of your own life, but you are earnestly to speak to them the Word of God concerning the calling of a young wife.

### **Called to Love**

The fundamental element of your calling, christian wives, is that of love.

We speak now of that spiritual virtue which recognizes marriage and the family as God's wonderful gift to His Church.

That young women have husbands and children is only by God's appointment.

That God has given to His Church marriage is by His sovereign appointment. He has done so, according to Ephesians 5, in reflection of that amazing relationship between Christ and His Church which He has established by His sovereign and eternal decree of election. The inspired Apostle speaks of the institution of marriage and that holy relationship, when he says in Ephesians 5:32: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

For a young woman to love her husband, she must recognize her God-given place.

In Genesis, chapter 2, we learn that man alone was not able to perform the calling that God had for him. God created the woman as the help fit for him. What a tremendously important calling you God-fearing wives have! Without Godly wives and mothers in the home, the family and the Church could not exist! The church, after all, is founded upon the life of the family.

What a glorious place God has given you women! You are indispensable to the welfare of us all. The home, the Church and the cause of the kingdom depends di-

rectly upon your work as Godly wives and mothers. Knowing that indispensable place given you by God, you are called to love your husband.

### **True Love**

The love, therefore, which unites the Christian husband and wife together is much deeper than mere physical and romantic attraction. You will not find this love in the world's books or the world's movies.

This is a love which bears all things, which forgives many faults, which seeks the welfare of its object. It is the love of God in Christ which He works in their hearts through the Holy Spirit. And that love, as a matter of the soul, comes to expression.

Such love is the giving of one's self to another.

This is the love of self-denial, the love which seeks the other and gives to the other.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme example. We read in Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." He gave Himself to the death of the cross for the welfare of His Bride, for her salvation.

Here in Titus 2:4 the same calling of love is set before the young wives in the church.

Husbands must indeed love their wives. That is their chief calling in marriage.

But the text before us today sets the same calling before you wives.

To love your husband is to live for him, recognizing his headship as the picture of Christ's headship over the church. It is to pray for him and to support him in all his endeavors. It is to be a spiritual help to him. It is to apply yourself in your daily life to preparing for him the most comfortable home possible. It is to be there for him, to fellowship with him.

To love your husband is to live with I Corinthians 13 written upon your heart. Such love also comes to expression in many other virtues, as we shall see presently.

Besides the love for her husband, the young mother is to love her children.

This, again, is not a natural love. Else it would not have to be taught you.

Your calling here is a calling to that deeply spiritual virtue of love. You are called to reflect the love of God in your relationship with your children.

That is often difficult. Because our children are sinners. Not only so, but they are sinners in such a way that they reflect the sins of our own natures. That makes it very painful to experience. But you are called to love your children.

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Such love is a love that provides for the children. A God-fearing mother is there for her children. She is not selfishly pursuing other interests to the neglect of her children. She is there, recognizing that her children require full-time labors of love. They must be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

During those several hours of the day when her husband is at work, the full responsibility for that calling rests upon mother's shoulders. She must love her chil-

dren, providing discipline for them, teaching them, having devotions with them, praying with them.

This love, love for her husband and love for her children, is the foundation of the Christian home where the young wife has her calling. Such love comes to manifestation. (To be continued.) ❖

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

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From the Web

## Can Christ Come Back Any Second?

by Rev. Richard Moore

### Question #33

I would like to ask you a question. I am having a dispute with class members with the following question. What will happen at the end of the world, and can Christ come back any second, or do signs still have to happen?

### Answer #33

When you ask about what will happen at the end of the world with the related question, I understand that you are talking about what will come to pass before Jesus returns upon the clouds of heaven in judgment to bring all his saints into the new heavens and new earth. There are many things that take place leading to the coming of Christ. These things are outlined for us in the Scripture. It is necessary to turn to the various Scripture passages that speak of those things that must come to pass in order to have a complete picture of that which takes place. I will not take the time in this question to expound all those Scriptures to you, but will direct you to study the prophecy of Daniel, the book of Revelation, the record of Jesus' own words as to what must come to pass as recorded in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, and also to the apostle's explanations in the epistles of the Thessalonians.

The signs given us by Christ of His coming in Matthew 24 must be taken quite literally. That which he teaches us speaks not only of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, but as is obvious from His own words

have their fulfillment at the end of this age. Jesus answers the specific question of his disciples, in Matthew 24:3-4 we read, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you." Then we have the rather long and detailed answer as to what must first come to pass before the final judgment.

Basically we have the signs that are seen in the working out of the history of this world with wars and rumors of wars, with the strife caused by the differences among men, between those that have and those that have not, etc. There shall be many and increasing signs of the coming judgment as seen in the earthquakes, and other great storms, the famine and pestilence's that shall continue to increase in the midst of this earth, etc. As is evident from the book of Revelation, these increase in the history of the new dispensation until final they are means for the final destruction of man in this world. We find this in the increasing measure of these judgments as the seals are opened into the trumpets, and the trumpets finally bring forth the final vials of God's wrath upon man. And then there are the specific main events that yet are unfolding and must be unfolded that Jesus speaks of which immediately precede the final destruction of this world and the coming of Christ to usher in the new heavens and new earth.

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There is the sign of the great apostasy that Jesus speaks of when He teaches us that the love of many shall wax cold. We read in Matthew 24:11-14 “ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Understand these two things happen together: 1) the true gospel of Christ is preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations, and 2) there is a growing number of false prophets who preach a false gospel that leads to great deception and falling away so that the true church becomes smaller and smaller while the apostasy or departure from the Scripture increases.

Now we ought to understand that as far as the scope is concerned, the gospel has been preached to all nations. What remains for the faithful church in its missions is not the conversion of nations any more, the white horse of the book of Revelation has finished its course as to scope, the gospel has been brought to all nations. But in its missions the true church in its preaching is used of Christ to gather together the remaining elect remnant from those nations. We live in the day of the final gathering of the elect remnant and when the last child of God is born and gathered into the church under the Word Jesus will come.

But at the same time apostasy grows and develops until Antichrist in all his evil deceit as the servant of Satan takes his place in the temple. That is he represents himself as the Savior of this world, and all men shall walk in obedience to him. That is, all except the true elect remnant. This work of Antichrist is outlined in various chapters of the book of Revelation, namely the 13th and 17th as well as in the other passages of the Scriptures that we mentioned before.

The power of antichrist shall be a political power, which will be concentrated in one ruler in the midst of this world. He shall have at his side another powerful leader the second beast of antichrist that shall lead all the religions of the world to promote the kingdom of antichrist. And it shall be a world power that shall stand opposed to the Christ of the Scripture, but shall present himself as savior of the world and as the one that should be served and worshipped.

This power of antichrist is being developed with exceeding rapidity in the days in which we live, but still has not obtained his throne. The common economic drive, the policing of the whole world by the powers that be, the striving for world environmental reforms, the continuing cry for ecumenical unity among religions, etc. are all very present and declare the final manifestation of antichrist is drawing near.

Then finally when antichrist has come to his full power and the whole world is united to serve him, then shall a great persecution come against the elect remnant

that will not bow down and serve this antichrist. Jesus says that persecution will be greater than any ever before seen. So this must yet come to pass in all of its fulness. We should remember however Jesus words that those days then shall be shortened. They will not last long so that the elect may be kept safe. Matthew 24: 22 “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

Finally there shall be the battle of Armageddon when the pagan world nations shall arise against the nations of antichrist, the so called christian nations, and the universe shall break up. Then Christ will come in judgment to take His saints to

the new heavens and new earth that comes forth from the present heavens and earth that perishes with fire, see II Peter 3.

To answer then your second part of your question, No! Jesus will not come in the next few seconds!!

Not even in the next few days or month’s for these signs must be fully revealed before He returns. This is His own word to us. But also we see from the above and a study of the Scripture and the observance of the history that is unfolding before us, He comes quickly. The signs are being rapidly revealed, and it would be foolish for us to think that Christ’s return is afar off, is many years or hundreds of years away. Christ is coming and He is coming quickly, and we pray, yea Lord Jesus, come quickly. For then we shall be delivered from this earth of sin and this body of death and will dwell with our Lord in the new heavens and the new earth forever.

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**We live in the day  
of the final  
gathering of the  
elect remnant and  
when the last  
child of God is  
born and  
gathered into the  
church under the  
Word Jesus will  
come.**

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## Confession of Faith (2)

by Rev. Ronald Cammenga

*Reprinted from the Standard Bearer Vol. 63 pp. 211-213*

**A**t the end of our last article, we were busy discussing the basis for public confession of faith. We saw that the responsibility to make public confession of faith is based, first of all, on the general calling of the believer to confess Christ's Name in the world. Confession of our faith is something to which the Word of God everywhere calls us. It is simply an integral part of the Christian life.

A second reason why Reformed churches have always insisted on a public confession of faith by the young people is the duty of the consistory to guard the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Lord has entrusted the sacraments to the church. The church is called to administer the sacraments. Besides, the church has been given by God the responsibility to protect the sacraments from abuse and desecration.

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 teaches clearly that if the church knowingly allows profane persons to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the church sins and because of this gross neglect falls under the judgment of God. This responsibility of the church is spelled out in the Heidelberg Catechism.

Q. 82. Are they to be admitted to this supper, who, by confession and life, declare themselves unbelieving and ungodly?

A. No; for by this, the covenant of God would be profaned, and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation; therefore it is the duty of the Christian church, according to the appointment of Christ and his apostles, to exclude such persons, by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, till they show amendment of life.

Since the tie of the Reformation, Reformed churches have exercised supervision over the Lord's table by

means of public confession of faith. By insisting on a public confession of faith prior to admission to the sacrament, the consistory makes sure that those who partake do so worthily.

The third basis for the responsibility of the young people to make public confession of faith has to do with the responsibility to partake of the Lord's Supper itself. In instituting the Lord's Supper, Christ said, "*Take, eat, this is my body. Drink ye all of it.*" It ought not to escape our attention that these words of Christ are a command, imperatives: "Take! Eat! Drink ye!" Christ obligates every adult believer to partake of the means of grace, the Lord's Supper. As much as we are obligated by God to hear the preaching of the gospel, so we are obligated to partake of the sacrament. Young people, you must be impressed with the duty that is yours before God to use the sacrament. And being impressed with the duty that is yours before God to use the sacrament. And being impressed with your duty to use the sacrament, you cannot but also be impressed with the attendant duty of making public confession of your faith.

### **Two Dangers In Regard To Making Confession Of Faith**

There are at least two dangers that must be guarded against with regard to making confession of faith. The first is the danger of making confession of faith recklessly and insincerely. Some young people make confession of faith only because everybody else is doing it, and they don't want to be the odd man out. Or they make confession of faith so that they can quit going to catechism. They have probably gone through the Essentials catechism book a couple of times, are tired of memorizing questions, taking notes, and writing tests, and so make confession of faith. Others make confession of faith because they have married someone in the church, and confession of faith is viewed by them simply as a way of

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“joining the church.” They do not make confession of faith because they personally and heartily agree with “...the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian church....” But they simply make confession of faith for the sake of a husband or wife.

This is wrong! Those who make confession of faith for these sorts of reasons sin grievously. Those whose confession with the mouth does not have its source in the heart, make a mockery of confession of faith. Better not to confess at all, than to make this kind of confession.

But besides this danger, there is also the danger of wrongly putting off confession of faith. There may be reasons for this. It may be that undue pressure is being exerted by parents or pastor, and the young person balks at making confession of faith lest he be making confession simply because of this outside pressure. Or it may be that a young person puts off making confession of faith because he feels that he just does not know enough. Or a young person may put off confession because he is mistakenly waiting for some special sign from God, some special occurrence in his life, that would indicate to him that now the time is right to make confession of faith.

Needlessly putting off making confession of faith is also a danger to be guarded against, although it may be said that quite often the reasons given by the young person for doing so at least indicates that he is taking confession of faith seriously.

This matter of putting off confession of faith seems to be a trend in our own churches. It seems that in the past several years young people are making confession of faith at an older age than was common in the past. Whereas in the past many young people made confession of faith in the middle and late teens, it is common for young people to make confession of faith today in the teens to early and middle twenties. It is doubtful that this is a good trend. As parents and officebearers we ought to do what we can to reverse this trend. The responsibility of officebearers to work with young people who may be needlessly putting off making confession of faith is brought out in the questions that are asked of the consistory at the time of the annual church visitation. One of those questions is, “Do the children of the congregation, when they come to years of discretion, seek admission to the Lord’s Supper? And if they are remiss, are they pointed to their obligation and treaded as the need requires?”

## When To Make Confession Of Faith

Obviously, no hard and fast rules can be laid down as to when a person ought to make public confession of faith. The Scriptures lay down no set age at which a young person in the church ought to be partaking of the Lord’s Supper. One ought to make confession of faith when he has come to spiritual maturity. Just as physical and psychological maturity take place at different ages in different people, so does spiritual maturity. Undoubtedly there are some 12 or 14 year olds who could make confession of faith, while others ought to wait until their later teens or even their early twenties.

The basic requirements for making confession of faith and for partaking of the Lord’s Supper is laid down by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 11:28,29: “but let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

The basic requirement for confession of faith and for partaking of the sacrament is “discerning the Lord’s body.” The man or woman who does not “discern” Christ’s body, partakes of the sacrament to his or her condemnation. Whoever partakes discerning the Lord’s body, partakes worthily.

What is it to discern the Lord’s body? Discerning the Lord’s body is not simply a matter of understanding that the bread of the Lord’s Supper is a sign of the body of Christ, and the wine a sign of His blood. Discerning the Lord’s body in the sacrament is understanding the meaning and significance of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ as that suffering and death are set forth in the Lord’s Supper. Discerning the Lord’s body is discerning the reason for the suffering and death of Christ, which is the sins of His people. It is discerning the One Who suffered and died—the very Son of God Himself in human flesh. It is discerning the nature of God for all those on behalf of whom He died. It is a limited atonement or a particular redemption. It is a discerning the efficacy of that death, the truth that by His suffering and death the sins of all those for whom He died are actually forgiven. It is discerning the calling that comes to those for whom He died to live thankful and holy lives in the world. All this is involved in discerning the Lord’s body.

And it is a personal matter. Discerning the Lord’s body is a matter of personal discernment. It is precisely for this reason that in the same text in which he calls us to discern the Lord’s body before we come to the Lord’s Supper that the Apostle says, “Let a man examine him-

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self. . . .” Coming to the Lord’s Supper is not a matter of mere head knowledge, that you know in your mind all the truths connected with the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. But in partaking of the Lord’s Supper and making confession of faith, this personal, subjective element is on the foreground.

Coming to the Lord’s Supper is not just a matter of acknowledging the truth that the death of Christ was necessitated by sin; but that He died for MY sins. It is not merely a matter of acknowledging that the One Who suffered and died was the Son of God, Christ the Lord; but that He is the Son of God, Christ the Lord for ME. It is not just a matter of acknowledging that by His death He made satisfaction for sin; but that by His death He covered in the sight of God MY sins. It is not just a matter of acknowledging that His death was a limited atonement; but that I personally belong to the number of those for whom He died. It is not merely a matter of acknowledging that the calling of those for whom He died is to live thankful and obedient lives; but the personal conviction that this is MY calling, on account of My salvation.

This personal element stands out in the Lord’s Supper. The one who approaches the Lord’s Table does so with the words of the psalmist on his lips, “O God, Thou

art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is,” Psalm 63:1. A young person about to make confession of his faith must be able to take on his lips the opening statement of the Heidelberg Catechism:

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

The young person who discerns the Lord’s body, who discerns the Lord’s body in this personal, experiential way ought to make confession of faith. You have no reason to delay! No reason to put it off! Confess your faith! Partake of the sacrament! In this way honor the Lord whom you love! In this way experience His rich blessing! ❖

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

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## Where We Stand

# The Enemy

by Rev. Gise Van Baren

*This article was first presented as a speech by Rev. Gise Van Baren at the 1998 Young Adult’s Spring Retreat in Loveland, CO. The retreat occurs in March of every year. Young adults of high school age and older are encouraged to attend.*

**I** come as a messenger with a very serious message. That message is: the enemy is here. He is not far out in the distance, not even just at the

gates, but here with us in our gathering! This enemy you can’t see, but nevertheless he is very real. And though it sounds perhaps silly, one might say that we can tell that he is here by the stench of hell which accompanies his presence. This enemy is Satan and his hosts. These represent an enemy that is intent on destroying us and all of the church of Jesus Christ.

Probably you would prefer not to speak of such an enemy at the close of a day in which we have enjoyed

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wonderful fellowship together. We've had a good time today snowshoeing at Bear Lake. We hardly thought about enemies. We've rather rejoiced in our friendships: old friendships renewed, and new friendships made. We have had our physical activities—and now we are asked to consider an enemy! It seems almost too much for a day such as this.

My speech tonight is going to be largely negative. Normally one ought not to be mostly negative in a speech. There ought to be something largely positive in it. But tonight this speech will be rather negative. In fact, I'm going to try to make it as negative as I can. I want to impress upon each of us the seriousness of this enemy we confront. The enemy is Satan and his fallen angels.

Whenever any army confronts another, it is imperative that it recognizes precisely who the enemy is. He must know the area of the enemy's strength, but also his weaknesses. If he knows the enemy and recognizes his battle plan, he is more able to prepare for the battle. And so it is true of the child of God.

Christians would be fools to fail to recognize who the enemy really is. We think that we have no real enemies at present since we live in a land with religious freedom. Or we think of our enemies, when they show themselves, as Paul describes them: flesh and blood. These can put us in prison or kill us. We are concerned about such enemies—but by God's grace we believe we shall be able to maintain the faith in spite of persecution. However, do we realize that the enemy we confront is far more dangerous than mere flesh and blood?

We face spiritual entities, fallen angels, whom we can not see. The apostle emphasizes that in verse 12 when he states, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood (which doesn't strictly mean that we never wrestle against flesh and blood, but this is not the basic enemy), but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." There's an array of fallen angels, a hierarchy: spirits of all different kinds, in different positions. And these are all united in a single purpose: to destroy the kingdom of God including the church of Jesus Christ. The enemy is Satan and his hordes of fallen angels!

Such an enemy can do things that, perhaps, we can't fully understand. These fallen angels have some access into the mind of a person. In the days of Christ there were those who were demon possessed so that a demon could even take over a human body: speak through him and perhaps work through him. You have read about those in the gospel accounts. With respect to Judas Iscariot,

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we must not say,  
"The devil made me  
do it."

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we read that when Christ tells Judas to do what he intended to do, we also read of the fact that Satan entered into Judas to move him to do this very thing.

This enemy, these spiritual entities, have the ability to influence our thoughts. Satan and his cohorts would direct our thoughts into paths of sin. However, we must not say, "The devil made me do it." That's a popular bumper sticker. We may not first blame the devil. When we do evil deeds, it's because we desire to do it. We provide openings for Satan to affect and influence our thoughts. But we must be aware that the enemy seeks to attack the church of Jesus Christ by affecting our thoughts. We face that kind of enemy.

The Word of God tells us that we have to be mindful of that enemy. We have to watch for him. In fact, in the Old Testament one reads oftentimes of the watchmen on the walls of Zion. Ezekiel 33:7 says, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." The watchman stood on the top of the wall. He would overlook the whole of the valley. If an enemy would approach, he would see them in the distance. He must shout his warning to the army within the walls of the city. But if that watchman fell asleep on the job, and didn't warn the people of the city, and the enemy approached, and perhaps even entered into the open gates of the city, many would be destroyed. Perhaps the city would be captured. But the blood of those who were slain would be placed upon the watchmen on the walls of Zion. He didn't warn when it was required.

That's what the Word of God demands too. Today there are watchmen on the walls of Zion. First of all these are the preachers who have to proclaim the Word of God from the pulpit. Also the elders who have to rule in the midst of the church are the ones that must shout out the warning. "There's the enemy! He is not just far in the distance, but nearby!! Here!!" These must warn the people of God of the dangers that the church faces from that enemy. Eph. 6 reminds us of that fact. In verse 12, especially, we are told that this enemy represents a

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hierarchy of fallen spirits who through devious and clever means would seek to destroy the faith.

We have to note too the tactics of such an enemy. If an army is to confront an enemy, the general must be aware of tactics the enemy will likely use. If the enemy might use biological or chemical weapons, the general knows what he must do. He will make sure that there is a gas mask for every soldier. He will provide every soldier with an inoculation against biological weapons. Of if the general anticipates that bombs are to fall, he would provide some sort of shelter. There must be a defense against the attack of the enemy.

So it is with the child of God. Satan is indeed clever. And yet in all of his cleverness, he has not been able to hide the method of his attack. Knowing this, one can be properly prepared and protected.

There are two principal tactics that Satan inevitably uses very effectively. We must know what these are. They are so obvious, perhaps, that I hardly need mention them. Many, however, ignore or overlook Satan's battle-plans. The Bible exposes and explains these.

In the first place, we go to Paradise where Satan sought to deceive Adam and Eve. He came in the serpent and spoke first to Eve. What was his *modus operandi* there? Mind you, he was trying to attack perfect people. One might say that Satan must be extremely clever in order to get them to fall. So what did he say? You've heard it often. In essence Satan says this, "Yea hath God said...." He questioned God's Word. He did it in such a way that Eve first, and then Adam, listened—and disobeyed. Eve ate of the forbidden tree. He had created doubt in her mind about what God said: "Yea did God say they might not eat of all of the trees of the garden?" And after Satan created doubt, Eve begins to question God's Word. She responds, "God said we may not eat it, nor touch it (God had not said that), lest we die (God did not say that; ye shall surely die, God said)." It was truly a clever and deceptive attack: "Yea, did God say?"

I want to emphasize that this is the basic attack that Satan uses, not only in Paradise, but throughout the ages. Remember that!

Allow me to give you some examples of the methods Satan uses along the lines which he used first in Paradise. You all know that there are all kinds of religions in this world: Mohammadism and their Koran, the Jehovah Witnesses who have their own variation of the Bible, and the Mormons with their Book of Mormon. Each of these have a "bible." It is in some ways a bible

that resembles the Bible we have. Satan would not have us throw away our Bibles—but will provide many other "bibles" to create confusion. Doubt arises: "What did God really say? Which "bible" accurately expresses the will of God? There are many today who say, "Yes, these all are religious people: Muslims, Mormons, and others are all serving God too. Some call Him by a different name: Allah, perhaps; but they are serving the same God. Satan seems so to affect even those within the churches with this line of reasoning that many say that Christianity is not the only way of salvation. Christ and His cross are not the only way of saving people. Satan would display a variety of religious products which in some ways resemble the original. Before long the claim is made that these products may differ slightly, but are all equally legitimate ways to God.

Satan has created confusion in the church with the introduction of all kinds of translations of the Bible. One isn't enough. King James is outdated, obviously, with all of its archaic words. So we need new translations. So now one person quotes from the NIV and another from the King James, another from the American Standard, or the New English. Increasingly the question arises, "Did God really say this?" Comparing the different translations, one recognizes that passages are omitted from some, important truths are distorted. Satan does not need to say, "Throw aside the Bible," Satan says in effect, "Here's a large number of different translations to help you understand what God said." There is created confusion, doubt, and ultimately unbelief within the church. One asks, "What did God really say?" Increasingly, Scripture itself is questioned. Satan succeeds in creating doubt about what Scripture really said.

Consider all of the issues which have divided the churches in recent years. There is the question concerning creation. Did He really create all things in six days of 24 hours? There is doubt concerning the miracles: "Did He really mean to tell us in the Bible that the walls of Jericho fell down after the people marched around it seven days and seven times the seventh day? Did that really happen?" There is growing doubt about the historical accuracy of Scripture! You, young people, are going to face that sort of attack. One still has the Bible, but which one must we believe? "Yea, hath God said..." That has proved to be a very effective attack of Satan. (To be continued) ❖

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*Rev. Van Baren is pastor of Loveland Protestant Reformed Church in Loveland, Colorado.*

# Through Strife to Victory

## Chapter 8

### The Crisis—Synod Meets

by Rev. C. Hanko

**T**he synod met on June 18, 1924. We should bear in mind a few things regarding a denominations broader gatherings before continuing. The Synod is a broader gathering than the classis. Likewise, the classis is a broader gathering than the consistory. It is composed of delegates from the consistories of a certain geographic area. In 1924 there were thirteen classes in the Christian Reformed Church. The synod in turn, is an assembly of delegates from the various classes. In this case there were six delegates from each classis, making a total of seventy eight delegates. The professors of the seminary also attended these meetings with an advisory vote.

It should be understood that according to Reformed church polity the classis and the synod do not have judicial power. A classis or synod is *not* a superior court or higher gathering within the church, but a *broader* gathering. They have advisory power. Christ's authority rests with the *consistory*. The consistory, with the advice of the congregation, calls a minister, chooses office bearers, and with the *advice* of classis, the office bearers and congregation, disciplines. All judicial power rests with the consistory. Therefore consistories can present their problems to the classis, and, if necessary, to synod. These broader gatherings can advise the consistory as to the proper procedure. If the consistory refuses to carry out this advice, the synod can declare that consistory outside of the denomination, but cannot depose either the minister or the consistory. This is sound church polity to avoid hierarchy.

The Synod of 1924 would go down in history as having made one of the most vital decisions ever made, which would bear its weighty consequences in the Christian Reformed Church for years to come, as well as being the occasion for the birth of the Protestant Reformed Churches.



*Rev. H. Hoeksema –  
shunned at CRC Synod  
1924.*

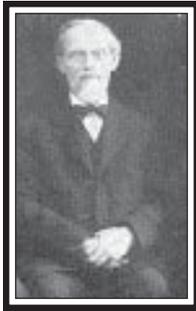
There are at least four factors that must be borne in mind as we discuss the decisions of the Synod of 1924.

First, the work was not finished in the smaller gatherings. As has been remarked before, the protests from Classis East were sent to synod before Eastern Avenue CRC consistory or classis had finished their work. The

same applies to the consistory of Kalamazoo and Classis West, regarding Rev. Danhof.

Secondly, as a result of the haste with which the issue was treated by both classes, the material did not appear on the agenda and the delegates had no opportunity to study the matter. As a result, many of the delegates, especially the elder delegates, did not understand the issue nor how weighty the matter really was. One elder informed me later that he had been delegate to this synod and had voted for the Three Points of Common Grace simply because he thought this was an official doctrine of the church.

Thirdly is the appointment of Prof. Berkhof to the committee of pre-advice. For readers unfamiliar with procedure at a synod, it is customary for synod to appoint committees of pre-advice, who study the material entrusted to them and give a formal report and recommendation to the synod. On the committee that deals with doctrinal matters the professor of theology is customarily appointed as the advisor. In this case that would have been Prof. F. Ten Hoor. But instead of Prof. Ten Hoor, Prof. L. Berkhof was appointed for this duty. It



*Prof. TenHoor and Prof. Berkhof: Exerting their influence.*

must be remembered that Prof. Berkhof was a strong defender of the theory of common grace. Later he wrote a brochure entitled, “De Drie Punten in Alle Deelen Gereformeerd”, that is, “The Three Points from Every Aspect Reformed.” In speaking of Prof. Ten Hoer, it is interesting to note that during the discussions on the floor of this synod, Rev. Danhof, who was a delegate, made the remark that he was a spiritual son of Prof. Ten Hoer. There upon, the professor arose and remarked that he did not know that he had ever produced a spiritual son.

The fourth factor to be borne in mind is the decided attempt to ignore Rev. Hoeksema. It should be remarked that in such broader gatherings the person involved in the protests is often called upon to enlighten the committee of pre-advice and is also allowed to speak as often as necessary on the floor of the synod. This is only proper and just. Rev. Hoeksema, who was not a delegate, was not even once called before the committee of pre-advice even though they labored for almost two weeks before they were ready to report. When the Synod met, Rev. Hoeksema was not allowed to speak on the floor of synod. Repeatedly he asked for the floor, but was always refused. Finally, in desperation he offered that if just once he were given time to speak his mind, he would not ask for the floor again. He was given an hour and a half in an evening session. After that he was held to his promise, which he should never have been compelled to make.

The committee of pre-advice eliminated everything from the protests and overtures which were brought except three matters: common grace, the restraint of sin, and civil good that the wicked perform. The committee then formulated the well-known Three Points of common grace and advised synod to give the two ministers a most severe tongue lashing, advising them not to agitate in the churches in the future and warning that if they did continue to agitate, the synod would be compelled to

make their case pending with their consistories. This reminds one of the admonition that the Sanhedrin gave to Peter and John soon after Pentecost.

Days of wrangling and discussion followed. It is important to note one particular motion which failed to be adopted. At one point, Rev. Manni made the motion that:

Synod having duly considered the advice of the committee of pre-advice in the matter of protests and objections against the views of the Reverends H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema, decides to drop the common grace case for the present, with the earnest admonition that thorough study be made of this matter, in the spirit of brotherly and mutual appreciation.

In order to execute this thorough study synod decides to appoint a large committee in which also the brethren Danhof and Hoeksema shall be members, which shall serve the next synod with more light on this serious problem.

Finally, synod declares that the protestants (whose good intentions synod appreciates) must be satisfied with this decision and abide by it, considering that the synod is of the opinion that the time is not ripe for a more definite expression of the problem before which it was placed by the protestants.”

This motion pointed out the way that this synod should have gone. But the motion was defeated.

The outcome was that the three points of common grace were adopted. It should not escape us though, that the synod had no intention of declaring these brethren Danhof and Hoeksema heretical and certainly did not advise discipline. That becomes evident from a declaration that the synod made which virtually contradicted the decision regarding common grace. But we shall look at all this more in detail next time. ❖

*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.*



*Photo courtesy of Calvin College Archives*

*Rev. Manni's defeated motion an omen of things to come.*

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

## Sandra's Prayer

*... let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

Sammy looked so small and so sick as he lay in his crib. Mother gently rubbed his back, but he still continued to moan. Sandra watched awhile and then went to her room.

She squeezed her eyes shut and clasped her hands as tightly as she could. After all, maybe God would do what she wanted if she prayed hard enough.

"Oh Lord, our Father," she began, "please make Sammy better..."

But slowly the words dropped from her lips, and her eyes and hands forgot to be tight. *Father*, she thought again and again, *Father*. Surely our Father wants what is best for us. He's our Father! And He knows what's best for us, too. Surely He wants Sammy to get well. If--if that's best.

Sandra opened her eyes but remained deep in thought. *Best*. Our Father knows best. She shut her eyes and tried again.

"Oh Lord, our Father," she began, "wilt Thou do what is best..."

She prayed for Sammy, but first she prayed that God's will would be done. Even if she didn't understand, God's will is best.

She was relieved and sighed, "Amen." After all, whether Sammy got well or not did not depend on how hard she prayed. But it did depend on God, their Father. And that was all that mattered. ❖



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

**Find the underlined words in the puzzle at the right:**

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."

Matthew 6:7,8

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

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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:**

Alaina Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Ondersma—Byron Center, MI  
Kennedy Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Kaptein—Georgetown, MI  
Grant Jonathan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Flikkema—Georgetown, MI  
Tyler William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Sam Copple—Hope, MI  
Samantha Jo, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ken Engelsma—Hope, MI  
Thomas James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Mastbergen—Hope, MI  
James Walter, son of Mr. & Mrs. Daryl Warntjes—Hull, IA  
Jackson Arthur, son of Joy Bleyenbergh—Hull, IA  
Jacob Harlow, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Dykstra—South-east, MI  
Meghan Faith, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Todd Groenendyk—Southwest, MI  
Trevor Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Huisken—Southwest, MI  
Jacob Martin, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan DeVries—South-west, MI  
Laura Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David Rau—Southwest, MI  
Cassidy Rachelle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian TenBrock—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:**

Tara Bouma—Georgetown, MI  
Tricia Peterson—Georgetown, MI  
Dan Van Uffelen—Holland, MI  
Mary Holstege—Hudsonville, MI  
Joy Bleyenbergh—Hull, IA  
Sandee Lynn Alsum—Randolph, WI  
Michelle Key—Randolph, WI  
Elisabeth Key—Randolph, WI  
Jeremy Huizinga—Southwest, MI  
Jennifer Looyenga—Southwest, MI

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

*Matthew 19:5*

**United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:**

Mr. Jonathan Lubbers and Miss Melissa Corson—Byron Center, MI  
Mr. Rob Andringa and Miss Candice Boon—Doon, IA  
Mr. Wayne DeJong and Miss Rebecca Aardema—Doon, IA  
Mr. Terry Dykstra and Miss Tracy VanDyke—Grace, MI  
Mr. James Boorsma and Miss Tami Moelker—Hope, MI  
Mr. Philip Kuiper and Miss Laura Van Den Top—Southeast, MI