
Beacon Lights

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Grow in Grace and In The Knowledge of Christ!

by Mike Feenstra

Right now you may be sitting at the kitchen table or in your favorite chair. Look out the window. Perhaps you see the brilliant colors of spring, the beautiful white of the dogwood trees and the rich colors of the tulips. Open your front door. What do you hear? Most likely you hear the birds filling the creation with their song. Maybe you hear some birds which you have not heard for awhile! Take a sniff of the air. It even smells like spring! Open your Bible to II Peter 3. Take a look at verse eighteen. The creatures of creation around you are growing. Young Person, how about you? Are you growing in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! Also, are you interested in your personal growth so that you might, by God's grace, be of service to God's church?

Spring and Summer are wonderful seasons of the year. Through the whole winter we can not wait until the time of year when the earth will again be enveloped in green. But have you ever thought that winter serves a good purpose? Often we are cooped up in our house with nothing to do. Therefore, we take the opportunity to read and study God's Word (do we?). But, when the winds of summer blow, we often slack off on our devotions. Is it the same way with you?

This summer I encourage you to make a change. For those of you who regularly study God's Word, I commend you and encourage you to press on. Resolve, by God's grace, to grow in the knowledge of God's Word. This is an extremely important matter because John 17:3 says, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Therefore, when we are engaged in Bible study, we must approach the Scriptures with great seriousness. After all, when we read the Word of God, Christ speaks to us.

The Scriptures speak much about the matter of studying the Bible. In Acts 17:11, Luke reports that the Bereans searched the Scriptures daily to test the preaching of Paul. In Deuteronomy 17:14-19, God instructs the people that the future kings of Israel must be kings which read and study the law all the days of their life. Because we are kings according to Revelation 1:6, surely we must do the same. Finally, Psalm 1:2 says that the law of God ought to be our meditation *day and night*. Therefore, the Bible teaches us that we must have *daily* devotions.

If we meditate on God's Word every day, then we will be able to edify our fellow saints in the Truth. For, although it is true that we, personally, must grow in the faith, it is so that we might serve the kingdom of God. This means that we are to talk about the Scriptures with our fellow believers. We do not do this as often as we should. We ought to remember the teaching of Proverbs 27:17, namely, that when we as friends and fellow saints talk of the wondrous deeds of God it is as if we are iron sharpening iron. Undoubtedly, we all have experienced this phenomenon in a Bible study. After we have done our preparations (We do prepare for Bible study, don't we? Else Bible study will be fruitless.), our

friend at Bible study always brings up an important point that we missed. We need each other not only to remind us about the doctrine of Scripture but also to admonish us in the application of that doctrine in our daily life.

Although we must speak to one another about spiritual things during the week, this is especially true on the Sabbath Day. What do you talk about at church, young people? Are your subjects of discussion edifying your fellow believers? Or, as soon as we file out of the church building after the worship service, do we forget the sermon altogether and begin talking about sports or about the latest gossip? If this is so, we need to make a change. We need to involve ourselves in activities that build up the saints. Maybe that means that we discuss an aspect of the sermon. Or, maybe we can involve ourselves in teaching the children of the church in Sunday School. This activity will take more study on our part, but God is pleased to use the faithful work of His saints to build up His Church.

You may ask, how should I go about studying the Scripture? I recommend that you begin an organized study of the Scriptures. Maybe that means that you will study a certain book of the Bible or a certain doctrine of the Scriptures. There are many study guides to be found including guides available through the Reformed Free Publishing Association. In your study, you may choose to follow the guide's format, but may I propose a system which Rev. R. Hanks gave in the *Standard Bearer* of August 1, 1982?

In his articles on Bible study, Rev. Hanks gives some important advice about how the Bible itself commands us to conduct Bible study. This list summarizes what Rev. Hanks says in his articles, so if anyone wants to read his full article, I refer you to it.

A. Rules for spiritual preparation:

1. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
2. Leave time for meditation upon the passage under study, probably after all other work with the passage is finished.

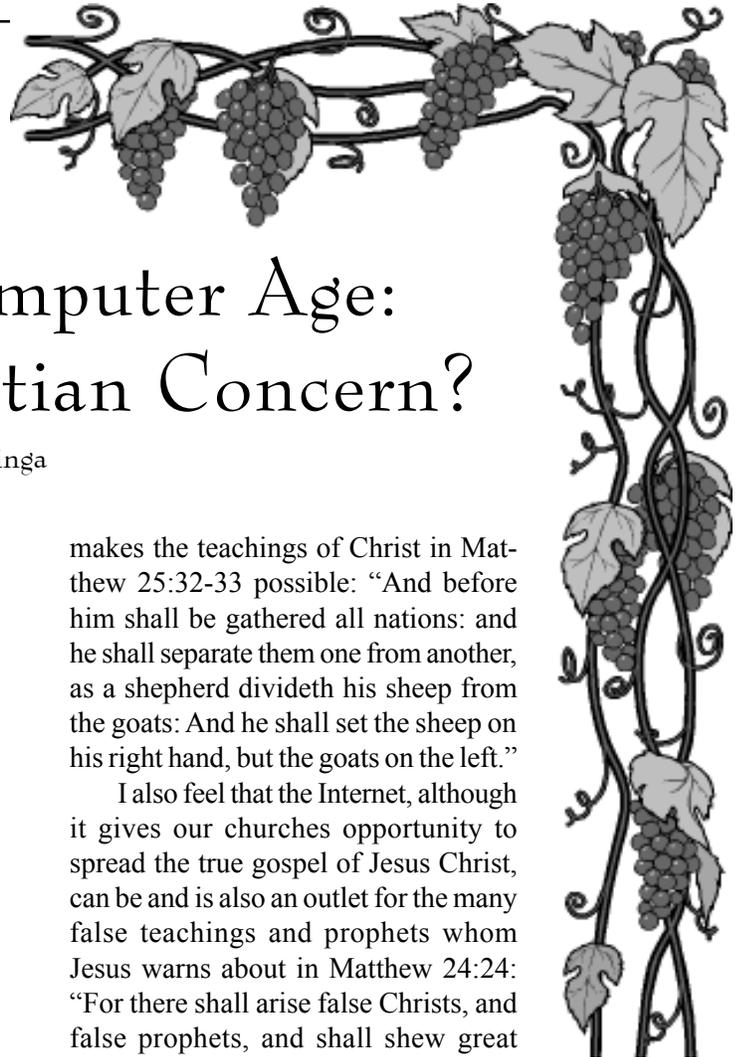
B. General rules:

1. Determine what kind of literature is being studied: poetry, prophecy, history, etc.
2. Attempt to divide the passage into sections or determine where the passage being studied begins and ends.
3. Define the theme of the book in which the passage is found and the place of that theme in the rest of Scripture.
4. Write down all questions.

C. Rules concerning the actual interpretation of the passage:

1. Determine the main point of the passage.
2. Take note of any problems of grammar and interpretation.
3. Identify the important words or concepts in the text.
4. Study these words or ideas in the light of the rest of Scripture by looking up and studying all the important texts where the same word or words are used.
5. Compare the text as a whole with similar or related passages from the rest of the Bible.
6. Take a close look at the passage in light of the immediate context as well as the context of the whole book and ask how the text fits into that context.
7. If necessary look for background material on history, chronology, customs, etc.
8. Look for Christ in the passage and how the text brings the Gospel of Christ.
9. Try to set out clearly the application of the text—what the Spirit says to the Churches.

Rev. Hanks states that the last two points are very important and require much meditation. We need to see where Christ is in our passage of study and we must apply that Word unto our lives. When we do these things we will grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We can and must do this because Christ said in John 15:8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." ❖



Living in the Computer Age: A Reason for Christian Concern?

by Susann Huizinga

1997 PR Scholarship Essay

Computers are the wave of the future, and now, with the emerging popularity of the Internet, the computer industry is growing and expanding by leaps and bounds. Everyone, it seems, is investing in computer equipment and software in order to be online or to benefit by the other conveniences that computers provide.

Computers have a tremendous impact on almost everyone, and our schools are no exception. Many of our schools are building up their computer labs and teaching their students how to use them. This is a good practice; the children and young people in our schools have to be familiar and proficient with computers and how to use them. In order to survive in today's and tomorrow's world, students must be computer literate. Computers have many good qualities and tremendous capabilities to make tedious or humanly impossible tasks easier to complete.

However, despite their ability to make life easier for all of us, I believe that computers also give Christians reasons for concern. One of these concerns lies with the development of the Internet, and this concern is mainly for two reasons. First, many families and schools are now online, and the Internet can be a dangerous and volatile source of information. Young people can easily stumble onto things that no one should ever read or be so easily presented with. Should we make something so volatile and dangerous so easily accessible to our young people? Possibly, with appropriate supervision. Secondly, I believe the Internet should also be viewed as one of the signs of the times. Through the Internet the world is becoming more and more connected and has become much smaller. Communication with anyone anywhere or in any country is entirely possible. The gathering of the nations through the swift communications through the Internet and other computer technology

makes the teachings of Christ in Matthew 25:32-33 possible: "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

I also feel that the Internet, although it gives our churches opportunity to spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ, can be and is also an outlet for the many false teachings and prophets whom Jesus warns about in Matthew 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

As teachers in our Protestant Reformed schools, I believe that we must be aware of those things which seem to point to the glorious second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must make these things known to our students. However, we must not teach these essential truths in fear, but rather with the attitude of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer: "*Thy kingdom come*; that is, rule us so by thy Word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to thee; preserve and increase thy church; destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against thy holy word; till the full perfection of thy kingdom take place, wherein thou shalt be all in all" (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 48, Question and Answer 123). ❖

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

He Will Be There

by Annalise Venhuizen

When troubles come, and block our way,
When fears tear apart the day,
When we rest and when we pray,
He Will Be There.

When our greatest hopes fail,
When we become sick and pale,
When we sin, and when we're frail,
He Will Be There.

Help us Lord, when we fear,
As we live throughout this year,
Please bless us and keep us dear,
Lord, Be There.

*Annalise, age 13, is a member of South Holland
Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois.*

Short Story Contest

The *Beacon Lights* is having a short story writing contest. The entries must be between 800 and 1500 words, portray a distinctively Reformed perspective, and be suitable for a teen audience. The entries will be judged in two categories: post-high and high-school and younger.

Three prizes will be awarded for each category: \$100, \$50, \$25. Send your entry including a self addressed stamped envelope to the editorial office listed inside the front cover. Entries postmarked after July 31, 1999 will not be considered for a prize.

The Wedding Day

by J.P. de Klerk

The marriage of Onno and Renate was not a “do-it-and-think-about-it-later” matter because they were not that kind of people. They had a good Christian background and there were married brothers and sisters on both sides.

There had been numerous discussions and carefully organized preparations with all their friends and relatives. With the experiences of others as a basis, they had received plenty of good advice and it was sometimes difficult to make a choice. They agreed it had to be “traditional,” but not extravagant; no wasting of money.

From Onno’s side the grandparents came from The Netherlands. From Renate’s side they were British. They were all still alive, but the journey to where they lived in Canada would have been too long.

The bride’s dress was made by her mother and her sisters; Renate was quite happy with it. Onno and the groom hired their suits. On the wedding day more people came than they had expected, but they needed not to worry about that, said an uncle of Renate—he would foot the bill.

They had been worried about the Church, but that problem was easily solved. In their village there was an empty Church building available for free. Their own minister and three elders came over, two hours flying, and they could stay the night with the neighbors. The celebration dinner was held in a beautiful hall of the Church building; some volunteers had given it a fresh layer of varnish.

The local postman was member of a club of owners/collectors of vintage automobiles; they were willing to take care of the transport.

A group of women, who usually cooked the meals for the “meals on wheels” service (who took care of elderly people in the region) prepared all the food; some girls of the “girl’s brigade” of the scout movement did the waiting. The tables were decorated by cousins and friends, with whom Onno and Renate had been to school



and grown up with; some of them would soon marry themselves. In fact, at the wedding day they felt like one big family and they enjoyed every minute of it.

At the end of the Church service a small choir, made up of aunts, cousins and nieces sang two Psalms which the young couple liked so much. They both worked at a farm and they noticed with a smile the absence of animals around them. Someone had decorated the wedding cake with a horse made of butter, surrounded by small flowers of colored sugar.

Of course there were the usual speeches; quite a few in fact. Onno’s father said: “Let us rejoice and be glad, together with the bridal couple. Now, if you want to ask me what a happy marriage is, go ahead. I am 80 years old, so I think I can answer that question. We all know that the story began with Adam and Eve. Many people nowadays put that fact aside. I believe, that is why so

many couples break up, but *many more stay together*, by the grace of God? Do you know why?

In my humble opinion, there is a formula, and the first element is love. No, no, not the Hollywood kind of love, not a contemporary fiction, not “keeping up appearances.” No, the real thing. The type of love of I Corinthians 13. Being patient and kind; not selfish. Not where the woman tries to rule over her husband. No, it must be a true spiritual love. That will last. Come rain come shine, you’ll be together.

The second element is maturity. Because marriage is not for the infantile persons lacking in balance, who don’t possess the ability to handle the stresses that appear from time to time. The bride should not expect that God brought her husband into this world just for the purpose of making her happy. God uses humans for His plans. She must give her husband the chance to do his daily work. That takes time and energy.

The third element is *appreciation*. A minister of the Church told me once, that the desire to be appreciated, is one of the strongest drives of human nature. Think about it. We are made that way. Human beings, who never receive a single word of appreciation, will wither and die. I heard once about a woman who always put a note in the pocket of her husband’s jacket or his shirt, with a simple message like “Thank you for just being you.” You see, that touches the heart, that holds mar-

riages together. The fourth element is, of course, that strong *sense of unity* that you feel here today. My wife and I remember how we enjoyed walking, traveling and working together.

Nothing else mattered. We could laugh about mistakes we made, things we forgot. We were happy and thankful all the time, singing, talking, painting, gardening. Our relationship grew deeper and became more meaningful with every passing year.

Finally, the couple that *prays* together, stays together. No place for fear and worries. You are children of the Covenant.”

And they raised their glasses, all of them, after each speech.

There were references to I John 4:19 and Psalm 127:1.

Many photos were made, as souvenirs for the future, someone made a videocassette. An avalanche of impressions went over the heads of the bridal couple. When they left the party some of the youngest guests offered them bonbons.

It was unforgettable.

No wild feast of the world could have done it any better. On the contrary Onno and Renate had a real Christian wedding day. ❖

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

From the Web

Does the PRC Think They Are the Only True Church?

by Rev. Richard Moore

Question

I have been trying to find out more about the Protestant Reformed Church, in particular, what the difference is between the CRC and the PRC. Is the fundamental difference the idea of grace, common or elect? At one time I remember hearing something about how the CRC to the PRC are the unbelievers? Is that too harsh or not? Or am I way wrong, and

miss-heard something? I guess I have lots of friends in the PRC from Dordt and am wondering where we differ and where we stand together?

Also, why does the PRC have their own day grammar schools, but when it comes to High School they go to schools such as Western or where ever?

I guess I am curious and I thank you for your time.

You can answer straight to me if you like, rather than posting it on the web.

Answer

I have chosen to answer you on the web, because I believe that these questions are raised with fair regularity among many, especially younger adults of other Reformed Churches.

To answer the question as to what is the difference between CRC and PRC would take a long treatise to answer completely. Something that I will not take time to do on this page, however there are many pamphlets that do explain much of the difference between the two denominations on the PRC Home Page. Especially it would be good to begin with the Introduction to the PRC. Then other pamphlets that would specifically help would be “The Three Points of Common Grace,” “Grace Uncommon,” “Our Reformed Heritage,” etc. The pamphlets on this page may be printed straight to your printer from the page, or saved to be used in your word processor for printing. To get a real understanding of our churches take time to read pamphlets from this page, then compare with your understanding of your own denomination.

The fundamental teaching on grace became the point over which our churches were forced out of the CRC. We have always held to a sovereign and particular grace, whereas in the 1920’s the Christian Reformed Churches adopted a doctrine of Common Grace, which teaches that there is some grace common to all men elect and reprobate alike, and that there is a grace common to all in the offer of the gospel. We maintain that this is a doctrinal stance that has no Scriptural foundation, in fact that is denied by the Scripture.

To teach that grace must be common to all men in any sense must necessarily lead to the teaching that God has some love towards all men—an impossibility unless we were to teach that all men are saved, or that salvation is dependent upon the will of man.

Your comment about the PRC people counting the CRC people unbelievers simply is not true. The members of our church understand or ought to understand that there are children of God yet in many other denominations. The fact that a denomination has started down the path of apostasy (that is departure from the truth) does not mean that all in the denomination are reprobate. Even in a terribly apostatizing Israel during the days of Ahab there were 7000 that had not bowed their knee to Baal. Surely in our “mother” denomination there be those true elect children of God that seek God according to His Word. However, it is necessary always and again to warn against apostasy wherever it raises its

ugly head and to call God’s people to watchfulness and prayer. This is true whether it be found in the CRC, PRC, or any other denomination.

Further, the members of the PRC cannot nor ought not to maintain that all within our midst is pure. We must constantly be reforming and striving for perfection. There are always tares among the wheat says our Lord.

Hopefully you misheard something. Although by others, the PRC members have been accused of thinking that they are the only children of God. This is probably due to the fact that we as a denomination have always staunchly and ardently defended the true faith. This means that we have not been bashful to point out error, whether in our own midst or outside of our churches. The Formula of Subscription in fact binds our officebearers to this task.

Then to answer your question as to why in our denomination we have our own grammar schools, but when it comes to high school we use other schools such as Western Christian High in the NW Iowa area, is a matter of practicality and feasibility to a large extent. It is obvious that we do not view the Christian Reformed Churches as the false church, but as one that has taken a path of departure from the truth. This is the reason we are separate denominations. However, I should point out that where we have sufficient numbers to support a high school we have such, namely Grand Rapids, MI. Where we have been given greater numbers of people in our churches, we are working towards the establishment of high schools, namely in the South Holland, IL area and here in NW Iowa. As God gives us the means, we will also be blessed by having these efforts come to fruition and it shall be counted a blessing. But until such time, as covenant parents we have the calling to give to our covenant seed the best covenant education possible, and this means until we can have and maintain our own schools, we will use the next best possible and we are thankful that we may do this. This does not mean that we embrace that which is contrary to God’s word there, and with this we must continue to contend and take extra time to instruct our covenant youth in the distinctions between us.

Hope this helps, if you want to follow this up, you may do so in more private correspondence between yourself and me, or if you please on the web. ❖

Remember to write your questions to me at revmo@mtcnet.net Also feel free to write follow up questions.

WWJD

Dear Editor

As time and space is amply permissive, please allow these comments.

Thankfully, magazines as the one you currently produce still gives voice to the Reformed faith. It behooves me, as a confessing member of a Protestant Reformed Church in the Grand Rapids area, and also as a member of the Universal Church of Jesus Christ, to directly comment on the recent rhetoric written in the March 1999 issue.

Reformed believers down through the ages that are distinct and mature MUST confess with the mouth, a belonging to Christ. Romans 10:9-11.

A living reality of confession is found in the everyday antithetical walk of the Reformed believer, who confesses Christ. Above all this, is the sincere and lively preaching of the Gospel, which MUST radiate in and through the life of a believer, i.e., calling sinners to repentance.

If the true preaching is indeed manifested in the Reformed believer, and takes hold of walk and life through the inner work of the Holy Spirit, why would a Reformed believer need a visual reminder to amplify a confession and walk of life? Galatians 5:22, 25.

*A Concerned Reader,
(humbly submitted)
Keven D. Moelker*

Church Family

Faithful Witnesses of God (1) Walking as Children of Light (Eph. 5:8)

by Aaron J. Cleveland

“**F**or ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” This is the Word of God to His chosen people in Christ found in Ephesians 5:8 instructing them to walk as “children of light” in the midst of this present world of darkness. Along with this passage and many other passages of God’s Word is to be found the principle that God’s chosen people bear witness of the

light as they carry out their God-given station and calling in this life.

In Philippians 2:14, 15 we read that we are to “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” Once again we have the principle that when the people of God live according to the commands of God (doing all things

without murmurings and disputings, living blamelessly and harmlessly) they shine as “lights in the world.” Again this principle can be found in I Peter 2:9. Here we read, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Here we have the idea that those who have been chosen and called into the light of Christ, walk as children of light, showing forth the praises of Him who calls out of darkness.

In Matthew 5:14-16 we read of the fact that we, as God’s peculiar people, are the light of the world. In verse 16 we are commanded to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Again, we have the principle that in living a life of obedience (good works—see the Catechisms definition of good works) we shine as lights in the midst of the world of darkness.

If we make a further study of this principle, we find the source of this light that shines through us into the world of darkness. And the source of this light is God through the work of Christ in us. In reading John 8:12 this truth is set forth. We read, “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

A beautiful verse which explains this truth clearly is II Corinthians 4:6. We read, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” We must understand that by nature we are children of darkness and have no light. But God, through the work of Christ has enlightened our hearts by His Spirit, so that we possess a knowledge of the glory of God. Further, we come to know God through Christ. It is only when we have been enlightened that we know and love God and live according to His will as children of light.

A further examination of Scripture reveals to us that we cannot walk as children of light and we cannot even see the light but by the work of God in us. In Psalm 36:9 we read, “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” Psalm 43:3a has the same idea. “O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me.” In both of these verses we are reminded that apart from the light of God in us and illuminating our way, all is darkness and stumbling hopelessness. Foolishness it is to think that we can find our way and walk the path of life outside of the gracious light of God.

David recognized this important truth in the inspired words of II Samuel 22:29. “For thou art my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkness.” Once again we have the idea that we, of ourselves, are in complete darkness of understanding. We know nothing but darkness and we have no longing for the light. But it is the Lord who illuminates our heart and understanding and it is the Lord who puts the confession in our mouth that, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

**As Reformed young people
it is our calling to walk as
children of light.**

As Reformed young people it is our calling to walk as children of light. We are to “walk in the light of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:5). As we carry out this calling, and walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8), we bear witness of the truth in the midst of this world of error. Just as a light shines forth in the midst of darkness, so does the truth shine forth in the midst of the darkness of the lie. It is God who shines forth His truth through the Godly walk and confession of His chosen people.

It is good that we come to a better understanding of this truth in connection with the subject of witnessing. Much has been written and spoken of lately on the subject of witnessing. “Witnessing” is a term which can take on many different meanings and is a term which is misused by many. It is best to examine the subject of witnessing in the light of Scripture.

**as children of God, we are
always witnesses and we
are always witnessing.**

Let us begin by understanding that as children of God, we are always witnesses and we are always witnessing. This truth is clear from Ephesians 5:8. One’s “walk” refers to all aspects of one’s life. When God calls us out of darkness into His light, He does not illuminate us in such a way that only certain aspects of our lives are

changed. No, our whole life is changed, so that our whole “walk” bears witness to the fact that we are children of God. This, of course, does not mean that there are not times when we walk sinfully, contrary to God’s law and in darkness. This certainly is true. But, we continually live a life of repentance and turning from sin.

David, in Psalm 26, gets to the heart of the matter of what our walk involves. First, our walk begins in the heart (verses 1, 2). From our heart are the issues of life. And our hearts are under the power of God’s lovingkindness and truth (vs. 3). Second, with hearts under the power of God’s truth, we walk in that truth (vs. 3). It can be no other way. Our walk involves every aspect of our life. Where we go, what we do, what we think, whom we associate with, the words we speak (our confession), and what we allow ourselves to see, all belong to our walk.

Years ago, Rev. Vos, in a meditation written on Psalm 26 (found on pgs. 83-89 of *O Taste & See*), made an important point that speaks directly to a lie prevalent today concerning our walk. The lie is this: One can live on very friendly terms with the wicked of this world and freely associate with them and participate in their evil deeds, and at the same time “let His light shine” and somehow have a positive influence on the wicked. Rev. Vos gives an answer to this lie which is well worth quoting:

I hear a question: Must we not love our enemies? Must we not try and save them? Must we not let our light shine unto them if haply God will use us to snatch them from the brink of eternal death?

Yes, I have often heard these questions. Sometimes they are put to us in a way and in an atmosphere that makes us wonder.

Yes, we must certainly love our enemies. That is a text from Jesus’ lips. And I agree that you must try and save the wicked with whom you come in contact. Of course, you are a walking Evangel. Many there are who were drawn to God by means of your Christian walk.

But always remember this: you will never be a light unto the Gentiles by becoming a boon companion with the wicked. When I wonder about such questions is when I notice that the people that question me thus live on a very friendly footing with the world. They seem never to be bothered by the vile way of the world. We do not know the heart, but it seems to us that they are of that kind.

And such conduct is damned.

**you will never be a light
unto the Gentiles by
becoming a boon
companion with the wicked.**

That we are always witnesses and witnessing must be clearly understood. It is not the case that witnessing is only one of many compartments in our life. We are always witnesses of the truth. It is not the case that we make the decision to go to a movie on a Friday night and not witness, and then decide to witness of the truth to a co-worker on Saturday morning. We are constantly witnessing as we carry out our God-given station and calling in life. When we are not doing this, we are witnessing of darkness and our lives become the occasion for the reproach of the cause of God.

Implicit in being a faithful witness of the light is living a life of obedience and good works. A good explanation of this can be found in the Catechism, Q & A 86. The question asked is this: If we are saved merely of grace and by none of our own works, why must we still do good works? The answer is that when we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, we are renewed by His Holy Spirit after His own image. When this is the case, we are enabled to testify, “by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for His blessings, and that He may be praised by us; also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ.”

When we are living a life of thankfulness and good works (our godly conversation), we are witnesses. As we mentioned earlier, good works are only those which “proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to His glory” (Q & A 91). So then it is not possible to witness of God without a true knowledge of God. Neither is it possible to be a witness of God when we are living contrary to the law of God. Neither are we witnesses when we are seeking our own glory and not that of God. How important it is to grow in our knowledge of God and of the assurance of our salvation. Let us sanctify the Lord God in our hearts (I Peter 3:15). ❖

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



The Song of Zion

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

by Skip Hunter

May 1 Read Psalm 93

Psalm 93:1-2 Do you confess that Jehovah is from everlasting? Do you acknowledge Him as king? These two verses are full of absolute statements. We need to acknowledge such absolutes and then live out of them. When we do this, we will not try to make God something or someone he isn't. We will not try to make of ourselves more than God. We will live out of the confession that we are His subjects and must give to Him honor. There is great comfort in this. We will be assured that His promises will never fail. We will never worry about this world being destroyed before His time. Let us laud Jehovah as our king. Let us live lives which show that He is our King. Sing Psalter 252:1-2.

May 2 Read Genesis 6:17-24

Psalm 93:3-4 It is springtime here in the northern hemisphere. Springtime quite often brings about floods. These floods may be caused by snow melt or by torrential downpours. If you live in any area where flooding threatens, these verses can be a comfort for you. All of us know the story of Noah and the great flood. We know of the sign of the rainbow which tells us that a flood large enough to destroy the world will not happen. As Noah and his family heard the noise outside the ark, they knew that God was mightier than the flood. This was impressed upon them when they stepped out onto dry land safe and sound. Do you have this confidence? Do you know and confess that God is greater than any wall of water bearing down on you? With this knowledge we can rest assured that the flood of our sins cannot wash us away from His care. Satan cannot destroy us, no matter how hard he tries. We have a mighty God; let us confess that as we worship Him today. Sing Psalter 252:3.

May 3 Read Psalm 19

Psalm 93:5 As we finish this short Psalm we see a shift in emphasis. In the first four verses we see God who is mightier than any of His created nature. This last verse speaks about spiritual ideas. First of all it speaks of His testimonies. What are these? As we know from other parts of Scripture including our reading for today, these are His law. We went to His house yesterday. We heard His law read. Did we vow to keep it? Are we trying to put behind us those sins which prevail against us? We also know that in the keeping of Jehovah's law is great reward. That reward is of holiness. The child of God, out of gratitude for his salvation, must strive to be holy even as God is holy. When we walk a walk of sanctification, we will strive to keep the law. We will do this with our whole being. In this way we can present ourselves a living sacrifice—"holy acceptable unto God". Sing Psalter 253:4.

May 4 Read Psalm 94

Psalm 94:1-2 This type of Psalm is not very popular today. It is called an imprecatory Psalm. It is a prayer for the destruction of God's enemies. Some may say that God could not have enemies because He loves all men. We know from Scripture's testimonies that God most certainly does have enemies. The next question is, "Why should we pray for their destruction?" The reason is that those enemies bring scorn upon God's name and glory. This is a proper prayer for the child of God in order that God's name may be glorified. It is also a comfort for us to know that our God cares for His people. Let us, as we are commanded, pray this prayer. But let us do it only that God's name may be glorified. Sing Psalter 253:1.

May 5 Read Jude 14-25

Psalm 94:3-5 The Psalmist as well as Jude had the same cry. How long will God's enemies trample His name under their feet? Is that our cry? Do we see that the world hates God and His cause? Do we see that whatever they do is against His most holy name? Or have we joined the world and with them bring despite to God's most holy name? Do we desecrate the Sabbath as they do? Do we enjoy the sin of drama which is never to God's glory? Do we seek to make ourselves number one? These sins are not for us to play with or decide what is right or wrong. God's Word gives to us ample knowledge about glorifying Him. Let us stop joining with the world, and let us dedicate ourselves to His service and glory. Sing Psalter 253:2.

May 6 Read II Kings 4:1-7

Psalm 94:6-7 The reading for today gives pause to a chilling thought. Can people who are seemingly church people afflict other people of the church? The answer is yes. They do it in a way that it seems that they care not what God says or sees. What is in such a text for us? First of all we must be warned that we are no different. Young people and children, how do you treat your fellow classmates? Are you kind to them under all circumstances? Do you oppress them and cause them much grief on the playground and in the halls? We must be warned that this is not the proper conduct of the child of God. We must know that God will not let such things go. We will be required to give account for them in the day of judgment. The second thought for us is that God does see such afflictions upon even the littlest of His people. He will come to our aid. This affliction is for our profit. Let us be warned in this text and let us be comforted. Sing Psalter 253:3.

May 7 Read Proverbs 20:1-12

Psalm 94:8-9 These two verses continue the thoughts of yesterday's verses. I want us to focus on the word wise. What is it to be wise? The Scriptures speak of this concept in two ways. First there is the wisdom that anyone may obtain. This is the wisdom that allows one to succeed in the business world or the world of education. This is the wisdom for which men and women give up their families and family life. This is the wisdom which becomes the god of many. The second kind of wisdom is the wisdom which is called the fear of Jehovah. Not many men are qualified to receive this kind of wisdom. It is the free gift of God's grace. It is a wisdom that is more precious than any mineral or amount of wealth. For what type of wisdom are we striving? Are we giving up all for the cause of Christ and His church? Worldly wisdom is helpful to the church, but it can never be a god for them. God is not pleased when our striving after the wisdom of this world causes us to forsake Him and His wisdom. He sees, He hears, and He will take action. Sing Psalter 253:4.

May 8 Read Psalm 94:1-11

Psalm 94:10-11 More sobering words than verse 11 are hard to find. God knows our thoughts and knows that they are empty boasts filled with self-glorification. As we prepare to enter the house of God, these words provide us with comfort as well as encouragement. They comfort us because we know that God will avenge us against those who would harm us. This is a comfort because we know that ultimately God's name will be glorified. They are encouragement because they help us to put away thoughts of self-worth and put on thoughts of God's glory. They make us realize that Jehovah, He is God. We need these words today so that we want to go to God's house tomorrow. In that house we find the way that we should go. We find the way that leads to eternal life. That way is Christ. That way is found through the preaching of the word. Let us remember that the Lord looks on the heart. Sing Psalter 253:5.

May 9 Read Psalm 94:12-23

Psalm 94:12-13 Are you happy, people of God? Are you happy, young people and children? Are you happy when God corrects you by chastisement? This is not something to be trifled with. If God does not chasten you, He does not love you. For He is our Father, and a father chastens the sons he loves. He chastens us by teaching us out of his law? As the law is or was read this morning, what was our reaction? Did we even listen or was it out of custom and habit that we sat through it? Why does God chasten us and teach us out of His holy law? The answer is to be found in the second verse we read today. He does it to give to us rest from our adversities. Oh, that rest may not be found in this life. We may go to the grave being oppressed by those around us. Think of the martyrs of the early reformed church. Think of their lives. They counted it all joy to enter heaven through the way of affliction. There is rest to be found, and it will be found by the way of eternal damnation of the wicked. Be happy, people of God, and know that God loves you even as He chastens you. Sing Psalter 253:6.

May 10 Read Luke 18:1-8

Psalm 94:14-15 These two verses can help us as we go back to work and school today. When we have to work or study in an environment that is not friendly to the child of God, we need to remember the thoughts found in these verses. We need to know that God will never leave us. Even when oppression's ugly head is always looking over our shoulder, a higher power sees. God will not leave us. He will care for us. We can know, even as we read in the par-

able, that God will hear our prayers as we bring to him our cares. We can go to the throne of grace in the confidence that He will hear us and will deliver us. God's judgment is sure and it will comfort us. Go to His throne even at your desk or machine today and find mercy in God. Sing Psalter 253:7

May 11 Read II Kings 8:1-6

Psalm 94:16 Are you overwhelmed with those around you? Do you find no peace in any avenues? Does appeal to your parents, teachers, bosses, review committees seem fruitless? Do we have nowhere to go with our troubles? The answer to the last question is the answer to the rhetorical questions found in verse 16. Who will represent us? God will. How? First of all we are represented before His throne by Christ who is our advocate. Secondly, He will rise up for us. How? We don't always know. I am sure the woman who went to the king in today's reading did not harbor much hope in her appeal. But God by His providence caused Elisha to be there and to represent her. God raises up Elisha's for us. Who are they? We can only find out by prayer and meditation. Pray for your Elisha. God will hear and will help your cause. Sing Psalter 253:8.

May 12 Read Job 19:19-27

Psalm 94:17-18 People of God, can we with Job confess that we know our redeemer lives? Are we confident in such a confession. Job's friends spent a week in silence. Then they spent a long time saying comfortless words. But Job knew that Jehovah was his help. He knew where he could find mercy in time of need. Job knew that He needed the mercy of God. And because of his sin, he was slipping. God held him up even as he will hold us up. The psalmist speaks confidently in verse 18. He knew and knows even as we can know that God's mercy is long-suffering toward His people. Delight in that mercy and it will hold you up. Sing Psalter 253:9.

May 13 Read John 14:15-27

Psalm 94:19-20 It would do us well to take time to read John 14 often in our lives. Because I had to learn this as a child, I can draw on its words for solace at any time. What is your comfort? Is it money? Is it prestige? Is it some material thing? Most of us know at least the first few words of Lord's Day 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism. Our comfort is found in our Savior. He has sent us a Comforter who will give us peace even in all our afflictions. People of God, we must stop looking for comfort in the things the world delights in. They will never comfort us. They may pacify us for a time, but they will never bring true comfort. The child of God through all ages of this world has only found comfort in the things of God. God's fellowship and friendship is full of comfort for His covenant people. Seek that comfort. Pray for that comfort. You will find rest for your soul. Sing Psalter 253:10.

May 14 Read Matthew 27:1-12

Psalm 94:21-22 Another way in which we can draw comfort and peace from affliction is that our elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, suffered such affliction. He was brought before Pilate's judgment seat without a cause. He was innocent of any wrong doing. Because He knows such affliction, He will care for us. He took our wrong doings upon Him when He appeared before Pilate. He was pronounced guilty in our stead. Jesus could say "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit" with the confidence that God was his defense and rock of refuge. We, too, can have this confidence even as we face the afflictions in our lives. Sing Psalter 253:11.

May 15 Read Psalm 94:12-23

Psalm 94:23 Once again we come to the theme of this imprecatory Psalm. God will not only deliver us from our enemies but He

will cut them off in their sin. As has been pointed out throughout this Psalm this is a cause for comfort for us. It is not cause for boasting. We do not look upon the wicked's condemnation in a spirit of revenge, but rather we see it in the light that by their condemnation God is glorified. This is our chief end in this life. We must have God's most holy name glorified. By the glorification of God's name, we can rest assured that He will deliver us from all trials on this earth and take us with all the saints to our eternal home to rejoice in His goodness. We will be delivered from this valley of the shadow of death and be taken to a place where only God will be glorified. Is this your hope, people of God? Then pray for the judgment of those who blaspheme God's name. Sing Psalter 253:12.

May 16 Read Psalm 95

Psalm 95:1-2 It is appropriate that we begin this Psalm today. For today is the Sabbath. That day set aside by our God at creation for us to cease from our daily labors and recreation and worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Notice the way in which we are to worship. We are to sing unto Him. Are you a singing worshipper of Jehovah? This does not mean someone whose voice is trained by man, but rather someone whose voice is trained by the Holy Spirit. Singing is a wonderful tool that God has given to His people. Song can be used to praise, to comfort, or to edify. Not only has He given to us the tool, our voices, He has given to us the songs, the Psalms. On this day let us go to the Lord with a joyful noise. Let us praise the rock of our salvation. Sing not only the recommended stanzas of the Psalters, but sing them all. Sing Psalters 254:1, 255:1, and 256:1-2.

May 17 Read Genesis 1:1-13

Psalm 95:3-5 How many of us read the creation account often? We really should do this more. What is my reasoning? First of all by reading it we again see how great our God is. To say, "Let there be light," and light appears. What a majestic thought! We also see the goodness of God pronounced on his original creation. Also by reading it often we have knowledge of creation to battle the forces who claim evolution is the way the universe originated. Yes, I know it is faith which enables us to believe the creative process, but one part of faith is a "certain knowledge." Finally knowing about creation provides for us comfort. If God created all things in this earth, He will surely preserve us until the day of His coming. God loves us and He will care for us. Let us read the creation story and let us wonder over the creation through the spectacles of faith. Sing Psalters 254:2, 255:2, and 256:3-4.

May 18 Read II Chronicles 6:12-21

Psalm 95:6-7 The passage that we read today is part of the temple's dedication. It is the prayer of Solomon which sets for the whole idea of worship for the church of not only Old Testament Israel but also the church of all ages. In verse 7 of today's text, we see that we are sheep under our heavenly shepherd. This means we go where He leads. We know that sheep stray. When that happens, our shepherd must bring us back on the path. His voice calls us all by name. Are we listening for that voice? Do we want to hear it? Or would we rather be lost in school, the factory, the office, or wherever else God has placed us? Would we rather that no one knew that God is our shepherd? God's voice is calling today for us to stay on the path. We must listen and obey. Sing Psalter 254:3, 255:3, and 256:5.

May 19 Read Numbers 14

Psalm 95:8-9 Israel was at the door of Caanan. God called for them through the voices of Caleb and Joshua to enter that land. Because they had not ears to hear, they did not hear the voice of God. They, because of unbelief, refused to enter the promise land. Their hearts, like that of Pharaoh, had been hardened by God. Their condemnation will be worse, however. They knew the Word and they rejected it. How about us? God has given to us a great blessing in His Word. He has given to us the preaching of that Word from Sabbath to Sabbath. He has given to many of us schools where that Word is taught throughout the curriculum. Do we hear the voice of God? Are we listening for it? Sing Psalters 254:4 and 255:4.

May 20 Read Psalm 95

Psalm 95:10-11 Do we wish to enter God's rest? When we go to church and keep the Sabbath faithfully, we have a little picture of that rest. Do we like it? The elderly saint knows keenly the joy of entering the rest in heaven. He knows that his earthly body is frail, and he wishes to reside in heaven with His Savior. What about you, young people? What is your attitude toward the day of rest? What is your attitude toward heavenly rest? We must not grieve God with our life on this earth. We must live lives which show that we are pilgrims and strangers on this earth. We must long for our heavenly abode. Let us remember that as we go through our work week. Let us look for the rest of the Sabbath when we can worship God in spirit and in truth. And let us look for that rest which will never end. Sing Psalter 254:5.

May 21 Read Psalm 96

Psalm 96:1-2 This Psalm and the last one give to us direction on how Jehovah is to be worshipped. Both of them begin with the idea of singing. This is not to say that singing is the most important part of worship because that belongs to the preaching. But singing provides the attitude with which we come to worship. Singing, first of all, is joyful. We must be joyful as we come to worship our God. We sing songs filled with the praise of God. Our songs of worship must not be to praise man or to honor man for anything. Worship like our singing is for God alone. When we sing, we must bless God or speak well of Him. This, too, must characterize our worship. Let us prepare to worship by singing, and let us worship in our singing. Sing Psalters 257:1, 258:1, and 259:1.

May 22 Read Romans 15:3-12

Psalm 96:3 One of the responsibilities of the church of the new dispensation is to proclaim the gospel to all nations. This is done through worship services as well as other means. We must show how we worship our God. By this means of grace it may please God to gather some from a nation that knows not the Lord. What are we declaring in this worship service? God loves all men? God forbid! We declare the glory and sovereignty of God as it relates to the salvation of His people. We show that by the wonders He has given us that He is God and He alone. Worship whether in the established church or the mission church must be worship which is bowing the knee to God. We must proclaim this in order that God's Word goes throughout the lands. In this way He will be honored. Sing Psalters 258:2 and 259:2.

May 23 I Corinthians 8:1-7

Psalm 96:4-5 Verse 4 and 5 of Psalm 96 give the reasons why we proclaim God's majesty to all nations. We must do this to show that He alone is God. During the Old Testament times it would be easy for us to show this. But it is this truth that we must show today. We must identify what man serves as gods and show the

vanity of such service. We must proclaim God as creator above all else. Only in the way of faithfully proclaiming these truths will we bring the truth of salvation to the nations. This is our calling from God. Mission work must be centered in teaching true worship of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 257:2.

May 24 Read Revelation 19:1-10

Psalm 96:6 There are four descriptive words found in this text. Each of these words is used indiscriminately by man to describe himself. This is not wrong in itself as long as we remember that only in God can be found the ultimate strength, honor, beauty, and majesty. Each of these ideas can convey a lot. When we use them, we must be careful not to steal from God. We must not take unto ourselves that which belongs to Him. If we do, He may chastise us and take away our strength, beauty, honor, or majesty. You can find many examples in Scripture when this was done. Worship the God of all beauty, strength, majesty, and honor. Worship Him and remember that we are only His creatures. Sing Psalters 258:3 and 259:3.

May 25 Read Psalm 29

Psalm 96:7-8a These words are a continuation of the thought of yesterday's verse. After realizing that strength, honor, beauty, and majesty belong to God, we must glorify Him in those things. Because the whole context of this chapter is worship, this must be evident in our worship. In every way we must glorify God in our worship. We must do this on Saturday evening as we prepare for the Sabbath. We must do this on Sunday morning as we ready ourselves for church. The clothes that we wear must glorify God not just be pleasing to us. This may require that we show discretion as we buy clothing. We must glorify God in the way we sit in church and in our behavior in church. Nothing must detract from the worship of our most holy God. When we consciously make an effort to glorify God in all ways in worship we will give to Him the glory due to His name. Sing Psalters 257:3 and 258:4.

May 26 Read II Corinthians 9:1-7

Psalm 96:8b Today is Wednesday. Are you preparing your offerings for the Sabbath? This may seem like a foolish question in this day and age when a check can be written at any time. But yet we must prepare our offerings. We must not look into the wallet or checkbook on Saturday night or Sunday morning and see what there is to offer unto the Lord. We, like the Corinthian Christians must be ready to give even as we have been blessed. This may mean setting aside Sunday's offerings today. This may mean doing without something for our own comfort or entertainment in order that we can worship properly on the Sabbath. The collection is a part of worship which requires preparation. We must be preparing today in order that we can give unto God the glory due to His name. Sing Psalter 259:4.

May 27 Read John 4:13-24

Psalm 96:9 The final verses in this chapter provide a summary for all that has been written in the first eight verses. They begin with this beautiful verse. This verse and its New Testament companion John 4: 23 should characterize all of our worship. We must worship Jehovah in the beauty of holiness as well as in spirit and in truth. When each element of the worship service is characterized by these three ideas, we may rest assured that we are worshipping God in a way that is pleasing to Him. We will not have to leave God's house wondering if it was good enough. We will know that in this way of worship, God will bless us and our children who

worshipped with us. Let us take these ideas and put them into action each and every Sunday. Sing Psalters 258:5 and 259:5.

May 28 Read Revelation 11:15-19

Psalm 96:10 In this summary we go back to the content of the gospel to the mission field. We must proclaim that the Lord reigneth. We must also tell them that the earth will not pass away until it is ordained by God. There are two ideas that we must combat in the mission field. First of all there is heathen superstition. Heathens look at phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanoes and possible endings to this world. We must give instruction that this is not so. Secondly we must combat the message that this world will last for ever and we must redeem it for Christ. This is a false gospel; one that is not blessed by God. Finally we must show that Christ is coming to judge the living and the dead. In this way we will glorify God's name in missions. Sing Psalter 257:4.

May 29 Read Isaiah 55

Psalm 96:11 We may wonder what a description of the creation is doing in a chapter full of instruction of the worship of Jehovah. The answer is simple. The whole creation waits for the day in which it, too, will be able to worship Jehovah freely unencumbered by sin. We know that the creation groans in anticipation for that day. As we see the times of the times in creation, we can know that creation groans. Many men do not want to worship Jehovah. When the day of judgment comes, they will want creation to cover them. Let us watch with the creation and wait for the day when we will truly worship the Lord in spirit and in truth in the beauty of His holiness. Sing Psalters 257:5 and 258:6.

May 30 Read Judges 9:7-13

Psalm 96:12 Today is another Sabbath. Once again we can put into practice the ideas about the worship of God. Some in the world and maybe even some of us like to think a Sunday or two spent in nature can be useful in worshipping God. There is no truth to this. This Psalm and many other passages in Scripture tell us of our duty to go to God's house in order to worship Him properly. In the parable found in Judges we see that most of the trees knew their place in glorifying God. We, too, must worship Him as He has commanded and not what is pleasing to us. Let us use this day and all the others to come preparing for the eternal Sabbath of worship in heaven. Sing Psalter 259:6.

May 31 Read Psalm 96

Psalm 96:13 God is coming to judge the world. Of this there is no doubt. What is such a truth doing in a chapter which speaks so much about the way we must worship God. It is there because when the king comes He will judge what has been done in His kingdom. He will judge all of creation to see if they have brought honor and glory to His name. The chief way His people have to bring honor and glory is by way of worship. Our worship will be judged as God-glorifying or man-glorifying. Which will it be? It can only be one or the other. Let us examine our every practice of worship in order when the supreme Judge of heaven and earth comes we will be ready to give to Him the honor due to His name. By doing this we will know that He will bless us now and to eternity. Sing Psalter 258:7.

Psalter 44—The Safeguards of Prayer

by Beth De Vries

We turn this month to a versification of Psalm 20 entitled “The Safeguards of Prayer.” This Psalm is believed to be written by David near the end of his life, and reflects what he has learned through his life about prayer and God. We notice in this Psalm the confidence that David has in God’s hearing and answering of prayer. David also speaks of trusting in God’s will and counsel. As we reflect on this Psalter versification may we find comfort as David did in prayer.

David teaches us to call upon the name of our God in the day of trouble. He speaks assuredly that God will hear these requests. We remember that these troubles have been given to us by the Lord; therefore, to Him are we to turn for comfort. The God who has made His covenant with us will care for us in times of trouble. We know that God instituted His covenant with Adam by breathing into him the breath of life and making him a living soul (Gen.2:7). God took Adam into covenant fellowship with Himself. After the fall, God continued to maintain His covenant by the words of the promise made in Genesis 3:15. God shows His covenant fellowship by caring for His people even in their distresses. As David in this Psalm encourages the people to look to God, so Christ as our mediator leads us to call upon our triune God in time of need (Heb. 13:20).

God sends His help when we call on Him from the sanctuary according to this Psalm. We know that in the New Testament we need not go to the sanctuary to call on God, but we go through our mediator, Christ (Heb. 7:22-25). When we earnestly and faithfully call upon God then does He supply our need. We know that we receive by God’s hand what He knows we need, not

what we think we need (Matt. 6:8). May we remember when we call on God that we ask in accordance with His will (I John 5:14). God promises to grant our hearts desire (Ps. 20:4). This should sober us to think about our desires and to make sure they are to God’s glory. If we utter our selfish desires to God, He may answer us as He did the Israelites in the desert. We read about this in Psalm 106:14-15 “But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.” We certainly

do not want to bring leanness of soul upon ourselves. We are taught in Scripture that the Spirit also maketh intercession for us (Rom. 8:26, 27). Therefore, we can call upon our God with confidence that He will hear us and that His divine counsel may be fulfilled.

May we think on the salvation which God has given to His people with joy. This is the idea expressed in the fourth stanza of Psalter number 44. We

know that of ourselves we are undeserving of salvation. Our gratitude for this salvation is expressed by giving thanks to God in prayer and song.

When we pray we are to give thanks to God for this gift. May we be a people that prays without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17). We are called to set up our banners in the name of God (Ps. 20:5). By doing this we magnify God’s most holy name in all that we do. We must witness to the world around us of the faithfulness of our God. May we with heartfelt sincerity sing this versification of Psalm 20 remembering “The Safeguards of Prayer.” ❖

44 The Safeguards of Prayer

PSALM 20 C. M. WIZARD William B. Bradbury

42 [Selected Stanzas]

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

The Sabbath: A Perpetual Covenant

by Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

What a wonderful command God has given His church in the fourth commandment! It is one that believers cherish and enjoy keeping! “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” This is the one commandment that Jehovah repeated just before Moses came down from Mt. Sinai. “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever” Exodus 30:16, 17.

Ever since the pronouncement of that command Israel both in the old and new dispensations alike (Ephesians 2:11-19) have enjoyed the Sabbath. It may be true that today we call our Sabbath, “the Lord’s Day,” because Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament Sabbath, but our Lord’s Day today is still the Sabbath of the Lord. Of course it is! The Sabbath was established as a *perpetual* covenant. It is meant by God to be continued, to be carried on from one generation of believers to the next. It is a sign between God and His people *forever*. It did not cease when Christ fulfilled the Old Testament Sabbath in His resurrection. We still celebrate the Sabbath today, just like the saints of old did, without the Old Testament ceremonies, of course.

Sunday is a blessed day—a wonderful day for the believer, for us. Why? Well, because God has commanded us to set aside that day and consecrate it solely for worship of Him. Pretty wonderful, huh? God has given us one day every week that we can cease from doing everything we would do during the week, and then fill that day with things spiritual! Wow! That is quite a gift, considering that we seem to be so busy with earthly matters every other day of the week. We really need that day. We need it to recoup spiritually. Without it we would

become so earthly, so carnally minded. It is a good thing that the Sabbath was made for man, as Jesus says.

You know, it seems to me that a person would be hard pressed to call himself a believer if he enjoyed using the Sabbath for his own purposes instead of for what God intended it. I mean our Lord’s Day is a sign, right?

a person would be hard pressed to call himself a believer if he enjoyed using the Sabbath for his own purposes instead of for what God intended it.

That is what God told Moses on Mt. Sinai: “it is a sign between me and the children of Israel.” That is what God spoke also through the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel too in Ezekiel 20:12, “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” Each Sunday anew we are reminded of the covenant fellowship and friendship with God. When we use the day in the way God intends it, then we enter into intimate fellowship with our God. We push everything aside in order that we might listen to Him, learn of Him, and respond to Him. Is it not that which every true believer desires above all else? How can a person say he is a child of God if he does not want to spend the Lord’s Day in fellowship with his Father?

It is a puzzle to me why then there were those in the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, and are those of us in the church of the New Testament, that would rather

When we use the day in the way God intends it, then we enter into intimate fellowship with our God. We push everything aside in order that we might listen to Him, learn of Him, and respond to Him.

use this day to fulfill their own pleasure! God speaks of pouring out His fury upon the nation of Israel in Ezekiel 20:13. He explains why in verse 16 of that chapter: “Because they despised my judgements, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols!”

Isaiah prophesies of what those “idols” were when he says in Isaiah 58:13, 14, “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord...” The idol in Israel and the idol today that replaces blessed fellowship with God is fun. Recreation, earthly pleasure, fun is the idol that has overtaken many in the church today. And that idol is threatening proper Sabbath observance among our young people.

May I be honest? I mean, I would be honest if I were sitting around that campfire with you at a young people’s retreat discussing this subject. I think there are those of our young people who have forgotten why God has given us the Sabbath. It has become common knowl-

I think there are those of our young people who have forgotten why God has given us the Sabbath.

edge that some of our young people make their way to the beach on Sunday night to hang out. On the way they stop at McDonalds to get a burger. Perhaps for a change of pace they search out the nearest campfire or spend the evening drinking coffee in a restaurant. The after-

noon is spent sleeping the whole afternoon away or watching the football, basketball, or baseball game on TV. (Some young people enjoy doing this with their parents.)

I may sound like a prophet of doom (but then Isaiah and Ezekiel were considered this too by some), but it seems to me that there is a huge monster that is on one side of a locked door and is pressing against that door to get in. We have it locked but the door is bulging and it is about to break. When it does, that monster will get in and consume the church! Our churches still maintain that the Lord’s Day must be kept holy. We still insist that there should be no labor on that day. We have the door locked yet. But the idol of pleasure is pushing on the door and it is threatening the proper observance of the Sabbath! The door is about to break and if it does, worldly-mindedness will swallow up the church!

Let’s lay aside all the excuses we come up with. They are overworked anyway. And what is more, they don’t hold water! We must call the Lord’s Day “a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable.” It is not to be used for earthly labors or for recreation. It is to be filled with things spiritual, things of the kingdom. And let’s not try to synthesize these things with recreation. If we do, the spiritual matters of the Lord’s day will eventually fade away. The Lord’s Day is a day of worship; both public worship with God’s saints but also family worship. In this way we will experience fellowship with God and God’s people. We will *live* the covenant and not just profess it.

Are you a believer, young person? What is more important to you, then: fun or God? You cannot serve both. What takes priority in your life? If it is God then render to God on His day that which is due Him. If it is fun, well, God will not bless us. If the Sabbath Day is a delight because in it we seek our utmost to enter into fellowship with God then the rest of the words of Isaiah 58:14 will be true, “... and I will cause thee to ride upon the high place of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

Sunday: what a wonderful day for the believer! ❖

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma is pastor of Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Martin Bucer (1)

By Mike Feenstra

If we would ask anyone to name the key Reformers of the Reformation, it is doubtful that Martin Bucer would be named. Unlike Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, Martin Bucer has no Protestant group which directly claims him as their spiritual father. As a result, he has never received very much attention by historians. However, interest has increased in recent years for two reasons: 1) many are now seeing his importance to Protestantism and 2) the modern ecumenical movement sees him as an “example” (We shall examine this ecumenicity of Bucer in a future article, D.V.). These two stimulants explain in a nutshell Bucer’s influence on the Protestant world. Although he was a Reformer who at times compromised the truth in order to achieve “unity”, we must view him as Calvin did, namely, as “...a man of revered memory, and an eminent teacher of the Church of God”... (Calvin, 2).

Who was Martin Bucer and what was he like? First of all, Bucer (or Butzer) was an extremely busy man. While racing all over Europe for most of his life in efforts to establish concord between rival groups of Protestants and laboring tirelessly with the quill in his hand, he still had time to head a large family which often hosted many guests. For this much credit is due to his faithful wife, Elizabeth, who in many ways resembled Katherine Luther. Thus, she is the eminent example of a faithful wife because she guided the house even while her husband was off arranging and attending numerous conferences (not to mention his busy pastoral duties).

At these colloquies, Bucer was often the man who did much of the talking. In fact, Luther once called him a “Klappermaul” (“Chatterbox”) and Charles V called him a “windbag.” Nevertheless, we must view Bucer as a man who was skilled in debate. Everybody knew that he was a persuasive man: some even feared to debate him! Therefore, we can understand why Bucer often de-

sired to speak to people in person rather than by letter. Yet, Bucer was also a man who composed countless polemics, commentaries, and expositions. However, his works, written in terrible penmanship, were often thrown together because he was so busy (Eells, 66). And to top it all, Bucer suffered from many physical ailments (Hall, 146). Truly, this was an age of great men of God.



Martin Bucer was born in the Alsatian city of Selestat on November 11, 1491. At ten years old, his parents left him to his grandfather apparently because they were too poor or because they thought that he could get a better education in Selestat than in Strasbourg, the city to which Bucer’s parents were heading (Eells, 2). However, his grandfather later desired that he stop his studies and become a shoemaker. Because Martin wanted an education, he received his grandfather’s permission to enter the Dominican monastery of Selestat. But, after he became a Dominican friar in 1507, he found that he hated the life because he was forced to study “sophistical legends” and the writings of Thomas Aquinas.¹ Therefore, through the help of a patron, he was obtained a transfer to the Dominican monastery of Heidelberg in 1517. While in Selestat and Heidelberg, Bucer studied medieval scholasticism² and, more importantly, humanism.³ Thus, Bucer was a well educated man with a desire to become a second Erasmus (Eells, 3-4).

The event which changed his life was the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518. Luther, the Reformer who was well-known already because of his ninety-five theses, so captivated Bucer that he became Luther’s disciple. Because Bucer advocated humanism and the teachings of Luther, he was finally forced out of the monastery in 1520. Forthwith, he came under the influence of the humanists Sickingen and Hutten, who arranged a priestly post for him in Wissembourg. At Wissembourg, Bucer

boldly advanced the Reformation by debating with the local monks. In that debate he stood for the truth, challenging the monks by saying that they could stone him if he could not prove his doctrines from Scripture. Thus, Bucer became a marked man by the Roman Catholic Church. However, it was only after he married Elizabeth Silbereisen that he was excommunicated in 1523. Although he was protected in Wissembourg for a while, he was forced to flee to Strasbourg in 1523 when Hutten and Sickingen were defeated (Eells, 4-18).⁴

There he was elected to the post of St. Aurelia's in 1524, the first of many posts in Strasbourg, a place where he would stay for twenty-four years. While at St. Aurelia's, Bucer began the work of reformation immediately. Already in 1524, he ordered that the bones of St. Aurelia be removed because it was a pilgrimage shrine. Naturally, the Roman Catholics of Strasbourg were not pleased. Therefore, Bucer and the other Strasbourg reformers had to do spiritual battle with men like Conrad Treger, an Augustinian provincial. By the strength of God's grace, these men were able to defeat Treger by standing on the truth of *sola scriptura* over against Treger's position of the authority of church councils. In the following years they continued the Reformation of Strasbourg by setting up an education system in the city, commencing public lectures on Scripture, and starting poor relief. By 1526, Strasbourg was clearly a Protestant city that boasted a foursome of gifted Reformers, namely, Capito, Hedio, Bucer, and Zell. Nevertheless, it took until 1529 for the pastors of the city to persuade the magistrates to abolish the mass (Eells, 32-53).

Although the magistrates worked with reformers on the preceding matter, their unwillingness to abolish the mass shows that Strasbourg was relatively tolerant of other beliefs. This was especially the case with the Anabaptists, many of whom flocked to Strasbourg.⁵ As a result, Bucer had to struggle to save not only the city but also Capito from Anabaptism. The triumph finally came in the Strasbourg Synod of 1533. At that Synod, many important events happened. First, the leaders of the Anabaptists were stopped. Melchior Hoffman was jailed and Schwenckveld was told to leave the city. Second, Capito became firmly opposed to Anabaptism. Third, the Synod adopted a new code of ecclesiastical ordinances and a system of church discipline which included a "compulsory observance of infant baptism" and "a primitive system of religious instruction for children" (Eells, 154). These ordinances show Bucer's firm belief

in church discipline, a belief which we will consider in our next article (Eells, 146-159).

Along with his desire that Strasbourg be a Protestant city, Bucer wanted it to be a center of theology. Thus, the academy of Strasbourg (which later became Strasbourg University), founded in 1529, needed to be the best in Europe. To accomplish this, Bucer recruited gifted men from all of Europe including a young theologian who had been ousted from Geneva. His name was John Calvin. In his stay at Strasbourg (1538-1541), Calvin and Bucer mutually influenced each other. As a result, the doctrines of Calvinism which we know today were honed. In fact, Bucer so influenced Calvin in the areas of exegesis and church discipline that Pauck can even say that "The type of church which we call Calvinistic or Reformed is really a gift of Martin Butzer to the world, through the work of his strong and brilliant executive, Calvin" (Quoted in Engelsma, 4). It was Bucer who prodded Calvin to marry Idelette de Bure. However, in the same period, Bucer lost his wife, three children, and his friend Capito to the plague. Soon after this tragedy, Bucer married Capito's widow, Wilbrandis Rosenblatt, a woman who already had been widowed by two other great reformers, Cellarius and Oeclampadius.

However, Bucer's days were limited in Strasbourg because after the defeat of the Protestant Smalkald League in 1546-1547, the Diet of Augsburg decreed the Augsburg Interim of 1548. This decree was in essence a forced compromise between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants of Germany. Because this Interim conceded key doctrines and was imposed by force, Bucer would have nothing to do with it.⁶ On account of his rejection, he was told to leave the city (Eells, 393-400).

Although he was an exile, Bucer was still held in such high esteem all over Europe that many groups desired his help. Finally, Bucer decided to go to England and help with the Reformation there. In England he died on March 1, 1551. He truly was a giant of the Reformation as can be shown through the action of Mary Tudor. In the words of Engelsma: "In her own way, even Mary Tudor, the infamous 'Bloody Mary,' acknowledged the greatness of Bucer when upon her accession to the throne of England, not only did she burn Lattimer, Ridley, and Cranmer alive, but also Bucer dead. She had his body dug up from the grave, and the remains chained to a post and burned"⁷ (3). During Queen Elizabeth's reign, Bucer's body was ceremonially rehabilitated.

Works Cited

- ¹ Aquinas was a thirteenth century medieval scholastic.
- ² This was a system of philosophy and theology used by medieval theologians. It was based upon the logic of Aristotle and the writings of the church fathers.
- ³ This was the intellectual and cultural movement, begun during the Renaissance, that stemmed from the study of classical Greek and Latin.
- ⁴ Hutten and Sickingen were humanists who tried to use the Reformation as a way to advance their own desire to construct an independent Germany by physical force.
- ⁵ Anabaptists were not the only ones that came. Bucer had to refute Servetus in a public lecture in order to root out the “poisonous weed,” namely, his false doctrine concerning the Trinity. ❖

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Please note that I use this work as my main source of Bucer's history.

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The Thomas Church of Stanhope

J.P. de Klerk



England came in its history already early under the influence of Christianity (about 300 after Christ), but it got really visible shape after the arrival of the missionary Augustinus, the first bishop of Canterbury (596).

Because he came from Italy, the British bishops who were there already, refused to cooperate with him. But he was not discouraged that easily and worked further, founding congregations and Churches in many places...

This was also the case in the town of *Stanhope*, 20 miles West of Durham, in the Eastern part of England, where this Church was

built, named after the Apostle Thomas. Originally it was a very primitive building with a hump instead of a tower, so that on early prints it looked like a tortoise. But after the Reformation it has been altered and restored a couple of times; now it has a more traditional roof, which was built in the days of queen Victoria. Medieval paneling and stained glass are still there. From the moors North of Stanhope a fossilized tree stump has been brought to the Churchyard wall (it was dug out of a local quarry), thousands of years old. The font in the Church is made from local Frosterley marble, a limestone which contains fossil remains from the days the sea was yet there. In the days of Cromwell (1599-1658) this Reformed Church was very popular, when most men worked in the lead mines in Upper Weardale. On the well-maintained cemetery hundreds of names can be found back. ❖

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



Book Review

Whosoever Will

review by Aaron J. Cleveland

Whosoever Will, by Herman Hoeksema. Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grandville, MI. 164 pages (paper).

The title of this book is based upon the words of a hymn, the chorus having the words:

*Whosoever will may come.
Whosoever will, whosoever will;
Send the proclamation over vale and hill;
'Tis a lover Father calls the wand'rer home:
Whosoever will may come.*

And so the author, Rev. Herman Hoeksema begins a discussion of the words, “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17b). Hoeksema, in the opening paragraphs of the first chapter immediately sets the tone for the discussion that is to follow. He

makes clear that the words, “Whosoever will may come,” must be understood in the light of Scripture. Further, he warns his readers of the “danger of the error that would attribute salvation to the choice of the sinner’s will.” (pg. 12). It is his desire to explain these comforting words in the context of the “truth of salvation by the sovereign grace of God.” (pg. 12).

The problem with the phrase “Whosoever will may come” is not that it is unbiblical, because it most assuredly is. Reading Revelation 22:17, Isaiah 55:1-3, Ezekiel 33:11, Matthew 7:7, 8, Matthew 11:28, and John 3:16 will testify to this fact. However, the problem with this phrase is that it is spoken and sung by most with the intent of denying the doctrine of salvation by sovereign grace alone. It is sung with the purpose of placing upon sinful man the act of coming to God apart from the work of grace. This is the Arminian lie that was prevalent in

1945 when this book was first published as well as the lie which seeks to destroy the Reformed doctrine of sovereign grace even more so today.

Striking is Hoeksema's mention of the "one-sided emphasis on what man may do and must do in order to be saved without mention of the truth" (pg. 17). How descriptive these words are of almost all of the preaching which surrounds us in the church world today. Hoeksema's description of this "one-sided emphasis" is so very applicable today. He writes: This one-sided emphasis on what man may do and must do in order to be saved without mention of the truth that the sinner can do nothing unless God first performs the wonder of His grace upon him, is characteristic of most collections of hymns in distinction from the beautiful and mighty Psalms. And this one-sided presentation of the matter of salvation also predominates in modern, so-called evangelical preaching. And so the way is prepared for that caricature of gospel preaching, that consists chiefly in begging the sinner to come to Jesus before it is too late, leaves the false impression with him that it is quite in his power to come today or tomorrow, or whatever time may be convenient to him, and that presents a very willing but powerless Jesus, that would be ever so pleased to save the sinner, but is incapable to do so unless the sinner gives his consent. (pg. 17)

What follows is a chapter by chapter explanation of these words in the light of the scriptural truth of sovereign grace. In chapter two, entitled "Coming to the God of Our Salvation," Hoeksema explains that indeed we do come to God as the God of our salvation through Christ. It must be understood that we come not of our own volition, but we come to God through Jesus Christ.

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volition, but we come to
God through Jesus Christ.**

Instructive are Hoeksema's words that "it is to Jesus Christ of the Scriptures that we must come, and not to any Christ of our own imagination." Hoeksema points out a few of these imaginations with the following words which ought to immediately strike us as being applicable for us today (pg. 30): Many, indeed, are the mod-

ern Jesuses, all of whom are characterized by this, that in order to come to them the sinner does not have to renounce the pride of his sinful heart. He is the great Teacher, whose instruction we are good enough to receive, especially as it is embodied in the Sermon on the Mount, and whose precepts we must keep. *Or He is the good example, who Himself walked in the light, that we might follow in His steps. And so, we must ever walk and live with the question before our minds: what would Jesus do?* (emphasis mine, AJC) Or he is the one who was deeply God-conscious, who was conscious of the truth that man is the son of God. We must, therefore, believe in the Fatherhood of God, and establish the brotherhood of man in the world. We must build Christian character. We must establish the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus has shown us how good we really are, and what a power for good we have, and we can work ourselves into the favor and love of God. *All this modern trash that flatters the pride of sinful men has nothing to do with the Christ of the Scriptures.* (emphasis mine, AJC)

Chapters three and four deal with the truth of coming to Christ to find rest (Matt. 28:11) and to drink (John 7:37). In chapter five we read an explanation of the words of John 6:33, "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Rich is Hoeksema's explanation of these comforting words: In order to be saved, therefore, we must come to Him and eat. And as Christ does not simply give us, but is the bread of life, we must eat Him. Just as in the natural sense we eat bread, that is, take it, taste it, relish it, assimilate it, make it part and parcel of our very physical existence, flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, bone of our bone; so, in the spiritual sense, we must eat the Christ of the Scriptures, appropriate Him, taste that He is good, absorb Him, and assimilate Him into our spiritual nature. We must eat Him, not as the modern Christ of man's own invention, not as the great teacher that instructs us how to be good, or as the good example we must copy, but as the crucified One Who was raised from the dead (pg. 65).

In chapters six, seven, and eight Hoeksema gives an explanation of coming to Him as the Liberator (Isaiah 61:1), the Light (John 8:12), and the Resurrection (John 11:25). In chapter nine, we have the all-important explanation of the very act of coming to Jesus. Just what does this mean? In Hoeksema's words it is a "spiritual act, not a mere natural deed. It is an act that proceeds from the heart, whence are the issues of life;

not from the superficial and quickly changing emotions.” Further, he writes, “It is an act, not of the natural man, but of the spiritual man” (pg. 111). And all-importantly, “being a spiritual act by a spiritual man, it does not condition grace, but is already the fruit of the grace of the Holy Spirit” (pg. 112). Hoeksema is also careful to point out that this act of coming is a continual act and is never finished. Never may a man say that at some time in the past he came to Christ and that was the end of the matter. This is a lie that is almost universally believed today.

Chapter ten explains this coming to Christ in relation to the truth of God’s drawing. We read in John 6:44, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” It is important to understand that we do not come apart from this drawing of God. Writes

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drawing of God.**

Hoeksema, “The Father draws, and Christ draws also, not as if these were two separate operations, but so, that the Father draws us through Jesus Christ as the Mediator of our redemption” (pg. 123).

In the closing paragraph of this chapter we read of the comfort of this truth of God’s drawing: Thus we understand why it is so absolutely sure that “whosoever will may come.” In the will to come and the coming, the sinner experiences the drawing power of God’s grace. God convicts him of sin, and he repents; God enlightens him by His Spirit, and he beholds the Christ in all His beauty of salvation; God allures and attracts, and he longs for the God of his salvation; God seals him, and he appropriates the Christ and all His benefits. How then could he ever be cast out? They that thus come to Jesus shall never be ashamed! (pg. 127).

In chapter eleven, we have explained the relationship between coming and preaching (Romans 10:14). It is God who works faith in us through the Word. It can be no other way. And not any word, man’s word, but The Word. Writes Hoeksema, “Such a faith can be wrought in me only by His own Word, spoken by Himself! I must hear the Word of God! I must hear the Word

of the Good Shepherd!” (pg. 134). Further, it must be understood that “it pleases Christ to speak this mighty Word by which He draws men to Him through the preaching. The Word of Christ does not come to us by an inner voice, which He immediately, directly, and mystically addresses to our hearts” (pg. 135).

Hoeksema makes very clear what true preaching is and exposes false preaching as well when he writes: If Christ does not speak, there is no preaching. All the wisdom of the world, all the glittering oratory of a wonderfully fluent and attractive speaker, all the sentimentalism of a modern revivalist, all the touching stories he may be able to tell, all his emotional begging and pleading, are vain. What matters, as you and I listen to the preaching of the Word, is that we hear the voice of Jesus say: “Come unto me, and rest,” that we hear Him call: “repent and believe,” that we hear Him assure us: “Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.” Unto this end preaching is a means (pgs. 135, 136).

In chapter twelve we have an explanation of God’s drawing and man’s responsibility in light of Romans 9:20. Hoeksema is careful to refute the arguments of those who say that God’s drawing absolves man of his responsibility. Rather, we must understand that whether God chooses to harden the heart of a man or irresistibly draw him by His grace and save him, God always deals with man as a rational moral being. Man’s answerability to God is never destroyed in his dealings with God.

The thirteenth and final chapter of the book explains the truth that we are coming ever nearer to Christ (II Peter 3:18). We grow nearer to Christ in the way of increasing in the spiritual knowledge of Him that is to be found in the knowledge of the gospel or Holy Scriptures (pg. 161). Hoeksema points out that when the Church preaches this gospel it must be the “pure and unadulterated gospel in all its fullness and implications, the whole counsel of God” (pgs. 161, 162).

This book is certainly understandable and profitable to those who are in high school, college, and older. Not only does it positively set forth the truth of coming to God through Christ, but it also speaks boldly in the face of the Arminian lie that is so common today. ❖

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

Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:
Jonathan Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Knott—Byron Center, MI

Tabitha Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Landheer—Byron Center, MI

Alison Ruth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Garry Eriks—Georgetown, MI

Abigail Jane, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Miedema—Georgetown, MI

Mitchell James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Vink—Grandville, MI

Courtney Alyse, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric Smith—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:

Jason Schipper—Georgetown, MI

Jim Aardema—Georgetown, MI

Dave Ritsema—Georgetown, MI

Mike Kerkstra—Georgetown, MI

Beka Schimmel—Georgetown, MI

Kolleen Moelker—Hope, MI

Jennifer Rutgers—Hope, MI

Katie denHartog—Lynden, WA

Rebecca Tolsma—Lynden, WA

Paul Joostens—Lynden, WA

Jim Kaptein—Lynden, WA

Joe Meyer—Lynden, WA

Frank Tolsma—Lynden, WA

Mike Tolsma—Lynden, WA

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Phil Doezema and Miss Janet Elzinga—Byron Center, MI

Mr. Dave Ritsema and Miss Jamie Engelsma—Georgetown, MI

Mr. Tim Schulz and Miss Diana McClaury—Redlands, CA

Mr. Ben Cammenga and Miss Elizabeth Kalsbeek—Southwest, MI



The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I have a goodly heritage.

Psalms 16: 5 & 6

Thankful to God for the guidance and goodness He has given to our churches over the past 75 years, the Protestant Reformed Churches are celebrating, D.V., our 75th Anniversary with a celebration to be held at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan from June 19-23, 2000. The campus of Calvin College has been reserved for this family event where most of our activities will take place, including our lodging. Everyone is cordially invited to attend this wonderful event.

The theme for the 75th Anniversary Celebration is "Living Out of Our Heritage" and is based on the above verses. There are three speeches scheduled during the week that will be on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings in which Rev. Jason Kortering will speak on *A Beautiful Heritage*, Prof. David Engelsma will speak on *A Present Necessity*, and Rev. Carl Haak will speak on *A Sure Light For the Future*. There are many activities that are planned for each of the days, and we anticipate a typical day at the celebration to consist of the following:

8:30 - 9:30	Breakfast
10:00 - 11:30	Children's Bible School
	Adult discussion and sectionals including information on various missionary fields and activities of the Protestant Reformed Churches
11:30 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 4:30	Different activities each day, including: Family Fun Day, Field Day, Tours of Historical Protestant Reformed Churches, visiting local museums and planetariums, sports activities, and many more unstructured activities and free time.
5:00 - 6:00	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00	Speeches, Discussion & Fellowship Time

We appreciate your continued support for this event and in the upcoming months you will be receiving additional letters on the celebration regarding costs, how to arrange your reservations, and other pertinent information. We will also be conducting a finance drive with the intent to lower the registration cost of the celebration so the celebration will be affordable to everyone.

The event is being planned so that it will be enjoyable for all ages, and in such a way that there is something for everyone by having many different types of activities planned throughout the week. We anticipate a large turnout to this family event and look forward to a time of fellowship with family and fellow believers. Mark your calendars now to spend June 19-23 in the year 2000 at this CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD!

The Promotion Committee

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

Different Stars and Planets

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

Michael's brow creased with concentration as he hung the last planet in his solar system display. He had worked long and hard on the school project, hoping to earn not only an "A", but also a chance to enter his display in the regional science fair contest. But there was only one problem. No matter how hard he tried, his classmate Jared always seemed to do better. Jared's display won first place in the contest last year. Michael knew his chances were slim, but he kept on trying anyhow. Maybe if he tried hard enough...

"I have an announcement to make," said Mr. Warren as he cleared his throat. "Choosing a science project to enter the regional contest has been very difficult. All of the projects were extremely well done—"

Michael held his breath.

"—but finally we came to a decision. I am pleased to tell you that Jared's display about the metamorphosis of tadpoles into frogs will be entered into the contest this year."

Everyone clapped. Michael forced his hands together, but little sound came from them.

After school he gingerly packed his display in a box and brought it home. Mother saw the disappointment on his face as he set the box down.

"Was Jared's chosen?" she asked.

Michael nodded.

"May I see your display?"

He opened the box and set up the planets. He set the sun across the room. Mother oohed and ahed. "I think we should build a special shelf for this in your room," she said. "The sun can hang near your window."

Michael shrugged his shoulders, but could begin to see the possibilities.

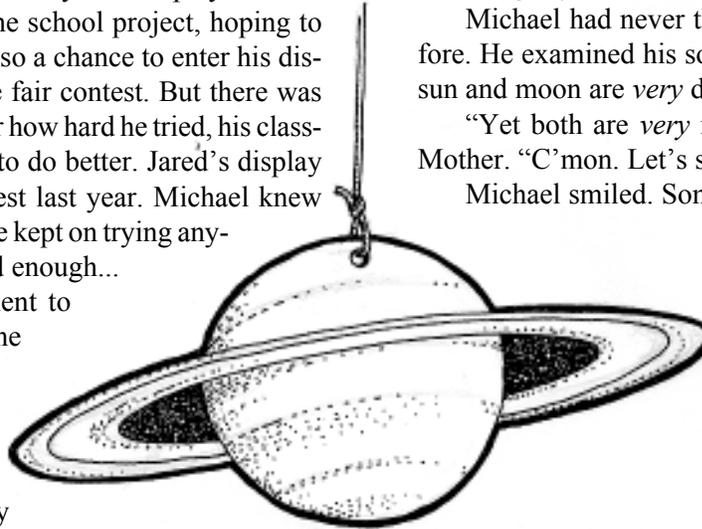
"You know," she continued, "God has given everyone different gifts. The body has many different members." She pointed to his display. "There is even 'one

glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars'."

Michael had never thought of it quite that way before. He examined his solar system more closely. "The sun and moon are *very* different," he said.

"Yet both are *very* necessary to the earth," added Mother. "C'mon. Let's see about that shelf."

Michael smiled. Somehow, he felt a little better. ❖



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

Puzzle

Find the underlined words in the puzzle below:

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory..."

I Corinthians 15:41-43a

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

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