
Beacon Lights

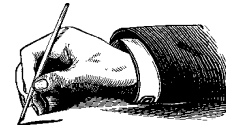
*June
1999*

*Volume LVIII
Number 6*



Take Along Your Tools

by John Huizenga



If you are going to the convention, put this issue in your suitcase after you have read it because in this issue are contained some important tools that you will find very useful. Without the tools you need, your trip is doomed to fail. You can't build a house without a hammer and nails. You can't take a canoe trip without a canoe and paddles. You can't grow spiritually or accomplish any of the goals of the convention in California this summer without bringing your tools. Not everything will be fed to you off of a silver platter.

Everyone must bring a Bible. If you come without a Bible, it will be like having a meal with no food. It would be foolishness and a glaring signal that you are in the wrong place. The Bible will be your chief tool as you seek to be fit and "ready to give an answer." Don't leave home without it.

Your convention will be a very busy time. It will be difficult to find time for quiet reflection and meditation. Every day will be abuzz with the energy of youth. Yet, your primary goal will be to latch onto some parts of God's word that will become deeply embedded in your heart. At this convention, you dare not leave California without being "ready to give an answer." For this reason, it will be very important for you to study the outlines included in this issue and take them along. They are printed here to help you focus your mind on the topic at hand.

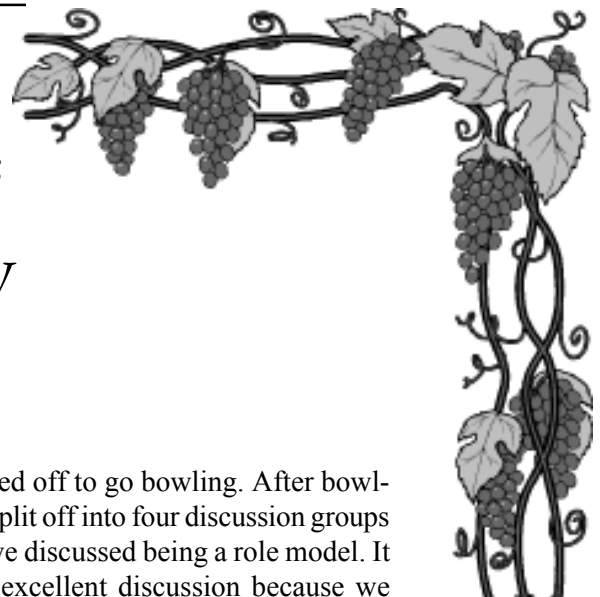
Specifically, you should go to the convention with some theological vocabulary at your fingertips. You should know what amillennialism, premillennialism, and postmillennialism are. You should know what universal atonement is. You should know what we believe regarding the millennium and atonement. You should come with questions and seek to prepare yourself to be ready to give an answer to anyone who questions you.

When you go to the convention prepared with the basics, you can be assured that your goals will be reached. May God grant you His blessing upon your labors at the convention. ❖

Fruitful Branches

The Colorado Spring Retreat—A Summary

by Joshua Hoekstra



The Colorado Spring Retreat was an excellent experience because it was a great time of christian fellowship and spiritual edification. Monday morning about sixty people registered and we

all headed off to go bowling. After bowling we split off into four discussion groups where we discussed being a role model. It was an excellent discussion because we

were able to define what a christian role model is and we were able to identify many practical actions that entail being a christian role model.

Tuesday morning we gathered in the chapel for a short song service. In the afternoon we all went hiking up the Twin Sisters mountain. Only about half of the people made it to the top since it was such a laborious climb. In the evening we went to the chapel and heard Rev. VanBaren's speech on "The First Love." This was an excellent speech because it explained what the first love is not only for all christians in general but also specifically for the church at Ephesus and for our own PR churches.

Wednesday we prepared for debates which directly followed the preparation. The first debate was on birth control, whether we can use it or not. The debating groups finally concluded that we should not use birth control except in special cases like when the mother could die. In those cases we decided that abstinence was the honorable, God-given way but that it might be necessary for other means to be implemented. The second debate

was on whether or not speaking in tongues exists yet today. It was concluded that speaking in tongues ceased to exist about the time of the death of the apostles.

In the afternoon most people went snow shoeing which was quite a riot because we would go climbing up hills and then go sledding down in whatever manner we felt like. In the evening we heard Prof. Hanko's excellent speech on "The Loss of the First Love." One of the important points in his speech was that a church can regain its lost first love but it cannot regain the truth once it loses it. Rev. VanBaren's speech fit well with this speech because we could compare our own lives to see if we had lost our first love.

Throughout the entire retreat there was a lot of fellowship, often times in the form of pranks, but still in good fun. Most people didn't get a lot of sleep, but that's because they didn't want to miss anything. All in all everybody enjoyed the wonderful time out there because of the wonderful fellowship and spiritual edification. ❖

Joshua is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Creation Through the Spectacles of Scripture

Adaptation: God's Providential Hand in Creation

by John Huizenga

It's a beautiful summer morning. A fog huddles in the low land. The grass is wet with dew. As you head out the door for a quiet morning walk, you put on a light jacket. It is not long, however, before the sun and exercise warms your body enough so that you remove your jacket. By the time you get home, your skin is damp with perspiration working to cool your body.

When you put your jacket on, take it off, and sweat, you are *adapting* to a changing environment. All the creatures that God has created have the ability to adapt to a changing environment. What I have described so far is the adaptation displayed by an individual creature. What

I want to look at in this article is the ability of an entire population of a particular species to change physical characteristics so that it can better survive in a given environment. The ungodly snatch up this ability of the creatures to adapt and use it to explain evolution, but through the spectacles of Scripture we see the wisdom of God.

The English peppered moth is an example of a species that has changed to better adapt to its environment and has been used to support the theory of evolution. This moth is a species that comes in a light gray variety and a dark variety. Despite the color differences, they

are the same species in the same way that a black person and white person are both human. Before the industrial revolution, the population of moths was mostly light colored moths with relatively few dark ones. This fact was due in part to lichen (a plant-like fungus that grows on rocks, wood, etc.) that grows in this region and gave a perfect camouflage for the light colored moth. Dark moths that lived in this area were easy targets for birds and other predators and therefore the population of peppered moths was almost entirely light colored.

When industry began producing pollution that killed the lichen and darkened the landscape, the light colored moths became easy targets and the darker moths survived, mated with other dark moths, and produced more dark moths. Fewer light colored moths were produced because the genetic makeup had shifted and thus the moth population changed to be darker. Since then, factories have cut down on pollution, lichen grew back, and the population now is predominately lighter colored. The whole population adapted to a changing environment.

This type of change is occurring all the time among the creatures of the world. The mechanism behind the change is called *natural selection* and the result is that a given population better adapts to its environment. In a sense, the environment selects (determines) which characteristics in a population of a particular species is more likely to survive. In distinction from natural selection, artificial selection is when man, not the environment, selects different characteristics of a plant or animal to breed for a particular result. An example of artificial selection in plants is the breeding of a species of wild mustard to produce the broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage plants we use for food.

Charles Darwin was one of the first to describe natural selection as attempted to give an explanation for evolution. Interestingly, his explanation for evolution is a scientific fact even though the theory he was trying to explain is false. His idea was that when a population of a species of bird, for example, was separated from the parent group, it changed so much due to the gradual accumulation of adaptations that it would no longer be able to mate with individuals from the parent population and thus became a new species. Having rejected the word of God a few years earlier, he applied his natural reason to propose that the grand variety of creatures came not from the hand of God, but rather from millions of years of accumulated adaptations along with some mutations. Even though many examples of adaptation have been observed, not one case of a new species emerging has

ever been documented. Even if a new species would emerge over a thousand year period, it still does not prove evolution.

Taking a look at adaptation through the spectacles of man's reason, you see nothing but endless adaptations and a theory of new creatures emerging from this process. Looking through the spectacles of scripture you see a wonderful and amazing work of God's creation and providence.

First of all we see that adaptation is an amazing work of God that came at the creation. The creatures were made to reproduce after their own kind, but this does not mean that every offspring is an exact clone of its parents. The offspring is very much like the parents, yet different from them while at the same time remaining distinct from every other species. This variety is necessary for a given population of a species to change certain characteristics that allow it to adapt.

We also see that God made creatures reproduce in this way so that they could fulfill His command: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth," Genesis 1:22. Again after the flood God told Noah "Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth," Genesis 8:17. The creatures had to multiply abundantly and fill the earth.

When we see the importance of adaptation, then we also get a better idea of what it means to *fill* the earth. Suppose, for example, that the earth is a bucket, and that the different species that fill it are represented by cubes. If the cubes are wooden blocks, then it is impossible to fill every bit of space with the blocks. The gaps and spaces would represent certain habitats in the earth where creatures could not live. If you make the blocks smaller and fill the bucket (more species with smaller populations), then the empty space would be reduced but it would still be there. If you make the blocks smaller still so that they approach to the size of atoms, then they would fill all the space, but would also number in the billions. But if you make the blocks out of something flexible like Jell-o, then a smaller number would adapt somewhat to squeeze into the empty spaces and more completely fill the bucket.

The space for creatures to live on earth is much more complex than the inside of a bucket and thus the ability to adapt is that much more important if the creatures are

to fill the earth. God did not make an infinite number of species to fit and fill the infinite number of different habitats in the earth. He made a limited number with enough flexibility to fill every nook and cranny of the earth.

There were creatures such as the dinosaurs that were unable to adapt to such drastic changes that took place after the flood and became extinct. Other creatures filled the spaces they left. To man God gave the greatest flexibility. He is able to live in nearly every habitat. In some cases the physical characteristics of certain populations changed over time to suit a particular climate. In the modern age, adaptations come more in the way of inventions and the construction of homes.

As we continue to study the creation and discover the ways in which creatures fill the earth, we see the infinite wisdom of God. We give God all the glory "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," I Corinthians 10:26. More glorious, however, than all the creatures which fill the earth, is the change which God works in His people to prepare them for heavenly life. Our hearts are made new and our bodies will be changed at the second coming of Christ to live forever with God in heaven. ❖

John is a member of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin, and is the editor of the Beacon Lights.

Gem of the Month

Glorified Dust

by Debra Portinga

On the Sixth Day
God Created
Man—A vessel of dust
Lifeless.

God Loved
He breathes on His creation
Breath brings
Life.

God makes man a Living Soul
Image Bearer of His Creator.
Fellowship and Communion
Peace.

Man lusted after knowledge
Knowledge of good and evil
He fell
Death.

Sin wrapped itself intimately around his Soul
Lost, forsaken, dead in sin
Friendship with God was dissolved.
Despair.

God loves—from all eternity
He loves and gives
Gives His Own beloved Son.
The only begotten of God
Jesus Christ.

God gives the Perfect Sacrifice
Lamb of God
Bears all the guilt and shame.
The power of sin is shattered
At the Cross.

God Delivers and Restores.
Restores me to life
Communion with my Creator is
Renewed.

Death comes to us
We leave this life.
But the grave is made
The doorway to

Eternal Life with God.

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

A Child Asked

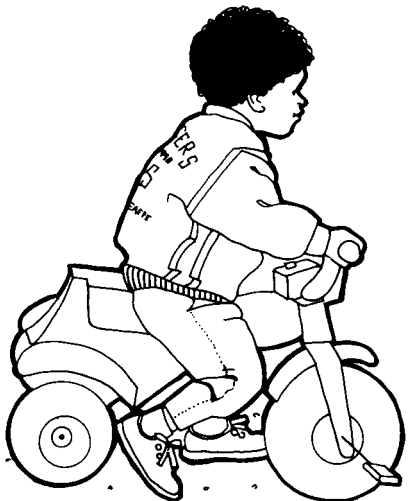
by J. P. de Klerk

When she thought about it, Floortje van Kavelen was often surprised by what children asked her, what matters came suddenly up in their small world of imaginations, mixed with words and ideas they had picked up here or there. There were many things they did not yet understand and they kind of worried about them.

Floortje had noticed that because she was a kindergarten teacher. She often found it difficult to come up quickly with a ready-made answer, and especially when there came four or five children all at once to her. This sunny Saturday morning in autumn, Floortje washed the big windows of the bungalow in the wood in Appelscha (in the Netherlands) where the Van Kavelens lived, father raked dead leaves together and buried them somewhere under the pine trees, mother was busy in the kitchen.

Floortje wrung the chamois out above her bucket with water, when suddenly her little brother James dashed past on his little tricycle. He rattled purposefully along the whole length of the tiled path to the forest-road.

“Hey!” cried Floortje. “Where are you going to?”



“I am looking for *God!*” he answered cheerfully, while his legs moved hastily on the pedals.

“Where are you going to search?” she asked quickly.

“Don’t know yet!” and he disappeared around the corner, behind the bushes. A squirrel threw a nibbled-off fir cone after him.

Floortje shook her head and proceeded with cleaning the windows. A while later she saw mother making gestures in the direction of the low table in the living room, where a cup of tea was waiting. “Thanks! I’ll first finish this job!” said Floortje with a laugh. Her thoughts however went back to James, and she prayed, “Lord, help me to say the right words to this little child.”...

Just when she reached the garage doors with her empty bucket, James came back, panting and blowing, with downcast eyes. He left his tricycle behind halfway down the tiled path and trudged towards her and asked, “Was it silly what I did? I thought, you have always told me God made everything, and He still does anything. I thought, what does He look like... You say he is everywhere, always. Why can I not *see* him?”

Floortje put the bucket down and went sitting on her knees. “Listen, James. He has said, let the children come to Me. He knows who you are and where you live. He hears you when you pray to Him. You must *believe* that. I can not explain everything. Nobody can. Honestly, now He takes care of us day and night. We do not need to search for Him. He is omnipotent. That means everywhere at the same time. Believe it. Let us go inside.”

James wrinkled up his forehead a bit and nodded. “I believe what you say, but I don’t understand it very well... God is invisible, but He is alive, He is real, I can pray to Him, yes, I knew that...”

Floortje ran her fingers through his hair. “You are the nicest boy in the whole of Appelscha,” she said. “I will read a story for you.”

They smiled at each other. ❖

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

A Bride Adorned For Her Husband

by Jay Martz

Imagine that today is the day of your wedding. You have been anxiously awaiting this exciting moment for quite a long while now, and the time is here. Going to the closet to pull out that beautiful white gown, a symbol of purity, you think of how your husband will feel when he sees you. It was not easy picking out this dress; you know the challenge of finding just the right one. Yes, this is the perfect gown that will cause him so much joy when he beholds you in it. After all you love him so much, and would do anything to please him.

Now we too as Christians have a husband, we are the bride of Christ. We are to make ourselves ready for the wedding feast. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," Revelation 21:2. We are to keep pure the white robes of Christ's Righteousness. We seek to keep ourselves undefiled because we love our husband, we love Christ. What a husband is He, there can not be found one more loving and giving than our Lord. Now there can be no doubt that we attempt to keep our garments clean by avoiding sin, and doing that which is good. We determine what is good by the Word of God, which is "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto my path," Psalm 119:105. When God reveals His will in any given area, we are to obey based on the principle of love. To act contrary to His Word shows either ignorance of His word, or rebellion against it. In either case we must seek to know what our Husband would have us to do, and then do it.

What is the Bride of Christ to wear? I do not mean spiritually, but physically. It is summertime again and our clothing changes. This is a difficult time, because all the world uses this time as an excuse to expose their bodies. It is a time to wear provocative clothing, in order to draw the attention from those of the opposite sex.

What is the Bride of Christ to wear? I do not mean spiritually, but physically.

There is not only this temptation in the world of unbelievers, but even in us. We must beware of falling prey to the temptations of the world, and our own flesh. We must not follow the fashions of the world because they are popular. No man will stand before the exalted Lord, and plead that they dressed like the world, because everyone else was doing it. Some do not feel that we have any direction in this area from God's Word. Some feel that you are being legalistic for speaking of the need to be modest, even challenging you to show them where in the Bible it says you may not wear a skirt above the knee, or wear a modern bathing suit in public. God's people have the Holy Spirit, and we must pray that he will give us guidance in these areas where we do not find clear direction in the Bible. We can be assured that if we come with humble hearts pleading for guidance, he will surely give it. Yet none the less, God's Word is not silent on the issue of clothing.

Back in Genesis 3:7 we read: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." When our first parents sinned, they became keenly aware of their impurity. Their first reaction was to cover themselves, which is evidence that they were no longer righteous. God has ordained that our unclothed body reminds us of our sinful nature. Adam and Eve sought to cover their shame by making aprons (KJV), or girdles. Clothing should be a reminder of our need of a righteous robe, to cover our shame. This is exactly what

**God has ordained that our
unclothed body reminds us
of our sinful nature.**

God provided for our first parents. In Genesis 3:21: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Here we have a picture of the blood shedding necessary to bring us righteousness, along with a covering to hide our shame. This is symbolic of the wedding garment that we must all wear when meeting Jesus. Now the passage does not say that God made them aprons of animal skins, but covered them with something superior in His omniscient mind, coats. The Hebrew word coat means tunic, a long shirt-like garment usually of linen. This word carries the meaning of covering, indicating a purpose of concealing from view. Thankful they should have been to receive a garment that covered more of their shame, as well as picturing the need for the sacrifice of Christ. Do we dress to cover our shame? Do we see our own sinfulness; do we realize that clothing should humble us, rather than being a means of self-exaltation?

The Apostle Paul has something to say about the attire of a godly women in I Timothy 2:9, 10: “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” We read here about modest apparel. Is this a general term that is subjective at best, or does it teach us something important? The term modest in the greek is kosmios, which means well-arranged, seemly, modest, according to Thayer’s Lexicon. The greek word for apparel is katastole, This word is comprised of two words, Kata and Stole. Kata has the meaning of hang down according to Thayer, while Stole is a word for a particular garment. According to W. E. Vine, Stole “denotes any stately robe, a long garment reaching to the feet or with a train behind. It is used of the long clothing in which the scribes walked, making themselves conspicuous in the eyes of men, Mark 12:38.” A noted commentator Adam Clarke in his commentary on I Timothy 2:9 says “The *stole*, stola, seems to have been originally very simple. It was a long piece of cloth, doubled in the middle, and sewed up on both sides, leaving room

only for the arms; at the top, a piece was cut out, or a slit made, through which the head passed. It hung down to the feet, both before and behind, and was girded with the zona round the body, just under the breasts. It was sometimes made with, sometimes without, sleeves; and, that it might sit the better, it was gathered on each shoulder with a band or buckle.” Later on he says this of the stole “A more modest and becoming dress than the Grecian was never invented; it was, in a great measure, revived in England about the year 1805, and in it, simplicity, decency, and elegance were united;” Now if Paul gave this as an example of how a godly women should be adorned, oh how saddened he would be to see the state of affairs today.

In the book of I Peter we have further instruction concerning how one should adorn oneself. In I Peter 3:3 we read: “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting of the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” Now we have a list of items, which Peter inveighs against. His purpose is not necessarily to condemn each item, but to rather focus on what is truly important. Godliness should be our goal, not outward appearance; to focus on the outward betrays an improper placement of the affections. You could hear the Apostle pleading that we ought to spend more time looking at how we could be more beautiful on the inside, rather than wasting so much time with the outside. Do we spend as much time each day reading God’s Word, meditating on that Word, praying, and reading good Christian books as we do getting dressed, putting on makeup, and doing our hair and nails?

**Do we spend as much time
each day reading God’s
Word, meditating on that
Word, praying, and reading
good Christian books as
we do getting dressed,
putting on makeup, and
doing our hair and nails?**

Let us again turn to view what the Apostle Paul has to say. In I Corinthians 6, and 10 he deals with that which is lawful. What do these passages have to do with our clothing? After having said all the above, some may claim that the Apostle has said *all things are lawful for me*. I do not know how such a plea could be made in this area, but yet we must consider the argument. I Corinthians 10:23, 24 “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.” This is how God through the pen of Paul qualifies those things not directly spoken against in Scripture. These guidelines determine what the Apostle shall do, and they are based on love. *All things are not expedient, all things edify not, and I will not be brought under the power of any*, show our need to be loving to the brother. There are certain things that we might do, that can cause our brother to stumble. We may not do these things, but rather we are told to *Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth*. To wear clothing that is immodest, can provoke our brother to temptation and sin, for we are prone to the lust of the eyes as I John 2:16 warns us. We may not be the best judge of what is modest, so better to err on the side of over modesty (if that is possible) than to miss on the other side, and be a source of stumbling to our fellow man. This section is not meant to say that our attire is an area of Christian liberty, as we have seen we do have instruction how we are to adorn ourselves, but rather to show that immodesty should never be argued from Christian liberty.

Summertime is now upon us, and all the world shall begin to shed big baggy outfits, in favor of tight, short, and more revealing attire. Let us battle against being tempted to do the same. When you are tempted to put on the bathing suit, and go into public, consider what effect this will have on those who see you. Is there really much difference between underwear and the bathing suits of today? Would you meet with your brothers, or walk around in front of strangers wearing your underwear? Of course you would not. Even when we meet for church, the temptation is to wear short skirts, high slits, or see through white blouses when it begins to warm up. First of all, we dress for God. His all Seeing Eye knows what we wear, whether inside or outside of our worship service, so we must *always* be modest. Yet to bring possible temptation to the house of prayer is truly sad. We come to repent, and praise God, not to fend off temptation. Oh let us love one another. I have refereed mainly

to the attire of women in this article, and the reason is two-fold. Women are more prone to dressing to attract men, or at least are generally more concerned about their outward appearance. Also the Word of God speaks of women as being a source of temptation in a way that it does not speak of men. So please do not feel as though you were being singled out ladies.

**Clothing should be a
reminder of our sinfulness,
which should make us
humble, not a source of
self-exaltation.**

In conclusion let us remember these guiding principles. Clothing should be a reminder of our sinfulness, which should make us humble, not a source of self-exaltation. We dress to cover, not to reveal. Our dress should be modest, not by the world’s standards, nor even by our standards, but by the standard that Almighty God sets. Do not mistake the stole for being a culture-bound garb, as if the people lived in a cold climate that required long robes. No, it was a very warm region, it must be obvious that they wore these clothes because they were indeed modest. We must not focus on our outward beauty and dress nearly as much as on our inward spirituality. We must dress with our brother in mind. We should seek not our own welfare to the exclusion of our neighbor, but we are to esteem each other higher than ourselves. Let us love the neighbor, by not tempting him. If we use these guidelines, we will show that we love our husband, who is in fact called the Word. We will also show our love of the neighbor, which is called a fulfilling of the royal law, according to James, when we follow these principles. On top of it all, we will be more inclined to draw the attention of a true godly man, a man who will love you because you love God. Let us adorn ourselves for our husband on earth, and more importantly our husband in heaven. ❖

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



The Song of Zion

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

by Bruce Koole, Ryan Hanko, Mike Feenstra, and Heath Bleyenberg

June 1 Read Psalm 97:1-2

The psalmist declares in these verses the sovereign rule of God, and that in Him is found all righteousness and judgment. Clouds and darkness are round about Him. Is not it an amazing sight when one looks out on a hot, humid evening near dusk, and sees a thunderstorm develop off in the western sky? And within minutes the clouds get bigger, rolling over each other, as darkness slowly covers the land. Does not this create within us a sense of awe and even fear? Clouds and darkness are round about our Lord, making Him an awesome God and one to be feared, even more so than even the mightiest of thunderstorms. Let us tremble before His throne as we humbly draw near Him today, acknowledging our sinfulness, knowing that all His commands are righteous, and that His judgment goes uncontested. Sing Psalters 260:1, 423:1.

June 2 Read Psalm 97:3-5

As we read of God's judgment yesterday, today we see how He executes His judgments. In verses 3-5, the wrath of the Lord is compared to a consuming fire, which goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies. We read in II Kings chapter 1 of the two captains with their fifty being consumed by the fire of God, and in Genesis 19 how the Lord's wrath was kindled against Sodom and Gomorrah for their sin. These verses point out that God is angry with the sin of His enemies, but let us also remember that He is also angry with the sins of His own people. By our sinful nature we deserve no less punishment than what the wicked receive, and daily provoke God to anger against us. But let us be comforted, for by faith are we justified (Rom. 3:28), and clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and therefore are sanctified and freed from the ruling power of sin. Although we daily struggle with sin in our lives, we must not yield to its power and temptation, for God's grace is far stronger than that of sin. He is just in His condemnation of the wicked, and of crowning His children to everlasting glory. Sing Psalters 260:2, 423:2-3.

June 3 Read Jer. 10:1-16; Psalm 97:6-7

After reading these two verses, my mind immediately thought back to Israel, camped at the base of Mt. Sinai. They became weary and restless waiting for Moses to come down, so they made themselves a golden calf, which they worshipped as the god that brought them out of the land of Egypt. We think how foolish Israel must have been (and rightly so) to serve these idols, after they had seen first hand the miracles God had done for them. In our pride we think we are much better than Israel. Read Q & A 95 of the Heidelberg Catechism. We learn idolatry is placing our trust in any other object other than the one true God. Do we place our trust in our

abundance of material wealth, as the rich man of Luke 12 did? Will these riches that we lay up for ourselves truly make us content and happy? The more we think about this the sooner we see that we are no better than the children of Israel. Let us bow our heads and pray for grace, that we might cast away our idols, and trust only in the one true God. Sing Psalter 260:3, 423:4.

June 4 Read Psalm 97:8-9

Mention is made here of the rejoicing of the daughters of Judah and the gladness of Zion. Why are they so joyful? The answer can be seen in verse 9, for the Lord is high above the earth, He is exalted far above all other gods. When we think upon the greatness of the Lord, of His sovereign rule, of His just judgment, do we become glad, do we become exceedingly happy and rejoice as the daughters of Judah? All too often in our lives, we fail to see the significance of the fact that our Lord God is Almighty, that His throne is fixed forever, that no one can overthrow Him. Let us rejoice! For He is our God! As we sit down and read the Scriptures and meditate upon His Word, let our hearts fill with happiness and an unspeakable joy, to know that His name might be magnified by us. Sing Psalter 260:4, 423:5.

June 5 Read Daniel 3:13-30 Psalm 97:10

Here in Daniel we read of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, of their refusal to bow down and worship the golden image Nebuchadnezzar set before them, even though it meant they would be cast into the fiery furnace. These men, as is made clear in their confession to the king, did not know whether or not the Lord would preserve their earthly existence. What love these men demonstrated, that what seemed to be their standing at the brink of their certain death, they not only confessed the Lord's name, but added all the more emphatically that they would never serve the gods or the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar. Are our lives characterized with this fervent love for God, that we confess His Name, and place all trust in Him that He will indeed preserve our souls? Let us walk in this life as loving, confessing members of our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing and being assured through His Spirit, that indeed our souls are preserved, that no matter what evil or temptation presents itself before us, the Lord will save us, for He delivereth His children from the hand of the wicked. Sing Psalters 260:5 & 423:6.

June 6 Read Romans 8:18-39 Psalm 97:11-12

The upright in heart shall be glad. As servants of Christ, Scripture states that we will endure suffering and tribulation for His name's sake. The world hates Christ, manifesting their hatred in the persecution of His church. Although our sorrow at times might be great, we are well reminded in verse 11 of this psalm that light is

sown for the righteous. Just as seed that is sown in the ground will come up, though at times this growth might not seem evident, it most assuredly will spring forth in its own due time. Let us glory in our tribulations, knowing that Christ has sown light and joy for us, and that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ. Sing Psalter 260:6, 423:7.

June 7 Read Psalm 98:1

This Psalm speaks of the glory of God as it shall be wonderfully displayed throughout all creation. And it is our calling as covenant children to make known this praise due God throughout our lives. In the first verse we are directed as to how we shall praise God, centrally, with our mouths, in that we must utter forth songs of praise and thanksgiving unto Him, for all the marvelous things He has done. God has gotten Himself the victory, through His right hand, and His holy arm. This proclaims that our Lord is sovereign, for He has not gained the victory with the aid of man or any other creature, but by His own right hand. Let it comfort us to know that His holy arm stretches out and rules over evil men who attack us on every side, even over the devil himself. God has gotten the victory! "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things;" Sing Psalter 264:1, 261:1.

June 8 Read Isa. 52:1-12 Psalm 98:2

We saw yesterday the glory due God for the marvelous things He has done. What are these marvelous things? This verse mentions one, namely, the wondrous work of salvation through Jesus Christ. Do we take this wonderful work for granted? Do we praise God for His marvelous work of salvation? This is no easy task. All too often in our prayers we do not even thank God for our salvation. Or is it the case that we remember at the last minute and try to sneak it in at the end of our prayer? Let this wonderful work of God be at the forefront of our mind and our tongue as we humbly draw nigh to God, thanking Him for being faithful to His covenant promises, and for the gift of salvation, made possible only through Jesus Christ. Sing Psalter 262:1 & 263:1.

June 9 Read Psalm 98:3

How forgetful we as humans are. Young people, how often do you forget to say your prayers before bed at night? Young adults and older, how many of us can remember the answer to Question 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism? Numerous times in the Old Testament the prophets had to warn Israel of their forgetfulness of God and of His law. And did not David in his weakness feel that He was forgotten of the Lord? (read Ps 13, 42:9) In contrast to our forgetfulness, our God is a God of remembrance, as can be seen in verse 3 of Ps. 98. God will not forget or forsake His people (Read Isa. 42:21, 49:8-17). Not only will He not forget, but also He will remember His mercy and truth toward His elect, and show them His salvation. May we pray for grace and be assured that our heavenly Father will not forget us, even in our deepest spiritual battles, but will all the more remember and have pity on His children. Read Luke 12:6-7. Sing Psalter 264:3.

June 10 Read Psalm 98:4

Again in this Psalm we see the glory and praise due God for His excellency and majesty. We must make a joyful noise unto the Lord, and sing praise. Does this characterize our actions, not only on Sunday, but also throughout the week? God has commanded that His Name be praised, and singing is one means whereby we from the heart can express our gratitude and praise to God. In our singing, do we consciously lift up our voices, making a loud noise, singing from the heart, knowing that these words are being heard

by God Himself, and that it is a sound pleasing to Him? Let us rejoice all the more, knowing that these songs are indeed heard by God, only for the fact that He has given us the life of Christ which lives within us, making us to praise Him. Sing Psalter 264:4.

June 11 Read Psalm 98:5-6

Young People, do you love to sing to the Lord? Psalter #264:5 says to, "Praise the Lord with harp and song, with voice of psalms His praise prolong; in swelling chorus gladly sing and shout before the Lord the King." Do you shout before the Lord? Or, are you ashamed to sing lustily in church because so and so will hear you. I know that we all do not have the same gifts for singing. Therefore, are you singing to the best of your ability? God delights in praise. He delights in praise sung with music. In the everlasting sabbath we are going to do this forever and ever. Therefore, let us be encouraged to do it each and every sabbath and every day of the week. Sing Psalter 264:5.

June 12 Read Psalm 98:7-8; Genesis 1:9-10

The passage for today is a summons for the floods and the hills to praise Jehovah. Therefore, when we sing Psalter number 264:6, it is as if we are standing on a mountain cliff shouting out to the hills, seas, and vales below to praise God. Have you ever thought about this? The creation was created to praise the King of the heavens and earth. This is the truth about the world around us. Now, of course, this earth could never praise God if it came into existence by evolutionary processes. If this were true, it would have no reason to praise God. By God's grace, we know that this is not true. The oceans, the seas, and the dry land show forth their joy because they were created by God in six days of twenty-four hours. Sing Psalter 264:6, 262-3:3.

June 13 Read Psalm 98:9; Romans 8:22

Yesterday we mentioned that the creation praises and glorifies its Maker. Verse nine gives us the reason. It is because, "He comes with justice, evil to redress, and to judge the nations in His righteousness." The creation is extremely interested in the Final Judgment. Romans 8:22 says that it groans for the coming of Christ because it will be redeemed through the cross of Jesus Christ. The reason for this is found in John 3:16 which is, "For God so loved the world [kosmos], that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In the Judgment, God will show to all the world His judgment on Satan for his diabolical attempt to steal God's creation. And, God will redeem the creation by burning it up and ushering in the new heavens and new earth. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen. Sing Psalter 264:7, 262-3:3.

June 14 Read Psalm 99:1-3; 1 Peter 1:6

Psalm 99 is a Psalm that extols God's Holiness. No less than three times are we called to praise God because He is Holy. Thus, the refrain on each of the stanzas of Psalter #265. What does it mean to say that God is the Holy One? Rev. Hoeksema in Reformed Dogmatics says that it is, "to speak of God in His incomparable majesty, sovereignty, and glory" (94). Psalter #265 certainly speaks of this in stanza one where we sing, "Jehovah reigns in majesty; let all the nations quake. He dwells between the cherubim; let earth's foundations shake." This means that all the earth must give glory to the Lord. How are we to give that glory? We do this by serving the Lord with reverence and godly fear. Finally, we do this by living the antithetical, holy life. Why? 1 Peter 1:6 says that we are to be holy because God is holy. Sing Psalter 265:1; 266:1; 267:1-2.

June 15 Read Psalm 99:4-5

Throughout our nation today, many people are crying for justice because of the corruption and injustice in our land. Just after the terrible school shooting in Littleton, Colorado, I observed a picket sign held by a protestor which said, "Stop the Madness!" What is this sign saying? It is saying, "We need justice." Where do we find true justice? Certainly, we shall not find it in our rulers today. Isn't it wonderful that we have a God that is a God of perfect justice! This is why we do not have to be afraid that anybody will "get away" with a horrendous sin, even though sometimes it seems as if this is the case. God will judge every man that ever lived in this world. This means that He will judge us also in His righteousness. However, because of the cross, the horrendous sins which we have committed are covered in God's sight. Exalt the Lord for He is holy. Sing Psalter 265:2; 266:2; 267:3-4.

Devotionals for Psalm 99:6 through Psalm 100 are unavailable. Please read the rest of the Psalm and sing the accompanying Psalter numbers on your own. The next few days will have reprinted devotionals from June, 1995 by Mr. Cornelius Jonker. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

June 16 Read Matthew 6:1-4

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

June 17 Read Matthew 6:5-8

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

June 18 Read Psalm 118:17-24

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Every day we should echo these words, but especially on Sundays when we can gather in the communion of saints, sing praise to God, give our offerings, call upon Him in prayer, and, above all, hear the preaching of the Word. I'm afraid that some-

times we take this great privilege for granted. I'm sure I didn't always appreciate it as I should until I was deprived of it. Because this is the chief means of grace, we are exhorted not to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Come to church, prepare yourself for proper worship, pray for your pastor and officebearers, and ask for a blessing upon yourself and your fellow worshipers to the end that God may be glorified. Read or sing Psalter 349, verses 1-4.

June 19 Read Matthew 6:9-15

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

June 20 Read Matthew 6:16-18

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

June 21 Read Psalm 101:1, 2

Psalm 101 was written at a time in Israel's history when idolatry was rampant and God had again departed from Israel. The Psalmist, feeling incomplete, beseeches the Lord to return to his household (vs 2). The Psalm then finishes up with a list of the Psalmist's vows to insure that the Lord returns to his house. His first vow is that he will sing to the Lord. How often do you sing Psalms? If you do not sing Psalms, then do your songs speak of the Lord's judgment and mercy? In connection with verse 2 read I Samuel 18:14 and I Kings 11:4. You, too, need to walk like God's servant, David and to not walk like Solomon in his old age. Heed the Lord's warning. Make no sacrifices to idols. Sing Psalter 271:1.

June 22 Read Psalm 101:3-5; Deut. 13:11-14

How many of you remember this song? "O be careful little eyes what you see, O be careful little eyes what you see; For the Father up above is looking down in love, O be careful little eyes what you see." Heed the song. Set no wicked thing before your eyes. In the Hebrew text 'wicked thing', in verse 3, is equivalent to 'thing of Belial'. Now reread the verse. "I will set no thing of Belial before mine eyes..." 3b describes the wicked things that sons and daughters of Belial do. Belial was never a person. Belial is a description of someone who is worthless, a law-breaker, and opposed to Christ. Sons and daughters of Belial were not careful about what they saw

(or heard). Instead they let their bodies natural, evil urges take over. Do not be a Belialite. Do not live a lie. Be Godly in all things. Sing Psalter 271:2.

June 23 Read Psalm 101: 6-8

What kind of activities do you do with your friends? Are they holy and upright? If not, then you and your friends are living a lie. David states that “he that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house” (vs 7a). Only the “faithful of the land...may dwell with me” (vs 6). Not only must you cease being friends but also you must “cut off all the wicked doers from the city of the Lord. I must confess that parts of these verses confuse me. In verse 6 David states that “he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. The last part seems to indicate pride on the part of David. Are not we as Christians supposed to serve others? The first part of the verse seems to indicate that those who are holy are equal with us and yet the second part indicates that they are lower than we are. Then, the beginning of verse 8 states “I will early destroy all the wicked of the land...” I understand that the wicked must be destroyed. So why add the adjective ‘early’? Perhaps it means that the destruction of the wicked has waited too long. In order to convey the urgency of their destruction the Lord adds early. Do it now. While it is yet early. Do not wait. Again I do not know. But I do know that it is necessary that you choose your friends wisely. Sing Psalter 271:3.

June 24 Read Psalm 102:1, 2a

Whether you want to admit it or not, you have a great affliction that weighs heavy upon you. It is sin. Having to daily deal with the problems and torments of sin is wearisome. The question is whether or not you realize it. Those who do not realize it will do nothing because they feel that they are strong enough to deal with any problems. Obviously they are not. Eventually they choose the wide and easy path and end up in hell. It is imperative that you realize that you have a great problem. Only God has the strength and power to relieve the problem. Understand this and pray to him. He is listening always. Are you praying? Sing Psalter 272:1.

June 25 Read Psalm 102:2b, 3; II Thess. 5:16-28

Next time you are roasting marshmallows watch how quickly the smoke from the fire disappears. Smoke has a very short life. It only lasts for a few seconds. Compare the supposed length of your life with the life of smoke. Your life should last about 75 years or approximately 2.5 trillion seconds. Smoke lasts about 5 seconds. Do the math and you should last 473 billion times as long as smoke. According to verse 3 our life span is equivalent to the life of smoke. O, how short we live. Heed the words of II Thessalonians. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks. Sing Psalter 272:2.

June 26 Read Psalm 102:4-7; John 6:25-40

So, what happens when one does not sing and pray? The Lord of judgment (Psalm 101:1) smites your heart so that it withereth away like the grass. This will trouble you (vs 7) so that you have problems sleeping and talking about it (Psalm 77:4). This emptiness will become a thorn in the flesh. Everywhere you go and everything will be hard to do because your conscience is smiting you. It will be incredibly hard to concentrate on doing even the most mundane of tasks. May the Lord bless you, keep you, and make his face to shine upon you so that this never happens to you. Do not eat the bread of man but do eat the bread of life. The Lord is more fulfilling than anything the world has to offer. Sing Psalter 272:3.

June 27 Read Psalm 102:8-11

In the previous verses, the Psalmist experienced the hatred and absence of God. It proved to be quite a terrible thing. It distressed him so much that could not even sleep. But it did not end there. It got worse. All the Psalmist can do and does, now, is weep. He weeps when he eats. He weeps when he drinks. He weeps during every waking hour. The same thing happens to you when the Lord removes his Spirit from you. We begin to spiral ever downward into the depths of hell. This is what the Psalmist experienced. Hell. How great and terrible it is. Pray without ceasing. Sing Psalter 272:4.

June 28 Read Psalm 102:12

The previous verses reminded the Psalmist how a great and terrible sinner he was, so much so that he experienced, as it were, hellish agonies. His family had left him. He could not sleep. He felt like an old man. The Lord had deserted him and did not know whom to turn to. That is, until verse 12. The psalmist declares that there is much that he does not know and much that he will never know. There is, however, one thing that he is sure about and that is the everlastingness of God. No matter what has happened in his own life or in the annals of history, the Lord has always been there for his people. The Lord does not hide but makes Himself known so that every generation passes on to the next their remembrance of God. May you never forget the Lord because there comes a time in every man's life that there is so much stress that he is not sure what to do. The answer: Turn to the Lord in prayer and in song. Sing Psalter 273:1, 275:1, 276:1.

June 29 Read Psalm 102:13

Remember how despondent the Psalmist was a two days ago? Today he is at his highest point. Not only is the Lord permanent and remembered from generation to generation but he is also striking down the Son of perdition. Verse 13 speaks of Christ's resurrection. The Lord has given a definitive answer to the Psalmists prayer. When you are afflicted by a great calamity, pray in the power of Christ's resurrection. One interesting note: just as the time was nigh for Christ's resurrection in this Psalm, Christ's return is nigh in our time. This means the world is getting more evil and more and more prayer and supplication is required. Sing Psalter 273:2, 275:2, 276:2.

June 30 Read Psalm 102:14, 79:1; I Corinthians 16:55-57

This verse is quite an enigma. Upon first glance it appears to be verse of joy, just like 12 and 13. The key of the verse is the stones. Chapter 79 speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem. The servants of the Lord, you and me, take pleasure not in the destruction of Judah, but in the destruction of the devil. According to the verse, we even prefer that Jerusalem be destroyed, for this means that the Lord has arisen and destroyed Jerusalem. “O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Sing Psalter 273:3.

Faithful Witnesses of God (2)

The Lord God Sanctified in Our Hearts

Aaron J. Cleveland

We ended last time with an important truth. Only those who have a true knowledge of God and who live out that knowledge in a life of thankfulness can be faithful witnesses of God. This truth is explained for us in Luke 24:44-49. In these verses we read of Jesus' instruction to His disciples just before His ascension. While these verses apply directly to the apostles as they were called to preach the gospel, they apply to us as well, as faithful witnesses. In verse 45 we read, "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." Later in verse 47 we read, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name... and ye are witnesses of these things" (vs. 48). Important to understand from these verses are two truths. First, our ability to understand Scriptures is dependent upon the fact that the Lord opens our understanding. Without His Spirit working in us, we do not and cannot know the truth of the Word of God. Second, when we have this understanding and enlightened heart, we are witnesses. It follows that those who know and love the truth will live out that truth. And

**those who know and love
the truth will live out that
truth. And by doing so, they
witness of that truth.**

by doing so, they witness of that truth. It is necessary to have this spiritual understanding of the Scriptures to be a witness of the truth.

There are many who claim to be witnesses of God and His truth who do not have this understanding. In reality they are false witnesses in darkness. They do not witness of the God of light and truth, but of the lie. They

have no spiritual understanding; the Lord God is not sanctified in their hearts. Matthew 7:21-23 speaks of this fact. Just after Jesus has finished saying the words, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." He gives the following warning:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

**Faithful witnesses then,
are those who do the will of
the Father in heaven.**

Faithful witnesses then, are those who do the will of the Father in heaven. What is involved in doing the will of the Father? First, it involves knowing what the will of the Father is. The will of the Father is made known to us by the Holy Spirit who makes known the Word to us in our hearts. Second, doing the will of the Father involves obedience to the will of the Father. And obedience is "a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works" (Catechism, Q & A 90). We, who live out of the principle of the new man, do the will of the Father.

Really, our whole walk involves performing the will of the Father. God has given to each of us a specific station and calling in life. For some of us, our particular calling in life at this time may be that of a student in school. Doing the will of the Father in this calling involves a number of things. It requires of us respect for the authority of the parents and teachers God has placed over us. It requires of us diligence in our studies. If we are college students, doing the will of the Father may mean defending the truth of the Word of God against the lie in the classroom. Doing the will of the Father may involve suffering reproach and persecution for righteousness sake.

It may also be the case that our calling in life is that of a young mother. Doing the will of the Father requires of us submission to our husbands. It requires of us keeping the home and raising our children in the fear of the Lord. It requires of us that we deny any desires that we have to forsake our calling of being a keeper at home and living the life of a career woman.

Doing the will of the Father is a high calling. In our workplace, doing our Father's will may be especially difficult. This is true because we are surrounded in this world by those who hate our Father and hate those who do His will. We may be asked why we don't bad-mouth the boss behind his back. We may be asked why we refuse to participate in trashy lunchroom discussion and why we never have a foul joke to offer. Reproach may be heaped upon us when we explain why we do not work on the Lord's Day. Jokes and sneers will be directed at us when we bow our heads in prayer at mealtimes. Such is the life of the faithful witness who does the will of his Father in his particular station and calling in life.

When we live as shining lights in this world of darkness, we will no doubt be asked for a reason of the hope that is in us. Usually, the question will be asked of us by those who speak evil of us. This is the context of I Peter 3:15. In verse 12-14 we read that those who follow after that which is good suffer for righteousness sake. This is always the case. Those who live godly lives always suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12). In verse 15 itself we read, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." In the verse following we are reminded that those who ask us for this reason are those who also speak evil of us and falsely accuse our "good conversation in Christ."

It is important that we do make a good profession of our faith when we are asked of the reason of the hope

that is in us. Before we can make this good confession, however, let us not overlook the instruction found in the first phrase of verse 15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." We have the same idea in Isaiah 8:13, where we read, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." What does this mean? Matthew Henry gives a good explanation of these verses. He writes:

We sanctify the Lord God in our hearts when we with sincerity and with fervency adore Him, when our thoughts of Him are awful and reverend, when we rely upon His power, trust to His faithfulness, submit to His wisdom, imitate His holiness, and give Him the glory due to His most illustrious perfections. We sanctify God before others when our deportment is such as invites and encourages others to glorify and honour Him; both are required, Lev. 3:10. When this principle is laid deeply into your hearts, the next thing, as to men, is to be always ready, that is, able and willing, to give an answer, or make an apology or defense, of the faith that you profess, and that to every man that asketh a reason or your hope, what sort of hope you have, or (sic) which you suffer such hardships in the world.

Only those who sanctify the Lord God in their hearts are able to give an answer. Only those who know God and reverently fear God will not be afraid nor fear wicked men. Only those who go forth in the confidence of the promises of God's Word can speak a true confession and give a sound answer. "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word. So shall I have therewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments" (Psalm 119:41-43).

This admonition to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts is so very important to notice. So often we are tempted to focus our attention on the latter part of the

The Lord God is only sanctified in our hearts when we have a faith-wrought knowledge of His sovereignty, holiness, justice, and power.

verse. But the latter portion of the verse will mean nothing to us until we understand what it means to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” We sanctify the Lord God in our hearts by “ascribing all praise and glory to Him, and by relying entirely upon Him” (John Calvin commenting on Isaiah 8:13, 14). It carries with it the idea of “exalting His power highly.”

It is obvious that we cannot “exalt His power highly” nor “rely entirely upon Him” unless we KNOW Him. The Lord God is only sanctified in our hearts when we

have a faith-wrought knowledge of His sovereignty, holiness, justice, and power. Apart from this knowledge, we cannot sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. Thanks be to God that we have been given hearts of flesh engraved with His Word and that we have been given of His Spirit to bring that Word to remembrance. ❖

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

Where We Stand

The 1,000-Year Period of Revelation 20 Outline on the “Millennium” PRYP Convention, 1999

by Prof. David J. Engelsma

Introduction.

- A. Revelation 20 mentions a period of 1,000 years six times (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7); the Latin-based term for 1,000 years is “millennium.” (This is the only passage of Scripture to mention the millennium.)
- B. There are three main explanations of the millennium.
 1. Amillennialism.
 - a. Denies that the millennium of Revelation 20 is a literal period of time in the future before the end of the world. (“A” in “amillennialism” means ‘not.’)
 - b. Holds that the 1,000-year period is a symbolic, or figurative, description of the entire New Testament age from Jesus’ ascension to shortly before Jesus’ return, when Satan is loosed for a little season.
 - c. This is the position of most Reformed and Presbyterian churches, including the PRC.
 2. Postmillennialism.
 - a. Takes the 1,000-year period literally.
 - b. Holds that in the future the entire world will be converted to Christ and will become Christian, so that the church will enjoy earthly peace, power, and prosperity: a “golden age” in history before the end.
 - c. Christ’s coming will follow this millennium. (“Post” in “postmillennialism” means ‘after’—Christ will come after the millennium.)
 - d. This is the position of some Reformed and Presbyterian churches; in the past, it was the view of some Puritans.

3. Premillennialism.
 - a. Takes the 1,000-year period literally.
 - b. Holds that in the future, but before the end of the world, Jesus will return to earth in His body, to establish an earthly kingdom for 1,000 years: a “golden age.”
 - c. Christ’s coming will precede this millennium. (“Pre” in “premillennialism” means ‘before’—Christ will come before the millennium.)
 - d. The main form of this doctrine today is known as “premillennial dispensationalism.
 - 1) The church of believers will be taken up into the air at any moment in a “secret rapture.”
 - 2) While the church is in the air for seven years, Antichrist will persecute the Jews in Palestine.
 - 3) After seven years, Jesus will return to earth in the body, publicly, to make the Jews His kingdom again as they were during the Old Testament.
 - 4) The Jews will reign over the world for 1,000 years with Jesus as their king in Jerusalem.
 - e. This is the position of most Baptists, fundamentalists, and evangelicals, e.g., Billy Graham, John MacArthur, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Ed Dobson.

C. Important issues at stake.

1. Does the church face persecution in the future, before the end, or earthly peace? (Both postmillennialism and premillennialism deny that the church in the future will suffer the great tribulation.)
2. Is the kingdom of Jesus Christ earthly or spiritual? (Both postmillennialism and premillennialism present the Messianic kingdom as earthly.)
3. Is the New Testament church the fulfilment and reality of Old Testament Israel, or are the Jews and the church two different peoples? (Premillennial dispensationalism teaches that the Jews are the kingdom, whereas New Testament believers are the church.)

Questions for Discussion.

1. What evidence is there in the book of Revelation as a whole that the number, 1,000, in chapter 20 is figurative, not literal? (Is the book of Rev. largely a symbolical book?)
2. What evidence is there in Revelation 20 itself that the number, 1,000, is figurative? (Is Rev. 20 obviously figurative? See vv. 1-3, concerning the binding of Satan with a chain.)
3. What is the meaning of the figurative use of the number, 1,000 (10 x 10 x 10)?
4. According to Revelation 20:1-10, what events occur during the 1,000 years?
5. In what respect is the devil bound during the millennium (v. 3)? What does the devil do when he is loosed (vv. 7-9)? To what event in the future does this refer? (See II Thess. 2.)
6. Who live and reign with Christ during the millennium (vv. 4-6)?
7. How does verse 4 indicate that the reign with Christ takes place in heaven, not on the earth?
8. How does Revelation 20:1-10 teach that the church must expect persecution in the future, before the end?
9. What encouragement does Revelation 20:1-10 give to the saints, to endure persecution patiently?
10. What does Revelation 20:1-10 teach about the “intermediate state”? (The “intermediate state” is the state of the believer after death and before the resurrection of the body.)
11. What does the rest of Scripture teach about the increase of wickedness before the end? (See Matt. 24:4-14; II Thess. 2:3; II Tim. 3.) about the church’s suffering persecution? (See Matt. 24:21, 22; II Tim. 3:12; Rev. 2:8-11.) about the rise of Antichrist? (See II Thess. 2; Rev. 13.)
12. How do the Reformed confessions teach the essential identity of Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church, against premillennial dispensationalism? (See the Heid. Cat., Q. 54; Q. 74; Q. 123; Bel. Conf., Art. 27.)
13. How are the church and the elect believer victorious in the world? ❖

Prof. Engelsma is Professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament Studies at the Protestant Reformed Seminary in Grandville, Michigan.

Universal Atonement

Prof. Russell Dykstra

The atonement is a crucial truth in the whole of the Reformed faith. It describes what Christ did when he laid down His life for His sheep (John 10). A man's convictions on the atonement will influence all his beliefs in the matter of salvation including who are saved and how they are saved. The Reformed fathers in the Netherlands were willing to call a national synod and invite delegates from all over Europe to nail down the biblical doctrine of the atonement.

The atonement is of utmost significance for each of us personally. Finally it comes down to this—Did Christ die for me, and if so, does it mean that I am saved, or only that I have a possibility of being saved?

The all-important question that must be faced is this—For whom did Christ die? For all men, or only for certain ones (the elect). The Arminian view of the atonement is that Christ died for all people, that is, every individual member of the human race. This is a universal atonement. The very sad fact is that many who call themselves Reformed, not to mention Christian, hold to a universal atonement.

Resources for preparation:

1. The Canons of Dordrecht, Second Head—Of the Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby. DO READ THIS—ALSO THE REJECTION OF ERRORS. (The “Rejection of Errors” sets forth various errors on the atonement.) If you do nothing more to prepare for the discussion, do read these brief articles. Also, it will be very helpful to take a copy of the Canons to the discussion.

2. *Saved by Grace*, by Revs. Cammenga and Hanko, especially pp. 97-122 & 215-224. This is highly recommended, very clear and readable, and full of texts!

- I. The defense of a universal atonement.
 - A. Here are some verses used to support the teaching of a universal atonement. Look them up and try to face the question of what these verses teach. These will be considered later.
 1. John 3:16
 2. 1 Timothy 4:10
 3. 1 John 2:2
 4. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 5. 1 Timothy 2:4-6
 6. Hebrews 2:9
 - B. Various arguments for universal atonement. If Christ died for all, would not all go to heaven? The Reformers put this question to the Remonstrants (Arminians 400 years ago). Not necessarily, replied the Remonstrants. It depends on what Christ really did when He died.
 1. Here are some possibilities offered by the Remonstrants.
 - a. Jesus' death did not actually save; it only made salvation possible. By his death Jesus made salvation available to all men. It is up to the individual to take the salvation.
 - b. Jesus merited, not salvation, but the right of God and man to talk to each other again.
 - c. Christ died so that God can drop the requirement of perfect obedience and only demand faith.
 - d. Jesus died to show what God could do us because of our sins. This is a warning, that if we do not repent, we will perish.
 2. Show how the Canons reject all these explanations, either directly or indirectly.

II. The forms of universalism.

A. The full-blown *Arminianism* is stated in the second article of the Remonstrants (the seventeenth century followers of Arminius).

1. It reads: "Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that He has obtained for them all, by His death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins, except the believer."
2. This leaves the whole matter of salvation up to man.
 - a. God wants to save all, and does His part—making salvation available to all men.
 - b. But, man must exercise his free will to accept this gift of salvation.
3. Is this in harmony with Scripture? Find proof.

B. Very complicated *hypothetical universalism*. (Think of what is meant by 'hypothetical'.)

1. This holds that God has two wills:
 - a. One will of God is to save all men. To this end God sent Christ to die for all men to obtain a salvation available to all. This will of God does not save anyone.
 - b. The other will of God is to save some by actually giving faith by which certain men do receive the blessings of salvation.
2. The result is that Christ died for all individual men, so that He merited salvation for all, which can be offered to all, but the benefits of the atonement are only given to those who believe.
3. This view tried to make God to be more in control of the salvation of man than the Arminian view. Does it succeed? What other objections would you have to this view?

C. Very illogical "*contradictionism*" (not their term, but mine). In a sense the atonement is particular and in another sense, it is universal.

1. The claim is that Christ died:
 - a. FOR the elect, in the sense that He was a substitute for them at the cross. Only they will be saved.

- b. Yet He died FOR all men, in the sense that He died for their benefit, that is, to earn some non-saving benefits for all men.

2. What are these non-saving benefits for all men? The two most commonly cited are:
 - a. Common grace and,
 - b. A universal and free (i.e., well-meant) offer of the gospel.
3. Scripture:
 - a. Can you find any texts that make the atonement of Christ to merit non-saving benefits?
 - b. Can you find any texts that speak of the benefits of Christ's death specifically?

III. "Limited" Atonement—that Christ died not for all men, but only for the elect.

A. What does the Bible teach about the atonement?

1. We must become specific and clearly define terms from Scripture in order to know—and demonstrate to others—the true doctrine of the atonement.
2. These are some questions that must be answered in order better to define the atonement.
 - a. What is an atonement?
 - b. What did Christ accomplish, what did he DO, when He died?
 - c. For whom did Christ accomplish this?
 - d. Does the death of Christ save or only make salvation possible?

B. What are the necessary parts of the atonement, according to Scripture and the Confessions?

1. The atonement is a *payment*.
 - a. What words in these passages show that the atonement is a payment?
 1. Matthew 20:28
 2. Leviticus 25:25-28 (idea of redeem)
 3. Galatians 4:4-5
 4. Titus 2:14
 5. 1 John 4:10
 6. Exodus 30:11-16
 - b. This leads to other questions:
 1. For what did Christ pay?
 2. How did He pay?
 3. To whom did He pay?
 4. If He paid the price for an individual, is that individual's salvation certain?

-
- c. Where and how do the Canons teach that the atonement was a payment?
 - 2. The atonement of Christ is *vicarious*, that is, *substitutionary*.
 - a. What specifically do those terms mean in connection with the atonement?
 - b. What concretely does it mean that Christ died for others?
 - 1. In their place?
 - 2. For their benefit?
 - 3. Both of the above?
 - c. Notice how the issue becomes crucially important: For whom did Christ die?
 - d. How do the following verses teach this substitutionary atonement?
 - 1. John 10:14-15
 - 2. Galatians 3:13
 - 3. Ephesians 5:2
 - 4. 1 Thessalonians 5:10
 - 5. 1 John 3:16
 - e. Do the Canons teach this? Where?
 - 3. The atonement is *limited*, *particular*, and *personal*.
 - a. These three words refer to the same truth, but from three slightly different points of view. Discuss these three terms.
 - 1. What does each one mean as it describes *atonement*?
 - 2. Which do you consider to be preferable?
 - b. How is this aspect (that is, limited) of the atonement presented in the Canons?
 - c. How do these demonstrate the truth that the atonement is limited, particular, and personal?
 - 1. Hebrews 9:28
 - 2. Matthew 1:21
 - 3. John 10:14-15, and 26
 - 4. Galatians 2:20
 - 4. The atonement of Christ is of *infinite value*.
 - a. This sounds like a universal atonement, but it is not—the Canons teach it—see Articles 3 & 4.
 - b. The Arminian charge is that the Reformed make the atonement of Christ to be of little value. Christ’s atonement is small, unable to save all men. The Canons say its value is infinite.
 - c. What does this mean that His death is of infinite value?
 - 1. That Christ died sufficiently for all men, but efficiently for the elect?
 - 2. In what way must we say that Christ’s death is of infinite value? (Or, why would this death be of infinite value? See Canons II, Article 4.)
- C. The bottom line is that the atonement is *effectual*.
- 1. It accomplishes exactly what God determined it should—the full salvation of those for whom Christ died, and that for God’s chosen people.
 - 2. In light of that, consider some of the verses used to defend a form of universal atonement.
 - a. John 3:16 “God so loved the world...”
 - 1. What is *the world* in this verse? Does the Bible use *world* to refer to absolutely all men?
 - 2. Who do believe in Jesus? (Eph. 2:8-10)
 - 3. What was God’s purpose in sending Jesus? Does God accomplish His purpose?
 - b. 1 Timothy 2:4-6—“all men.”
 - 1. The word *all* in the Bible does not necessarily mean *every last one*. See Exodus 9:6 & 21.
 - 2. *All* can mean either *every individual*, or *every kind of*.
 - 3. What does it mean here? (The context is important.)
 - c. 1 Timothy 4:10 “Savior of all men”
 - 1. The word *Savior* can mean *Preserver*. Then what does this verse teach?
 - 2. Or, the words *all men* can be explained as in 1 Timothy 2.
 - d. 1 John 2:2
 - e. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - f. Hebrews 2:9. ❖

Prof. Dykstra is Professor of Church History in the Protestant Reformed Seminary in Granville, Michigan.

Martin Bucer (2)

by Mike Feenstra

Having looked at Martin Bucer's history in our first article, how should we remember Martin Bucer? First, we should remember that he was a reformer who diligently, and at times stubbornly, fought for unity in the church. This was a worthy goal. Members of the church should seek to unite, but that unity must be on the basis of the truth. The problem was that Bucer was so desirous of concord that he would do almost anything, even compromise the truth. He manifested this ecumenical spirit especially during the Lord's Supper strife and the attempted reunion of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. Second, we should remember Bucer as a great reformer who developed the truths of the Reformed faith, especially the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Therefore, although Bucer should be considered a great reformer, his ecumenical activities are very disturbing to Reformed Christians who desire to have church unity based on the truth alone.

To analyze Bucer's ecumenism we will first examine Bucer's place in the Lord's Supper strife, a schism over Christ's presence in the supper which, you will remember, was between the Lutherans based in Wittenberg and the Zwinglians based in Zurich. The Lord's Supper strife began in 1522 when Carlstadt, an Anabaptist who was originally a fellow reformer with Luther at Wittenberg, began to teach the radical doctrine that the Lord's Supper is merely a passionate recollection of Christ's death, that is, he taught that Christ's body is not present in the sacrament. Therefore, in Carlstadt's view, the sacrament is not a means of grace. This radical move so infuriated Luther that he never budged from his view of consubstantiation, the view which claims that the substance of Christ's body is present with, around, and under the elements of the Lord's Supper. As a result, Luther also stated that unbelievers who take the sacrament actually eat the Body of Christ, albeit to their condemnation. In contrast to Luther stood Zwingli's teaching that the Supper was a mere memorial. He based his view on

his interpretation of Luke 22:19, namely, that when Christ says, "This is my body," He is really saying, "This signifies my body" (Engelsma, "Lord's Supper," 8-10).

During this strife, Bucer desperately looked for opportunities to forge a compromise that would preserve the unity of Protestantism. Mainly, he tried to do this in two ways. First, he constantly stated in numerous conferences (which he usually set up to hammer out the problem) and in correspondence that *the quibble was merely over words*. Therefore, to get both sides to agree to a common confession, Bucer chose to explain the sacrament in ambiguous words. For example, witness these words of the *Tetrapolitan Confession* of 1530: "In this sacrament his true body and true blood are truly given to eat and drink, as food for their souls and to eternal life" (Eells, 100). Second, to convince both sides that they were really in agreement, *Bucer made erroneous distinctions concerning the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper*. For example, Bucer made a distinction which "saved the day" at the conference which resulted in the Wittenberg Concord of 1536, a concord between the Lutherans and most of the southern German cities (the Swiss cities did not subscribe). Bucer's distinction "solved" the dispute over whether the unbeliever receives the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. According to Engelsma, Bucer accomplished the compromise with Luther through making a "dubious distinction," namely, that there are "...two kinds of unworthy partakers, those who are merely weak, and therefore, do receive Christ, and those who are ungodly, and therefore do not receive Christ" (Engelsma, "Lord's Supper," 20). The Witten-

Although he labored
ceaselessly to achieve a
compromise, both sides
hated him.

berg Concord, therefore, did not truly solve the problem. Soon, Bucer found this out. Although he labored ceaselessly to achieve a compromise, both sides hated him. Thus, Bucer finally decided to not talk to anyone about the issue (Eells, 224). In retrospect, it is sad that this strife occurred. Although we do not condone the underhanded tactics¹ that Bucer used at times, we can only commend Bucer for his work to achieve a concord. Our forefathers should have labored diligently to truly hammer this problem out.

Although Bucer should be commended for his work as mediator in the Lord's Supper Strife, we cannot accept his desire to achieve a reunion with the church of

Although Bucer should be commended for his work as mediator in the Lord's Supper Strife, we cannot accept his desire to achieve a reunion with the church of Rome.

Rome. Here is where we see that Bucer was a "Fanatic of Unity." Although there are many details to this attempted reunion which we can talk about including the fact that the Turks were threatening Germany, we shall only speak of the climax of Bucer's efforts in the years 1540-1541. During this period Rome and the Protestants came very close to unity. First, while the official Colloquy of Worms of 1540 was deadlocked, Bucer and Capito met secretly with a moderate Roman Catholic group including Veltwyck and Gropper to write up a document that would serve as the basis for concord at the upcoming Diet of Regensburg.² In this document, which became known as the *Regensburg Book*, Bucer and Capito compromised with the Roman Catholics on different issues including the doctrine of justification by faith alone. However, by God's grace, the subsequent Diet of Regensburg of 1541 failed especially because of disagreement on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Naturally and justly, Bucer incurred a flood of severe criticism because of his concessions. Luther said, "Bucer, the rascal, has absolutely lost all my confidence" (Eells, 296). Calvin, Bucer's colleague at Strasbourg, condemned Bucer for his "ambiguous and dissimulating formulae concerning transubstantiation" (Quoted in

Engelsma, "Fanatic," 27; Eells, 278-301). This also should be our reaction to Bucer's ecumenism. We must not follow Bucer's example as the modern ecumenists do who see Bucer as their stimulus. Instead, we must vigorously defend the truths of sovereign grace with sharp statements of belief. Specifically, we need to de-

We must not follow Bucer's example as the modern ecumenists do who see Bucer as their stimulus. Instead, we must vigorously defend the truths of sovereign grace with sharp statements of belief.

fend the truth of justification by faith alone over against the ambiguous confessions of *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*.³

* * * * *

Although Bucer compromised the truth at the Colloquy of Worms and Regensburg, we must see him as a man who both influenced many streams of Protestantism and developed much of what we know today as the "Reformed Faith." His influence on Calvin and Calvinism was great. First, he developed a sound method of exegesis which Calvin saw as his "model" for writing commentaries (Engelsma, "Reformed," 4). Second, Bucer had a high doctrine of predestination which, according to Stephens, shaped all of his theology (23). Bucer taught double predestination unconditioned by foreseen faith (Bucer, tr. Wright, 96-97, 102). Therefore, he taught predestination not as a cold doctrine, but as the doctrine which assures one in the faith (Bucer, tr. Wright, 99-101). Third, Bucer rejected the humanistic idea of Erasmus (already in 1524) on free will by teaching, in Engelsma's words, that, "Predestination controls the calling ... in this way, that there must be a work of the Spirit in the elect *before* they hear and believe the Gospel, to enable and empower them to believe" (Engelsma, "Reformed," 12). Fourth, Bucer started the practice of confirmation, or confession of faith, probably as a response to the Anabaptists (Wright, 31). Fifth, Bucer gave us the Reformed view of the Lord's Supper,

the view which is beautifully confessed in the thirty-fifth article of the Belgic Confession. Engelsma explains: "In the good providence of God, the pressure of the upper millstone of Wittenberg and of the nether millstone of Zurich produced in Martin Bucer the solid meal and the exhilarating wine of a unique, Biblical doctrine of the Lord's Supper"(Engelsma, "Lord's Supper", 12). Sixth, Bucer stressed the doctrine of Sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in the seventh place, he taught that "there cannot be a Church without Church discipline" (Bucer, tr. Wright, 31). Moreover, he taught that discipline was only the duty of the consistory of the church, not the state, albeit they had a "supervisory" role (Burnett, 223). Discipline was extremely important for Bucer because he sincerely believed the truth of Ephesians 2:10, namely, that the elect are predestined unto good works (Stephens, 71). However, to Bucer's dismay, the laity and the magistrates of Strasbourg never completely accepted Bucer's system. Thus we can see that Bucer contributed extensively to Reformed Doctrine, particularly by his development of our doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

Martin Bucer influenced not only Calvinism but also other branches of Protestantism. He was known in all of Europe as an effective reformer, and many sought him "as an organizer and counselor in establishing their churches on a reformed basis" (Eells, 119). For example, he accomplished reformation in many cities such as Ulm, Augsburg and Constance. This is the reason why Thomas Cranmer desired that Bucer come to England after Bucer was exiled from Strasbourg in 1548. There, Bucer labored as a Theology professor at Cambridge (when he was not ill) where he wrote one of his most important works, *De Regno Christi* (On the Kingdom of Christ), for King Edward VI. This work was Bucer's program to create a true Christian commonwealth in England. While the work was never implemented because of the subsequent reign of Mary Tudor, *De Regno Christi* illustrates that Bucer did not quite understand the truth that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual and is identical with the church.⁴

In conclusion, we can see that Martin Bucer was of great importance to the Reformation because of his extensive work of reforming the church in doctrine and life. Nevertheless, we must not emulate his drive for unity because he sometimes compromised the truth to achieve a mere outward unity. In doing so, Bucer did not make things better; he made them worse.

¹ For example, in 1526, when he was translating Bugenhagen's work on the Psalms into Latin, he took the liberty to translate the passages that favored Lutheranism into statements that favored Zwinglianism.

² It should be noted that Charles V called this Diet for mostly political reasons, namely, the ominous threat of a Turk invasion.

³ I encourage our readers to study Prof. Engelsma's recent articles on this subject in the *Standard Bearer*.

⁴ With much regret, we must say that Bucer's writings concerning divorce and remarriage are, according to Engelsma, "licentious" (*Marriage*, 223). *De Regno Christi* is one such work because part of the book is on the subject of divorce and remarriage.

Works Cited

- Burnett, Amy Nelson. *The Yoke of Christ: Martin Bucer and Christian Discipline*. Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994.
- Common Places of Martin Bucer*, D. F. Wright, tr. and ed. Appleford, Abingdon, Berkshire, England: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1972.
- Eells, Hastings. *Martin Bucer*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931.
- Engelsma, David J. *Marriage, the Mystery of Christ and the Church: The Covenant-Bond in Scripture and History*. Grandville: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1998.
- "Martin Bucer's 'Calvinistic' Doctrine of the Lord's Supper." *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 22.1 (1988): 3-29.
- "Martin Bucer—'Fanatic of Unity.'" *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 22.2 (1989): 18-35.
- "Martin Bucer: Reformed Pastor of Strasbourg." *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 21.2 (1988): 3-24.
- Stephens, W. P. *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Martin Bucer*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1970. ❖

Mike is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan. This article was originally written as a research paper for a college history course.

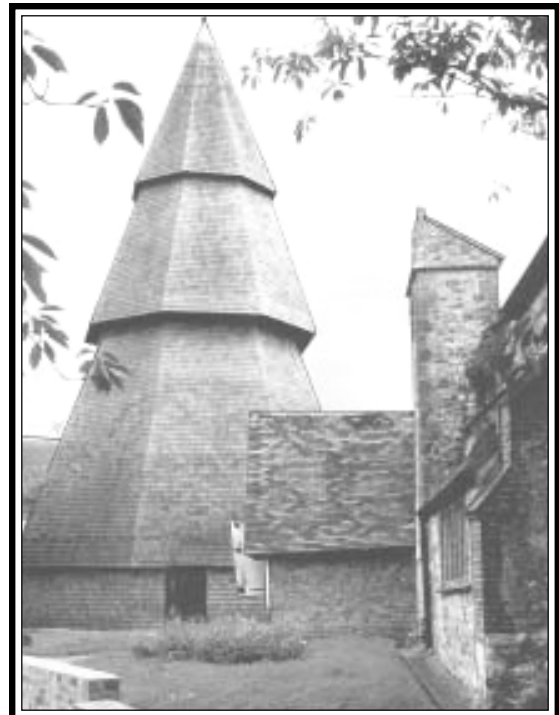
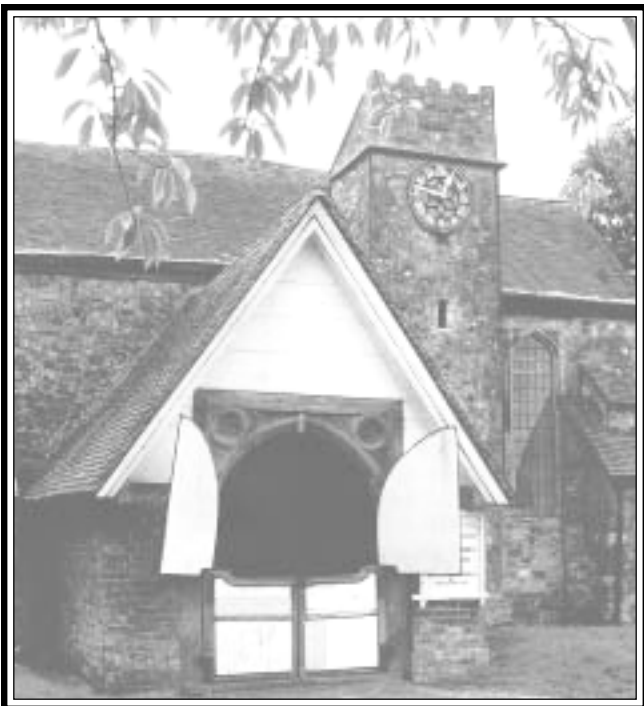
The Augustine Church Of Brooklands

by J. P. de Klerk

It took me a while to find out that Brooklands is a small town in the English earldom of Kent, six miles Northeast of Rye. Kent is South of the river Thames, along the North Sea and the Street of Dover. That earldom exists since 1465. The history of Kent is old. Christianity came there in 596, under king *Aethelbert*. After his death Kent became part of the kingdom of Mercia Aethelbert who was the first Christian there and whose laws were based on the Ten Commandments. Mercia was an assembly of tribes which existed till the beginning of the ninth century (taken by Duke Egbert of Wessex). Although the entrance of the Augustine Church is a bit unusual, it has become famous because of the “*candle-snuffer*” belfry standing next to it. Originally it was *on* the Church, but after it had blown off several times by the gales coming from the North

Sea, the Church council got fed up with putting it back again. It was built in the twelfth century as just a framework for one big bell, to be used at times of flood or invasion by the Danish pirates. Then more bells were added three centuries later, with a conical weatherboard roof. The roof has been shingled since the 1930s, but its eleven thousand cedar shingles are still supported by some of the original beams. The white shutter-gates in the porch are more often found in stables than churches. Inside, the arcades lean at an alarming angle, due to subsidence in the marshy soil. The Protestant Church-goers don't worry about that. ❖

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



Famous “*candle-snuffer*” belfry from the Augustine Church of Brooklands.

Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Jared Edward, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Van Dyke—Byron Center, MI

Joseph Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dan Monsma—First, MI

Logan Wade, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Schimmel—Georgetown, MI

Kara Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Russ Zwak—Georgetown, MI

Graham Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Robb Vander Heuvel—Georgetown, MI

Josie Mae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chuck Doezema—Holland, MI

Rebecca Lanae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Vanden Berg—Holland, MI

Trevor John, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Miedema—Hudsonville, MI

Tyler Aaron, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Kraker—Hudsonville, MI

Shania Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kimmy Kooiker—Hull, IA

Corina Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Larry Rypstra—Lynden, WA

Jeremy Ross, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Van Baren—Southeast, MI

Aaron Jake, son of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Westhuis—Southeast, MI

Calvin Ross, son of Mr. & Mrs. Travis VanBemmel—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:

Annise Kooops—Holland, MI

Elizabeth Peterson—Hope, MI

Ross VanOverloop—Hudsonville, MI

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Jason Scholten and Miss Tammi Mingerink—Byron Center, MI

Mr. Justin Koole and Miss Cathie Kaptein—Faith, MI

Mr. Brian Kuiper and Miss Karen Vink—Grandville, MI

Mr. Victor Kuiper and Miss Lisa Baas—Grandville, MI

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee is offering scholarships for the 1999/2000 school year for students studying in the field of education or ministry. Please contact Joyce Holstege (616-662-5018) for application forms and essay topics. Entries are due June 15.

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.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

The Storm

Thunder rattled the windows while lightning lit the room with flash after flash of eerie blue light. I pulled my blankets over my head. There was no use in trying to sleep, but maybe the ostrich maneuver would make me feel better.

Boo-o-om.

That one was close.

Tink..plink, tink.

Who would throw rocks at my window in the middle of the night? I pulled the blankets around me even closer. Rocks? No, that has to be hail!

Shshsh...shsh.

The wind was picking up. I shivered with more fear than cold.

But wait—what was that? Voices? I lifted the blankets just a little. Yes, I heard Father clearly say, “Jenny, Jerry, Carry, are you awake? You may come downstairs!”

I heard the scramble of my sisters’ feet and threw the blankets off my bed. I didn’t want to make the trip alone!

The power was out, but Mother lit a kerosene lamp and set it on the table. We all huddled together near the

light. Not that we needed its glow. The lightning kept us well supplied.

“I’m scared,” whimpered Carry.

“Storms can be scary,” confirmed Mother, “but we know that no matter what happens, God controls *everything*.”

“Everything? Even bad things like storms?” I asked.

Father nodded. “Everything.”

Cra-a-ak. The house shook. I nestled closer to my father.

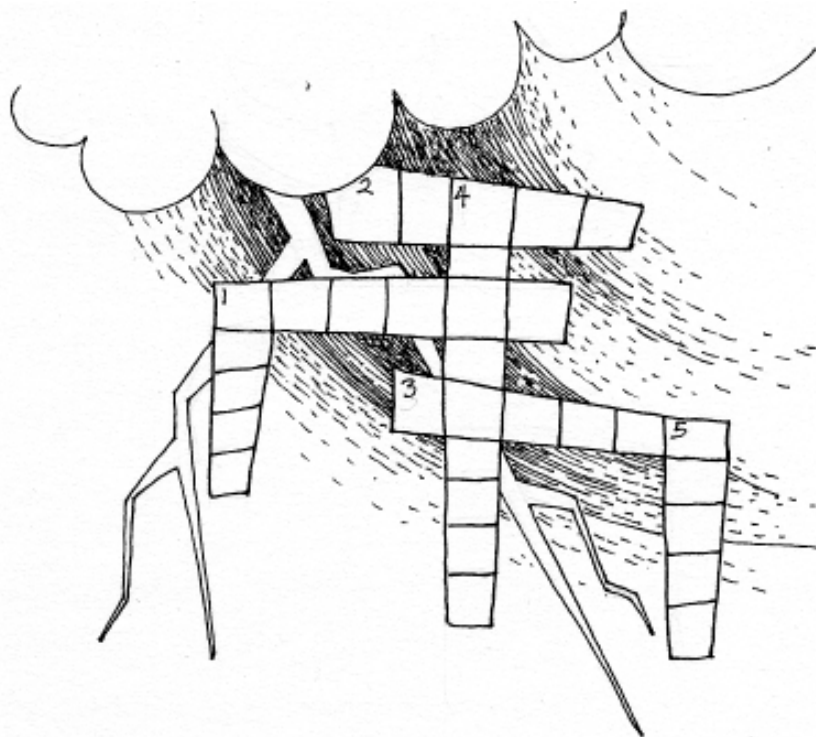
“Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, remember?” he continued.

“Will He calm this one?” Carry asked.

“When He wants to, He will,” Father said. “And don’t forget—God’s will is best.”

Rain splashed against the windows. Lightning continued to flash. But knowing that God controlled the storm made me feel better—much better than my blankets! ❖

Connie is the mother of 5 children and a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Look up Nahum 1:3.

- What is the Lord slow to? (1 down)
- What will He not do with the wicked?
(1 across)
- What is He great in? (2 across)
- What is as the dust of His feet? (3 across)
- What two things does the Lord have His way in? (4 and 5 down)

BEACON LIGHTS

P.O. BOX 375
Jenison, MI 49428

Periodical
Postage
paid at
Jenison, MI
(UPSS046-840)

Ready to Give an Answer

Discussion Topics

Rev. Koole - Knowing the Truth

Rev. Gritters - Witnessing and Testifying of the Truth

Rev. Bruinsma - Our Hope and Comfort in the Truth

Make your plans to visit California for the

1999 Young Peoples Convention

Camp Cedar Falls

San Bernardino National Forest

August 16 - 20, 1999

*The Convention of
a lifetime.*

