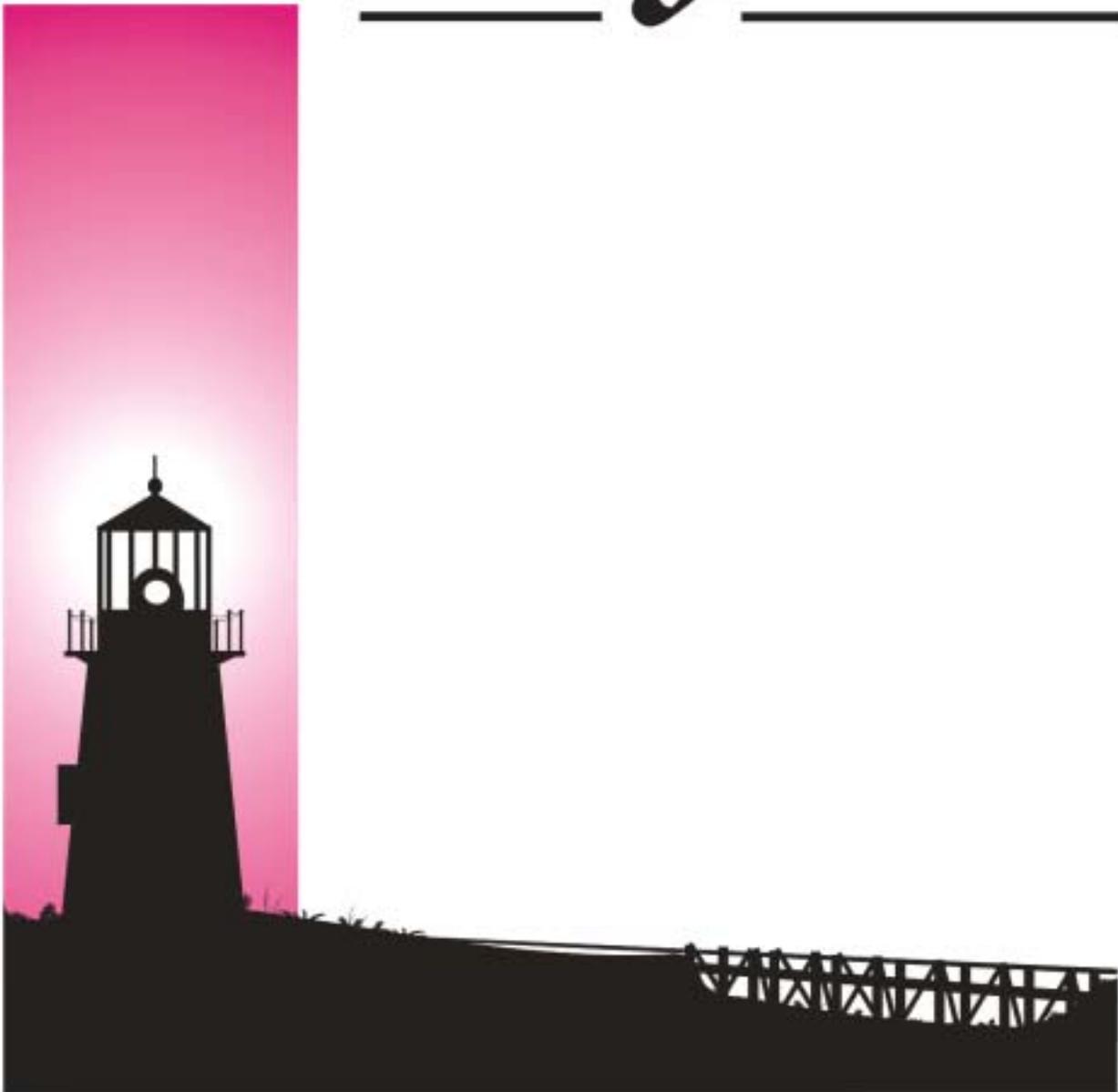


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A Look at the Weather Through the Spectacles of Scripture

by John Huizenga

“The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits,” Ecclesiastes 1:6-7.

We cannot see the air that surrounds us, but we probably talk about it more regularly than anything else. Perhaps we talk about the weather too much, especially when we could be discussing the sermon after church. More often than not we talk about the weather itself and its relation to our daily lives rather than the weather as we see it through the spectacles of Scripture. Looking through the spectacles of Scripture, the believer certainly has something worth talking about.

The air that surrounds us is a part of the earth’s atmosphere. When the air close to the surface of the earth moves we feel wind. When the air gets cold we put on thicker clothing to stay warm and when the air gets very warm, it feels good to swim. The air also holds water. When the air is dry, it can absorb water through evaporation and cool your skin. When the air is carrying more water than it can hold, it falls to the earth as precipitation. The condition of the air, (moving or calm, hot or cold, dry or laden with water) we call weather.

Unlike the trees, hills, and buildings around us, the weather dramatically changes from day to day and forces us to live accordingly. When we look at the weather through the spectacles of man’s reason as the meteorologist does we can learn some basic facts and we become aware of the awesome power that the atmosphere bears. First the sun pours forth its energy upon the earth heating the earth’s surface and the air near the surface. The warm air expands, becomes lighter, and rises. Nearby

air rushes in to replace the air and we feel wind. Areas of low pressure and high pressure develop. Water from the earth evaporates and is carried with the air. Powerful rivers of air are set into motion high in the atmosphere which act as barriers to warm and cold air masses and push storms across the face of the earth. The atmosphere churns and swirls pushing tons of water into billowing thunderheads, lifting water from one place and squeezing it out to fill the rivers in another place, setting off powerful tornadoes and hurricanes in one area and flowing smoothly in another area to let the sun shine and the air grow calm.

The movements of the air with the infinite combinations of temperature, water content, pressure, and the surface features of the earth give rise to an infinite variety of weather conditions. Scientists observe patterns, develop complicated theories to explain what is happening, and try to predict what the weather will be like at a particular time and place in the near future. As creatures observing the weather we are fascinated and stand in awe of the power of storms and the beauty of cloud patterns. As believers we are inspired to “Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains,” Psalm 147:7-8.

The meteorologist also explains the importance of the atmosphere and the movement of air for the earth. It distributes water across the thirsty land for plants. It carries away dirt and pollution. It also helps to regulate the earth’s temperature to lesson the extreme heat and cold that occurs with the rotation of the earth. We will shortly see through the spectacles of Scriptures that God reveals

a much more glorious purpose for the atmosphere and weather.

As with every other created thing, the weather makes known the “eternal power and Godhead” of God and leaves every man “without excuse.” Romans 1:20. Man may be able to predict and explain certain aspects of weather phenomena, but in his heart he confesses that it is God who upholds the atmosphere and the entire creation and it is He who directs the movement of each atom in the atmosphere.

Let us now leave the thermometer, barometer, hydrometer, Doppler radar, and computer models aside and turn to the Scriptures. One of the first things we see is a fundamental difference between the weather during the days of Adam and Eve and the weather we have today. Instead of rain, snow, sleet, and hail to water the earth, God sent “a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground,” Genesis 2:6b. Given the nature of pouring down of water during the Flood, it is reasonable to surmise that the earth had been surrounded, as it were, with a great bubble of water protecting it like a greenhouse. The protection God prepared for the early earth is now gone and we are exposed to the fierce interaction of the sun with the atmosphere. The atmosphere today with its storms, uneven distribution of temperature and water we have today testifies of the wrath of God against the wickedness of man. Even in the violent storm, however, God comforts His people with the rainbow, the sign of His covenant faithfulness.

As we learn more about the weather from observations and study, we are more inclined to think of the weather as something that naturally happens due to the laws of nature. When God opens our eyes, however, and we see through the spectacles of Scripture, we learn that God decrees the violent hail and every spring breeze. God so prepared Job that he often observed the weather and testified of God’s sovereign control. Job wrote in Job 28:24-27, “For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.” In response to the words of Job, Elihu also brings to our attention the Author of weather: “For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. . . . By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth

his bright cloud: And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine? Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge? How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind? Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass? Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness. Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up. And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them. Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty,” Job 37:6, 10-22. From the book of Jeremiah we read, “When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures,” 51:16. In Amos 9:6 we read “It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name.” Never was this power of God revealed more clearly than in Christ, the Word of God, when He “rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm,” Matthew 8:26.

We claim to understand how the clouds are formed, but Elihu writes, “can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?” Job 36:29. Even if scientist are able to understand how clouds form and learn to predict the weather accurately, can we fathom the wisdom of God who created the atmosphere with all of its particular properties? Neither can we fathom the sovereign purpose of God as he uses even the spreading of the clouds for the gathering of His Church and for His glory.

Man with his knowledge and study is able to understand and predict the weather better than ever, but Jesus puts it all into a God glorifying perspective when he rebukes the Pharisees for paying more attention to the weather forecast and ignoring the signs for the second coming of Christ. “He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to

day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Matthew 16:2-3. Again in Luke 12:54-56 we read "And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" What do you and I do the first thing in the morning? Do we check the latest weather report so that we can plan our day and week or do we meditate upon God's Word and look around us to discern the spiritual weather so that we can prepare for the Lord's coming?

When we look to God's Word, we see first that God has sent messengers to tell us of the return of Christ. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," Jude 1:14. Jesus Himself foretold His second coming in Matthew 25:31, "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." The apostles tell us that He is coming again with an admonition "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:" 1 Tim. 6:14. The angels which came to the disciples as they gazed up after Jesus said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," Acts 1:11.

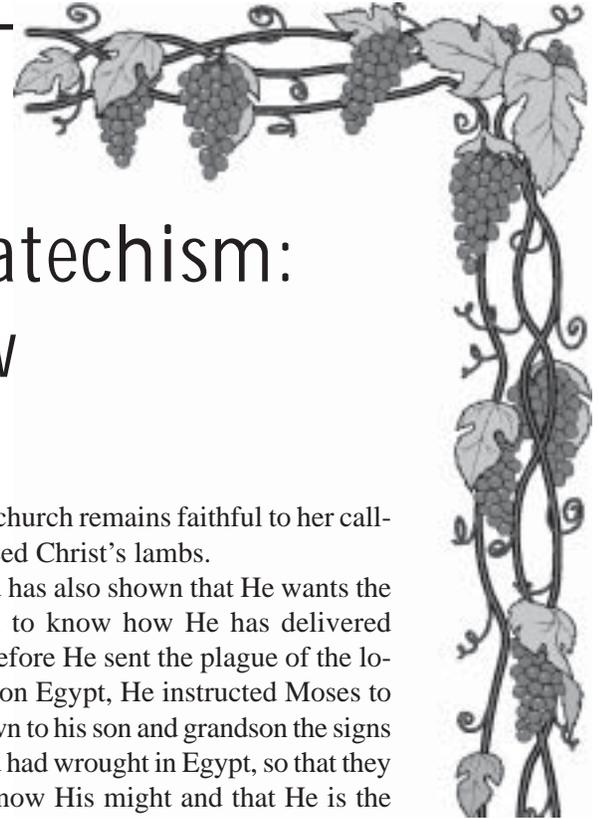
Just as the meteorologist knows what to look for when predicting a storm, so we know what to look for as signs that we are living in the last days before the last and final event of earth's history. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 24:5-14, 24, 29, & 30 to watch for a number of signs: "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise,

and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.... For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.... Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

The signs of Christ's coming are also seen in major weather changes, the growing violence of the weather, and corruption of the environment. We read in Rev. 7:1 "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." In Revelation 8:7 and 10 the sounding of trumpets symbolize environmental disasters that will sweep the globe: "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. ... And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." In Revelation 11:3-6 we read of two witnesses who will prophesy and will "have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

Are you ready for the day of the Lord? Every time we check the thermometer or the weather report let it be a reminder to meditate upon the forecast of the Lord's coming and prepare for that day. All the plans you make for your own satisfaction and honor in this world are like plans for a picnic that will be spoiled by a storm. Just as faithful Noah prepared the ark, so we will be prepared for the great day of our salvation. ❖

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



Teaching Christ In Catechism: Why and How

by Andy Lanning

2000 Protestant Reformed Scholarship Essay.

Catechism instruction makes up a large duty of the ministers in the churches. In preparing for the ministry of the Word, I need to see from scripture why Christ must be taught in catechism. This is necessary so that I am not tempted to bring my own words to the children, or the words of others, but that I realize the biblical command to teach Christ alone. I also need to know why Christ must be taught in catechism so that I am able to tell the children, D.V., why they need to receive catechism instruction that is centered in Christ.

First of all, Christ must be taught in catechism because the church has a specific command to see to the instruction of the children in the Word of God. At his third appearance to his disciples after his resurrection, Jesus asked Peter if he loved him. When Peter answered yes, Jesus commanded Peter to feed his lambs (John 21:15,17). This exhortation was repeated by Paul to the elders in the churches, that they feed the flock of God (I Peter 5:1,2). The church, then, has the calling to see to it that its members get fed. This is done mainly in the preaching of the Word of God on the Lord's Day. However, the church also makes sure that she has an official instruction of the children, so that she can be faithful to Christ's command to feed his lambs. This official instruction of the children is catechism.

It is not sufficient, however, for the church merely to set up a catechism class in which to instruct the children. The church must also make sure the content of the catechism class is proper, so that the lambs of Christ get fed with the proper food. The food must be nourishing and give life to the children, and can therefore only be Christ. Christ identified himself as this nourishing food for the lambs because He is the life-giving bread. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life" (John 6:47,48). Christ must be taught in catechism, therefore, in order

that the church remains faithful to her calling to feed Christ's lambs.

God has also shown that He wants the children to know how He has delivered them. Before He sent the plague of the locusts upon Egypt, He instructed Moses to pass down to his son and grandson the signs that God had wrought in Egypt, so that they might know His might and that He is the LORD (Exodus 10:2). God instructed Moses and Aaron that the keeping of the Passover service would cause the children to ask about the meaning of this service. The children were to be taught that the service was a commemoration of the deliverance that God gave to His people when He smote the Egyptians (Exodus 12:26-27). After the Israelites had passed through the Jordan River on dry ground, God told Joshua to erect a monument of stones in the Jordan, so that the children may know the great deliverance He had given to His people there (Joshua 4:6-7).

God wants the children of His covenant families to know of His might, and that He has given to His people a great deliverance. The greatest deliverance God has given to His people is in Christ, as the apostle Paul writes in II Corinthians 1:9,10. "... But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." This is also why Christ must be taught in catechism. The children need to be taught of the great deliverance that God has wrought for His people.

There is another reason to teach Christ in catechism, though. This is the deep way of sin and salvation. We are all sinners. Paul taught this plainly when he wrote, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). King David also instructs us that sin is common to the whole human race when he confessed,

“there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:3b). All men, through their own sins and transgressions, have come short of the glory of God. This is true not only of the individuals in the world, but also of the members of the church. This is true not only of the adults in the church, but of the children as well. We are all sinners.

As sinners, we deserve punishment. Our disobedience and rebellion against God’s law make us worthy of hell. This is the position of the Reformed churches and is set forth in Question and Answer 10 of the Heidelberg Catechism:

Q. Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

A. By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them in his just judgment temporally and eternally, as he hath declared, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” (Galatians 3:10)

The sins of all must be punished. Children are included in this punishment, since they are also sinners.

Only in the way of payment for our sins can we be spared from God’s just wrath. Jesus Christ has accomplished this payment, suffering and dying in our place so that our sins are purged away. This truth is taught in Article 21 of the Belgic Confession:

...[H]e restored that which he took not away, and suffered, the just for the unjust, as well in his body as in his soul, feeling the terrible punishment which our sins had merited; insomuch that his sweat became like unto drops of blood falling on the ground. He called out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and hath suffered all this for the remission of our sins.

Just as all of God’s people, including children, deserved the curse of God for their sins, so the salvation from God’s curse is for all of God’s people, including children. Jesus made plain that children are included in this salvation by declaring that they also have a part in the kingdom of God. “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10: 14b). This is the reason why Christ must be taught in catechism. Children are guilty of sin and deserve damnation, but Christ’s blood covers their sins. They have as much of a need for Christ as the mature believers do. The children, along with their parents, cry out for salvation to Christ, saying, “Hosanna to the son of David” (Matt. 21:15).

Christ must be taught in catechism because the comfort of the gospel, spoken of in Lord’s Day I of the Heidel-

berg Catechism, is for the children of God just as much as it is for the adults. The children also have the comfort that God loves them and that nothing can take away that love of God for them. When the believing children are taught Christ in catechism, they are able to confess their comfort with Paul; “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38,39).

The question, then, is how to teach Christ in catechism. This question is important to the church, because the church wants her children instructed in Christ in the proper way. This question is important to me, because as a future pastor, D.V., it will be my responsibility to teach the children in the proper way in catechism. It is one thing to know that the children must be taught Christ in catechism, but it is also necessary to know how Christ is properly taught in catechism.

If I plan to bake a cake, I don’t turn to a book about gardening in order to find out what I must do. I have to make sure that I go to the proper source, a cookbook, because the cookbook will tell me what I need to know about baking a cake. In the same way, instruction concerning Christ must come from the proper source. The minister or elder must make sure that the source from which the instruction comes is the source that reveals Christ and His work of salvation. If the wrong source is used, the children will not be taught Christ, and the church will fail in its duty to feed the lambs of Jesus.

This proper source is not difficult to find. One of the names given to Jesus Christ is the Word. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). The Word of God is Jesus Christ, and Christ is revealed in the Word of God, the scriptures. The scriptures teach Christ and His work of salvation. “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:15). From this we see that the proper source from which to teach catechism is the Bible, since Christ is revealed in the Bible. The truths of God’s Word must be taught to the children in catechism, for in this way Christ is taught to them.

Catechism must also be taught to the *children*. Children are not mentally or spiritually mature, and therefore must be fed with the milk of the Word so that they may grow. Professor Engelsma puts it this way:

“...[C]atechism is the church’s teaching specifically of the children in classes devoted exclusively to them. The teaching is adapted to the children’s capacity and level of spiritual and intellectual development” (*Standard Bearer* 486).

Christ must be taught to the children so that they understand God’s work of salvation through Christ.

Finally, the teaching of Christ in catechism must be systematic, so that the children are taught all of God’s Word. All of God’s plan as He has revealed it in His Word must be shown to the children. That is why the Protestant Reformed Churches teach the history of the whole Bible for the first seven years of catechism, followed by instruction in the doctrines of scripture as summarized in the confessions. In this way, the whole of Christ is taught to the children in catechism.

Catechism is an important work of the church of Christ in this world. Through instruction in catechism,

the children of God’s covenant are brought into knowledge of the awesome love of God for His people. The church desires her children to grow in the Word and become mature, confessing members of the church. For this reason, she insists that Christ be taught in catechism, and that Christ be taught properly in catechism. May God be glorified in this instruction of His covenant youth. ❖

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Book Review

The Shaping of a Christian Family

review by Debra Poortinga

“The Shaping of a Christian Family” by *Elisabeth Elliot*. Published by *Fleming H. Revell* a division of *Baker House*. 215 pages (\$10.00) paperback.

Elisabeth Elliot unfolds for us a fine description of structuring a biblical, Godly home in the midst of this unconnected world. This book will warm the heart and encourage our covenant families in the importance of establishing proper examples as father, mother, wife and husband in our homes. She does this by giving us a glimpse of the Howard family from whence she came, a family of 4 sons and 2 daughters, and the upbringing which they encountered. She strongly emphasizes the importance of structuring an orderly home with orderly habits as foundational for the early training of our children. She uses her parents as an example for our great need to bring our every need before the Great Shepherd of our souls in frequent and diligent prayer.

The book provides 8 pages of pictures from the family album and well as frequent quotes from the Scriptures using various translations being properly applied and administered throughout her story. Her Baptist background is evident throughout but not overbearingly so. This book can find its place within our Reformed personal libraries and be beneficial to many.

Those who have read other books by Elisabeth Elliot will enjoy reading this book, will observe for yourselves the early beginnings of Elisabeth Elliot, and will appreciate her upbringing and strong convictions which she focuses on in many of her books. Others who have never read any of Elisabeth’s books will become interested in picking up some of her other materials and will be enriched by them.

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

Reverend George C. Lubbers (2)

by Agatha Lubbers

After six years in the seminary 1928-1934, he was examined in the spring of 1934, before the Classis held in Oskaloosa, Iowa. He was declared eligible for the ministry and that summer he received calls from the PR churches of Orange City, Iowa, Rock Valley, Iowa, and Doon, Iowa. He accepted the call from Doon and became the second pastor of the Doon PR church that had been organized in 1929.

Since Rev. Lubbers had accepted the call to work in Doon, Iowa, he had to make arrangements to move his family from a small home in Jenison, Michigan on 12th Avenue. He took his wife and two young daughters (Agatha about three and Garretta just one year old) to Doon in northwest Iowa in the Model T Ford, the family vehicle. This first of many future trips was long, monotonous and exhausting. The end of the eight-hundred-mile(thirty-two hour) trip in a very primitive conveyance on the roads of those days brought them to the little town called Doon on the Rock River.

A few days after his arrival and settlement in the parsonage in Doon he was ordained on September 7, 1934, into the gospel ministry by Rev. C. Hanko, pastor of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church.

The history of his pastorates is as follows—

Doon, Iowa PRC, 1934-1937

Pella, Iowa PRC, 1937-1944

Randolph, Wisconsin PRC, 1944-1950

Grand Rapids, MI, Creston PRC, 1950-1954

Home Missionary of the PRC, 1954-1964

Wyoming, MI Southwest PRC, 1964-1970

Missionary to Jamaica, West Indies, 1970-1975

Pella, Iowa PRC 1975-1978

Emeritus Pastor, 1978-present

It was while he was pastor in Pella, Iowa, that he studied philosophy, Latin and German by taking courses at Central College. He worked with his own hands to earn a little money to pay the tuition for his college courses and to pay for the tuition of his children in the Pella Christian School.

While he was the pastor of the Randolph PRC, he became ill for eight months with undulant fever. The family had purchased contaminated non-pasteurized milk from the Stone Dairy. Rev. Lubbers became sick because of this contamination. While he was recovering from this illness, he became depressed and experienced a spiritual struggle. It was the kind of struggle that caused him to learn anew the truth expressed in the song, I sought the Lord and afterward I knew He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me. It was not I that found, O Savior true; No, I was found, was found of Thee.” Of this struggle he can say, as he looks back, *Luctoret Emergo*—I struggle and I emerge. The Lord graciously lifted him out of the miry clay and set his feet upon a rock, and that Rock is Christ. He learned profoundly that the Lord did not need him. He learned to pray, “Use me Lord.” It was a time in his life when he was led to see more clearly than ever before that salvation is not at all a work of man but is entirely the work of a sovereign covenant God, who is faithful to His promises.

One of the projects undertaken by Rev. Lubbers in the 1950’s while he was a minister in Randolph was the translation of the book, *Believers And Their Seed*, by Rev. Herman Hoeksema. I remember this project well because I typed every page of that translation from the handwritten script of my father, Rev. Lubbers. *Believers And Their Seed* was written originally in the Dutch language. Rev. Lubbers fulfilled the desire of his mentor, Herman Hoeksema. Rev. Hoeksema had always hoped that someone would prepare an English translation of this work—a work he believed would serve to instruct God’s people in the Scriptural and Reformed truth of God’s everlasting covenant of grace with believers and their seed.

During the seventy-four years that Rev. Lubbers has been associated with the Protestant Reformed Churches, he has been faithful to the cause of Christ as this is represented by the PRC in America. One of the most trying periods in his life occurred during the controversy of 1953—a controversy that rocked the churches. During

this time he served as the Stated Clerk of the Churches and was Secretary of the Theological School Committee. It was a time of great stress in the churches because many of those who had at one time been co-workers and friends in the cause of the churches left and eventually rejoined the Christian Reformed Churches.

During the years 1955-1964, Rev. Lubbers was domestic missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches. These were the days following the triumph of our churches against the error of a "conditional promise." They were the years during which more than half of the ministers and more than half of the membership had returned to the Christian Reformed Churches. They were the days of small things—of heroic efforts on all fronts. The labors began with work in Pella, Iowa because the minister and this PR church had returned to the Christian Reformed Church. Later labors included work in Loveland, Colorado, where there is now a thriving PR church. The labors next turned toward work in Isabel and Tripp, South Dakota, and Forbes, North Dakota. In these early labors in Colorado and the Dakotas Rev. Lubbers worked with people whose roots were in the German Reformed Churches and who were familiar with the Heidelberg Catechism. Later work was done in Houston, Texas, among those whose ecclesiastical roots were in the traditions of the Westminster Confession or the Baptist Churches.

After six and one-half blessed years in the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church (1964-1970), Rev. Lubbers took the call to be missionary on the island of Jamaica. Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers spent five years (1970-1975) there. Rev. Lubbers labored in churches that were Pentecostal or Holiness Churches and were more Methodist than Reformed. During this time Rev. Lubbers worked not only as a missionary pastor but used much of the time to instruct four young men for the gospel ministry in what were to become indigenous Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica. The Lord gave Rev. Lubbers and his wife Rena the strength they needed each day. In His own way the Lord blessed these labors in Jamaica. Twice since their departure from Jamaica in 1975 they made return visits of two months—1976 and 1982.

After leaving Jamaica Rev. Lubbers received a call from Pella, Iowa. He accepted this call, and he and his wife were once again in Pella, Iowa, 1975-1978, a church they had left thirty years before.

In 1978 Rev. Lubbers retired from the active ministry after forty-four years of service.

After his retirement Rev. Lubbers continued to write in the *Standard Bearer* and *Beacon Lights*, and taught some catechism classes. Writing exegetical studies in the *Standard Bearer* was a good discipline. It was this work that made it possible for him to publish two commentaries—one on the book of Galatians and the other on the book of Hebrews. The commentary on Galatians is entitled *Freeborn Sons Of Sarah*, 1982. The commentary on Hebrews is called *The Glory Of The True Tabernacle*, 1984. The commentary on Hebrews he called the Jubilee Exposition of Hebrews because it was published during the fiftieth year since he was ordained as a minister of the gospel. In 1989, he published a third book, *The Bible Versus Millennial Teachings, An Exegetical Critique*.

Since January 1992, Rev. Lubbers has lived at Raybrook Manor, a part of the Holland Home of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is now 90 years old and can no longer walk, can no longer read, and cannot manage tape recorders or other electronic sound devices. He enjoys the times when someone reads to him. He is confined to his wheel chair, and it is difficult and often impossible for him to go to church or to leave his residence in the nursing department. As often as he can he listens to the services by telephone from his church—the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

During his gospel ministry Rev. Lubbers had to learn to confess the truth that we sing in one of the songs based on Psalm 126.

When Zion in her low estate was brought from bondage by the Lord;
In ecstasy we sang for joy, by grace and wondrous love restored.

The sower bearing precious seed may weep as in his toil he grieves, But he shall come again with joy in harvest time with golden sheaves.

It is Rev. Lubbers' confession that he has only done in the gospel ministry what a grateful child of God can do in thankfulness for the great grace of God. He is, as are all of God's faithful servants, an unprofitable servant utterly beholden to His Sender.

He looks for the reward of grace in the great day of the Lord when he will hear, "Well done faithful servant, ye have been faithful in little, I will place you over much."



Agatha Lubbers is the daughter of Rev. Lubbers and is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Skip Hunter

February 1 Read Proverbs 19:1-7

Jesus in His last days on this earth told His disciples that they had the poor with them always. Now He was telling His disciples to focus on His death as the only way to salvation, but He was also directing them to a very important fact. The poor are in our midst. If we have not been given many material gifts, are we realizing that this is God's way for us? If we have much—and most of us do, do we help those whom God has placed in our circles? In this world the poor have almost no place. What about in our churches? Are the poor received as the people of God? Let us ponder this truth and realize that the materially poor are pictures of us. Without Christ we are spiritually poor. We need the riches of God's grace to us. Let us share our earthly riches with those who need them. Sing Psalter 24.

February 2 Read Proverbs 19:8-13

Are you discrete, people of God? Parents, do your children and young people understand the virtue of discretion? To be discrete is to love the neighbor. We love him and therefore we do not spread stories about him to others. We stop and think and do not lose our cool when we think our neighbor has wronged us. God has passed over our transgression through His love toward us in sending His only begotten Son to die on Calvary's tree in our stead. In thanksgiving we must forgive those who trespass against us. This is a fundamental part of the Lord's prayer. It is an attitude that we must cultivate in our dealings with our neighbors. In doing this we will have more peace at home, at school, and in our churches. Let us be discrete and pass over our neighbor's transgressions. In doing so we will receive the praise of our heavenly Father who forgave each of our sins. Sing Psalter 83.

February 3 Read Proverbs 19:14-21

Notice the parallelism found in this verse. As part of Solomon's admonition to his son, he wants him to ponder whom he is to marry. A young man prepares for his future in many ways. He works so that he can build his house. He educates himself in some way so that he can earn a living. All of these things are prudent. All of these things also are necessary and ordained by God. Solomon also wants his young adult son to consider whom he will marry. What about you young men? Are you looking for a wife? Are you looking for a God-fearing wife? Now I said a God-fearing wife not a wife, that you will

attempt to make God-fearing. You will not find her in the places of the world. A worldly counselor may tell you to frequent the singles bar to find a wife. Solomon did not tell his son that. Look in the church, young men. There you will find her whom God calls beautiful. Pray for a prudent wife and you will have a good thing. Sing Psalter 360.

February 4 Read Proverbs 19:22-29

Young people and children, I want you to stop and reread verse 27. Then I want you to ponder its meaning. Are you hearing instruction which is detracting from God's knowledge? What about the tapes, CD's, or radio stations to which you listen? What about the videos that you watch? What about the books and magazines which are "cool"? What are these things teaching you? By now, parents, you should see that you have an enormous responsibility here as well. In what way are you training your young children? Will they know from your example how to cease from hearing harmful instructions? Or do you bring the videos home from the grocery store or library and say here is knowledge for you tonight? What do you allow your young people and children to watch on TV? In this day and age we must be vigilant because that lion Satan is using these means to cause our children and young people to err. Sing Psalter 327.

February 5 Read Proverbs 20:1-8

Do you need a verse which is appropriate for today's world and today's attitudes? This might be the one. How many articles of clothing have a person's name on them? How often do we wish to shout our name from the roof tops? How many times does the word *I* turn up in our conversation? This is a me-centered world. The Christian has fallen prey to this as well. To be faithful means to deny ourselves. Are we ready and willing to do that? Children, young people, adults of all ages, are we ready to put ourselves last and God and others first? We must do this in our homes. We must do this in our schools. And, of course, we must do this in our churches. To do anything else is to take the name of God in vain. The two great commandments are really all the instruction we need in this matter. Let us leave *I* out of our lives and let us love God and the neighbor each minute of each day that we live. Sing Psalter 253: stanzas 1, 2, 5, and 6.

February 6 Read Proverbs 20:9-16

Children and young people, verse 11 is for you. Solomon knew his children and teenagers. He knew that by nature they thought that their sins did not count yet. This is the position of some theologians and churches as well. They thought, and think today, that sowing a little “wild oats” was permissible. God says, children and young people, that even your works are known by Him. He will call them into judgment in the last day. Will you be able to testify about your pure and right works? Or will you hide your head in shame before the gaze of Almighty God? Parents, how are you teaching your children and young people? Are you excusing wild oats or holding your children and teenagers accountable? Verse 11 is God’s judgment not man’s. What more must we say? Sing Psalter 161:1, 4, 5, and 9.

February 7 Read Proverbs 20:17-23

From admonitions to our children to admonitions to us adults, Solomon covers the whole gamut of everyday life. As adults we have the responsibility to be honest in our daily lives. We must never try to cheat those with whom we do business. We must give to our employers an honest days work. Those who are employers must be honest with their employees. Not one of us can escape the admonition of verse 23. Each of us is charged with being honest in our daily lives. We must examine what we do and see that it is as pure as the newly-fallen snow. Parents, we must teach this principle to our children as well. In their daily work they must be honest. Their dealings concerning their school work must be impeccable. We must never give them the idea that a little cheating is okay. Let us pray for the grace to love God and our neighbor in this matter. Sing Psalter 26.

February 8 Read Proverbs 20:24-30

In verse 29 Solomon reminds all of us that we have gifts from God and must use them to His glory and service. Those who are young are strong both physically and emotionally. Therefore their calling is to work vigorously in the church in whatever way they are called. The strength of the young man can allow him to work tirelessly in the church. The old man is commended for his wisdom. He must use that wisdom in the church. He must help the young make decisions about the use of their strength. With that wisdom they are to counsel members of Christ’s church in right ways of life. None can say it is someone else’s responsibility. All must use their talents for the cause of Christ’s kingdom. All must strive to hear the words, “Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.” Sing Psalter 192.

February 9 Read Proverbs 21:1-8

Reread verse two again, people of God. The first phrase of this antithetical parallelism was the situation in the days of the judges. But I also fear it is the situation in today’s world including that of the church. Young people, pay attention here. How many of you have answered the question “Why did you do that?” with the words: “Because I wanted to.” We can justify our actions in our own eyes, but what does God think about them? The searcher of hearts knows our inmost thoughts. He

knows what motivates our decisions. At the end of time He will examine what we have done. Let us make decisions about our way in the consciousness that God is the supreme judge. Only then can we please Him. Sing Psalter 95.

February 10 Read Proverbs 21:9-16

It is Saturday again. Are we ready for Sunday? Are we going to church tomorrow, or have we found an excuse to absent ourselves from the means of grace? If we are prone to look for ways to desecrate the Sabbath, let’s take another look at verse 16. Ignoring the means of grace means that we are wandering out of the way of understanding. Wandering out of the way of understanding means that we are going to the congregation of the dead rather than the living. We can also fall pray to this sin by going to a church were the Word is not purely preached, the Sacraments not observed, or discipline neglected. We can also wander from the way of understanding by not living a life pleasing to God. Read Psalm 1 sometime today or tomorrow. It will show to us the way of understanding. Sing Psalter 336.

February 11 Read Proverbs 21:17-24

A few months ago I assigned my students to prepare devotions on the use of the tongue. In our classroom devotions we were reading through the book of Proverbs. We were astonished at the number of times Solomon addressed this issue. Solomon’s children were no different than the children today. They all need to be reminded about the proper use of the tongue which God gave them. In Scripture, James also spent a whole chapter on this issue. Is this only an admonition to the young? Of course not! We adults need to watch our tongues as well. In this verse watching our tongues keeps our soul from trouble. This should show to us the seriousness of the matter. A little gossip, a little swearing, a little lie all have bad consequences. Worst of all they hurt our souls. Let us watch our tongues and keep our souls. Sing Psalter 343.

February 12 Read Proverbs 21:25-31

In verse 31 Solomon uses a figure of speech to remind us in Whom we must place our trust. Even though Solomon’s kingdom was basically peaceful in nature, he knew what war was. He knew that a soldier on horseback had an advantage over the soldier on foot. Today we may look for many ways for safety. The world and sometimes we of the church seek to find financial safety in our wise investments. The black horse of Revelation can take away what we perceive to be our safety net. Our help must come from Jehovah “who made heaven and earth.” Solomon not only learned about war from his father, but he also learned about safety. Safety came not from the works of man but from God. Is this our confession? Sing Psalter 305.

February 13 Read Proverbs 22:1-8

Young people, reread verse 3. Do you see how this applies to your lives? As you go out with your friends, do you examine the evening’s plans and try to see where they might end up? Or must you say to Dad or a police officer that you were just in the wrong place at the wrong time? When you see that your friends’ plans may end up badly what do you do? Do you follow them blindly or do you part ways with them and hide from the evil? Solomon did not leave his teenagers with an excuse. Neither

does God. Think ahead, children and young people, and do that which is good. Sing Psalter 145.

February 14 Read Proverbs 22:9-16

Verse ten gets to the very heart of keeping peace. You do not keep peace by giving in to everyone. Those who scorn the ways of God must be disciplined even to the point of removing them from your fellowship. The church is admonished to do this in the way of Christian discipline. Young people and children must not be companions with those who scorn God's Word. This may not always be easy. But it is what must be done to keep both inner and outer peace in our lives. Sing Psalter 361.

February 15 Read Proverbs 22:17-21

In this section Solomon gets back to the main theme of this book—wisdom. First of all, he tells us to listen to the wise. Secondly, we must apply our hearts to true wisdom. This means we not only learn God's Word but that we are admonished to make it part of our daily life. Thirdly, we must keep wisdom on our lips. Then, we must trust in the Lord in all our ways. Finally, we must be ready to give answer to all those who ask about our choices. This means we must be diligent in many things. The most important of which is the learning of God's Word. This does not end with confession of faith; on this earth it ends with death. Be diligent in this matter, people of God, and be wise. Sing Psalter 298.

February 16 Read Proverbs 22:22-29

Are you diligent in your ways, people of God of all ages? Children and young people have much to learn about in verse 29. The word diligent does not just mean in earthly matters. If that were true, any living person could say that he has attained to goodness. No, there is spiritual diligence which is at stake here. True we must be diligent in our studies if we are going to "make it in today's world." But that is not enough. To make it in God's eyes means that we must be diligent in our daily work spiritually as well. Doing well on a school assignment is not enough if we did not seek to glorify God in that assignment. Be diligent people of God and you will "make it!" Sing Psalter 149.

February 17 Read Proverbs 23:1-7

The first few verses of this chapter warn us to beware of pleasure seeking. Who of us in this world does not like to sample the dainties of this life? Whether they be food, clothing, housing, toys, sporting equipment, or other dainties does not matter. We must stop and consider what we are doing as we sample the dainty. We might ask why. The answer is that once you have sampled the dainties at the king's table, it is hard to resist wanting more and more of them. We become covetous and do not seek the better things of this life. We allow the dainties of this world to rule our lives and we become greedy. This sin is a hard one to fight in this materialistic age. Let us seek the grace to fight it and to help our children fight this sin. Sing Psalter 213:7-9.

February 18 Read Proverbs 23:8-14

Verse ten is one by which we must be instructed. It is necessary to know a little Old Testament history in order to understand the verse. Each family was given their land by Moses

and Joshua as they came into the promised land. The land was then marked with a stone or stones which showed the ownership of that piece of land. The land was then to remain in the family forever. It also became the sad truth that the widows and orphans fell prey to unscrupulous people who would steal their land and take down the ancient landmarks. These landmarks are pictures of the spiritual truths that we have been given by God. There are those who would steal the truths of Scripture from the church and lead the spiritual orphans astray. Against this sin God warns us to have no part. Let us keep the inheritance of Jehovah for our children and children's children. Let us do this today as we and our children hear those truths expounded in the preaching of the Word. Sing Psalter 215.

February 19 Read Proverbs 23:15-21

As we send our children off to school today, let us send them off with the words of verse 15. Let us admonish them to have a wise heart. We do this because then our heart is made glad. Is this because it makes us look good? Do we do this so that the family name is not disgraced? The answer to these questions is of course not. We do this because we rejoice when we hear that our children walk in the truth of Jehovah. This means, of course, that we walk in those truths. By nature Johnny will not walk where Dad will not walk. If Johnny sees Dad walking in Christ's ways, he will be more inclined to do so. Children and young adults, are you seeking to make your father's heart glad? Are you seeking to make your heavenly Father's heart glad? If you are, you have a wise heart. Sing Psalter 360.

February 20 Read Proverbs 23:22-28

Verse 23 has much to say to us in this day and age. This is an age of much buying and selling. Very few people in our society are self-sufficient. We buy and sell to obtain our daily necessities. Then we buy and sell to secure for ourselves a comfortable future. What buying are we doing for our spiritual future? Are we buying the truth? Are we spending the time to study God's Word in the home, catechism, school, or society? Are the catechism books studied with as much intensity as the sports pages? Do we spend as much time preparing and attending society as we do for other activities? Are our Bibles well-used or does its study receive short shrift in our lives? We must buy the truth as commanded in this verse. In doing so we will also get for ourselves wisdom, understanding and instruction. Fathers, you must take the lead here. Children and young people, you must obey this command of God as well as your parents. Sing Psalter 321.

February 21 Read Proverbs 23:29-35

Solomon sometimes spoke to his son from his own sad experience. Just read his book of Ecclesiasties to see the truth of verse 29 and 30. Alcohol is a good gift from God. But the misuse of it causes great grief. It is the middle of the week, young people, have you recovered from your excesses of the previous weekend? Are you planning the whereabouts of your next illegal and unspiritual foray in to the world of drunkenness for the coming weekend? Adults, do you have problems with demon rum—as it has been historically called? Living a life which revolves around alcohol causes more grief than you can ever

know. Solomon knew of what he was speaking. Parents, help your young people to say no in this matter. Help them to live an antithetical life even as you yourself walk antithetically. Sing Psalter 146:1-6.

February 22 Read Proverbs 24:1-8

Notice the verb in this verse. It is not doeth but deviseth. There are evils which are planned out very carefully. The murder who is convicted of premeditated murder has plotted to kill his target. His plans are well laid out so that nothing goes wrong. And when he has killed and then arrested, he must face the charge of premeditated manslaughter or murder. What about us? Are we guilty of premeditated sins? Do we deviously plan to get the best of our neighbor? Children, do you plan to get someone in trouble at school? Scripture calls such a mischievous person. This is not the little act of mischief that children may be prone to do. This is a sin as heinous as premeditated murder. Devise not evil but good and then, and only then, will you please God. Sing Psalter 93.

February 23 Read Proverbs 24:9-14

Verse 12 considers the sins of the heart. We must keep all of God's commandments in thought, word, and deed. It is easy for us to look at an authority figure—a parent, teacher, policeman, judge, etc.—and say that it was never in our heart to do wrong. Can we do that to Him Who knows all things including the heart? At the day of judgment, the thoughts of our hearts will be opened unto God and us and He will read them as a book. What will He uncover for us to see? Lying begins in the heart; you cannot lie to God. Think about these things, children and young people. Think about these things, parents, when you encourage your children to lie to cover up either your or their sins. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart. Sing Psalter 384.

February 24 Read Proverbs 24:15-22

After all these *don'ts*, it appears that Solomon's children are saying, "Dad, what about...?" "Solomon says, "Don't worry about Johnny across the street." This is the problem that Asaph had in Psalm 73. He was beginning to think that it was fruitless to live an antithetical life. He was beginning to think that God was not fair. This is what we do by nature. Our children and young people are very prone to do this. They wonder why the earth does not swallow up all those who attend movies, dances, and other like evil entertainments in this world. Solomon says, "Fret not thyself because of evil men." Reread verses 19 and 20 and consider the truths taught in them. Then pray to God and ask His grace for the wisdom to walk an antithetical walk in this vale of tears. Sing Psalter 201.

February 25 Read Proverbs 24:23-29

Reread verses 24-25. Is Solomon only talking to those who are in a position of authority? The answer must be no as we have read the words, "My son," often in the preceding chapters. These words are addressed to all of God's people including young people. There are times which we must tell the evil doer that he is evil. To do anything else is to bring his sin upon us. We become guilty by association. Soon others will notice our acceptance and encouragement of wickedness and judge

us to be evil as well. We must seek the blessing of verse 25. This is not easy. It is not accepted in today's world at all. It will not make us popular with some people. But Solomon never gives his son tips to win popularity contests. Rebuke the evil-doer and receive the blessing of God. Sing Psalter 182:1-5.

February 26 Read Proverbs 24:30-34

Let us consider the admonitions of verses 30-32. Reread them if necessary. Solomon has seen the field and home of a lazy person. He did not just look at it and say, "What a lazy man that was!" He looked at it and was instructed by it. The weeds that were crawling all over the man's farm were warnings to him what would happen in his life if he was lazy. He did not just learn a physical lesson. There was also a spiritual lesson to be learned. If we are lazy in the buying of the truths of God's Word, weeds will grow up in our spiritual life and choke it. Worse than that, our children will also have their spiritual lives choked by our laxness toward the study of God's Word. Spiritual laziness is a greater sin than physical laziness, but both are an abomination to our God Who requires us to be good stewards with what He has given to us. Sing Psalter 70.

February 27 Read Proverbs 25:1-7

It is said that the writer of the book of James has drawn much from the book of Matthew. By the same logic, then, the book of Matthew must have drawn much from the book of Proverbs. Seeing that the primary author is the Holy Spirit, we have a beautiful testimony to the unity of Scripture. In this section of Proverbs we are called to humility. The incident referred to also appears as one of Christ's parables as well as in the book of James. We are called to walk humbly in this world. This is not easy because at every turn are those who either proclaim themselves number one or urge us to make the same claim. The child of God must in meekness give all glory to God. This was true in the Old Testament, this was true in the New Testament, and this is true today. People of God, and especially young people, seek God's glory and not your own. Sing Psalter 86.

February 28 Read Proverbs 25:8-14

As we end this month there is no better thought than that of verse eleven on which to end it. A word fitly spoken. This can be the word of encouragement that a discouraged or suffering child of God needs. This could be the compliment paid to someone who has excelled in the works of Jehovah. This could be the word spoken to the mourner as he lays his loved one in the grave. There are many opportunities for us to speak a word in a good manner. Let us take advantage of that situation and build up one another in a Christian spirit. Those words spoken in a proper manner are better than any earthly riches. Let every child of God seek to give a "word fitly spoken" today and every day. Sing Psalter 88.

Psalter 336— Watching and Eager Longing

by Beth DeVries

This month we turn to Psalm 119:121-128 as it is versified in Psalter number 336. This passage follows the pattern of Psalm 119 in speaking about the statutes or laws of God. This section focuses on the truth that we are servants of God. David shows here how through mercy God teaches us His statutes. We also learn that when we truly know the testimonies of God, we also love them and seek to keep them.

David begins this Psalm by speaking of having shown justice in his judgments as king. He has attempted to rule in a Godly way. He asks God not to leave him. David recognizes his need of protection from God. He knows from whence his help comes. We need to remember this too when we face the opposition in the world. God will not forsake us and will always be there to protect us. David here sets a good example for us by waiting on the Lord.

The end of the first stanza speaks of God teaching His servants. When we look at verses 121-125 of Psalm 119, we find that David refers to himself as a servant of God three times.

David here recognizes that he truly is a servant of God. As a servant he asks to be taught by his master, God. David seeks to have understanding first. This would be an understanding of the ways of God. When we understand the will and plan of God only then can we truly be servants of His. In verse 125, we find that David asks

for understanding and then to know the testimonies of God. We learn from this that we too must pray to know God and then we will understand the importance of his testimonies and laws to us. Reflect on the idea that if

David, as great a king as he was, was only a servant of God; how much more we are servants of God.

It is through the understanding of the testimonies of God that we obtain wisdom. This is how the second stanza of Psalter 336 begins. God grants us wisdom when we pray for it. Wisdom helps us to know the testimonies of God and how they apply to our daily lives. We hear the commandments of God read each Sunday; yet we can think that we have kept them all. God in His wisdom shows us that in our hearts we have broken all of His commandments. This then brings us to see how great our sin is and our need for a Saviour. This Saviour is a merciful gift from God.

The final part of this Psalter versification speaks of David's love for the commandments of God. He esteems them more than gold. We too are of

the earth and come to think of gold as precious above all else. David reminds us that God's commandments are worth far more than earthly gold. It is through our keeping these commandments that we show our appreciation and love for God. Although we have only a small beginning of this obedience on the earth, we strive for this as

336 Watching and Eager Longing
 PSALM 119 8e and 7e ROBINSON Thomas Hastings

1. I have fol-lowed truth and jus-tice; Leave me not in deep dis-tress;
 2. I am Thine, O give me wis-dom, Make me know Thy truth, I pray;

Be my help and my pro-tection, Let the proud no more op-press.
 Sin-ners have de-spised Thy stat-utes; Now, O Lord, Thy pow'r dis-play.

For Thy word and Thy sal-va-tion, Lord, my eyes with long-ing fail;
 Lord, I love Thy good com-mand-ments And es-teen them more than gold;

Teach Thy stat-utes to Thy serv-ants, Let Thy mer-cy now pre-vail.
 All Thy pre-cepts are most right-eous; Hat-ing sin, to these I hold.

David did. We look forward to the day when we can keep the commandments of God perfectly in Heaven.

We have small beginning of appreciation for all the things that come to us by God's almighty hand. God teaches us, He gives us understanding, and He gives us

wisdom. God is truly merciful to us and full of compassion. ❖

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

Church Family

The Catholicity of the Church

by Rev. Ronald Hanko

Reprinted from the mission newsletter circulated in the UK by Covenant PRC.

When the Apostle's Creed refers to the "holy catholic church," it is not referring to Roman Catholicism. Rome claims to be the holy catholic church, but is, in fact, neither holy, nor catholic, nor the church of Jesus Christ, but the false church.

The word "catholic" means "universal" and is a proper description of the true church of Christ. We ought not abandon the word to Romanism.

That the church is universal is clear from many passages of Scripture. Revelation describes the catholic church in 7:9. There we read of a multitude that no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues standing before the throne.

Properly interpreted, Galatians 3:28 also speaks of that catholicity. It does not deny the headship of the man over the woman (I Cor. 11 and Eph. 5) or differences of gifts given to Christians. Instead it says that all are equal as Christians by virtue of the fact that they are in Christ Jesus. They are all Abraham's children.

Let there be, therefore, no prejudice or bigotry in the church of Christ—no rejection of others because of their skin color, language, nationality, or customs. *These things* make NO DIFFERENCE AT ALL.

The idea that one language is better suited to express the Christian faith than another, or that people of some races do not make very good Christians, denies the catholicity of the church. So is the notion that one country or people represent in some special sense the kingdom of God, as Dispensationalism and British Israelitism teach.

But the catholicity of the church does not only mean that people from every nation are gathered into the church by the power of God's sovereign grace (for it is grace alone that makes a difference). It also means that God gathers His church *through all ages*.

The catholicity of the church, therefore, assures us that we shall be with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in God's heavenly kingdom (Matt. 8:11). It allows believers now living to be referred to in Revelation 6:11 as the fellow-servants and brethren of the martyrs.

Lastly, the catholicity of the church means that all *kinds* of people belong to the church. Rich and poor, great and small, young and old, master and servant, male and female—the church has room for them all.

This is what the Word is thinking of in I Timothy 2 when it commands us to pray for "all" men. The word "all" does not mean "all without exception." It would be impossible anyway to pray for all in that sense. Rather the word refers to "all kinds" as the reference to rulers shows. We are to pray for "all kinds" of men because God wills to save "all kinds" and Christ has died for "all kinds" (not all without exception).

James has this same aspect of the catholicity of the church in mind when he blames Christians for showing favor to the rich and despising the poor (2:1-9). We do similarly when we despise other Christians for their outward condition.

Believing in the catholicity of the church, then, we believe "that the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. 10:12-13). ❖

Rev. Hanko is missionary/pastor of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland.

The Fourth Man

A Story from the Time of the Afscheiding

by P. S. Kuiper
translated by Rev. Cornelius Hanko

Chapter 4 Staying in School

Two boys with drawn faces and stiffly folded arms sat waiting for whatever would happen next.

Fifteen minutes before this, the town clock had struck three and school was dismissed. For a little while the area rang with the loud voices of children at the end of a school day.

However, the noise had soon faded away and now a chilly silence hung over the school.

Instructor De Liefde had sent Toon and Maarten back to their seats in their room. His eyes still flashed with anger.¹ Then he had left the room and had locked the door behind him. After a little while Maarten risked a careful rubbing of the seat of his trousers, for it still smarted there badly! With a slight groan Toon rubbed the red palms of his hands. Fortunately, his stomach-ache had almost completely disappeared after his hasty visit to the toilet.



Both boys gradually became restless. Where was the teacher?

Had he forgotten about them? It was now creepy quiet in the school.

Toon was the first one to have the courage to break the silence. He glanced carefully back toward his companion-in-misery and whispered: "He surely must have left and has locked us up."

"Why no, man. He likely is standing talking to some one or so," answered Maarten; but he barely believed it himself.

"He surely has pulled out," the other maintained anxiously. "And it will be Thursday before the school opens again. Then we will be sitting here that whole time alone, without bed and without food." The latter seemed to Toon to be the worst. "What a scared weasel you are," answered Maarten, acting big. "If that's true, we'll climb through the window!"

"My hands are too sore for that," complained Toon.

"Well, then you had better suffer hunger," growled his partner mercilessly.

"O no," cried the fatty hopelessly. "But aren't those windows much too small for us?"

"They are for you," Maarten quickly replied. "But I will ask Santa Claus to drop a dry crust of bread down the chimney for you every day. You often talk about him."

Although Toon usually was not too quick on the trigger, he now understood at once what Maarten meant. Angrily he turned around and again there was only silence between them.

Suddenly the door opened and Instructor Van Oostveen walked into the room. He took his seat on the chair and calmly filled his pipe. He lit it and looked through the cloud of smoke at the two prisoners, who again sat like statues.

"Instructor De Liefde asked me to investigate why you have misbehaved this afternoon." The voice sounded sharper than usual. "Come here!" A few seconds later, the two boys stood before the lower grade teacher. He first drew strongly on his pipe and stared at Toon with a penetrating look. "What happened, Bollebakker?" "Teacher," Toon stuttered, extremely nervous, "this afternoon I had a bad stomach ache, that made everything go wrong, writing and reading. And while the teacher was telling a story I suddenly had to"—he sought for a moment for an acceptable term—"go from the rear, and

then they all began to laugh. After that I caught it with the paddle.”

Instructor Van Oostveen’s beard trembled a bit, “What did you have for lunch this noon, my friend?” he added in an even tone.

“Brown beans, teacher.” The words came softly. “Aha, and how many plates full, my friend?” Toon was silent, but the perspiration broke out.

“Your silence speaks volumes, young man!” And how does friend Boelhouwer fit into all this?”

“When Toon ran out I acted a bit foolishly,” mumbled Maarten.

When instructor Van Oostveen raised his eyebrows, he quickly added: “I imitated Toon, and then I got it with the ruler.” The eyes of the lower grade teacher shone. “Do you think that is a joke when your fellow man has cramps and suffers pain?”

Maarten cringed. “Yes, teacher, no, teacher,” he stutted. And then he told, confused and in pieces, what had happened on the way from school to their house that noon.² But instructor Van Oostveen understood the situation now quite well.

“Both of you are going to copy an appropriate portion of your reading book,” he said sternly.

A minute later Toon had started on “The Gluttonous Peter,” while Maarten devoted himself to “The Disobedient Albert.”

In the meantime instructor Van Oostveen had lit a fresh pipe and was trying to overcome his vexation. Instructor De Liefde, the chief instructor had instructed him a half hour ago, to take the naughty boys in hand. He himself had to get a couple of family members from the towboat, who were to stay at his house during the Easter holidays. Mr. Van Oostveen did not dare to raise any objection, partly because Instructor De Liefde was not only head teacher, but also because Mr. De Liefde was his father-in-law. But he was very unhappy. Actually there were not two who had to stay after school; there were three.

Instructor Van Oostveen was dead tired, as was always the case by afternoon, although he was only thirty years old. Already for nine years he was lower grade teacher in this town, and all that time he had stood before classes of about 90 children.

The previous year his father-in-law had sent a letter to the town council in which he requested an extra allowance so that a second lower grade teacher might be hired. The thrifty town council had answered him with a nice letter stating that they had no objection to a second

lower grade teacher, if Instructor De Liefde would pay the extra 25 guilders out of his own pocket. Mr. De Liefde could also add a few small jobs to earn the extra money. That is the way in which the Hulversum town council treated its head instructor, who had served them since the time of the French.³

When Instructor Van Oostveen thought about these things for the so manyeth time, he had a milder opinion of his father in law. His father-in-law was actually worse off than himself.



Unexpectedly the door opened and his wife Marijntje appeared with a cup of tea! The teacher was so surprised that he almost dropped his pipe. “Must those poor boys stay after school in this beautiful weather?” she cried out sympathetically. “They did not behave, and therefore they had to remain after school this afternoon.” He added, whispering in an almost inaudible tone, “And I must stay too.”

To their amazement Maarten and Toon heard Instructor Van Oostveen and his wife quietly laughing and whispering.

Suddenly the teacher stood next to Toon’s seat. He checked his work and looked at him sharply. “From now on you go easy, both literally and figuratively! You understand friend?”

“Yes, indeed, teacher.” Toon nodded hopefully, although he actually understood only half of what was said.

Then the instructor turned to Maarten and glanced at his work. “Boys who recite such nice poems about striving for virtue must act accordingly.” Maarten heard the teacher say above him. The boy looked up and saw Instructor Van Oostveen’s dark eyes.

“I think that you do not as yet have a paradise on earth, do you? You will have it, but in a different way than you think!”⁴

Then, as if he had said too much, he hastened to the front.⁵

“My wife has appealed to my sympathy,” he said with a small smile. “You may go home, and I wish you pleasant days!”

The boys mumbled an unintelligible greeting and left the school. In a brotherly fashion they walked together up the Moleneind, happily watched by the instructor and his wife.

Marijntje left the school with an empty teacup in her hand, and Instructor Van Oostveen started on his last task, scattering white sand on the wooden floors of the rooms.

When he arrived home, Maarten found only his grandfather there. His grandfather asked for an explanation for his late arrival home. The boy, who kept very few secrets from the old man, told him openly and honestly what had happened that afternoon.

“You more than deserved those blows with the rod, young man,” concluded grandfather soberly. “Did you promise improvement to Teacher Van Oostveen?”

“The teacher said something about that poem of this morning,” Maarten said, avoiding the question.

“What did he say?” asked the old man with curiosity. “He said that the paradise on earth comes in a different manner,” the boy answered. “I am glad Teacher Van Oostveen said that,” remarked grandfather quietly. You can tell that he comes from Maartensdyk. There they live closer to the Bible than here.”

When Maarten looked at him questioningly he received a tap on his shoulder. “We’ll talk about that some other time. Now we are going to tackle the pig sty. Hurry and put on your old clothes, and tell Bas that it is about time that he takes it easy.”

¹ The readers will recall that in the last installment Toon had suddenly and without permission left the room because of severe stomach cramps, and Maarten, knowing the reason, had imitated him in the classroom. They were now required to stay after school as punishment.

² Maarten had run from school to escape talking to Toon. He had run into a fish cart and knocked it over.

³ The events described here took place shortly before the Afscheiding in 1834. The French under Napoleon had taken over the Netherlands at an earlier date and had reorganized the government and the church.

⁴ Mr. Van Oostveen is reminding Maarten of the poem, which Maarten had had to read earlier in the day. The poem spoke of a paradise on earth for virtuous boys. Apparently Mr. Van Oostveen did not agree with that poem, just as Maarten’s parents had disapproved of it. The poem taught a moralistic religion common in the apostate State Church. Mr. Van Oostveen is saying that Paradise will indeed be the blessedness to which Maarten can look forward; but it will be his through Christ’s cross, not through a virtuous life.

⁵ One could lose his position in the school for criticizing the religion officially approved by the government.

It’s Time

*Throughout life we live asking
For each and every thing.
For me the hardest part was waiting
For everything plus what was in between.
For so long I had wanted
To find someone and fall in love,
I even reached a certain point
When I became impatient with God’s plan from up above.
I wanted to know His reasoning
For making me sit and wait.
I was sick of being all alone,
All I wanted was a date.
Why was it that the others
Were in love, falling head over heels,
While I was left just sitting there
Wondering if my broken heart would heal.
I kept thinking my prayers were left unheard
That God didn’t really care.
Maybe I wasn’t a child of His
Otherwise this heartache I would be spared.
I can’t remember exactly,
But it happened just one day.
I was sitting alone when it hit me
Things in life don’t just happen just because I say.
I saw that what I wanted and what I needed
Were two completely separate things.
It was what I needed God was sending me
And not everything in between.
What I needed was to be patient
To wait upon His will,
I had to know He was in control
And let my heart be still.
It was not until later
That God had it in mind
To work out His special plan
HE was the one who decided it was time.*

The Office of Pastor and Teacher

by Rev. Ronald Hanko

Reprinted from the mission newsletter circulated in the UK by Covenant PRC.

The office of pastor and teacher (Eph. 2:11) is the third permanent office in the church. That it is an office requiring ordination is clear from I Timothy 4:14 and Romans 10:15. Its primary task is labouring “in the word and doctrine” (I Tim. 5:17), that is, the preaching of the gospel.

Nevertheless, as I Timothy 5:17 shows, those who labour in the word and doctrine are elders along with those who rule in the church. Indeed, this verse shows us that the ministers of the gospel also rule, just as the ruling elders are also pastors (Acts 20:28). Scripture makes no absolute separation between these two offices.

That the primary task of these “word and doctrine” elders is the preaching of the gospel is clear from II Timothy 4:2 and many other passages. This office, as Ephesians 2:11 reminds us, is a *teaching* office therefore.

The business of the preacher, therefore, is not to entertain. His business is not even first of all to “evangelize” in the usual sense of that word. His work is teaching.

That needs emphasis. Many preachers of the gospel seem to have forgotten it. Whatever they are doing, they are doing precious little teaching. Often the members of the congregation sit under their preaching for years and learn next to nothing. That is not always the fault of the preacher, of course, but more often than not it is.

Not only does the preacher have the calling to teach the older members of the congregation but also the children (John 21:15). The preacher ought, then, to give regular instruction to the church’s children, teaching them both Bible history and Bible doctrine, and not using silly

and useless “children’s addresses” where nothing is taught or learned.

The preacher even has the calling to instruct other young men and to prepare them for the ministry of the Word (II Tim. 2:2). In harmony with this Reformed churches have always appointed ministers of the gospel to this work. In this as in all else a preacher is also a pastor, a shepherd of God’s people with great responsibilities to them (Ezek. 34:1-6).

As part of his calling to teach, however, the preacher also has the responsibility to read and study (I Tim. 4:13), and to give heed to doctrine, that is, to learn and know it (I Tim. 4:16), matters that are *often* neglected by those who hold this office.

For this reason it is preferable that those who hold this office have opportunity to “give heed to doctrine,” and to receive training and instruction before they take up their responsibilities. How this is done is not as important as *that* it be done.

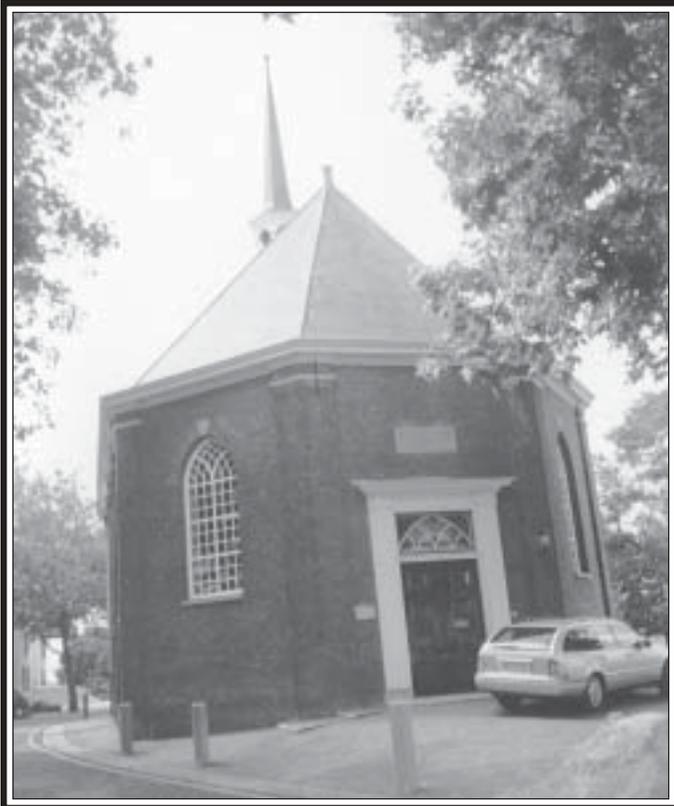
The congregation, too, has a responsibility in all this. Like the church in Colosse, they must say to their preacher “take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it” (4:17). The congregation must say this! They must say it often and especially when the minister is not giving heed to the responsibilities we have outlined.

This office is not meant to be an easy job for those who hold it, but is appointed by God for the salvation of His people. Woe to those shepherds who do not feed the flock! (Ezek. 34:2). ❖

Rev. Hanko is missionary/pastor of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland.

State Reformed Church of Ter Aar

By J.P. de Klerk

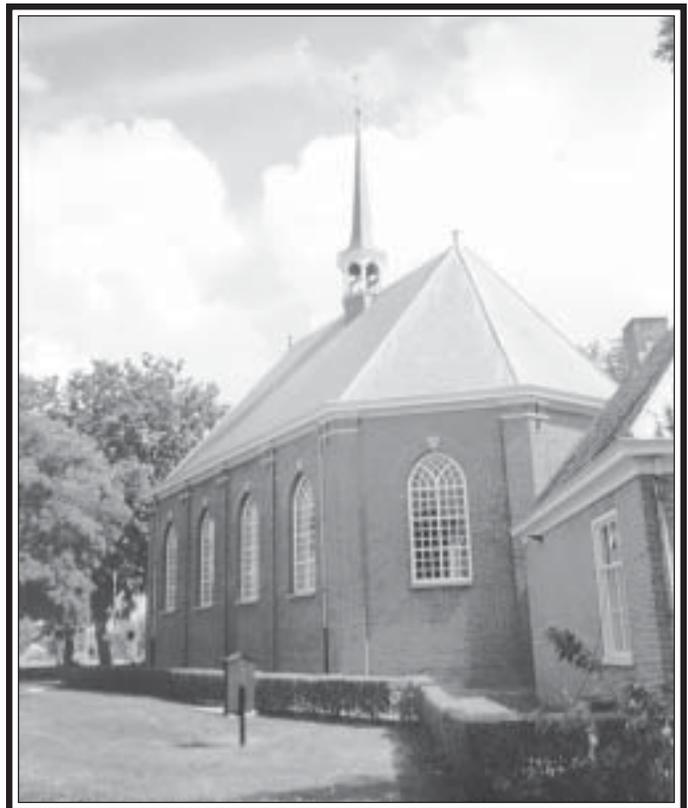


colleague Bonifatius (673-754), who was mainly interested in Friesland and Germany. When the Reformation came, the guidelines of Calvin were soon adopted. In 1600, the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk was recognized as the official church of the United Netherlands, under the supervision of the government until 1796, though the financing by the State continued (by decree of King William I). In 1834 and 1886 many pure Calvinists left the church. In 1862 and 1875 others became members of a Remonstrant Society. In 1918 came the formation of Liberal Reformed members in this Church who were hesitant to leave the traditional State Reformed organization. ❖

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

This church in the Dutch village of Ter Aar (province South Holland), North of Alphen-aan-de-Rijn, was built in 1517-1568. For an unknown reason the tower was broken down and a small tower made half way up the roof, which is covered with slates. You see the main entrance on the picture above. Originally the building was dedicated to a martyr for the faith, named Adrianus, but when the church was finished his name was not mentioned any more. In old papers it says that in the Middle Ages there was first a Roman Catholic chapel at this place, but nothing is left of it, and there are no particulars known.

In the lower right is the same church, seen from the backside. The Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (as it is called in Dutch) regards itself as the church “planted” by the English missionary Willibrord (658-739) and his



Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Katelyn Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brent DeYoung—
Georgetown, MI
Christian Kenneth, son of Mr. & Mrs. Chris Fisher—
Georgetown, MI
Harrison Wayne, son of Mr. & Mrs. Robb Vanden
Heuvel—Georgetown, MI
Jacob Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Schimmel—
Georgetown, MI
Isaac William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Start—
Georgetown, MI
Erin Janice, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mike Langeland—
Georgetown, MI
Drew Samuel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Sam Copple—Grace, MI
Amber Ruth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Greg Bos—Holland,
MI
Eric Charles, son of Mr. & Mrs. Chuck Doezema—
Holland, MI
Nicole Maria, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Hop—Hope,
MI
Brooke Autumn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brian
VanEngen—Hull, IA
Shane Tyler, son of Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Kooima—Hull, IA
Juanita LeeAnn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ed DeBoer—
Lynden, WA
Jesse Matthew, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Regnerus—
Randolph, WI
Emma Louise, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Marty DeVries—
Randolph, WI
Courtney Rae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Phil DeVries—
Randolph, WI
Hannah Katherine, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave
Braaksma—Randolph, WI
Nathan Josiah, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joe Mancusi—South
Holland, IL
Aaron Nicholas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Kleyn—
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:

Tim Hop—Grace, MI
Katie Knott—Grace, MI
Dena Engelsma—Hope, MI
Mary Jo Vermeer—Hope, MI
Nathan Yonker—Holland, MI
Robin Huizenga—South Holland, IL

MARRIAGES

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Ed DeJong and Miss Leah VanDenTop—Doon, IA
Mr. Shane Lems and Miss Lisa Bleyenbergh—Edgerton,
MN

Book Order Notice

If you sent in a book order for October or November, please read this notice. The book orders received in November were lost. If you sent in an order please call Cathy Postmus at (616) 662-4326 to make sure that your order is filled. We are sorry about the inconvenience.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

Tulip (7)

Mother gathered up the empty lemonade glasses. It had been a refreshing afternoon break for the whole family.

"I think I've had enough," Jamie said with a grin as he patted his tummy. "Thanks, Mom."

"You're welcome," said Mother. "What about you, Krystal?"

"Oh yes! Thank you, I've had plenty."

"Same here," Father added. "But," he paused, "my thirst for the truth will never be completely quenched. What a joy it is to understand more and more of the truths of Scripture and the Reformed faith."

"Like TULIP?" Krystal asked.

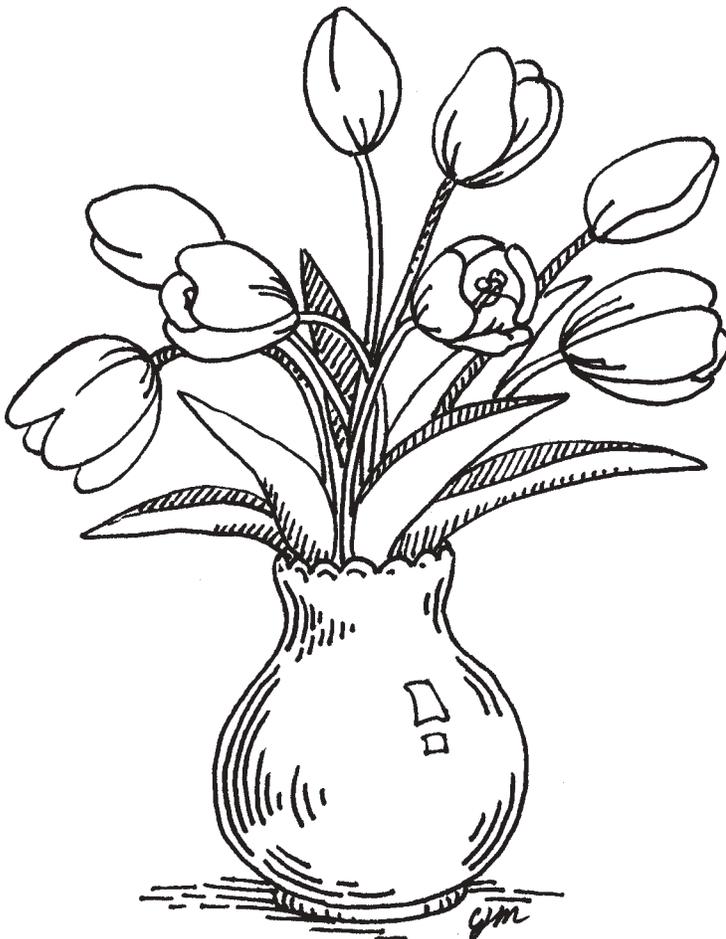
"Yes, like TULIP," Father confirmed. He asked Krystal, "What about you? Do you understand the doctrines that TULIP stands for a little better now?"

"Yes," she answered thoughtfully, "I think I do. Although I suspect I have much more to learn."

Father added, "Yes, we all continue to grow in our understanding. But if you can name each one and can begin to appreciate them for the comforting truths that they are, then you have made a very good start."

Mother turned the vase of tulips in order to view the arrangement from various angles. "Yes, the more we look—the more we see," she said. She crossed her arms, satisfied with the position of the vase. "A tulip is a beautiful creation. It is a happy circumstance that the acrostic for the five points of Calvinism spells it."

Krystal inspected the shimmering, jewel-like blooms and gently stroked one of the velvety soft petals. It was indeed a beautiful thing. ❖



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

Puzzle

Can you name each one of the truths that TULIP stands for? Give it a try. Ask a parent to help if necessary.

T _____
U _____
L _____
I _____
P _____

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of Holland, Michigan Young People's Society

SPEAKERS: Revs. Bekkering, Eriks, & Van Overloop

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