

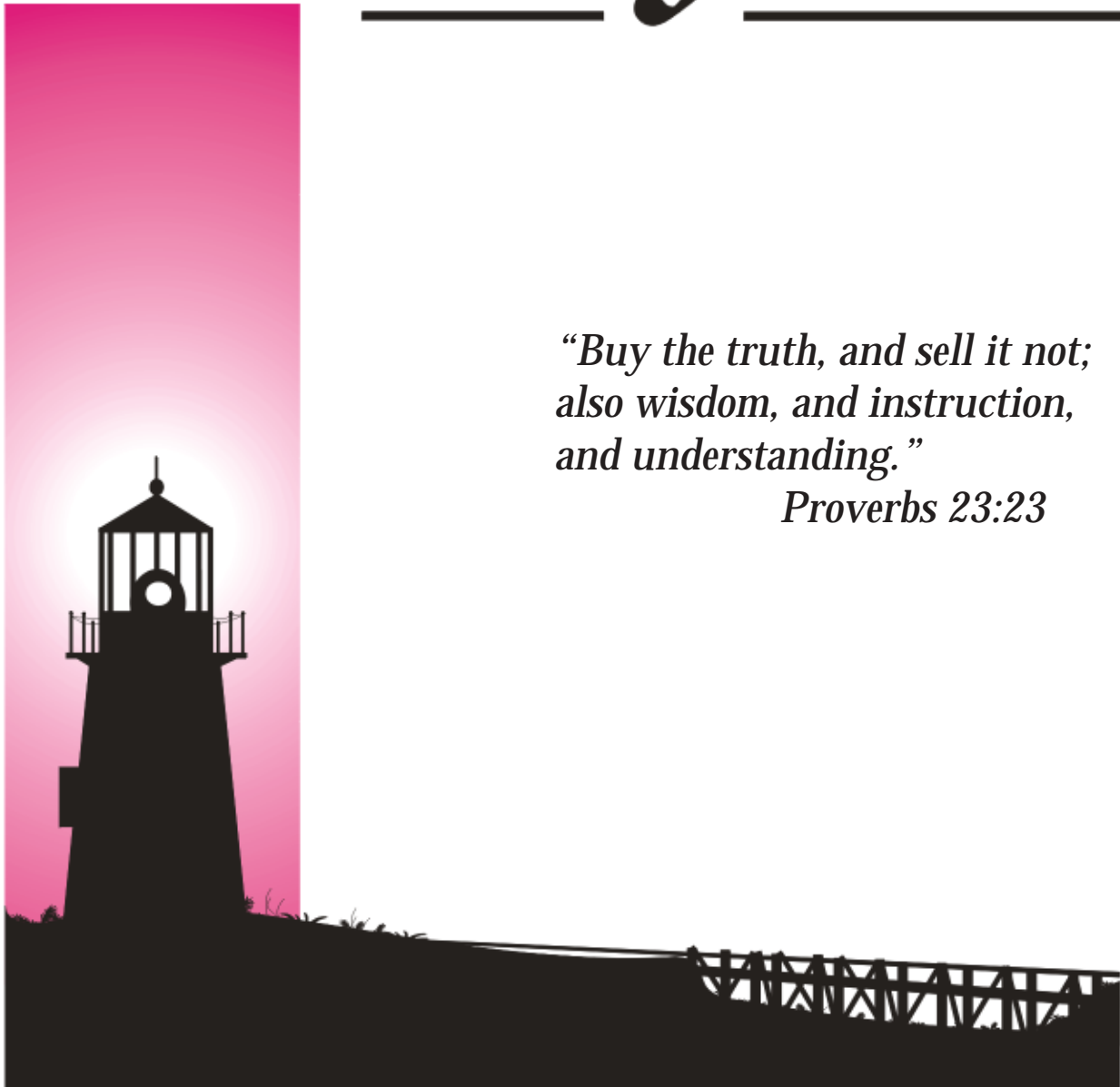
# *Beacon Lights*

March  
2005

Volume LXIV  
Number 3

*“Buy the truth, and sell it not;  
also wisdom, and instruction,  
and understanding.”*

*Proverbs 23:23*



## Table of Contents

	EDITORIAL
3	<b>Buy the Truth, and Sell It Not (1)</b>
	FRUITFUL BRANCHES
5	<b>Teaching Children to Pray</b>
	FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY
8	<b>God-breathed Scripture (2)</b>
	GEM OF THE MONTH
9	<b>The Virtuous Woman</b>
	DEVOTIONAL
11	<b>Watching Daily At My Gates</b>
	CONSIDER THE CREATION
16	<b>Winter Sleigh Ride</b>
	CHURCH FAMILY
17	<b>Respect in the Classroom</b>
	WHERE WE STAND
18	<b>Drama: A History</b>
	BOOK REVIEW
21	<b>Upon This Rock</b>
	LITTLE LIGHTS
23	<b>The Ploughboy (1)</b>
	CHURCH NEWS
	<b>Back Cover</b>

## BEACON LIGHTS

### EDITOR

John Huizenga

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Aaron Cleveland

### SECRETARY

### CONTENTS COMMITTEE

John Huizenga  
Trevor Kalsbeek  
Jason Kuiper  
Kris Moelker  
Randy Vaalburg

### EXECUTIVE FEDERATION BOARD

Matt Overway (President)  
Daniel Holstege (Vice-President)  
Sara Huizinga (Secretary)  
Jeffrey Van Uffelen (Treasurer)  
Sarah Koole (Librarian)  
Rachel Nagelkerke (Vice-Secretary)  
Eric Gritters (Vice-Treasurer)  
Greg Van Overloop (Youth Coordinator)  
Rev. Ronald Van Overloop (Spiritual Advisor)  
Rev. Rodney Kleyn (Spiritual Advisor)

### PROMOTION COMMITTEE

Kim Doezema  
Rachel Joostens  
Jeff Kalsbeek

### PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

Aaron Cleveland  
Dave Langerak

### BUSINESS OFFICE

Beacon Lights  
P.O. Box 144  
Randolph, WI 53956  
Phone: (920) 326-6186  
Email: [huizenga@powercom.net](mailto:huizenga@powercom.net)

### BEACON LIGHTS ON TAPE

A free service to the legally blind. Contact  
Sam Copple  
659 Lincoln Ave. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
Phone: (616) 774-4132  
Email: [SamCopple@email.msn.com](mailto:SamCopple@email.msn.com)

### CHURCH NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Melinda Bleyenbergh  
Email: [darylme@altelco.net](mailto:darylme@altelco.net)

### BOOK SALES

Becky Kalsbeek

### TYPESETTER

Robert Vermeer

### PRINTER

James Huizinga

### MAILERS

Bill & Fran Leep

*Beacon Lights* is published monthly by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies. Subscription price is \$10.00. Please send all correspondence, address changes, subscriptions, and article submissions to the business office.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

The articles of *Beacon Lights* do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

The *Beacon Lights* encourages its readers to contact the business office with any questions or comments. Letters may be edited for printing. We will not publish anonymous letters, but will withhold names upon request.

If any material of *Beacon Lights* is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source and forwarding the printed periodical to the business office.

# Buy the Truth, and Sell It Not (1)



by Aaron J. Cleveland

“**B**uy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” This is the familiar command of a father to his son found in Proverbs 23:23. This verse sets forth a very important principle, or standard, by which the child of God ought to live his life in this world.

This instruction is especially important to the young people of the church as the context of the passage proves. A father is instructing his son as to how he ought to live in a world of “sinners” (vs. 17), “winebibbers” (vs. 20), and “strange women” (vs. 33). The father is speaking to his son who, as he grows older, is beginning to leave the shelter of the home and Christian school. More and more he will be confronted with the temptations, pleasures, and ideas of the world. He is at the time in his life when he has to make many decisions which will have implications for the rest of his life. Where will he seek a spouse? What profession will he pursue? Who will his friends be? What church will he join himself to? The decisions he makes will set the pattern for the rest of his life. For them he will have to answer to God on judgment day.

Let us then examine this instruction as it applies to you, the young people of the church, as you begin to take your place in the church and in relation to the sinful world around you. We will consider four things about this command. First, what is meant by “the truth”? Second, how does one “buy” the truth? Third, how does one “sell” the truth? Finally, we will see the sad consequences for those who disobey this command and how God’s blessing rests upon those who obey this command.

First, let us observe that we read, “Buy *the* truth.” That is the command. We do not read, “Buy *a* truth,” or “Buy *some* truth.” No, *the* truth we are commanded to buy. There is only one truth. What is this truth? In John 17:17 Jesus prays for His elect to the Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” God’s Word, as it is recorded for us in the Bible, is the truth. In that Word, God reveals to us who He is. We confess, along with Article 7 of the Belgic Confession (the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, to be the only rule of faith), that “We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe, unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein.”

When we speak of truth, we mean most importantly doctrinal truth, and specifically, the doctrines of the Bible as they have been developed in the line of the Reformation. We believe those doctrines are best summarized in our three Reformed creeds, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort. We confess those doctrines not only as they positively set forth the truth, but also as they stand in opposition to false doctrine, the lie. We also understand that all of the various parts of the truth are united into one whole. To deny one part of the truth will ultimately lead to a denial of the whole truth.

The Reformed faith is a grand system of doctrines which fit together into one unified whole. Take, for example, the five points of Calvinism – total depravity, unconditional election, limited (particular) atonement, irresistible (efficacious) grace, and the perseverance of the saints. All of these doctrines complement each other. All of them fit logically together. One who denies just one of these doctrines takes the first step down the slope which ultimately leads to a denial of them all.

In our own history as Protestant Reformed Churches we have also been lead by the Spirit to confess the doctrine of God's particular grace in opposition to the false doctrine of common grace. We confess the truth of God's unconditional everlasting covenant with His people as opposed to any kind of conditional covenant. And related to our doctrine of the covenant, we confess that the marriage bond is broken only by death, and that the Bible clearly forbids remarriage while one's spouse still lives. All of these are doctrines which we believe to be "the truth" as found in God's Word.

When we speak of the truth, it is important to remember that we are talking about more than a mere head-knowledge of Reformed doctrine. We are referring to that by which our heart is guided, or the truth as it comes to expression in our daily walk. It will be evident by our walk of life that we are guided by the truth, that we know and *love* that truth. We will confess the truth and speak of it to others. Our actions will demonstrate obedience to God's Word. We will confess, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). Others will be able to see this in us.

Knowing what "the truth" is, how does one "buy" the truth? Immediately we understand that there is a sense in which we do not "buy" the truth. II Thessalonians 2:13 instructs us that we are saved "through sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth.*" That we *believe* and *love* the truth is part of our salvation and is a gift of God (vs. 10-13). God, in His sovereign good pleasure, withholds from others a "love of the truth" and belief in the truth. God is not pleased to save them. Even though the truth is plainly set forth in the Bible, and faithfully expounded to many in the preaching, and many understand that truth intellectually, because God does not give to them a love for and belief in the truth, they are not saved. God allows them to continue to take pleasure in unrighteousness.

That God works in us to love and believe His truth is not because we are more worthy objects of God's love than those who take pleasure in unrighteousness. Of ourselves, we are dead in sins. We cannot merit anything with God (Canons III/IV, Art. 15). Furthermore, every gift that God gives has been paid for by the blood of Christ and is given freely to His people. We read in Isaiah 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Therefore, we cannot buy the truth in the sense that we merit anything with God, contribute to our salvation, or make ourselves more worthy objects of His love.

However, there is a sense in which we are commanded to "buy" the truth. In the first place, we buy the truth when we live by faith. Question 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism asks, "What is true faith?" The answer explains how we "buy the truth" when we are living by faith. The answer states,

True faith is not only a certain knowledge, *whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word*, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel, in my heart; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits (emphasis added).

By faith we "buy" the truth when we live in the certain knowledge that all that God has revealed in His Word is truth. By faith we "buy" the truth when we live in the assured confidence that the promises found in that Word belong to us. We "buy" the truth when we know with a knowledge of love the truth of God's Word, when we believe that truth, and when we confess and live that truth in the midst of a sinful world.

Secondly, we "buy" the truth when we give up certain things for it. The central thing which we must forsake when we "buy" the truth is our sins. We cannot possess the truth and lies at the same time. For example, we cannot buy the truth and walk in the sin of taking God's name in vain. We cannot say, "Yes, I know and love the truth of God's holiness" while continuing to walk unrepentantly in the sin of listening to music where God's name is blasphemed. If we refuse to forsake the sin of taking God's name in vain, then we cannot say before God that we are buying the truth of His holiness.

Thirdly, we "buy" the truth when we are willing to give up or deny ourselves certain earthly things for the sake of the truth. Because we confess the truth of the fourth commandment, we are willing to deny ourselves certain professions which we know would prevent us from diligently frequenting the church of

God on the Lord's Day. Because we love the truth of the fifth commandment we are unwilling to take jobs which would make it necessary for us to join a godless labor union.

Our love for the truth and our desire to live a life separate from sin and sinners may mean that we must end friendships with those who walk unrepentantly in sin. Perhaps these friends are relatives, or close family members, who refuse to turn from their walk in sin. Said Jesus, we must for His sake and that of the gospel be willing to leave our house, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, and land (Mark 10:29).

As Moses, we may have to deny ourselves a place of prominence and importance according to the standards of this world. Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Heb. 11:24). By faith Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:26). Buying the truth will certainly mean that according to the standards of the world we will be of little importance.

Because we are busy buying the truth we will have little time for the pleasures of this world. Faithfully attending worship services, Bible studies, church functions, living in fellowship with one's family and fellow saints, and laboring faithfully so that one might support the causes of the kingdom leaves little time or money for "living it up" in the world. Yet, as those who possess the truth, we know that we have Christ, and having Christ, we have all things.

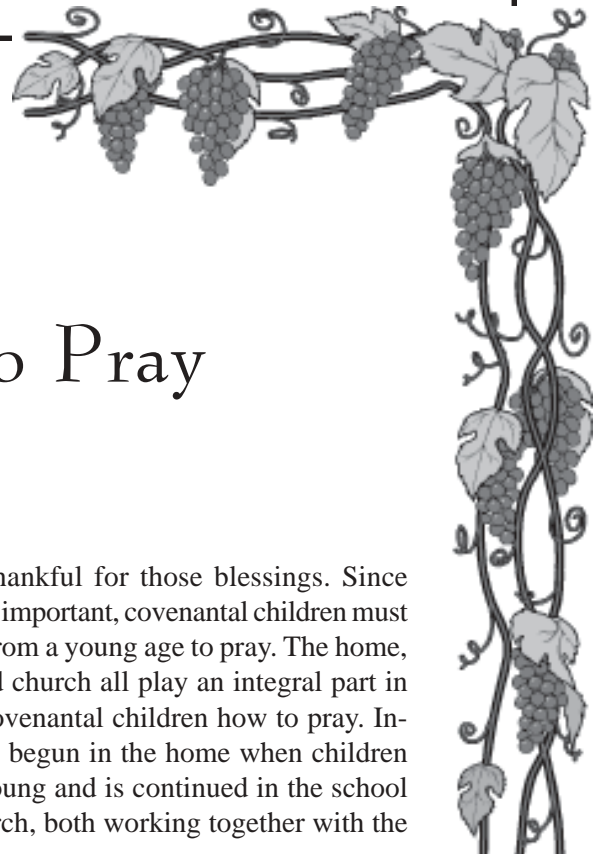
Next time, Lord willing, we will continue to examine how we are to "buy" the truth and we will see how we are forbidden to "sell" the truth. Also, we will point out God's blessing upon our buying the truth and the painful consequences of selling it. ❖

---

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

---

## Fruitful Branches



# Teaching Children to Pray

by Sarah De Boer

“Our Father which art in heaven...” These words along with the rest of the Lord's Prayer fast become a part of a covenantal child's vocabulary in his first few years of life. It is essential that covenantal children are taught to pray because prayer is a necessary part of a Christian's life. The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 45, Question and Answer 116, teaches that God requires Christians to be thankful, and prayer is the main way for a Christian to show thanks to God. Prayer is also necessary because God gives His blessings of His grace and Holy Spirit to those only who sincerely and continually ask those blessings of Him and

are truly thankful for those blessings. Since prayer is so important, covenantal children must be taught from a young age to pray. The home, school, and church all play an integral part in teaching covenantal children how to pray. Instruction is begun in the home when children are very young and is continued in the school and in church, both working together with the home.

Children should begin to learn to pray in the home, and the home lays all the groundwork on which the church and school build. It is a good practice that

---

many parents undertake to teach their children to pray a simple prayer before mealtime and before bedtime. As soon as the children are able, parents should instruct their children to pray, “Lord bless this food and drink,” or “Now I lay me down to sleep,” or something similar. Parents should guide the young children at first, helping them repeat the prayer, and slowly on the children will be able to repeat their prayer more and more on their own. When teaching children these prayers, parents should encourage the children to keep their eyes closed and their hands folded. Although young children do not fully understand the words that they are praying, teaching them these prayers is still important. For one thing, children begin to see that Christians can approach God in prayer with requests for their daily needs and also for forgiveness of sins. Also, when children fold their hands and close their eyes, they have a small understanding that God must be honored and approached with reverence.

As the children get a bit older and can understand more, parents can begin to teach their children why they are praying before they eat and before they go to sleep and why they must keep their eyes closed and hands folded. Parents should explain to children that in their simple prayers, children must ask for the Lord’s blessing and forgiveness. Christ instructed us in Matthew 7:7 and also in Luke 11:9 to “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Parents should also explain to their children that everything comes from God, and that when they pray, they thank Him for those gifts, including their food, as Psalm 50:14 gives instruction to offer up thanksgiving to God. Children should also understand why they end their prayers with, “For Jesus’ sake.” Parents can teach that sinners are very unworthy, but that God will hear their prayers for the sake of Christ.

If they are able, parents should also begin teaching children the Lord’s Prayer before the children begin school. The Lord’s Prayer is so important because it outlines what children and all Christians need to pray about. The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 45, Question and Answer 118 states that we must pray only for things God commands us to ask of Him. Although children cannot fully understand this prayer, they can begin to understand some things, such as how God is our Father. Because children have earthly fathers, children can see and somewhat understand relationships between fathers and children. Fathers should explain to their children that they as earthly fathers do not compare to their heavenly

Father and that although they might fail their children at times, the children’s heavenly Father will never fail them. In Luke 11:13, Christ stated that if earthly fathers, who are evil, can give good gifts to their children, the heavenly Father will definitely not deny His children what they ask of Him.

Covenantal children’s instruction of how to pray is further continued in the church, and this instruction in the church works in cooperation with instruction in the home. Once the children begin Sunday school, the Sunday school teacher can support the home in teaching children to pray as he or she helps the children learn the Lord’s Prayer and reminds them to keep their hands folded and eyes closed. The Sunday school teacher can explain to the children that they have to remember to close their eyes and fold their hands because they are praying to God in heaven who deserves to be treated with reverence.

The church must continue its role in teaching covenantal children to pray through catechism, especially when children are in junior high and are taking lessons in the Heidelberg Catechism and studying the Lord’s Prayer. In catechism, the minister should go through each part of each Lord’s Day, instructing the children in why prayer is necessary, what is needed in a covenantal child’s prayer in order to be acceptable to God, what God commands them to ask for, what each phrase and petition of the Lord’s Prayer means, and what the Lord’s Prayer teaches about all prayer.

The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 45, Question and Answer 117 lays out what is needed in prayers to be acceptable to God. First, children should be taught that prayer must come from the heart to the one true God only as He has revealed himself in His Word. God needs to be addressed properly in truth, not in a “fox-hole prayer,” when God is really not in a person’s mind. John 4:24 states that we must worship God in spirit and in truth. Second, children must be taught that they must know their sins and need for salvation in order to humbly approach the divine Creator. Third, children must be convinced that God will hear their prayer, although they are unworthy of it, for Christ’s sake. In John 14:13, Christ said that whatever His people asked in His name, He would do. Fourth, children should be instructed that prayers must include only what God commands them to ask of Him, which includes all things that are necessary for the soul and body.

Children should be further instructed in catechism in an explanation of the parts of the Lord’s Prayer to

---

receive a better understanding of prayer itself and how to pray. Children first need to be instructed how to address God properly as their Father in heaven. To fully understand this, children need to know how God came to be their father in Christ, and how God cannot be conceptualized in earthly terms. Children then need to be instructed in what petitions they must pray about God and about their earthly needs. First, children should be taught as stated in the Heidelberg Catechism to pray for God to grant them permission to know Him and to praise Him and for God to direct their lives to praise and hallow the name of God. Second, children should be taught to pray that God will rule them and preserve His church. Third, children should be instructed to pray that God's will be done, not men's will. Fourth, children must be taught to pray for all things necessary for the body, understanding that their efforts will not do them any good without God. Fifth, children need to be instructed to pray for forgiveness for the sake of Christ. Sixth, children should be taught that they are weak in themselves and need God's help to resist all spiritual foes.

The school compliments the role of both the home and the church in teaching covenantal children to pray. With a good foundation established in the home, children enter school with some basic knowledge about how to pray, even if they do not have a full understanding. When children begin school, teachers should help children learn the Lord's Prayer if children do not already know it, and also continue to encourage children to pray reverently and humbly, with closed eyes and hands folded. Also, right from the beginning, teachers should provide good examples as they pray when the day begins, before lunch, after lunch, and at the end of the day. In this, children learn to ask the Lord's blessing for the day and for the food and to give thanks for the Lord's care and for his provision of food at lunch. In listening to teachers' prayers, children learn that they must pray to the one true God, humbly, with confidence, and for the necessities of body and soul.

Even in the younger grades, teachers can teach children to pray by having them pray for devotions. Especially in the lower grades, but even through junior high and maybe even sometimes in high school, teachers should encourage students to write out their prayers before they have to pray in class. By writing their prayer out, children have to think about the prayer, and cannot come and pray unprepared in devotions. Students should think through what they should pray for and what they should give thanks for.

At the beginning of the year, when a teacher introduces the idea of the students taking turns for devotions, a teacher should instruct and remind the children of specific things a student should include in prayer. One example of an acronym a teacher could use is ACTS. A prayer should begin with expressing praise and adoration for God, who, according to Jeremiah 23:24, fills the heavens and the earth. After God is praised, sins need to be humbly confessed, so that a sinner can be humbled and see how great his need is for salvation. "T" is for thanksgiving, following confession, in which a person expresses thankfulness for deliverance from sins and for all other blessings. Finally, "S" is for supplication, in which God is asked for, in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, all things necessary for our spiritual and earthly needs.

Teachers also can teach children how to pray through teaching the students in Bible class about God and His attributes, about how great man's sins and miseries are, and how Christ died for His people's sins and how His people belong to Him, and how thus God's people have confidence that God will preserve His people unto the end. By understanding the truths about God as He has revealed them in Scripture, children can better understand how they ought to approach God in prayer.

The efforts of the home, school, and church in teaching children how to pray are not isolated efforts, but each work in conjunction with each other. When teaching children to pray, parents, ministers, and teachers should begin with Jesus' instruction on prayer. In several passages, Jesus instructed his disciples on how to pray. In Matthew 6:6-13, Jesus taught his disciples to pray not to impress men or with vain repetitions, but to pray in the manner of what now is called the Lord's Prayer. In Matthew 7:7-12, Jesus instructed that God's people must ask for God's blessings and that God will provide. Using these and other passages in God's inspired Word, along with the teaching of the reformed confessions, especially the Heidelberg Catechism, parents, ministers, and teachers can build up a solid foundation in teaching covenantal children how to pray. However, one must never lose sight of the fact that none of these efforts would be successful without the grace of our heavenly Father. ❖

---

*Sarah is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan. She wrote this essay for the Protestant Reformed Scholarship.*

## The Reader Asks

**D**o you have a question that has been on your mind? Something that came up at school or during a discussion with friends or co-workers? You can be sure that there are many more people reading these words who have had the same question and are looking for answers just like you. Rev. Laning of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan is waiting to answer them. Don't worry, if you would rather your name was not published with your question, we

will honor your request. We do, however, ask that your name and either your home or email address be included so that Rev. Laning can respond privately if need be.

Please send your question to:

Rev. James Laning  
1550 Ferndale S.W.  
Walker, MI 49544  
E-mail: jlaning@msn.com

## From the Pastor's Study

# God-breathed Scripture (2)

by Rev. Angus Stewart



**S**ince, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [literally, God-breathed]," it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). The infinitely wise God did not breathe forth a Word of little use or value; He breathed forth the most eminently useful and profitable book ever produced.

Some recognize the profit of the Scriptures but they use them the wrong way. They think that the Bible's profit consists in its telling us (in code form) when Christ will return (contrast Mark 13:32) or who will win a war or a sporting event. Others open up the Bible at random and put their finger on a verse hoping that it will guide them in decision-making: Should I move house? Should I marry him? Should I become a minister? Where should I go on holiday? etc. Others think that the purpose of Bible reading is to make them happy and feel good about themselves.

The Bible must be used to learn about our Father and the duty He requires of us so that we can glorify Him and enjoy Him forever (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q & A 1, 3). II Timothy 3:16 explains the profit of Scripture in four short phrases. The Bible is profitable "*for doctrine.*" Note that doctrine or teaching is put *first*; many today would place this last or ignore it alto-

gether. Scripture instructs us about the triune God, glorious in His holiness, power and truth, and His eternal purpose with the world, centering in saving His people through faith in Christ crucified and risen (15).

The Scriptures not only teach us the truth but they teach us how to live the truth. They are "*for reproof,*" convicting us and stinging our consciences for our wicked ways. They are also "*for correction.*" By "*reproof*" the Bible shows us our sins; by "*correction*" it tells us what we must do. Moreover, Scripture is "*for instruction in righteousness,*" so that it provides us with disciplined training in godliness. Since the Word is God's hammer, it also empowers us to grow in grace day by day.

---

**It is vital that you believe that  
there is profit in the Bible.**

---

It is vital that you believe that there is profit in the Bible. If you don't, you'll stop reading it on your own, for what good does it do? You'll grow weary in and then cease family devotions. On the other hand believing in the profit of the Scriptures, you'll make diligent use of the Word personally and collectively. You'll search the



Scriptures and not merely “skim” it. And you’ll memorize parts of it and meditate upon it.

So look for profit in the Word in the way that it says it will profit you. Expect to be taught, rebuked, corrected and disciplined in righteousness by the Bible. If you are not profiting, there is something wrong in your spiritual life and you must repent and rediscover the glory of the God-breathed Scriptures.

II Timothy 3:16-17 expresses the *goal* of the Bible: “All Scripture is [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

These verses speak especially of the Christian minister. II Timothy was written to a minister (Timothy). He is addressed as “thou” (15) and called a “man of God” (17). The true minister is a “man of God” because he is shaped by and proclaims God-breathed Scripture. Yet it is evident that these verses also apply to all God’s children.

The argument of the text is easily grasped. First, Scripture teaches, reprove, corrects and disciplines us. Second, this makes us “perfect,” capable and complete. Third, the complete Christian is “thoroughly furnished” (totally equipped) unto all good works.

This teaches us the *sufficiency* of Scripture. All Scripture is profitable for *four key things* (doctrine, reproof, correction, discipline) making Christians *complete* and *thoroughly equipped* unto all good works. The suffi-

## The Virtuous Woman

*What is a virtuous woman? A description you seek?  
She’s a God-fearing woman, mild mannered and meek;  
A woman whose children arise and call blessed;  
Who welcomes all strangers and treats them as guests;*

*A woman who plans for her household by night;  
Who trusts in the Lord with all of her might;  
A woman who cares for her home and family;  
Who leaves off from gossip and speaking idly;*

*A woman who invests her talents and time;  
Who helps to promote God’s wondrous design.  
Her husband, well known within the city’s gate,  
Lifts praises to God for his godly mate.*

*She’s a blessing to all and in all of her ways;  
She trusts in the Lord, whose voice she obeys.  
She teaches her children God’s laws and commands,  
And daily entrusts them into His strong, loving hands.*

*What is a virtuous woman?” There are those who would ask.  
She’s a God-fearing woman, Who’s been blessed with a task.*

---

*\*Author unknown. Reprinted from  
the May/June “News From the Pews”  
Southeast PRC.*

ciency of Scripture does not mean that it is sufficient as a history of Britain or a recipe book, though this does not mean that the Bible is in some way deficient. It is sufficient *for the task for which God has appointed it*. The Bible’s purpose is to “make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (15) and to teach, reprove, correct and discipline us in righteous living. Thus it enables us to do all good works so that we bring glory to God. As *Westminster Confession* 1:6 states, “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary

---

for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture."

---

...you must *require* that sound doctrine and the warnings of Scripture be proclaimed.

---

This means, first, that the minister must preach nothing more and nothing less than the whole counsel of God set forth in sacred Scripture. Second, the people of God must *want* Scripture preached to them with the specific purposes and goals God assigns to it. It will not do to say, "I do not like *doctrine*," or "I don't want to be *reproved* in the preaching," or "I don't like the *discipline* of the Word." God has given Scripture (and the preach-

ing of Scripture) *in order to* teach, rebuke and discipline us. You must not only *want* to be taught and to be exhorted to live godly in Christ Jesus, but you must *require* that sound doctrine and the warnings of Scripture be proclaimed. Thus you must seek out a faithful church where the Word is explained and applied the way II Timothy 3:16-17 directs. Remember, it is as you are taught, rebuked, corrected and disciplined by the preaching of God-breathed Scripture that you are more and more fitted to all good works and experience God's love, joy and peace. ❖

---

*Rev. Stewart is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches to the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland. This series is being reprinted with permission from the Covenant Protestant Reformed Fellowship website, <http://www.cprf.co.uk/> Volume IX, Issues 9 & 10.*

## Short Story Writing Contest

### Eight Prizes Beginning with 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

**A**ttention teachers, students, and anyone else who is willing to yield their pen to some prose. *Beacon Lights* is offering a writing contest that has been designed to work with your school writing instruction. Many of the teachers were introduced to some good strategies for writing stories at the last teacher's convention, and here is some incentive for prize-winning stories. A total of eight \$10 prizes will be awarded: one prize for each grade level (6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>) and one for post high school entries. The prize winning entries may also be published in *Beacon Lights* as well as the second and third place winners. Please contact the business office of *Beacon Lights* for information regarding material for writing stories that was presented at the teacher's convention.

For this contest, we are looking for short stories having a distinctly Reformed perspective. Entries will not be considered for the contest unless they are between 800 and 1600 words, typed, double-spaced and postmarked by June 1, 2005. All entries must have the author's name on the first page along with the word count. The entries will be judged according to the following guidelines: originality, believable plot, character development, appropriate setting, and resolution of the problem.

We look forward to receiving your entry. Please mail it to the business office of *Beacon Lights* no later than June 1, 2005. Please follow the guidelines carefully! Start early and plan on doing lots of revisions to polish it and hone it down to the required length. Keep in mind that a typical double spaced page contains about 200 words and your word processor probably has a word count feature.

# Watching Daily At My Gates

by Cornelius Jonker

## March 1 Read Psalm 119:17-24

For this series of meditations we plan to discuss in brief some of the names, attributes and virtues of God. These can in no wise be in-depth theological treatises on the unspeakable glorious being that is God, nor will we attempt to debate all the distinctions between these terms. We hope, however, that God may be pleased to reveal to us some glimpses of His greatness as we look through Scripture. As we do so, may we humble ourselves before His majesty and consider ourselves greatly blessed that we may serve Him and love Him. You undoubtedly realize that all we know about God is what He Himself has revealed to us in His word. But knowledge alone will profit us nothing unless the Spirit imparts the gift of faith to us. Then we not only know intellectually, but by grace we also believe that word and experience the joy and wonder of His love and mercy. Let us then explore these great wonders of God's revelation to us and pray that our eyes of faith may be opened and our hearts made receptive to these truths. Sing Psalter 333.

## March 2 Read Deuteronomy 6:4-15

In the first article of the Belgic Confession, we read, "We believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God." God reveals Himself to us in many ways. One of these ways is by His names. Our names are temporal and changeable. God is God and His name is unchangeable and reveals who He is. That God is a simple being means that God is one. He is completely independent and sovereign. Many people believe in polytheism, or "many gods." We read in Scripture of the nations with their various idol gods. Even today there are multitudes of people who worship spirits, or heavenly bodies, or imagine that they behold God in various objects of nature. To worship a god that must compete with other gods is abhorrent and unthinkable as well as comfortless and hopeless. Our God is one within Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with no conflict or discord. He is one from all eternity and nothing frustrates His purpose. Let us bow then in humble adoration and extol His great name. Psalter 15.

## March 3 Read Revelation 15:1-4

God is the *Almighty One*. He is pleased to reveal Himself at various times and circumstances as the alone mighty God. He is not merely the mightiest among others and must struggle to gain the victory. He knows no opposition. He uses all things, even the devil and his evil hosts to realize His purpose. Beginning in the book of Genesis when God appeared to Abram as the Almighty God, and reading this same term in numerous passages throughout Scripture, finally culminating in Revelation chapter 21, we see that our God is indeed the Almighty One. When we are beset with fears, and Satan takes advantage of our weaknesses, what a comfort it is to know that the Almighty One is in full control of all things. Nothing can frustrate His counsel, and nothing can separate us from His love in Christ. Sing Psalter 242.

## March 4 Read Psalm 24

Another name for God that appears in Scripture more than fifty times is the "*Lord of hosts*." Twice we read of the term "Lord of Sabaoth" which means the same thing. Our God is not only almighty in His Being, but He is surrounded by a host of angels who worship Him constantly, and willingly do His pleasure. This expresses to us His royal glory and majestic power. Picture in your mind for a moment an earthly king who has become great and powerful with a huge army fully prepared for warfare and conquest. Who would not tremble at their approach? But we would not even dare to compare this earthly king and His armies to the Lord and His hosts. We read in Psalm 2 that the kings of the earth take counsel against the Lord in rebellion. But what is His response? He laughs at them and holds them in derision. Let us bow before this Lord of Hosts, not in dread or unbelief, but in holy awe and godly fear, and by grace abide under the shadow of His protective wings. Psalter 228.

## March 5 Read Exodus 6:1-8

God is known to us by many names. Each one is significant and reveals to us different characteristics of His holiness and perfections. The name *Jehovah*, usually translated as "Lord", is well known to us and is of great comfort to His people. The name Jahweh, or Jehovah, means literally "I Am That I Am", and is explained to Moses in Exodus 3:14. It is in this name that God reveals Himself as the unchangeable covenant God. He loves His people in a covenant friendship in Christ from before the foundation of the world. In Psalm 35:14, we read "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." Can you think of anything more beautiful and picturesque than that? A secret is not made known to an enemy, but to a friend, and where secrets are exchanged, there is intimate friendship and love. Jehovah, the unchangeable One transforms us from children of darkness to children of light and makes us by grace to fear Him. This is not a fear of terror, but of love. Dear reader, do you hear this secret of Jehovah as He speaks to you through the preaching of the Word? God grant that this blessed gospel may fill your heart with assurance and praise. Sing Psalter 71.

## March 6 Read I John 3:1-3

More common and frequent in the New Testament is the name of "*Father*" when referring to God. This name also appears in the Old Testament, to be sure, but usually in a different connotation, namely that of generating or of bringing forth. As a father, God led His people out of bondage and into the land of Canaan. In the New Testament we are taught to address God as "our Father" in childlike faith. As you attend worship today, you confess with your fellow saints and the church of all ages the very first words of the Apostolic Creed: "I believe in God the Father". We are His adopted sons and daughters, and just as earthly parents adopt a child and

---

bestow on it all legal rights of sonship, so we belong to God and are rightfully His through His adoption of us. This is a great wonder of grace, and God even promises us that we shall be like Him. In our flesh we are frail, infirm, and sinful, but one day in glory we shall be changed to be like our heavenly Father perfectly. Let us by grace echo the words “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” Sing Psalter 278.

### **March 7 Read Isaiah 40:25-31**

Our God is the *Creator* of the heaven and the earth. In His eternal counsel, He purposed according to His will to call into being by His word, a creation. This creation perfectly serves God’s purpose. He declared it good and everything about it is adapted to the end that He determined. It must sustain life as we know it, so that man, the crown of creation, could commune with the Creator and enjoy His fellowship. Through this creation the elect must be gathered through the struggle of sin and grace. Christ must appear in this creation to redeem His church and He will return to it as Judge at the last day. The present heaven and earth is a picture of the new heaven and the new earth where righteousness dwells. Do you believe in this Creator, dear reader? Young people, you are exhorted to “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Eccl. 12:1a). Multitudes scoff at the idea of a sovereign Creator and wallow instead in the evil pit of evolutionism. But thanks be to God that by His grace we may embrace this truth regarding our great Creator and look forward to dwelling forever in the new creation purchased for us by the blood of Christ our Savior. Sing Psalter 37.

### **March 8 Read Romans 11:33-36**

One of the attributes of God is His *Independency*. All His attributes and virtues are interwoven and connected with each other because He is so infinitely great. But even though we cannot separate one from another, each has its own distinct characteristics. When we say that God is independent we confess that He is the self-sufficient One who owes His existence to nothing and no one. All things are dependent upon Him. He is always first and none can resist His will. In Psalm 115:3 we read: “But our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased”. On the contrary, we are dependent creatures. When we are born, we are helpless, totally dependent upon others for our very life. Every day we are dependent upon our heavenly Father for our daily bread and for every breath that we take. Above all we are dependent upon God for our spiritual well being, for the gift of a new life in Christ and the Spirit in our hearts so we may respond, “All that I am, I owe to Thee.” Sing Psalter 383.

### **March 9 Read Job 11:7-9**

As we pursue in a limited measure the attributes and virtues of our God, we see glimpses of how great and wonderful is the God whom we are privileged to serve. We will look for a moment at God’s *Infinity*. The dictionary defines the term infinite as “subject to no limitation or external determination.” This means that there are no limitations to God’s being or perfections. He is bound by nothing whatsoever. We are finite creatures; of the earth, earthly and unable to so much as move a muscle in and of ourselves. We are also bound by time and space, and as creatures of the dust, our time on earth will come to an end. By contrast, God is boundless and endless and although it is difficult for our human minds to conceive of such a wonder, yet by faith we embrace this infinite

God who is pleased to reveal Himself to us. Let us then confess with the psalmist “Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unreachable” (Ps. 145:3). Sing Psalter 394.

### **March 10 Read Deuteronomy 32:1-4**

God is the very essence and implication of *Perfection*. There is absolutely no flaw or imperfection in His entire being or in His works. It is inconceivable and even blasphemous to think that God makes mistakes or that we have the right to question His motives. We read in Psalm 19:7, “The law of the Lord is perfect.” Hebrews 12:2 speaks of “that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God,” and in Deuteronomy 32:4 we read, “He is the Rock, his work is perfect.” As creatures, we often use the term “perfect” to describe an object or decision that suits our purpose or fits some situation. But in our sin cursed world there is nothing perfect, nothing without flaws or imperfections. There was only one perfect man who ever trod this earth. That was our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ whom the Father sent in perfect wisdom, and who gave Himself a perfect sacrifice for our redemption. Because of that, we, and all God’s people, will one day dwell in glory and behold all of God’s perfections in Christ. That is surely a glorious prospect to behold and to strive for by His grace. Sing Psalter 40.

### **March 11 Read Psalm 102:25-28**

Closely related to God’s infinity is His *Eternity*. He is not limited to or by time, and lives His endless life in all its infinite perfections. It is difficult to think of this virtue of God apart from our own existence. We see beginnings and endings constantly in our lives, so how can we comprehend eternity? Perhaps “endless time” would be one definition, since Scripture does speak of it in that sense, such as in Ephesians 3:21: “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” When we think of the ungodly who must spend an eternity in hell, we tremble at the very thought of it. In this too, God is just, for the wicked hate Him, and willfully walk in sin and rebellion. But look again at the text we just quoted which points to the endless life of the church. Are you a living member of that church for whom Christ died? By nature we do not deserve a place there, but by His grace and mercy we are engrafted into Christ and nothing can separate us from His love. Thank Him then unceasingly and live a life that is consistent with your confession. Sing Psalter 275.

### **March 12 Read Isaiah 66:1, 2**

We will look today and tomorrow at the virtue or attribute of God that we call His *Omnipresence*. He is at once beyond all the laws of space and yet He completely fills that space. That means that He is *transcendent*, or above all, and that He is also *immanent*, or in all things. That God is transcendent is taught in Scripture such as I Kings 8:27: “but will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” He is beyond the limits of all possible knowledge and experience. This transcendence of God implies that He is not to be identified with the creature or the works of His hands in nature as the Pantheists maintain. Pantheism literally means “all is god,” and since God is all things, the inevitable conclusion must be that there is no God. All we have then is just a world, and therefore no sin, no prayer and no religion. People of God, don’t ever succumb to this heresy, but maintain God’s transcendence with the church of all ages. Sing Psalter 211.

---

### March 13 Read Acts 17:24-28

One of the aspects of God's omnipresence is His *Immanency*. Not only is He transcendent as we saw yesterday, above and beyond all things, but He is also immanent, meaning that He is constantly in all things. In Jeremiah 23:24 we read, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." It is impossible to be separate from, or to escape from God, for in Him we live and move and have our being. The ungodly in this life may shake their fist at God or even deny His existence, yet they will behold Him in hell, for He is even there as a consuming fire. For the child of God, however, this doctrine serves to draw us closer to Him and compels us to say "Search me O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24). Sing Psalter 382

### March 14 Read Psalm 102:25-28

Another attribute of God is His *Immutability*. This means that He is the unchangeable One. He always remains the same. Any change would have to be for the better or for the worse, and that is impossible, for He is a God of infinite perfections. Scripture makes it plain that God cannot change as Malachi 3:6 tells us: "For I am the Lord, I change not...." How must we then explain the many passages that speak of God repenting Himself of an action taken? We insist that God's counsel is unchangeable, but He carries out that counsel in time in harmony with the nature and condition of the creature. He cannot love and hate at the same time as the theory of common grace would have you believe. How can God present a well meant offer to all hearers of the gospel and sincerely desire their salvation when according to His counsel He has no desire or intention to save all who hear? A God who loves today and hates tomorrow is a changeable God and not the God of scripture. People of God, cherish the doctrine of the immutability of God and by grace cling to Him Who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Sing Psalter 86.

### March 15 Read Jeremiah 45:5-11

Our God is *Omnipotent*. He is all-powerful. Nothing can possibly change or resist Him as He carries out His sovereign will and counsel. Does this mean then, that since He can do anything, He is able to sin, or to change, or be tempted? In response we would point out that Scripture surely speaks of many things that God cannot do. He cannot lie, repent, be tempted, or deny Himself. God truly is almighty, able to do all things, but always in harmony with His being and will. When the disciples asked Jesus "Who then can be saved?" He said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Because God's power is absolute, nothing can frustrate the realization of His eternal counsel. All the elect will be saved, not one ever lost! King's hearts are in His hands to turn them whithersoever He pleases. We see the sign of the end unfold before our very eyes and observe the wicked world filling their cup of iniquity. God's omnipotence is a great comfort to the church for we know He loves us and can and will surely save us. Let us bow before Him in humble thanks and trust in this almighty God with all our hearts. Sing Psalter 76.

### March 16 Read Romans 9:13-21

In the preceding meditations we have dealt with the incommunicable attributes of God. Those, strictly speaking, are to be ascribed to God alone. There are also communicable attributes of

God, which in a creaturely manner are reflected in man. We hope to look at those wonderful virtues of God, but before we do, let us look at a term that is frequently and fittingly used in our circles. That is the *Sovereignty* of God. The word itself is not found in our pew bibles, yet it is the embodiment of all those attributes of God that we have discussed. Sovereignty is supreme and unlimited authority with absolute power to enforce that authority. God declares that He "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." It is a terrible indictment of the wicked, who scornfully question His perfect justice, but it gives unspeakable comfort to all the elect who by grace are sorry for their sins and cast themselves before His throne of mercy. Sing Psalter 269.

### March 17 Read Romans 11:33-36

Our God is a God of *Knowledge*. Because He is the source of all knowledge, He completely knows Himself and all His works. In fact His knowledge is actually foreknowledge in the sense that it is a causative, all-determining knowledge. Our knowledge is determined by the things themselves, and only after they exist. Our knowledge is limited and must be learned, therefore it is superficial and temporal and subject to development. Because God knows the end from the beginning, all things are ever before Him. Some would have it that the foreknowledge of God means that He sees beforehand what man's reaction and choice will be, and then He acts accordingly. Then man determines things and not God, which denies His sovereignty. God knows the wicked and determines their end, but never contrary to their willful rejection of Him. God also knows our hearts, which by nature were hearts of stone, but which He transforms to hearts of flesh by the wonder of regeneration. Make this your prayer, dear reader: "Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee" (Ps. 143:8b). Sing Psalter 207.

### March 18 Read I Corinthians 2:6-9

*Wisdom* is that virtue of God whereby He is able to adapt all things by divinely ordained means to the greatest glory of His name. Throughout Scripture, all true wisdom is ascribed to God. He is the all-wise, all discerning One. Scripture also speaks of wisdom in a creaturely sense. We might define it as the ability to use one's knowledge to the best advantage. God's people are exhorted to get wisdom and Proverbs 8:35 states that "whoso findeth me (wisdom) findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord". Contrasted to this is the wisdom of this world that is described as foolishness with God. Let us say with the inspired psalmist "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all" (Ps. 104:24). But especially in the work of redemption and salvation are the riches and depths of God's wisdom revealed. Pray for wisdom, people of God, that we may dedicate our lives to His service and use all our gifts and talents to His glory. Sing Psalter 288.

### March 19 Read Matthew 19:16, 17

"Only God is truly good," said Jesus to the rich young ruler who addressed Him as "Good Master." Because of the apparently casual way he approached Jesus, it was necessary to impress upon him the tremendous implication of this virtue. Here Jesus uses the term in its absolute sense. God's *Goodness* is the implication of His infinite perfection by which He knows Himself as the absolute good, and as such reveals Himself to man. Scripture abounds with passages extolling God's goodness. That He is good to all is true in the sense that He gives good gifts to all. But He never gives

---

these good gifts such as food, rain and sunshine to the wicked in His grace and love. Because His goodness can never be separated from His holiness and justice, only those who fear Him, all His elect children, are the recipients of His mercy, forgiveness and love. People of God, let us together confess with the psalmist: "For thou Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Ps. 86:5). Sing Psalter 233.

### **March 20 Read I John 1:5-7**

How many of us thought of God this morning when we first opened our eyes to the light? Perhaps not too many of us did. But we should have, for the Bible tells us that God is *Light* and in Him is no darkness at all. Before creation there was only darkness, but on the first day God made the light. Surely the darkness too is a gift of God, so that we may sleep, but figuratively, light signifies life whereas darkness implies evil and death. Earthly life as we know it could not be sustained without light. And our spiritual lives could not flourish without the light of the Word. God is called the "Father of lights" in James chapter one, and Jesus not only proclaimed Himself the light of the world, but tells us also that we are lights and must let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. Today, as you worship God with fellow believers, pray that your hearing may be mixed with faith as you listen to that Word which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Sing Psalter 71.

### **March 21 Read I Peter 1:13-16**

Perhaps no other attribute of God is more prominent in Scripture than His *Holiness*. The word itself means ethical purity and freedom from moral defilement. God alone is the Holy One so that He is completely consecrated to Himself and distinct from all creatures. He is the God of eternal and infinite perfections, so glorious that the seraphims covered their faces and feet and cried "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory" (Is. 6:3). However, Holy Writ also speaks of holiness that expresses a relationship such as holy people, holy oil, holy place, etc. These persons or things do not signify an inner spiritual virtue, but they are called holy because they have been separated from common use and consecrated to a particular service of God. People of God, we are all called unto holiness and especially we would address you, young people, who are in the vigor and strength of youth. Pray that you may walk in holiness, set apart from the world, consecrated to God, and experience His rich blessing. Sing Psalter 267.

### **March 22 Read Psalm 11**

God is the only criterion and absolute standard of *Righteousness*. The word itself literally means to be right or straight as a straight line. There are so many aspects to the righteousness of God that it is impossible to do justice to this virtue in a few words. Suffice it to say, that God does not merely possess righteousness or that it cleaves to Him, but righteousness is His very being. Related to this term is the idea of perfect judgment. As judge, God is righteous, for He wills and acts always in conformity and harmony with His infinite holiness. When Abraham confronts the Lord at the impending destruction of Sodom, he exclaims "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" God always deals righteously and justly both with the righteous and with the wicked. We also read of righteousness in connection with man. This, however, is a gift of God's grace, namely the righteousness of Christ imputed to

the elect sinner. Christ justified us in perfect harmony with the will of God and as such, we may one day stand before the tribunal of God and hear those blessed words "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you" (Matt. 25:34). Sing Psalter 6.

### **March 23 Read Isaiah 45:20-23**

Closely related to the virtue of God's righteousness is His *Justice*. It is safe to say that His righteousness and justice are one. However, we may distinguish between the two by saying that His justice is a manifestation of His righteousness. Earthly judges are called to judge rightly, that is, in conformance with the law. A just judge is one who not only knows what is right, but also fearlessly enforces that right. Many earthly judges willfully pervert justice to serve their own interests and are not concerned with what is right. Because God's righteousness and justice cannot be separated, He is forever right and just. Always He is a God of salvation to His chosen people in Christ, but a God of righteous anger and indignation towards the wicked who do not fear Him. People of God, here is our calling as we listen to the inspired prophet in Micah 6:8, "He hath shewed thee O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Sing Psalter 271.

### **March 24 Read Psalm 90:7-14**

Our topic for today is not popular or embraced in most of the church world today. That is the *Anger* or *Wrath* of God. God is presented as a God of love, full of kindness and benevolence who loves all men and winks at sin. Although it is certainly true that God is love, yet Scripture often speaks of His anger. Our God is not only angry with the wicked every day with a holy wrath, but is a consuming fire to them, jealously defending the honor and glory of His name. There is also the anger of man, but most of man's anger is evil. We become angry with God, with our fellow man undeservingly, or with events in our lives, and this is sinful. This kind of anger must be controlled and overcome by humble repentance with a plea for mercy and forgiveness. Scripture does speak of a righteous anger: "Be ye angry and sin not." There are times when we must be angry with a fellow saint should they sin or speak against the truth. But this must be done in humility and mercy, always remembering that our Father in heaven is slow to anger with us and plenteous in mercy. Sing Psalter 102.

### **March 25 Read I John 4:7-9**

On this day commonly called Good Friday, we consider the attribute of God's *Love*. Especially on this day we are constrained to quote I John 4:10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Can you think of a more fitting text to ponder as we see the greatest revelation of God's love manifested to us as we commemorate the bitter and shameful death of our Savior? Just think for a moment, how we, fallen sinners, corrupt and evil and very unlovable by nature, are eternally loved by God through Christ, the crucified One. What depths of love, what boundless mercy was displayed when God sent His Son who willingly died in our place. Our earthly minds cannot comprehend or fathom this great love of God. Only because He loved us first, can we possibly return love to Him and to our neighbor. Thank Him with all your heart, people of God, and go forward in gratitude and obedience. Sing Psalter 376.

---

### **March 26 Read Deuteronomy 7:6-9**

Yesterday in consideration of Good Friday, we saw the supreme manifestation of God's love in sending His Son to die. Today we will try to obtain another glimpse of the attribute of God's *Love*. The word love means to "fasten or join together" with delight. Scripture emphasizes that God is love, first of all with Himself. His life is a life of love and eternally He has fellowship with Himself as the triune God in the bond of infinite perfection. Love is also described as the bond of perfectness. Love, therefore binds and unites two or more persons and implies that we seek one another and rejoice in one another in this bond of perfection which characterizes us in principle. God's love is never a universal love as many teach and promote. His love is particular. Only His elect people chosen eternally in Christ are the objects of His love. He hates the wicked every day and never delights in the objects of His eternal wrath. That we may be the objects of God's love is the greatest treasure imaginable. Let us praise and thank Him and love one another as He has loved us. Sing Psalter 377.

### **March 27 Read Acts 13:26-33**

Can you think of a more fitting day to think upon that amazing power of God whereby He brings life out of death? Today we commemorate the *Resurrection* of Jesus from the dead. This wondrous work of God of re-creation is even more marvelous than the creation of the heavens and earth. Death as we know it is so final and so permanent. For the wicked, death is horrible despair and endless torment in hell. For the believer, however, death has lost its sting and the grave its power. Because Christ is risen from the dead, He has become the first fruits of all who die in Him. God, Who is the resurrection and the life, shall change our vile bodies like unto the glorious body of our Savior, a body that is fitted for the endless glory that awaits us. Think of this great power and love of God as you confess today with your fellow saints: "I believe in the resurrection of the body: and the life everlasting". Then go forward with renewed faith, walking in thankfulness and obedience to the God of our salvation. Sing Psalter 29.

### **March 28 Read Ephesians 2:1-10**

Our God is a God of *Grace*. He proclaimed His name to Moses, on the mount saying "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious..." (Ex. 34:6). We often refer to the word "grace" as "unmerited favor." Although this is true, it could also be said of all God's attributes. The fundamental meaning is a virtue that is charming, beautiful, attractive, and pleasant. Rev. H. Hoeksema defines it as follows: "grace is that divine virtue according to which God is the perfection of all beauty and loveliness, and contemplates Himself as such with infinite delight" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 112). That God is a God of all grace means that He is gracious in Himself. He is also the Author and Source of all grace and apart from Him there can be no grace. Grace is also seen in Scripture as an irresistible, almighty, and efficacious power of God that transforms the dead sinner from his filthy corrupt state to one who is "accepted in the Beloved". Ephesians chapter two describes how we were dead in trespasses and sins, but were made alive by the grace of God through faith and that it is all a gift of God. What a precious gift. What a gracious God who is the very embodiment of all loveliness and perfections. Sing Psalter 164.

### **March 29 Read Ephesians 1:1-6**

Yesterday we saw that grace is an attribute of God, most attractive, all-powerful, irresistible and revealed in the beauty of His

being. Because Scripture always testifies that grace is sovereignly bestowed only on the objects of His electing love and mercy in Christ, it is always particular, never common to all. We read in Ephesians 2, "By grace are ye saved through faith." If the grace of God were common to all men, then all would be saved. This deviation from the truth of Scripture has led to more and more errors, and we see abundant evidence how it destroys the antithesis and embraces amalgamation with the world and its culture. By the providence of God, there were faithful ministers and parishioners who would not and could not subscribe to that common grace theory. Thus the Protestant Reformed Churches were born who vigorously defend the truth of sovereign, free, and particular grace. Young people, hold on to this truth for your sakes and for the sake of the generations following. Sing Psalter 397.

### **March 30 Read I Peter 1:1-5**

"O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever" (Ps. 136:1). Every verse of this psalm rings out with this glad refrain "for his mercy endureth forever." *Mercy* is an attribute that shows forth the divine affection of God. He is not only tenderly affected toward Himself as the highest and only good, but also wills that His people are blessed in Him and therefore He saves them out of their great misery and gives them salvation in Christ. Because the love of God is the ground of His mercy, and because God's love is so great, the Bible often describes His mercy as plenteous, rich, and abundant. The mercy of God also reveals itself as compassion, pity, and kindness toward His afflicted people. This mercy was first displayed when Adam and Eve fell into sin in Paradise. They fell into the arms of God's mercy and every single child of God who ever lived or will live throughout the history of the world will be saved through the mercy of God in Christ. Give thanks unto this God whose mercy endureth forever. Sing Psalter 94.

### **March 31 Read Romans 9:13-18**

Yesterday we saw that God's mercy is a divine affection for Himself as the only blessed and highest good. Today we wish to elaborate a bit more on the objects of that *Mercy* and their subsequent calling. God tells us in Romans chapter nine that He will have mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. God in sovereign and perfect justice makes some the objects of His grace and mercy according to His decree of election. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." The reward of those that are merciful is the obtaining of mercy themselves. Does this mean that our showing mercy is first? That can never be, for by nature we are unmerciful. But God's stream of mercy to us reaches our hearts and makes us merciful in turn. The office of the deacons is to dispense the mercies of Christ officially through the church. However, each of us has a calling to also show mercy and compassion to those whom God places in our path and are in need. Sing Psalter 326.

When I In Awesome Wonder...  
Michigan's Golden Coast  
Winter Sleigh Ride

by Deane Wassink

**H**ow many of you have ever been on a real horse-drawn sleigh ride? For my family it is one of our favorite outdoor activities when there is snow on the ground.

I am afraid that all too often in today's world we have lost the opportunity and appreciation of a quiet time in the woods with God's creatures, observing His handiwork and wonders. If we get into the woods at all in the winter it is likely at breakneck speed on a noisy snowmobile so that we miss most of what is there to see.

I'll never get sick of a sleigh ride. The only noise is the jingle of the harness or brass bells on the horses along with the steady drumming of their hooves in the snow with an occasional snort as they are working. For me it is best when the ground has been frozen solid and then twelve to fourteen inches of fresh snow falls on top of it. The snow flies and sparkles as the horses charge through it.

It is sort of like riding through a postcard with the snow on the trees. Animals leave tracks in the snow. The occasional partridge explodes out of the pines making us jump more than the horses. Often a flock of ducks will take off from the open water of the creek near our house. The children ride on toboggans behind the sleigh while the adults stay warm under blankets as they sit on hay bales.

Usually I hear expressions of amazement from the uninitiated. At times I would even describe the reaction as one of reverence. Often the older family members will sit next to me on the front. Immediately long forgotten stories start to flow about childhood horses and farming experiences.

Afterward, we often sit around a big campfire warming up. We roast marshmallows and drink hot cider or hot chocolate. We are both building and recalling memo-

ries of family, faith and friends. Meanwhile the horses get brushed down and fed as they cool down from all the exertion.

God made us from the very earth we walk on. Because He has made us earthy I believe we need to stay connected to the creation for our own mental, emotional, and, yes, even spiritual wellbeing. When is the last time you paused to feel the snowflakes on your face? When have you listened to the crunch of the snow as you are walking in the sub-zero cold? When is the last time you breathed a prayer of wonder and thanksgiving to your heavenly Father for all the wonders of the creation around you? May His name be praised.

## Sleigh Ride

*Flying snow from pounding hooves,  
Gliding, the sleigh onward moves.  
The trees with white wondrous seem,  
The horses snort and blow out steam.*

*Our hearts are glad with family and friends,  
Thinking of the covenant blessings God sends.  
We feel His breath in the wintry chill,  
We're filled with wonder at the charging thrill.*

*Our hearts are warm as we think on His care,  
The Father feeding His creatures out there.  
If the earth winter's wonder can possess,  
How much more His people will He bless. ❖*

---

*Deane is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan.*



# Respect in the Classroom

by Stefan Griess

**R**espect, the literal meaning being “to look again,” is neither given nor required by the world we live in. If the world does demand honor for authority, it is only for selfish and sinful reasons. The Protestant Reformed teacher, as a witness to the baptism of children must, along with the parents, also “see that these children be instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine..., to the utmost of [his] power.” He earnestly desires to diligently teach the students the fear of the Lord. Respect is at the very heart and core of fearing the Lord and obeying His commands. Respect does not come naturally to man at all, so the students must be taught and led in the way of honoring authority. Even though authority is a matter of the heart, it still must be taught and demanded by the teacher, for God does use this means to mold and shape His church for His glory.

---

**...the end times of Antichrist  
are characterized by extremely  
disobedient and hate-filled  
children.**

---

The disrespect shown to authority and peers on this earth is indicative of fallen man’s natural state of enmity towards God. Man is conceived and born in sin (Ps. 51:5), and his proud heart hates God and the neighbor (Ps. 14:1-3, Rom. 3:10-18). Disrespect can be wrongly encouraged by friends, and Satan uses negative peer pressure to tempt deceitfully wicked hearts. He knows that if he can get covenant children to despise and hate authority, he has won a battle in his fight against God and His Church. The old man of sin must be constantly mortified, or it rises in rebellion against the enthroned Christ reigning in the regenerated heart. Not only does man have his innate sinful nature, but God promises in Scripture that the end times of Antichrist are characterized by extremely disobedient and hate-filled children (Matt. 10:21, Mark 13:12, 11 Tim. 3:2). The recent news reports, which tell of children rising up and murdering

their parents, cannot be ignored. Knowing the end times are present or very near must spur the Protestant Reformed teacher to instruct the students in proper honor and respect.

The dishonoring of authority might be allowed to bloom and grow because of the teacher’s dereliction of duty. Children learn very soon who is really in charge of the classroom when the teacher shows himself to be hesitant to use godly Biblical discipline when necessary. This is not true Christ-like love to let God-given children go uncorrected and allow their sins to be unpunished. God commands that His children be chastened in love when they sin (Prov. 3:11-12, Heb. 12:5-7) as He chastens all of His beloved.

The teacher must deal with the heart. If he does not, the child learns to obey the law to avoid conflict or punishment rather than to obey from the heart to show thankful obedience to God for salvation. When he teaches, he must show how the sovereign God glorifies Himself in all things, and therefore how we must glorify Him because of our knowledge of Him and His creation. The teacher must correctly portray why the Christian is placed on this earth: not for himself, but to respond in gratitude by performing good works to the glory of God.

---

**...a heart that shows honor  
and love for all those in  
authority also reveals a love for  
the neighbor.**

---

God’s fifth commandment is foundational to all the succeeding commands. In other words, a heart that shows honor and love for all those in authority also reveals a love for the neighbor, shows a desire to live chastely and temperately, wants to promote the advantage of the neighbor, loves the truth, and delights in all righteousness. The Protestant Reformed teacher must teach that, when God speaks to Israel of having long life in the land which He gave them, this is a picture of the full realiza-

---

tion of God's promise to us that we shall be given eternity in heaven.

The basis for this loving correction is the place of authority given the teacher by God and the fact that the child is the sole possession of God. This is absolutely essential to know because the teacher disciplines for disrespect towards God and not simply because the teacher has been offended in some way.

How God regards disrespect of authority is quickly understood by the students when they hear the story of the punishment of the children who mocked Elisha (II Kings 2:23-24). God caused two bears to *kill* them! All throughout their history Israel was chastened by Jehovah because they disobeyed Him. On the contrary, obedience is always crowned with the rewards of grace. Noah, by faith, obeyed God by building the ark when there had not yet been rain. He and his family were saved from the flood by God's grace and mercy. When the students are shown from *Scripture* their obligations and duties in honoring authority, the heart is affected because *God has spoken*.

Just as the parents are called by God to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (Eph. 6:4) the same must be carried over into the classroom so that there is the consistency that what is taught in the godly Reformed Christian home is also upheld at school. They must be taught that their responsibility is to show "all honor, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction." (Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 104). The Protestant Reformed teacher clearly shows to the class that obedience and honor to God go hand-in-hand and are inseparable. The students must know that they ought to be thankful to God not only for their parents and teachers, but also for their pastors and elders. It is the teaching and ruling

elders' duty to tend the flock, and they are the means God uses to watch over His people's souls.

The teacher must lead God's children in living under God's ever faithful eye rather than living for the approval of peers. Setting forth the holiness of Jehovah must cause the children to see how they ought to strive with all their hearts to be holy (Lev. 19:2, I Pet. 1:15).

With all of the obligations and responsibilities the teacher has concerning God-given youth, it is the grace and blessing of God that the Protestant Reformed teacher needs to accomplish this all-consuming task. Though the teacher may not always be brought to his physical knees in prayer, he is spiritually "brought to the knees" to pray in his heart. He knows that though he can speak to the hearts of his students by using God's Word for instruction, it is only God who, by His Holy Spirit, can change the heart. And oh! how the teacher knows from his own experience that the heart needs the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ for sorrow, confession, and repentance. How utterly futile is the teacher's labor except the Lord work in and through it!

At the end of the school day the teacher leads the class in prayer that God "would give us humble hearts to receive godly instruction, to honor and love all authority, and to obey God's commands from the heart." When he has graded all the papers and has prepared for the next day, he thanks God from the depth of his soul that He has shown His faithfulness to him once again in that day to carry out his task. He implores God for his great need to be patient and forbearing. He prays for wisdom to instruct His children and for God's continued grace to use him as a weak means to fulfill His will. ❖

---

*Stefan is a member of the Protetant Reformed Church in Loveland, Colorado. He wrote this essay for the Protestant Reformed Scholarship.*

---

## Where We Stand

# Drama: A History

by Aric Bleyenbergh

In this article I would like to go back to drama in its earliest stages. It is not my intention, completely, to argue the legitimacy of drama in the lives of the Chris-

tian today. Nor is it my intention to speak of what exactly drama is and all its elements. For that I would direct the reader to the pamphlets or *Standard Bearer* ar-

---

ticles already written on this subject, including the new articles by Professor Russell Dykstra.

Drama goes back farther than many of us probably thought or knew. One might think it began in the Renaissance with the love for the “arts,” but study into its history brings us much farther back in time.

According to theatrical historians drama began in early Egypt and made its way to Greece.

### Greece

In the wild hills and deep ravines of mountainous Greece the greatest drama the world has ever known was created. In the cold, clear air of dawn, the priests and choric singers assembled with the populace of the cities to celebrate the Dionysiac rites. Out of the dithyramb, their song of intoxicated rejoicing at the rebirth of Dionysos, God of Wine and Fertility, tragedy was born....

...According to Herodotus, the Dionysiac festival had its inception in Egypt and was transferred to Attica. This festival is commonly considered the fountain head of the theatre in Greece. The date of the transfer to Greece is unknown but evidence of Greek drama in Syria exists from about 1250 B.C.... The first of the City *Dionysia* (festivals AB) seem to have taken place in 534 B.C. (*A History of Theatre* pp. 8, 9, by George Freedley and John A. Reeves. Crown Pub. copyright 1941, 1955, 1968.)

It is clear that drama was born out of pagan worship. These festivals included songs and dances to be performed in honor to their gods. This became such a part of life for them that they built a theatre for their god Dionysos.

As you would expect from a theatre which stems directly from religious worship, there is a *thymele* (altar) which was first located in the center of a circular dancing space for the chorus known as the *orchestra*. This circular arrangement permitted the performance of the dithyramb in honor of Dionysos and the audience arranged themselves around the ring on the hillside and plain. The statue of the god which had been carried in the procession was placed near the altar so that he might enjoy the dithyrambs and later the dramatic performances in his honor.” (Ibid. pp. 26)

Theatre became more popular in the years to come. Dramatists were coming up with new changes and ideas. The actors would wear wigs to represent the different gods or classes of people, masks for representation as well as to make their appearance more visible, and to

make their voices carry. They created movable platforms, changeable backgrounds, flying machines as to take an actor to heaven, etc. “Many of the great impulses of the theatre stem from the Greek. ...[T]he theatre as we know it received wholesome (? AB) stimulus from the Greek thought which created the Renaissance, and so through that, modern drama. (Ibid pp. 31)

### Rome

Theatre began in Rome around 240 B.C. The first plays in Latin were probably just translations from the Greek. Rome was feeling some pressure due to the fact that even with their military strength the Greeks held the authority in the arts, literature and philosophy.

They (Rome A.B.) needed moral and religious legitimacy if their armies were to succeed in controlling the sprawling Greek world...The Romans imported hundreds of statues of Greek gods and equated those gods with their own; and, in a similar way, they imported, translated, and adapted hundreds of Greek texts in order to make Roman theatre part of Greek achievement. (*The Oxford Illustrated History Of The Theatre*, Oxford University Press, 1995. Pp. 49, 50)

By about 200 B.C. Rome devoted forty eight days each year to official dramatic and scenic productions.... So popular were all forms of theatrical art despite the effort on the part of the doughty and virtuous Roman senators to censor the theatre, that the number of these days eventually grew to one hundred seventy five during the fourth century A.D. According to the calendar of Furius Dionysius Philocalus, 354 A.D., these holidays were occupying almost six months of the year. One hundred and one were given over to plays and theatrical entertainment, sixty four to chariot races and ten to gladiatorial combats”. (*History of Theatre*, pp. 35)

This seems to be an enormous amount of time to devote to entertainment, and it undoubtedly is. But compare that to today. Today we can turn on our television sets and watch drama twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred sixty five days a year. We can watch with little interruption. If you have cable your choices of entertainment are probably in the thirties or forties, or maybe more. Even many of our commercials these days are dramatic productions (mini movies). How much time do we spend soaking up the doctrines of the world today, letting Hollywood teach us and our children about this age of tolerance. How we must tolerate other pagan religions. We must tolerate foul corrupt lan-

---

guage, nudity, homosexuality and other “alternative lifestyles.” One might say “Well, I know where I stand, and I know what is right and wrong: I can participate in the dramatic productions of this world without becoming affected.” It is my conviction that that idea is false. We, as God’s people, are the temple of the living God, and what agreement hath the temple with idols. (II Cor. 6:16). We are called to separate ourselves from the unbeliever and to touch not the unclean thing. (vs. 17). Then in chapter 7, verse 1, God calls us to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Our whole lives then we must strive to sanctify ourselves until we are in the Church triumphant.

If one goes out and works, or plays, in the dirt or mud it is inevitable that he gets dirty. The same is true with our spiritual life and our souls. If we watch, or join in, the drama of this world we will get dirty. To think otherwise is foolish. The horrible thing is that once our minds and souls are stained with the filth of this world we are always fighting against it. We easily become desensitized to the sins being portrayed, and as we will notice in the history of the early church that is not a light matter. We always want something new to entice our palates. The same was true in Rome.

Literary drama nearly ended around 65 A.D. Rome continued its drama in the mime, the circus (arena in which dramas were presented, AB), and gladiatorial combat. One of these mimes portrayed the crucifixion of a slave named Laureolus.

...Juvenal tells us that the actor, Lentulus, played the part with such cunning and viciousness that he deserved a true crucifixion at the end of the piece. On some occasions the part of Laureolus was played by a real criminal who actually died in agony on the cross. This was for the benefit of the spectators whose gladiatorial contests had taught them to enjoy bloody and cruel amusements. (*A History of the Theatre*, pp. 44)

Then as today, drama was often used to ridicule Christianity while the Christian Church stood against it.

Then as now, adultery was a favorite theme judging from the fulminations of the contemporary Christian Fathers against it. There were also the mimes which ridiculed Christianity, particularly the ceremony of baptism. Apparently the practice of immersion was extremely amusing to the Latin mind because this is burlesqued over and over again. Our

evidence of this frequently comes from the *Acta Sanctorum* (Acts of the Saints). (Ibid. pp. 45, 46)

In the mid 400s A.D. it is believed that many of the arts were temporarily lost, but were reborn in church drama.

Earlier we have spoken of the condemnation of the stage by the Roman Church which saw its worshipers attending mimetic spectacles and games rather than the holy office of the Mass.... Tertullian and Cyprian (died 258) joined in this vituperative chorus and it found echo in the Church Councils. Those several at Carthage, and at Arras decreed in 452 that actors, *histriones*, might not be admitted to Communion while they plied the trade of acting.... [T]he Trullan Council in 691 threatened the deposition of priest and excommunication of those of the laity who dared to attend them (dramatic performances, AB) ... In the next century, 813, the Council of Tours decreed that the clergy should not witness the obscenity of actors and in 816 the Council at Aix-la-Chapelle again stated that priests must not be present at plays given on the stage or at marriages. Over and over the Church thunders against the theatre. (Ibid. pp. 49, 50)

Despite the efforts of the early church, drama not only continued to exist, but worked its way into the church. The church then was like much of the church world today. Instead of fighting against the sins of the world they invited them in to be used in the church. We see this in churches today as well when they will play a movie, or the Super Bowl, or even an auto auction at a worship service. I do not write this to condemn other churches, but to remind us to take heed to our own practices lest thinking we stand, we fall into these same sins that destroy the church. After all if drama is eventually accepted in the homes of the majority of the church membership, how long until there is no stand against it and it is accepted in our own churches.

Appropriation (for the church, AB) proved more successful than restraint. Christianity overcame paganism by a process of absorption, turning pagan festivals into Christian festivals, pagan temples into churches, and pagan sanctuaries into cemeteries. The pleasures of theatre were introduced into church services, first through antiphonal music, then through formal dramatic enactments, and in a final phase through allowing certain holy days to become anarchic festivals of role reversal.... The medieval world was bi-cultural rather than monocultural, and Christianity had to keep renegotiating its position

---

in relation to a suppressed pagan religion. (*The Oxford Ill. History of the Theatre*, pp. 64, 65, 68)

Throughout the medieval period drama continued to take hold in and out of the church. In the church especially new boundaries were being made. Dramatists would portray any story they felt needed to be told. There were many new “biblical” dramas called mysteries. There were Passion performances which make the heroine to be Mary. There were plays of Abraham and Isaac, plays of Mary, plays of Joseph of Arimathaea, plays of Noah etc. There were also plays of saints, one of which was that a saint would be tied to a board and tortured, while others would pull him between one side of the stage and the other representing heaven and hell. Through this period and into the period of the Renaissance worldliness and entertainment continued while the spiritual life of the church was on a decline.

As we come into the period of the Renaissance I will be brief. Drama continued to thrive, not only in its established home lands, but began to spread like wild fire throughout the world. With nearly the whole world engrossed in this period of “enlightenment,” including much of the church world, one can thank God for the Reformation that He brought to the church.

Certainly, some Reformers did not condemn drama. But this was not the only remnant of corruption that remained to be rooted out until other men of God were raised up to call the church to holiness. (“Renewing the Battle” by Rev. B. Gritters, *Standard Bearer*, vol. 69, pp. 466)

May God grant the church those who continue to stand in the battle against this enemy of the world. ❖

---

*Aric is a member of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan.*

---

Book Review

## Upon This Rock

review by Phil Lotterman

It gives me great pleasure to present a review of the three-volume set of books written by Don Doezema and published and distributed by the Protestant Reformed Sunday School Teachers Association. Don wrote the content of these books many years ago (30 years plus?) when he wrote for the Sunday School paper under the title “The Lesson Story for Today” in the inside pages of the Sunday School paper *Our Guide*.

The material written by Don treated historical and geographical details which dealt with related doctrinal questions. The author himself tell us “... (e)ach lesson was a kind of commentary on the Bible passage for the week—not a verse by verse analysis, but an exposition of the passage in narrative form.” The Sunday School Teachers Association suggested (urged would be a better word) Don to consider making the material available to a wider reading public. And although the Association had never undertaken such a lofty goal, they agreed to take on the project, underwriting the cost and promoting

the book. This trilogy on the New Testament is now available and I urge you to purchase and read this outstanding work. The content of these volumes would be especially helpful for your Bible discussion societies.

As has been mentioned, this exceptional exposition of the New Testament is contained in three volumes: *Jesus Christ: His Earthly Ministry* (vol. 1); *Jesus Christ: His Death and Resurrection* (vol. 2); *Jesus Christ: His Acts Through the Apostles* (vol. 3). Each volume has an extensive Textual Index, Subject Index and an Index of Sources, all of which were prepared by Fred Hanko. Volumes one and two have a map of Palestine in the time of Christ and volume three has four maps showing the journeys of the Apostle Paul. One only has to read the Table of Contents to whet his appetite for the contents of each volume. Don uses the “harmony of the gospels” to further the benefit of the reader. If the above “selling points” are not enough to make you want to purchase the book, take a look at the books themselves.

---

Seldom will you find a more attractive and desirable hard cover book that you will be proud to have on your bookshelf.

Perhaps a little about the contents of each volume is in order. The first volume (473 pages including the indexes) begins with the birth of John the Baptist and concludes with the narrative of the mother of James and John asking Jesus to allow her sons to have the greater place in the kingdom of Heaven. In this volume of sixty-five chapters Mr. Doezeema writes about the historical events in the life of Jesus and treats the many miracles and parables of our Lord in narrative form, applying the “moral of the story” to today’s circumstances in our life. As an example see pages 323 and 324.

The second volume (455 pages including the indexes) begins with the story of blind Bartimaeus’ cry for mercy as Jesus and His disciples are preparing for the imminent suffering and death of the Savior. It concludes with the appearance of the Lord to His disciples where “...it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.” (Luke 24:51) This volume of fifty-two chapters is of most interest because of the extensive research and study of the final days of our Lord. There are very many references to historical as well as the doctrinal applications of the four gospel accounts of His passion and death. One example, which was of special interest to me, is found in chapter 23, pages 166 and 167, which speaks of the institution of the Lord’s Supper. In comparing the Passover meal with the last supper, Don tells the reader of the “ten customary steps of the celebration” of the Passover meal and the circumstances of some of the things that the gospel accounts record as having happened that night. Don also has the uncanny ability to make one feel that he is present at the time of the resurrection with his description of the events on that Easter morning when in chapter 43 he speaks of the appearance to the women and in chapter 44 of the wonder of the grave clothes. Don’t miss this volume!

Volume three (483 pages including the indexes and the four maps) begins with the ascension of Christ and continues with “...all that Jesus began both to do and to teach” (Acts 1:1). As Don writes, “Though Jesus had indeed ascended, His teaching did not by any means cease.” After His ascension He works from heaven through the Apostles. This volume of forty-eight chapters concludes with the final years of the Apostle Paul and his imprisonment by Nero. But Mr. Doezeema does more than just write about the contents of the book of

Acts. He tells the reader about the various epistles of Paul to the churches where he labored. Chapter 31 tells of the need for Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. There is background for the letter to the church at Thessalonica on page 253 and 254. And in the final chapter he explains the letter to Philemon and the second letter to Timothy. I must admit that this volume was the first one I read because some years ago I was the leader of the Men’s and Ladies’ Society and we studied the book of Acts. Oh, how I wish we had Don’s book then! A lot of unanswered questions and problems would have been solved.

When I reflect on Don preparing this material for the Sunday School children, I picture him at his desk with about a dozen (maybe thirty?) reference books around him. He consulted many commentaries and quotes from them. For example, in chapter 40 of volume two he refers to Rev. Vos (3 times), John Calvin (4), Lenski (6), Smith (2), Edersheim (2), Rev. Lubbers (3), Jamieson (1), and Rev. Ophoff (1). And he is not above disagreeing with the “experts”; when, after referring to “noted scholars like Calvin, Smith, Jamieson and Ophoff”, he writes “We prefer, however, with Rev. Lubbers, to consider the flow of blood and water from the side of Jesus to be nothing less than a miracle...”

Mr. Doezeema, who was both teacher and principal at elementary school and high school, is a very gifted storyteller. “He knows how to teach Bible history as it ought to be taught.... for little children, for older children, for early teenagers, and for Sunday School teachers...” (Foreword by Prof Hanko). Even eight-year-old children can read and be edified by these three books. I urge you to purchase them for yourself and your children and then read them.

The three volumes are sold as a complete set of books and the cost is only \$30.00 for the complete set. If you have ever been concerned about what to purchase as a Christmas present (or birthday, graduation or any special occasion) the giving of these books will solve the problem and at the same time will benefit the recipient. The books may be purchased from The Protestant Reformed Sunday School Teachers Association, c/o The Protestant Reformed Seminary, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., SW, Grandville MI 49418.

May the Lord bless you as you read and study these books to the glory of His name. ❖

---

*Phil Lotterman is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.*

# "LITTLE LIGHTS"

## The Ploughboy (1)

*... let it shine!*

by Connie Meyer

The mists of dawn hung in the air as the English farmer and his son emerged from their humble, thatched roof cottage. The boy shivered. The air was cool on this early autumn morn. He welcomed the heat of the old mare as he helped his father harness and hitch her to the plough. They had many furrows to make this day.

"Best get an early start, eh, Lady?" The boy patted the mare's neck and offered her what oats he could ration. He set off with the mare and plough while his father raked nearby.

The ploughboy had a simple life. Pleasant, here in the field. Quiet, except for the jangling of harness and plodding of hooves. Birds provided a song now and then. But another song broke the quiet towards the end of the day—a song from the valley down the road.

The boy turned to see its source. A brown robe bobbed along the way. A traveling friar whistled a tune, obviously enjoying the afternoon.

"Ho—Lady, we need turn one more row and we'll meet the friar as he neareth."

The clergyman saw the farmer and his boy now, too. He waved. *Ah, another coin in the coffer!* They met at the edge of the field.

"Greetings, sir!" said the farmer as he removed his cap.

"Aye, 'tis a beautiful day," answered the friar, "but is it beautiful for your departed loved ones, my friend? I

have here in my parcel a fragment of our Holy Virgin's cloak. How fortunate for you that I've come by! For viewing a relic such as this you take away 1,000 years from purgatory—to be applied to whomever you wish, of course. A mere sixpence, and you may see it."

The farmer squeezed his cap. He hadn't sixpence to spare. But 1,000 years off purgatory! What an opportunity for his dear wife in the grave. He nodded. The boy nodded, too, as he thought of his mother now gone.

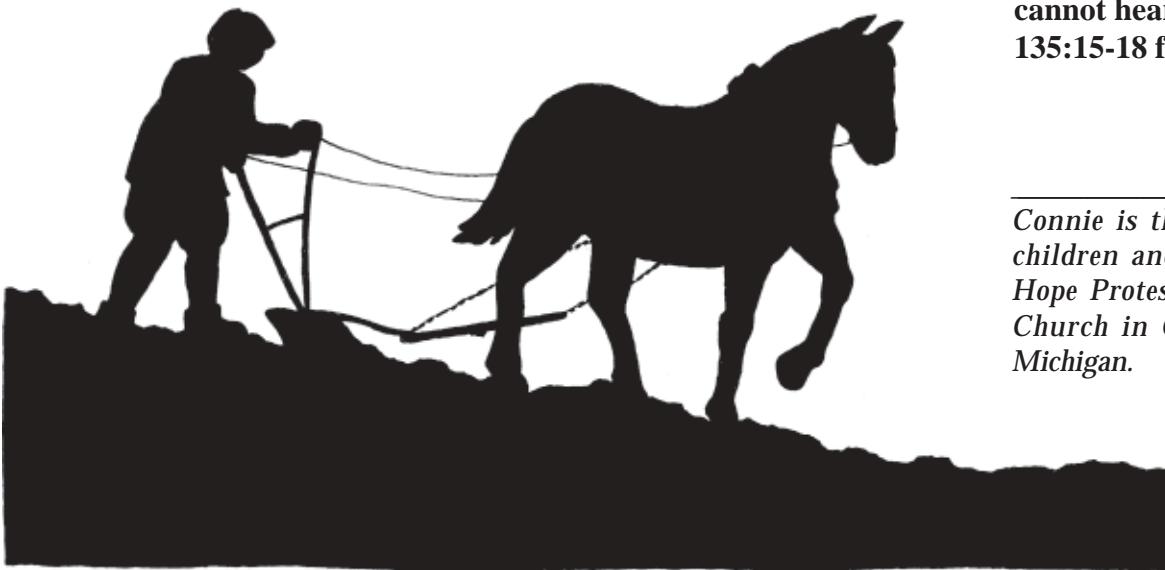
Last year the farmer had seen a bundle of straw from Jesus' manger. Once he had even kissed a bone of St. Thomas in the neighboring town's cathedral. It had cost him dearly, but the fires of purgatory needed to be quenched. What else could he do?

Evening dew was already starting to form as they led the smiling friar to their door. It would be a dense fog that would settle on the ploughboy's abode this damp, cold night... ❖

**What have mouths but cannot speak, eyes but cannot see, and ears but cannot hear? Read Psalm 135:15-18 for the answer!**

---

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



## BEACONLIGHTS

P.O. BOX 144  
Randolph, WI 53956

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

## Church News

### BAPTISMS

*"For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39*

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:  
McKenna Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dan VanDyke—  
Byron Center, MI

Troy Michael and William Henry, sons of Mr. & Mrs.  
Carl Kalsbeek—Faith, MI

Logan John and Jacob Steven, twin sons of Mr. & Mrs.  
Craig Coleman—Grace, MI

Logan Charles, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Decker—  
Holland, MI

Morgan Alise, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan  
VanDerMeulen—Hudsonville, MI

Joshua Grant, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Medema—Peace,  
IL

Ashlee Drew, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Darin Gritters—  
Redlands, CA

Ella Bliss, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. James Holleman—  
South Holland, IL

Sara Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Holleman—  
South Holland, IL

Jonathan Peter, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dale Zandstra—South  
Holland, IL

Emma Claire, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. George Bodbyl  
Jr.—Southwest, MI

Braxton Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kerwin Kooiker—South-  
west, MI

Brenden Ross, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Kuiper—South-  
west, MI

Michael Steven, son of Mr. & Mrs. Murray Geertsma—  
Wingham, Canada

### CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

*"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6*

Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

Mitchell Schimmel—Georgetown, MI

Luke Regnerus—Randolph, WI

Emily Bodbyl—Southwest, MI

Derrick Buitter—Southwest, MI

Teresa Kamps—Southwest, MI

Brent Kuiper—Southwest, MI

Dawn Rau—Southwest, MI

Jaimy VanDonselaar—Southwest, MI

Laura VanPutten—Southwest, MI

Meri Zandstra—Southwest, MI

Eric Traviss—Trinity, MI

### MARRIAGES

*"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14*

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Preston VanDyke and Miss Donna Miedema—Byron  
Center, MI

Mr. Eric Gritters and Miss Alicia Spriensma—Grace, MI