

Beacon Lights

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*"My son, hear the instruction
of thy father, and forsake not
the law of thy mother:"*

Proverbs 1:8

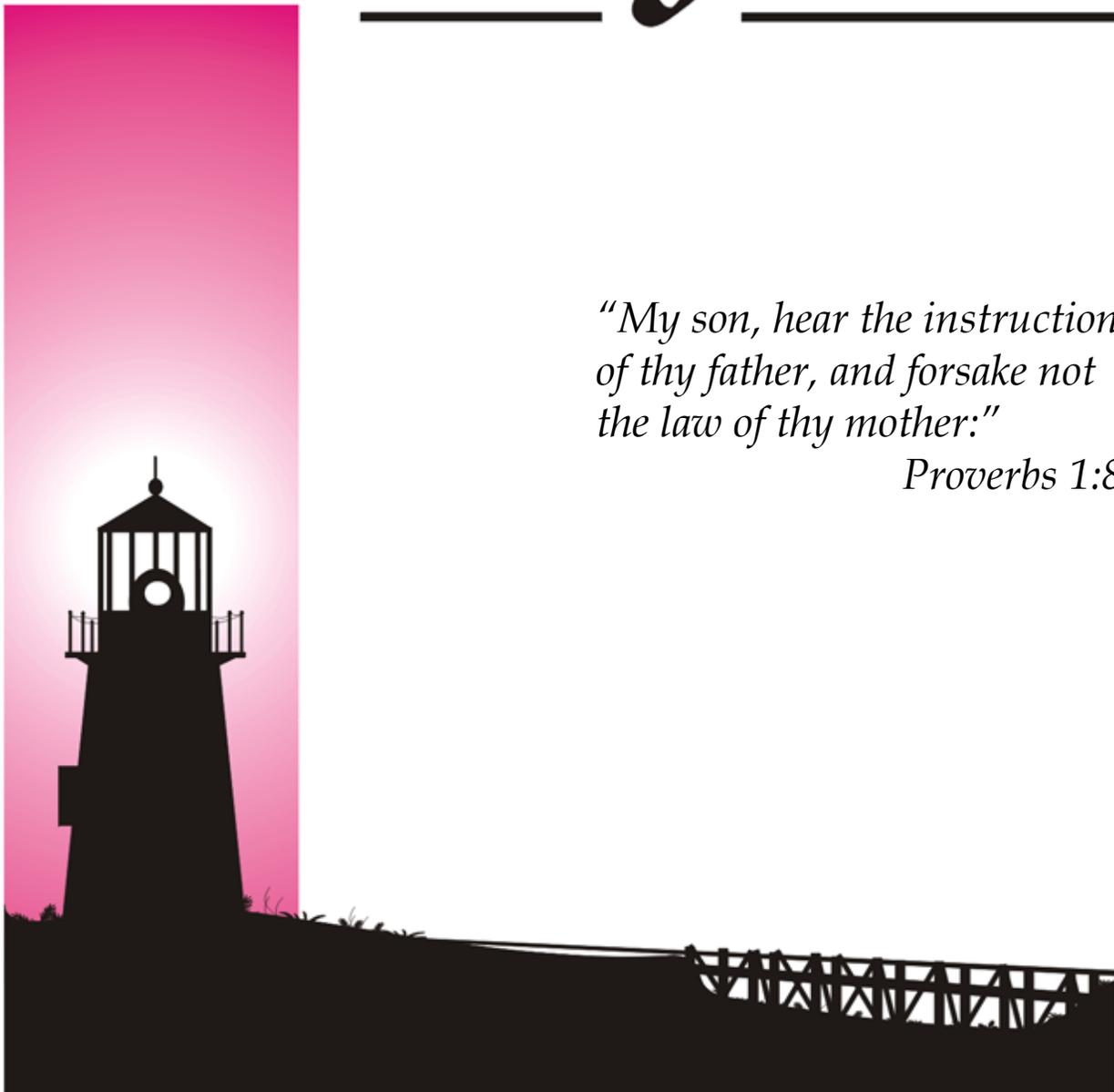


Table of Contents

	EDITORIAL
3	Ascension—Pentecost
	FRUITFUL BRANCHES
4	O Sing Ye Hallelujah
	CREATION THROUGH THE SPECTACLES OF SCRIPTURE
7	A Look at Mushrooms Through the Spectacles of Scripture
	GEM OF THE MONTH
8	Sunday Morning
	DEVOTIONAL
9	Watching Daily At My Gates— May 21 – June 15
	CHURCH FAMILY
13	A Daughter to Her Mother
	CHURCH HISTORY
15	I Remember Herman Hoeksema: Personal Remembrances of a Great Man (8)
18	CHURCH NEWS
	LITTLE LIGHTS
19	500 Years Ago... “Let Us Find the Truth!” (3)

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EDITOR

John Huizenga
Email: editor@beaconlights.org

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BUSINESS OFFICE

Beacon Lights
Jeanine Huizenga
621 Williams Street
Randolph, WI 53956
Phone: (920) 326-6186
Email: subscriptions@beaconlights.org

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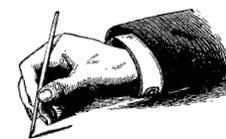
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Ascension—Pentecost

by Rev. C. Hanko — Oak Lawn, Illinois

Triumphant Easter, day of first-fruits, in which Christ arose as Victor over sin, death and the grave. Glorious ascension, for he went through the heavens to Father's throne, where he was crowned with glory and honor to rule over the works of God's hands.

Blessed Pentecost, feast of harvest, when he came to dwell with us in the Spirit, to bless us with all spiritual blessings from heaven and to take us unto himself that we may be where he is.

Without his ascent into heaven there could be no outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, no more than there could be an ascension without the resurrection from the grave. Nor could there be a resurrection unless it was preceded by the atoning death of the cross, no more than there could be a cross unless the Son of God came into the likeness of our sinful flesh, born of the virgin.

Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day and Pentecost are so many links in the chain of our salvation, filling our hearts with joy and praise to God.

Yet Ascension Day is a forgotten occasion. And Pentecost suffers the same lot.

Who would forget Christmas? If for no other reason than that the stores and display windows are decorated in festive array weeks in advance and carols are as popular as turkey on Thanksgiving. Even Good Friday gains recognition, and Easter vies with Christmas in growing popularity. But who bothers about Ascension Day or Pentecost?

Even in the church the interest waxes warm at Christmas time, for the story of the Christ-child never seems to lose its appeal. Also the passion weeks, climaxing in Good Friday, hold our attention to the suffering and death of the cross. And interest once more flames high on Easter as we follow the rapid flow of events on the amazing, glad day of the resurrection. But we need a special note on our memorandum pad to remind us of Ascension Day, and a similar note, twice underscored, not to forget Pentecost.

What may be the reason? Are these last two occasions less important than the others? Is it of lesser importance to the church of Jesus Christ here on earth that Christ ascended to heaven and poured out his Spirit upon the church than that he was born, suffered, died and arose again on the third day? Perish the thought.

Or is it because historical facts, which always have a special appeal to us, are somewhat lacking at these last two occasions? It is true that the story of Christ's ascent into heaven is very brief. The historical facts of Jesus' last appearance to his disciples on the mount, his final words, his being received up into heaven, so that a cloud received him out of their sight, and the sudden appearance of the angels and their message, are all soon told. And the known facts accompanying the outpouring of the Spirit are also few. There was the fact that it was Pentecost and the disciples were all with one accord met in one place awaiting the promise of the Spirit. There were the signs of the rushing, mighty wind, cloven tongues as of fire sitting upon each of them, and the speaking in various languages. There was the gathering of the multitude that had come together to investigate more closely into these things that were noised about, the speaking of the disciples to each in their own language, the reaction of the people and the sermon of Peter, followed by the conversion of about three thousand souls. More facts than could be mentioned about the resurrection. Yet, when we stop to think of it, do we have so many facts immediately connected with the birth of Christ that Christmas should take such a predominant place, even in the church? And even so,

what do we have left if we have nothing but the historical facts of Christ's birth and death and resurrection? What spiritual value lies in a mere story, if we lose ourselves in that? A story cannot save us, no more than it can fill our hearts with praise to God.

The facts of the case seem to be that there is some natural appeal to the historical events connected with Christ's life on earth. That appeal we fail to find in the ascent into heaven and the outpouring of the Spirit. Yet if we lose ourselves in that natural appeal, Christ's birth, suffering, death and resurrection cannot have any real significance for us. Nor will we look forward in anticipation toward the commemoration of Ascension Day and Pentecost.

The shepherds found more than a mere babe in the manger. They found the promised Messiah, the Saviour, born in poverty and shame to bring glory to God and peace on earth in the people of his good pleasure. When Jesus died on the cross the disciples lost more than a friend and master, for they confessed him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. When he died they seemed to have lost all for time and eternity. Therefore the glad day of the resurrection left Mary Magdalene without her Rabboni, but enriched her and all the true disciples with the hope of an eternal and blessed reunion in Father's house with its many mansions. The resurrected Lord has gone into heaven, whither he now dwells and rules over all things, whither he blesses us with all spiritual and eternal blessings in the Spirit, and whence we expect him in that day when he will change our vile bodies into the likeness of his glorious body. Christ in heaven means more to us than his presence on earth could ever mean. Besides, he is busily engaged in preparing a place for us there, and preparing us for that place, that we may be where he is. And he will take us unto himself in a perfect and eternal reunion in glory.

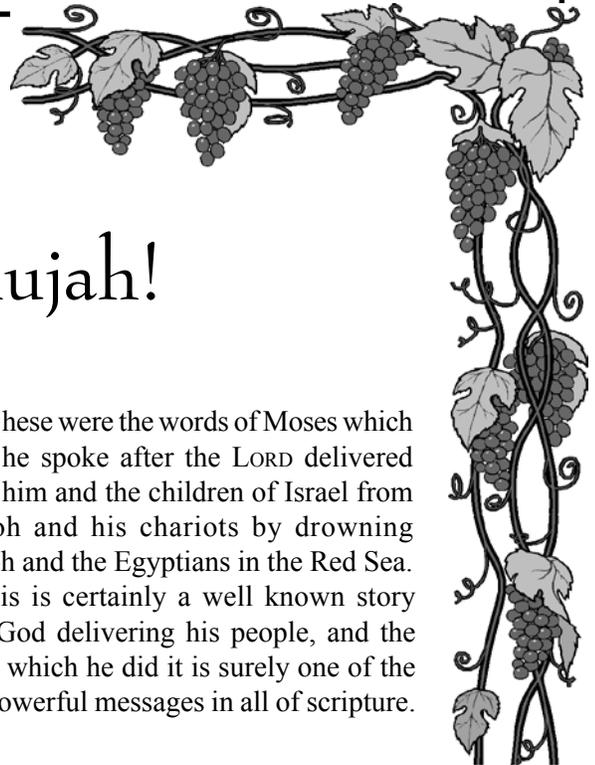
Of that we are assured through his Spirit in our hearts. Triumphant Easter.

Glorious Ascension.

Blessed Pentecost. ❖

The late Rev. C. Hanko was a minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches from 1929-1977. This article was reprinted from May, 1943 Beacon Lights.

Fruitful Branches



○ Sing Ye, Hallelujah!

by Dan Bergman

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.”

Exodus 15:1-2

These were the words of Moses which he spoke after the LORD delivered him and the children of Israel from Pharaoh and his chariots by drowning Pharaoh and the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

This is certainly a well known story about God delivering his people, and the way in which he did it is surely one of the most powerful messages in all of scripture.

What is interesting to note about this is how Moses and the children of Israel responded—they sang unto the LORD! Is that how you and I would have responded?

Let us take a moment to look at that question and a few others that come to mind when we talk about singing. I am not sure how much it is really thought about when it comes to singing. We may, unfortunately, sing and talk about singing out of custom and tradition without actually putting much thought into it. There are many questions that may come to mind when we think about singing. Why do we sing? What do we sing about? Do we sing only in church? These are only a few questions that may come up. I will refer to and answer these questions and a few more throughout this article.

First, we will look at why we sing. We can start out by referring back to Moses and the people of Israel and why they sang. Did they sing just because it was something to do? Did they sing because they were “rubbing it in” the faces of the Egyptians? The answer to both these questions is an obvious, No. The reason is because they were praising God for delivering them out of the hand of Pharaoh and his men. The people were joyful to God for all that he had done and does do for his people as their shepherd. And we are reminded of that in Revelation 15:3; “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

We today, as did Moses and the other saints of the Bible, have a plethora of reasons and examples to praise our great God. And one of the ways we praise him is by singing. One of those reasons is what we find already in Lord’s Day 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism. We all know the well-known Q&A.

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

I initially had only part of the answer, but then thought against it since the reason we should rejoice is found in the entire answer. How beautiful that answer is that we, by God’s grace, can give from our heart and soul.

For, as we find in Psalm 139:14, we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

The psalmist David spoke in the book of Psalms of why he glorifies God with singing. In Psalm 13:6 he mentions how he will sing unto the LORD “because he hath dealt bountifully with me.” He writes in Psalm 71:23 of how the LORD has redeemed his soul. Throughout scripture it speaks of the wondrous works of God. I Chronicles 16 is entitled a *Psalm of Thanksgiving*. In that chapter we find the words “wondrous works” and “marvellous works” mentioned at least in three different verses (9, 12, 24). The word “sing” is found approximately 70 times in the Psalms alone. A few of those passages, aside from the ones already mentioned, are: Psalm 30:4; 47:1-2, 6-7; 104:33; 149:1. In Psalm 89:1, the psalmist writes that he “will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever.” Also, let us remember the words which we find in the first part of Psalm 92. There we read; “It is good to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praise unto thy name, O most High: To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.” We even find the importance for singing here in the *Beacon Lights* under “Watching Daily At My Gates,” where at the end of each devotional it says to sing Psalter ____.

Why do I mention all of this? Because, even after we think about all those things which God does and hath done and will do, we still—as a result of our sinful nature—have a tendency to not sing the way in which we ought. As I mentioned earlier, we may very likely do it merely out of habit. If you were to look up the definition for the word “sing” in the dictionary, *Webster’s* definition would read; “utter words or sounds musically.” In a [worldly] sense that is true. However, as believers we must sing from the heart, for we are singing to our God. I am not saying that you must have your mouth open wide enough that you can have three fingers horizontally stacked together and be able to put them between your teeth (as you were probably shown and taught in grade school or junior high). It does mean, however, that you should sing with joy in your heart where it can be seen on your face. Just remember the next time you do sing, that whether or not others see your heart expressed on your face, God can always see your heart. We should, as we find in Psalm 9 and Psalter #17, sing with these words in mind; “O Lord Most High, with *all my heart* Thy wondrous works I will proclaim; I will be glad and give Thee thanks And sing the praises of Thy Name” [emphasis mine].

As I mentioned in my previous article about how our church attire can reflect our inner attitude, so it is true

with singing; the attire we wear on our heart can reflect through our singing. Remember, it doesn't matter how good you sound or whether you can read music. What matters is whether or not you sing joyfully and thankfully to God.

When we are contemplating whether or not we feel like singing, we should think about these words; "Sing praises to the Lord Most High, To Him Who doth in Zion dwell" (Psalter #17, stanza 5).

Or these words we find in Psalter #50, which is based on Psalm 22: "Come, ye that fear Jehovah, Ye saints, your voices raise; Come, stand in awe before Him, and sing His glorious praise." Let us not forget that we must "sing to the Lord with a cheerful voice" (Psalter#268, stanza 1). Why? "Because the Lord our God is good" (Psalter #268, stanza 4).

In Lord's Day 2, Q & A 4 we read, "What doth the law of God require of us?" We hear that answer every Sabbath morning. We hear the pastor begin to sum up the law with these words; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." So, "serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing" (Psalm 100). We also find it to be our Christian duty, as set forth in Ephesians 5, where it speaks of "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (verse 19).

Now that it has been laid out as to why it is so important that we must sing, we should now take a glimpse into how we are to go about doing this. One great way we do this is when we gather on the Lord's Day—to sing with joy and gladness. Sing with a smile on your face so that all can see the joy and happiness you have in your heart as you express it outwardly and vocally. Another way is to get a small or larger group of people together and sing and fellowship with each other. This is a great way to meet other fellow believers of the same or even a different denomination. There are groups that do this very thing. Keep your eyes and ears open and ask around, for someone either knows of or is a part of one of these wonderful groups already.

Do you really enjoy singing? Have you ever considered joining your church choir or one that is near by? Many of our churches have a choir each year. I personally feel that the number of members of the choir – in at least a few of our churches – is considerably smaller than the number of overall members in the church. That is really too bad since there are many members of the church who do have a good singing voice, have been in choir before and are not any longer for some reason, or do not feel they would be comfortable being in choir, or

have other "reasons" for not being a choir member. Are you hesitant to join because you feel that you do not have the voice it takes or are not a good reader of music? Let me just help you by saying what I said earlier that God does not care what you sound like. God cares if you sing from your heart. Never forget that! The decision whether or not to join choir is of course completely up to you. If you decide to join, you will be welcomed with open arms.

I feel that too many people don't sing emphatically because they are afraid of what they sound like or even what others will think of them. You may think that it is "not cool" to sing, and act as if you do not care. Always remember that God is always watching and deserves our heart-felt praise to him. "And the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: And they sang praises with gladness, and bowed their heads and worshipped" (II Chro. 29:28a, 30b). The next time you do get together with the group to sing, consider these Psalter numbers: #70, taken from Psalm 30; #261 and #424, taken from Psalm 98.

Are you a child of God? Did God send his son Jesus Christ to die on the cross and shed his blood to wash away your sins? Sing ye, Hallelujah! Is the LORD preparing you a place in the clouds of glory where you will someday be with him, where there will be no more pain or sorrow? Sing ye, Hallelujah! God has created all things and is our sovereign ruler. He is in control of everything, for, not even a hair can fall from our head without the hand of God being in control. Do you have faith in and believe that? Sing ye, Hallelujah!

We have an awesome God who is the one true eternal God and King. There are definitely numerous reasons to praise and exalt our great creator. I pray that the next time you and I sing, we will do so from the depths of our souls. Sing ye, Hallelujah! I want to end with these words we find in Psalter #315, which is based on Psalm 177:

*Praise Jehovah, all ye nations
All ye people, praise proclaim;
For His grace and loving-kindness
O sing praises to His Name.
For the greatness of His mercy
Constant praise to Him accord;
Evermore His truth endureth,
Hallelujah, praise the Lord. ❖*

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

A Look at Mushrooms Through the Spectacles of Scripture

by John Huizenga

The April showers bring May flowers...and mushrooms. Yesterday they were nowhere to be seen, but throughout the cool damp night, their ghostly forms appear here and there in the yard and sometimes in perfect circular rings. If you walk through a wooded area, you may find them growing from rotting wood or pushing from under the leaves. After a few dry days, they seem to melt away and disappear.

Although they seem to sprout out of nowhere, they really don't. A mushroom is really only a small part of a much larger organism living underground. The organism itself can be huge, covering acres of ground, but it lives unnoticed until conditions are right and parts of it absorb water and expand into what we know as a mushroom.

Mushrooms are not plants. They have no chlorophyll and do not make food with sunlight and photosynthesis like plants do. Scientists place them the classification of fungi. Beneath the ground they grow as a network of microscopic filaments called hyphae. The filaments produce acids and enzymes that break down organic materials around them into small molecules that can be absorbed and used by the mushroom as food. These fungi, along with other living organisms serve to break down once living material to the point where they can be used again by plants.

The underground body of a mushroom can remain small and restricted to a tree stump, or if unhindered, it can continue to grow beneath the ground for miles, spreading out in all directions. Wherever there is sufficient moisture and organic material present, the fungus will continue to grow and fill the area with its network of threads. It quietly goes about its work of digesting dead plant material and storing away the nutrients until the conditions are right

to send up mushrooms, puffballs, truffles, or other types of "fruiting bodies."

The mushroom itself is able to grow so quickly because it really does not "grow" with cell division, but rather inflates with water. All the cells have been prepared ahead of time to form a "miniature" mushroom that waits until the right temperature and moisture conditions. In order for a mushroom to inflate with water, a plentiful supply of water must be close at hand, and the air must have enough humidity. If the air is too dry, the mushroom will lose water into the air faster than it soaks it up. If it is too wet, the mushroom itself will rot.

The mushroom does not simply inflate for show. The mushroom is responsible for sending out spores that will get caught up with the breeze into the air to be scattered to some other region of the earth where the work of fungi are needed. The spores are like seeds that can grow into another fungus. For this work, God has

designed the mushroom to release the spores at the best time and weather conditions for the spreading of spores. Just after the rain when the air is still heavy with moisture, the mushroom quickly inflates and prepares the spores. As the air dries out spores drop like fine dust from under the canopy of the mushroom and are picked up by the dry rising air that has been heated by the sun. By the time the air has dried and the wind and heat of the day intensifies, the process of releasing spores is complete and the mushroom disappears from sight. Though no longer visible, the organism continues, alive and growing beneath the ground.

As with every other creature of God, a look at it through the spectacles of Scripture reveals the great wisdom and handiwork of God. No detail of



the intricate workings of creation has been overlooked. The life, created by God, indeed fills every nook and cranny of creation and faithfully serves its purpose to the glory of God.

A look at mushrooms through the spectacles of Scripture also displays a truth about the church that remains undetected by the most powerful microscope. You may recall a sermon or catechism instruction about the church where the visible manifestation of the church was explained in distinction from the invisible church as the body of Christ that consists of all the saints throughout

the whole world and throughout all time. We understand the visible church buildings and the gathering together there of local congregations of believers to be but a small visible manifestation of a much larger organism that is unseen. As with mushrooms, the visible manifestation of the church in a particular place may come and go, but the organism remains and continues to grow. ❖

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

Gem of the Month

Sunday Morning

by Sarah Mowery

*The tulips sprang too soon, it seemed:
An April blizzard buried them beneath
eight inches of white.*

*But yesterday's wind banished
the need for coverings,
and the earth has dissolved hers,
baring once again
the brown grass
before the penetrating gaze
of the morning sun.*

*And the tulips,
seated in earthy pews,
extend their pointed limbs in ecstasy,
in praise of Him
who sends Spring.*



Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

May 21 Read John 11:1-6

Notice two things about this short passage of Scripture. First of all we see that sickness is for the glory of God. This may be a hard thing to understand; it certainly was for the disciples. Even though sickness came into the world as a consequence of sin, it serves the ultimate purpose that God may be glorified. For the child of God, as Lazarus undoubtedly was, it is not the way to spiritual damnation. We must always remember this as we sit by the bedside of a loved one, or as we suffer the pains of some sickness ourselves. We must be reminded of the truth of Romans 8:28. The second thing, which I will touch on more later, is the truth of Christ's human nature. We can be assured even in our sickness that Christ has paid for our sins by undergoing in his earthly body a life of suffering on this earth. He loved Lazarus, and he loves us.

May 22 Read John 11:7-16

In these verses we see that Jesus is looking toward the end of his work here on earth. He knew that to go to Lazarus would bring him one step closer to his death. But he also knew that this was ordained of the Father that he might bring salvation to his people. The disciples were having trouble comprehending all of this. We are no better. Even as we watch for Christ's return, we must remember that he is coming, and that this world is not our home. This is not easy sometimes. Let us pray for the grace to look ahead for Christ's return and to watch and pray each day.

May 23 Read John 11:17-27

In verse 25 we see another of the "I Am's" of Christ. Jesus speaks this word of comfort in response to Martha's confession of her faith in Christ. Christ is speaking not only of life in this present world which he will give back to Lazarus, but also of life in the world to come. Our calling is to believe in Christ the Son of God. He is the only way to eternal life. This is another one of John's messages. Only Christ has the words of life. Do we believe this? Do we live this? Let us live

lives that show our belief in Christ who came into the world and died so that we may live.

May 24 Read John 11:28-35

Jesus is coming to the end of his journey on this earth. Both his human and divine natures are touched by the events in front of him. First of all, he sees the pain and suffering caused by the death of Lazarus, his friend. Secondly, he sees those who supposedly are to be comforting but are not. He knows that some of those same Jews would be shouting, "Crucify him!" in a very short time. Jesus's weeping is important for us. It took someone with the same human nature as ours to suffer the death of the cross in order that we would not suffer the pain of eternal death. Let us give thanks for the weeping Jesus who wept for us that we may enter the place where there will be no more weeping.

May 25 Read John 11:36-44

What a joyous scene that must have been for Lazarus's family at that gravesite! It is far different from most family scenes at gravesites. The tears of sorrow flow freely, as earthly ties are broken. But yet there will be a scene of greater joy someday. That will be the day when we are all freed from the bondage of sickness, pain, and death. That will be when Christ will return on the clouds of glory and receive all his church to himself. Then Jesus will not groan because of unbelief, but he will receive our wholehearted praise for all that he has done for us. Let us look through our tears at the grave as a place of victory for our loved ones as they have passed through death and entered the place of eternal rest.

May 26 Read John 11:45-57

There are two items of note in this passage. First of all, you see the two results of the preaching of the Word. Some believed, and some did not and ran to tell the rulers of what Jesus had done. These are always the results of true preaching. Secondly, we see an ungodly man prophesying of the result of Christ's death. His death would bring about salvation for all of God's

people from every land. While Caiaphas was looking out for himself, he unwittingly spoke the truth. It was that truth which is our comfort. Jesus died for us. He did not die for the Jewish nation. In fact, Rome would destroy them approximately forty years later. Jesus died for us. What a comfort! What a blessing!

May 27 Read John 12:1-8

Do we love Jesus as much as Mary did? Are we willing to take what we have and offer it unto him for his sake alone? That is what Mary did. In doing so she showed her love for him at whose feet she loved to sit and hear his words? Are we like Mary? Do we like to hear the words of Christ? Do we love those words so much that we will give up our riches for them? Judas did not see that love because there was no love of Christ for him. Therefore, there was no love in him either. Let us love Jesus who gave his life for our sins. Let us live a life of love for Jesus and the things of his kingdom.

May 28 Read John 12:4-11

Is Jesus callous towards the needs of the poor? The answer, of course, is certainly not. His statement is one of truth, and therefore is stated that we may learn from it? We have poor, in many places in Scripture we find our obligation to care for them; therefore, they are there for us to help. These poor are among us. We do not need to look far away for them. They are on our path. Jesus said that they are always “with” you. What is our response? Do we care for the poor that are on our path? In doing so, we carry out the command to clothe, feed, and visit Christ. Let us busy ourselves carrying out this mandate of Christ.

May 29 Read John 12:12-19

Each of the actions and activities of Jesus was perfectly calculated. This was done, not like man would plan an event, but rather for his disciples’ sake and ultimately for our sake. The disciples would later understand what was done and would use these things in their preaching. For us, we are part of the world that is gone after him. Do we see this? Do we see how God’s providence leads to our salvation in one way or another? Jesus’s triumphal entry is only a small picture of his real triumphal entry when he comes on the clouds of heaven to bring us into eternal glory! Let us watch for our king. Let us do this by praying often and looking at the signs of his coming which are all around us.

May 30 Read John 12:20-30

Verse 24 gives to us a picture that we can carry with us all of our lives. Most of us have some idea of how seed plants grow. When those seeds reside in the package, all that we have is the pretty picture found on the front. But when we place those seeds into the ground—bury them as it were—those seeds sprout and bring forth real fruit. Many of us dream of fresh corn, tomatoes, or beans during the winter. In the summer we get to taste the real thing. Christ had to die. Alive, he was only a picture of what he would be after his death, burial, and then resurrection. We have the promise already today. We are the fruit of his burial. What a blessing that is for us! Thanks be to God for this bountiful gift!

May 31 Read John 12:31-41

By grace we are children of the light. It is not of anything that we can do; it is not of anything that we must do. It is truly by grace alone that we can walk in that light. As we read God’s Word, we can see the light, and by that light we know how we must walk. We have many opportunities today to hear that light, to read that light, and to discuss it. Let us make good use of those opportunities. For the day cometh when the world will attempt to extinguish the light, but we know that light is in our hearts. When we see the glory of that light let us walk in it.

June 1 Read John 12:42-50

Are the words of verse 43 about us? By nature they are. By nature we would not want to do anything that would cause disapproval from those around us. Oh, we might say that we want God’s praise, but when it gets right down to it, what are our actions? We need daily to fight against this. We need to begin the day in prayer asking for help in fighting this sin. We need to ask for this help throughout the day. We need close the day in prayer asking for forgiveness for this sin. In the end what will Christ say? “Well done thou good and faithful servant” or “Depart from me, I never knew you.”

June 2 Read John 13:1-11

Jesus left us a powerful example before he died. The task of washing feet was assigned to the lowest of servants in his day. Yet, that is what he did for us. He came to this earth, humbled himself, and died the death of the cross for our sakes. Are we willing to wash one another’s feet? Are we willing to stoop down and

help those in need even if it is a very menial task? This is what we must do if we are to follow Jesus. This is all part of “loving our neighbors as ourselves.” Let us watch for the opportunities to serve those God has placed in our path even to washing their feet.

June 3 Read John 13:12-20

We have a continuation of yesterday’s thought. Verse 16 sums up those thoughts. Jesus tells the disciples, and in telling the disciples, tells the church that we must wash one another’s feet. We must all serve each other. We are all his servants; and, therefore, this command comes to all of us. It is a specific class of people however. Notice verse 18. “I know whom I have chosen.” Judas was not included in the group of servants. Not all men can serve as Jesus did. Let us show our thankfulness at being chosen by serving one another and all that God places in our path.

June 4 Read John 13:21-30

Another prophecy of Scripture was fulfilled. David in the Psalms had prophesied that a friend would betray Jesus. Like Ahithophel, Judas was a friend in name only. God had foreordained that he would carry out the awful but necessary deed. It was necessary for our salvation. Jesus was walking on the final path of pain and suffering. Each step was marked by another jolt of pain. Each jolt was for us, his elect people. Do we appreciate the depths of the suffering that Jesus endured for us? Do we live lives of thankfulness for these sufferings everyday? Verse 30 marks the beginning of the long night of Jesus’s suffering for us. Let us daily thank him for descending into hell so we do not.

June 5 Read John 13:31-38

Sometimes it is very hard for us to carry out the words of verses 34 and 35. Do we really love all those in the faith? Jesus was speaking to a very small group of men. These were men who had been brought together for a very important purpose, but yet Jesus had to remind them of that Christian virtue of love for the brother. In telling this to the disciples, he tells it to us. The disciples were the representatives of the New Testament church-us. We must love one another even as Christ loves us. We must care for one another even as Christ cares for us. This must be a love that shows in the world. The world hates the church, and the world loves nothing more than to see hatred among members of Christ’s church. Let us heed this commandment of

Christ and love one another today and every day.

June 6 Read John 13:33-38

Once again we are reminded that we cannot follow Jesus by ourselves. Peter thought that it would be easy to follow his Lord. He thought that even following him to the death was possible. Peter would have to learn a very hard lesson. That is the lesson that we must learn. Trying to follow Jesus on our own merits is impossible. The only way we can follow Christ is by grace. We can see that this is true by looking ahead to what happened with Peter. Even after cursing and swearing while denying his Lord, Christ forgave him and took him back. This is what grace is all about. Yes, we are no better than Peter. Yes, we are saved by grace. To God be all the glory!

June 7 Read John 14:1-7

Each of us must face death. It may be our impending death due to old age, or it may be the death of a loved one. Each death of a believer does not happen until Christ has prepared a place for that believer in heaven. When we go through death, we have the confidence that we do not travel the path alone. Christ is the way through that death. The truth of our salvation is sure because that, too, is Christ. Finally, in him we find life. We need not be troubled because our Elder Brother is with us and cares for us. He does this as we walk down life’s path. He does this in such a way that there is nothing that will take us off that path. Let us not be troubled or afraid.

June 8 Read John 14:8-12

Jesus begins to teach the disciples about the truth of his ascension. The disciples still looked for an earthly kingdom. Jesus would first of all show them about the reality of his death which was about twelve hours away. Then he showed them about his resurrection and ascension. For the next seventy-two hours the disciples would experience a whole range of emotions. Later, they would see how it all came to pass and would use the experience for the growth of Christ’s church. As members of that mature church, we must look to the day when Christ comes back. Our believing must be as theirs, as we, too, must believe that Jesus is the Christ who has redeemed us and will return on the clouds of glory and take us to heaven.

June 9 Read John 14:13-18

As Jesus ends his last day on the earth, he leaves his disciples and us with words of immense comfort. Notice verse 14 and 15 first of all. When we ask, it will be granted. Of course we must ask in his name; we must ask that God's will be done. This is understood in these verses. But when we ask, we will be answered, and the answer will be good. Secondly, he reminds us that our love for him will be shown by keeping his commandments. Finally the beautiful words, "I will not leave you comfortless." It does not matter in what situation we find ourselves; we will not be left without his comfort. He comes to us in his Word by the Holy Spirit. He comes to us and comforts us in a way that no type of earthly comfort can match. We can feel his arms around us at all times. Let us ask him for our needs, let us keep his commandments in all that we do, and let us feel the comfort that only Christ can give.

June 10 Read John 14:19-24

Because Jesus lives, we live. What a beautiful thought! In that living we love our Savior. In our loving we serve him by keeping his commandments. All three activities go together. It is obvious that it is not of ourselves that we can live, love, and keep the commandments. They all flow out of that living Savior. The result is that God our Father comes to us and makes his abode with us. And then one day he will take us to the place Christ has prepared for us. What a glorious thought! Thanks be to God!

June 11 Read John 14:25-31

What more beautiful words are there than verse 27. We need to read them often. As we go through this life, quite often we are anything but peaceful. Our worries and concerns need to be taken to our elder Brother as the familiar hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus", states. When Jesus speaks to us "Peace," we may know and have that peace. Then our hearts will not be troubled. Then nothing in this world can shake us. Let us seek that peace and pray for Christ to calm our troubled hearts.

June 12 Read John 15:1-8

Jesus goes on in his discourse in the upper room to instruct his disciples about life without his presence. The figure he uses is very vivid. Those who say that good works come from a person alone must have to ignore these verses. Look at verse 4 and 5 again. With-

out Jesus we cannot bear fruit just as a branch from a grapevine cannot bear fruit unless it is attached to the vine. There are obviously two kinds of branches. There are those who remain on the vine and bring forth much fruit, and those who are detached from the vine and are burned. Let us bring forth those fruits of thankfulness that are foreordained that we should walk in them.

June 13 Read John 15:8-15

Notice the positive emotions throughout this passage. First of all, we see the idea of love. Christ has loved us so much that he laid down his life for us. He calls us to continue in that love. Secondly, we have the idea of joy. Only the people of God can enjoy any kind of joy. True joy is found in Christ and through Christ. Let us not get caught up in the pseudo-joy of the world. Finally, there is friendship. Real friendship flows out of true love and true joy. Christ is our friend. Are we friendly to him and to others? Let us enjoy these fruits of his work on the cross for us.

June 14 Read John 15:12-17

While some would say that verse 16 only applies to the disciples, as we know Scripture applies to all of God's people. We have not chosen Christ. Nothing could be farther from the truth. By nature which of us would? He has chosen us so that we will bring forth good fruit. The beginning of this fruit is our love for all of those chosen by Christ. As we enjoy this day and everyday, let us remember the commandment given by Christ to love one another. As we put that love into action, we will show our love for our Savior.

June 15 Read John 15:18-27

Jesus speaks a truth in the first part of these verses that may be hard for us to bear. The world will hate us. We do not like to hear these words. Many in the world say love, love, love. They would extol a doctrine of toleration. But if a man confess Christ, the world will hate him. How are we living? Do we confess Christ day by day and hour by hour. Do those around us know that we are Christians? Christ tells us to expect hatred, but he also gives to us hope. He has sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who will help us in times of trouble. He will show to us what we must speak. He will comfort us in times of trials. Let us walk in these words. If the world does not hate us, we must examine our walk.

A Daughter to Her Mother

by Trisha Haak

As a child I always loved watching my mom bake a pie. To me it was like watching a fine art in progress. The precision of the ingredients, the exact rolling out of the dough. My favorite part was when she would shape the pie crust with her thumb. Scalloped u-shapes would form around the entire pan like Michelangelo sculpting his David. Then she would place it in the oven and soon the smell would float through the kitchen to the entire house. I could never have any of the pie because it was always for company. But regardless, I enjoyed the process.

Mother is a term that can evoke so many different images. Typically these are images of love and nurture. But for the world today mother can be such a meaningless word. Some children have abusive mothers, mothers in jail, mothers addicted to drugs or even two mothers. Some mothers beat their children and some even commit the unspeakable by murdering their own flesh and blood. Some mothers reverse the role by trying to be their child's friend rather than the parent. The family unit crumbles as the role of mother becomes meaningless and void. So the anarchy of minds prevails resulting in an overindulged society that doesn't know discipline or fortitude. It's the Garden of Eden gone amuck.

On the other side of the antithesis lies the church. Surrounded by this chaos, but by God's grace not a part of it, the church holds certain precious truths that are worth dying for. The truth of God's word, the work of his Son, the fellowship of believers and mothers. They are a crucial part of the church and a beautiful manifestation of how God cares for his people. We are not thrown into this world in a cruel wind on a rainy night left to flounder like fish gulping for air on dry ground. Neither do we incubate in eggs, hatch on our own and waddle off precariously into the jungle of life. God created the role of mother to show us that he is a nurturing God who loves the people that he calls his own.

Where you perhaps looking for the benevolent hand of God the other day and despaired because you couldn't find it? Then perhaps you should have thought of your mother. That God is his infinite wisdom should ordain



such a role is evidence that God truly loves his people. He wanted us to be raised by a loving hand and a helping heart, by chastisement that would guide us and by feet that would walk us into the sanctuary of the church. He wanted us to be raised by mothers who would tell us the story of the cross, of saints who walked by faith and not by sight, and of a better place to come than the world we live in now. My mother loved me because God first loved me in eternity through the work of his son. She spent so many of her years sacrificing for me because Christ did it first on the cross. She instructed me in truth because God commanded it of her. She taught me that my greatest calling was to love God and to be a member of the church that taught his truth.

Perhaps you read this with a scowl on your face. You never had such a mother as this. Perhaps you lost your mother when you were quite young or had a mother who in many ways was no mother at all. Though mother was for you not a physical person, the concept of mother (the love, nurture, and warmth) has always been yours in eternity. The Shepherd of the flock speaks specifically to you. For you who have suffered the loss of mother he gathers into his arms, into the eternal embrace of secure salvation. Mother to you is a higher concept reflected in the divine nature of the Trinity.

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us because God chose
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role in our lives, to be a
part of the things that work
to our salvation.

When I think of the God's wisdom I often think of the mother that he choose for me. No other mother would do. She is a perfect fit. That's how it is for all our mothers. No, they are not perfect. They never will be in this lifetime. But they are the perfect fit for us because God chose them in eternity to play that role in our lives, to be a part of the things that work to our salvation. Whether your mother played the role well or not, whether she was the rock that the waves crashed against or the grains of sand that shifted in the sea waters, she was the mother that God choose for you. And for that fact alone you have no need for another.

Yet sadly we often describe a mother's job as thankless, as if we are content in using such an adjective to describe this high calling. It is as commonplace as any cliché, mother and thankless walking hand in hand, never seeing the one without the other. The world takes their thankfulness and crams it all in one day. That's very typical of the world. They often have to set the moral alarm clock of their minds to go off at a certain time to remind them to think of another. Oh yes, they say, it's Mother's Day. I'll have to send my mom some flowers. And then they go on living as before in selfishness and moral disarray.

It has to be different for us who are believers. Because of the grace of God it has to be different. Our lives are living thank you cards that we send to each other

every moment when we are able. We live to serve and show gratitude to those who sacrifice for us. And if you think of those who have sacrificed the most for you, I daresay your mother would be towards the top of the list. I know mine is. But it isn't always easy to say thank you. Sometimes the words come out of our mouths and they feel like plastic, lifeless, with no meaning. After all, you say thank you to the cashier who hands you a receipt at the grocery store or to the waitress that brought you a refill. Our mothers have done so much more than that for us. So let me help you find the right words to say to her today and for all the days that follow.

"Mother, I would say thank you to for all that you've done for me but the words somehow don't seem enough. There was so much love, so much nurture and guidance. But most importantly, there was the loving act of you bringing me as a baby dressed in white, standing besides my father as I was baptized and given the seal and sign of God's undoubted love. You promised that day that by the grace of God you would do your utmost to instruct me in these doctrines. Nothing monumental. No walls fell that day, no nations rose to glory or power. The world didn't stop to take notice or even care. This event will never be written in their history books. A vow was made that day and to them it might as well have been the ramblings of the incoherent wind.

Yet God used you to bring me to the temple, a certain Hannah of old dedicating her Samuel to the Lord. And you brought me every Sunday after that. And then you brought me to a Christian school and to catechism. (What wondrous love is this, o my soul!) Do you see why "thank you" simply won't do? Because we both know, Mother, that it was all the work of God. It was his hand. So I'll speak to you in the language that you know and love. I'll tell you thank you the way you've always wanted to hear it: Mother, I love Zion. I've walked about her ramparts. I've studied her defenses. And you are right, Mother. She is beautiful. I love her and I love her Maker. So you can let me go and be happy because I am in the everlasting arms. No matter where I am in life, whether beside you or a hundred miles away, I'll always fly away and meet you on golden streets by a crystal river where our Maker dwells and knows us and calls us by name." ❖

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

I Remember Herman Hoeksema: Personal Remembrances of a Great Man (8)

by Prof. David J. Engelsma

A God-given Leader

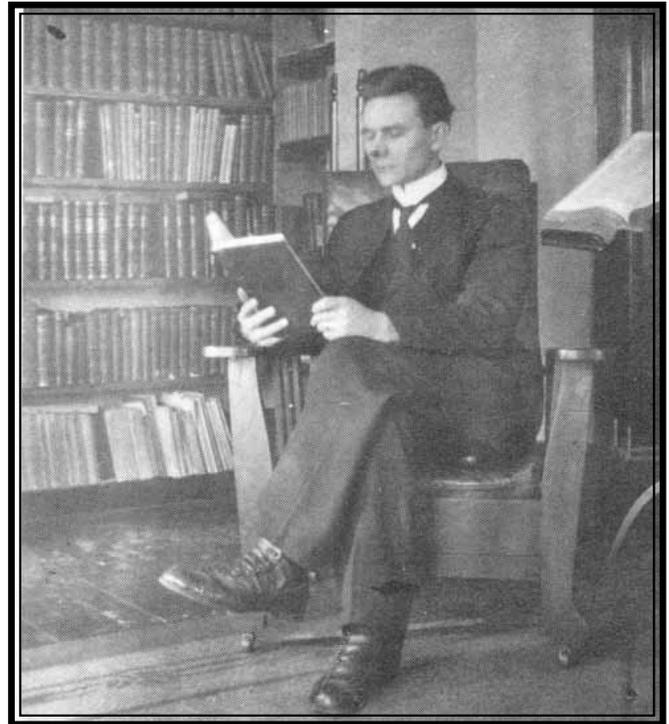
In Richard Newhouse's response to Herman Hoeksema's "*peccavi*" ("I have erred"), "It took him forty years to admit he made a mistake, and then he did it in a language nobody can understand," there was more than met the eye.

The remark reflected the awareness of the members of the Protestant Reformed Churches that Hoeksema was never wrong.

I do not at all refer to his spiritual life. He was a sinful man, with only a small beginning of the new obedience. He confessed this in his congregational prayers, in his sermons, and in all his writings. No theologian humbled the elect sinner, including, of course, himself, more deeply than did Hoeksema. He taught the total depravity of the natural man, unmitigated by common grace; the continuing total depravity of the regenerated child of God *by nature* to the end of his days, rightly applying Romans 7:24 to the believer; the defiling of every good work of the saint with sin; and the grace of God as the source of all good in the Christian.

He mentioned to me once, offhandedly, that his private prayer on the platform at church, in preparation for preaching, always was, "I repent of all my sins; forgive me." "Offhandedly," but with the unmistakable purpose that I should do the same.

Nor do I refer to his personal dealings with others in his everyday life. About this I know very little, and care less. But I do note that I found his dealings with me and with others courteous and brotherly during the three years of my contact with him in the seminary. By all accounts, his conduct in his marriage and family was exemplary. No one could ever blame him for a fault that disqualified him for the ministry. With the rarest exception, during all the long and bitter controversy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, that threatened the very existence of the churches he loved and that must have well-nigh killed him, he stuck doggedly to the doctrinal issue, while his opponents were relentlessly attacking his person.



The pastor in his study" from Therefore Have I Spoken p. 131)

But I refer to his public stands for truth and righteousness, his public instruction to the churches, and his public advice regarding important cases and issues in the churches, whether from the pulpit, in the *Standard Bearer*, in his many books and pamphlets, and at the church assemblies. Throughout his entire, long ministry, he was never, or almost never, wrong. Never did he have to say, "I have erred," whether in English, Dutch, or Latin. Never did he have to recant a position he had taken. Never did he have to admit that he had misled the churches.

(I qualify my "never" by "almost never," because he himself publicly announced a former error regarding a significant issue. Whereas he had once uncritically assumed the tradition that the "innocent party" in a divorce may remarry, he came to see that marriage is a lifelong

bond, unbreakable even by fornication. There were a few other issues during his ministry in the Protestant Reformed Churches about which, if he was not wrong, the Churches did not follow his lead.)

Hoeksema was almost always right.

He was right very early in his ministry, in the Christian Reformed Church. He was right in the “flag controversy” during World War I, as even Christian Reformed historians now openly acknowledge. He was right in the “Bultema Case,” regarding premillennial dispensationalism. He was right in the “Janssen Case,” regarding higher criticism of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. He was right in the “common grace” controversy, regarding a love of God in Jesus Christ that is wider and broader than election and regarding a spiritual union of the church and the anti-Christian world. The fruits of this doctrine in the Christian Reformed Church today are God’s own vindication of Hoeksema’s stand for truth and godliness in 1924.

He continued to be right in the prominent place God gave him in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

The outstanding instance was the warning he sounded against a covenant doctrine of a (saving) grace of God to all baptized children, conditioned by the faith and obedience of the children, and the instruction he gave concerning the unconditional covenant of grace, when in the late 1940s and early 1950s the Protestant Reformed Churches stood at the crossroads. That he was right in his theology of the covenant of grace is being proved, and publicly demonstrated, today by the inevitable development of the doctrine of a conditional covenant in the heresy of the Federal [Covenant] Vision, as also by the bold and widespread teaching that God loves all the baptized children, desiring their salvation, where the Federal [Covenant] Vision may not be countenanced.

But Hoeksema’s instruction concerning the covenant in the controversy of the late 1940s and early 1950s was only the outstanding instance of his being right. There were many other instances, which, though of lesser magnitude, were important for the well-being of the Protestant Reformed Churches. At synod, for example, Hoeksema did not speak often, or quickly. But when he spoke, the synod usually heeded his advice, because he was right.

He was invariably right, because he worked hard and long to prepare himself for the critique or deliberation; because he studied every issue thoroughly; because he had a deep and broad grasp of the Christian faith as confessed by the Reformed church, with regard both to principles and application; because he was widely read in

all branches of theology; and because the Spirit of Christ raised him up to be a leader in the church of Christ, giving him special gifts of mind, will, and speech.

There have always been such leaders.

Luther was one. Calvin was another. There have been others of lesser stature and place. They were men who saw the issues rightly, explained them clearly, and spoke out boldly. Most importantly, they stood for truth and righteousness uncompromisingly and fought for Christ’s cause without regard for the cost to themselves. God has used these men to preserve the church and to lead her deeper into the truth.

May God continue to raise up such men in the Protestant Reformed Churches and in other true churches of Christ!

For all their worth to the church, these men have never been appreciated by all. Their enemies have always reproached them as dictators and popes.

For all their worth to the church, these men have never been appreciated by all. Their enemies have always reproached them as dictators and popes. In his “Life of Calvin,” Theodore Beza observed that Calvin’s enemies slandered the Genevan Reformer by charging that “he was ambitious, forsooth, nay, he even aspired to a new popedom.” Hoeksema suffered the same evil-speaking.

Even their own colleagues chafed under their leadership. Karlstadt’s break with Luther was doctrinal, but personal resentment over Luther’s leadership in Wittenberg also played a part. On his deathbed, Calvin recorded his awareness that the ministers of the neighboring city of Bern, Calvin’s colleagues in the Reformed ministry, “have always feared me more than they loved me. I want them to know that I died in the opinion that they feared, rather than loved, me.”

Just as envy played a powerful role in Jewish officialdom’s delivering of Jesus to Pilate (Mark 15:10), so it was a factor in the expelling of Hoeksema from the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 and in the opposition to Hoeksema by a majority of his colleagues in 1953. (This is not to suggest that there were no doctrinal issues, or that the doctrinal issues were not fundamental. I have established these truths earlier in this series.)

Prominent Christian Reformed theologians and ministers, some of whom Hoeksema had rescued in the “Janssen Case,” turned on him (to his great surprise and grief), because already in those early days of his ministry he was a dominant figure. He was always prepared; he was always convincing; he was always right.

In the great internal controversy of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the late 1940s and early 1950s, colleagues resented Hoeksema’s leadership in the denomination, and were determined to diminish it, if not to destroy it altogether. It was not Hoeksema, but his antagonist in the ministry of First Church, who famously said in the days leading up to the schism, “The issue is simply this, ‘Who is going to be boss of First Church?’” What motivated Hoeksema’s adversaries came out in the vicious attack on his person before the secular court, when they charged that he was determined to rule, and what he could not rule he ruined.

Who will deny that the men specially gifted by the Spirit as leaders in the church did not sometimes contribute to the resentment by their own sinful weaknesses? Even the sympathetic biographers and historians say the same things about them all—Luther, Calvin, Gomarus, Kuyper: strong-willed; outspoken; impatient of contradiction, particularly with regard to the confession of sound doctrine; sometimes fiery of speech. On his deathbed, Calvin confessed, yet once more to his colleagues in Geneva, his occasionally unruly temper.

But what folly, what disregard for the church of Christ, what ingratitude to God, to reject these men on this account!

Their sins are not to be excused. But those weaknesses did not disqualify these men for the position God gave them. It is not even unthinkable that it is exactly a nature prone to such weaknesses that is essential to the use God makes of such men in the church.

What have been the consequences of the rejection of these leaders for those who rejected them? Where have the would-be leaders led their followers?

What did the rejection of Jesus by the envious Jewish officials mean for the nation of Israel?

Where did Andreas Karlstadt lead his followers, having rejected God’s Luther? Into the debacle of the Peasants’ War, the madness of Munster, and scattering.

What were the consequences of the rejection of J. Gresham Machen for the Presbyterian Church in the USA?

The end of the Christian Reformed Church’s rejection of Herman Hoeksema is now plain for all the world to see.

When I was a boy, my father and uncles, committed members of the Protestant Reformed Churches and diligent observers of the church scene, all, over coffee on a Saturday morning would agree that one of the main problems with the Christian Reformed Church was that they did not have Herman Hoeksema as leader. I was not so sure in those days. I am sure today. Where would the Christian Reformed Church be today had it listened to Hoeksema’s instruction and warning concerning being genuinely Reformed in the world and had it respected, rather than resented and rejected, his God-given position of leadership.

And what has happened to those former members of the Protestant Reformed Churches who followed the “boss of First Church” and others out of the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1953. Where are their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren? With rare exception, swallowed up in the Christian Reformed Church, which as I write is in the process of jettisoning the “Three Forms of Unity” as its binding creeds, and publicly, shamefully pleads for the approval of practicing sodomites in its fellowship in its magazine, *The Banner* (see the editorial in the March 2009 issue).

The good news is that, regardless of resentment and rejection, the men God raised up as leaders led. Luther led. Calvin led. Gomarus led. Van Velzen led. Kuyper led. Machen led. Hoeksema led.

Christ saw to it.

For the good of the church.

In Richard Newhouse’s mock-indignation at Hoeksema’s “*peccavi*” was recognition of Hoeksema’s leadership in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

It was recognition of Hoeksema’s true greatness as a leader in Christ’s church.

Hoeksema was always right.

Hoeksema’s response to Newhouse was not only the personal magnanimity (“largeness of soul”) of one who could bear easily what might be considered (but was not intended as) an insult. It was also the spontaneous response of a God-given leader in the church, towards the end of his life and work, who had learned to pay the price, from friend and foe alike, of faithfully carrying out the demanding task that Christ his Lord had thrust upon him.

For the sake of the church. ❖

Prof. Engelsma is professor emeritus of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary.

Church News

BAPTISMS

"He is the LORD our God: ...He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations." Psalm 105:7, 8

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

- Sydney Yvonne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Lubbers—Byron Center, MI
- Jayden Faith, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Grant DeJong—Calvary, IA
- Kate Michelle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel VanEgdom—Doon, IA
- Malea Nicole, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Moelker—Grace, MI
- Oliver Koole, son of Mr. & Mrs. Travis VanderKolk—Grandville, MI
- Casey Randall, son of Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Karsemeyer—Grandville, MI
- Nicole Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Krosschell—Randolph, WI
- Kadence Ann, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Streyle—South Falls, SD/Edgerton, MN
- Taylor Anita, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hanko—Southwest, MI

Maya Brooklyn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Marc Velthouse—Trinity, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." Psalm 119:33

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

- Robert VanTil Jr.—Byron Center, MI
- Stephanie Huizing—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN
- Kyle Terpstra—Faith, MI
- Sara Vander Schaaf—Faith, MI
- Cory VanOverloop—Grace, MI
- Kyle Hanko—Lynden, WA
- Jill Hoffman—Southwest, MI
- Paula Kuiper—Southwest, MI
- Jeremy Essenburg—Trinity, MI
- Jordan Hiemstra—Trinity, MI
- Alex VanOverloop—Trinity, MI
- Andrew VerStrate—Trinity, MI
- Ben VerStrate—Trinity, MI
- Cassie Boer—Trinity, MI
- Brianna Prins—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. Brett VanderVeen and Miss Emily Dorhout—Hull, IA

PRC Family Conference
Edmonton, AB, Canada
July 3-5, 2009



Held at Parkland Immanuel Christian School: 21304-35th Ave. NW Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The Evangelism Committee of First PRC of Edmonton Alberta, Ca is holding a Family Conference July 3-5, 2009 following the topic:

"Calvin and the Christian Family Life"

Prof. David J. Engelsma: "Calvin's Influence on the Family"
 Prof. Barret L. Gritters: "Calvin on the Sanctifying of our Children"
 Rev. John P. Marcus: "Calvin on Family Discipline"

For more info visit our website:
www.edmontonprc.org
 Plan to Attend

Still Available:
The Memoirs of Rev. C. Hanko

Extra copies of the memoirs of Rev. C. Hanko entitled, *Less than the Least*, are available for purchase at \$8 a copy. This book is an easy way to read up on some of the significant events in the history of the PRC. The reader will also gain insights into what the life of a pastor is like. This book is good for all ages and makes a great gift. If you are interested, please contact Sharon Kleyn at dskleyn@sbcglobal.net, (616) 748-8038 or Karen Van Baren at karenvanbaren@sbcglobal.net, (219) 374-6555.

500 Years Ago...

“Let Us Find the Truth!”

(3)

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

His father had wanted him to be a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, so he diligently studied to be a priest. But now, suddenly, word came to Jean Chauvin that his father had changed his mind. “You must study law.” Besides, lawyers make more money. At least that was the concern of Jean’s father. So in 1528, the eighteen-year-old Chauvin prepared to leave Paris and go to the university in Orleans to study law.

Jean did not mind the change. He didn’t care about the money, but lawyers must be logical debaters, and he was good at that. In fact, his cousin Olivetanus was still arguing with him about Martin Luther’s ideas. Salvation was either by grace alone—or it was not by grace at all. “Now what does Scripture say?” Olivetanus had a point. Olivetanus was even translating the Bible into French. Yes, what does Scripture say?

Jean studied the Bible to find out. But he was still not convinced. As a very small boy he had kissed the bones of Saint Anne with his own dear mother! And was he not yet a chaplain in the Church of Rome? But his cousin, and some of his friends—and even some of his learned professors—they were embracing these new Reformation doctrines and teaching them, dangerous though it was. Many a martyr had already been burnt in Paris, even while Jean was there.

Jean sighed as he thought on these things and began his long walk to Orleans. He had plenty of time to think and many miles to go.

Once there, he began his studies in earnest. Each day he would commit his professors’ lectures to memory. Within one year he was capable of lecturing himself! Jean learned Greek in Orleans, too. His professor of Greek, named Wolmar, used the New Testament to teach this language. Wolmar came from Germany and took Lutheran ideas along with him. The Scriptures he used were not lost on his gifted pupil named Chauvin.

After one year at Orleans, Jean and a number of others heard about a famous professor newly arrived at Bourges, so they left to study law there. His Lutheran professor Wolmar moved there, too. It was safer for Protestants in Bourges.

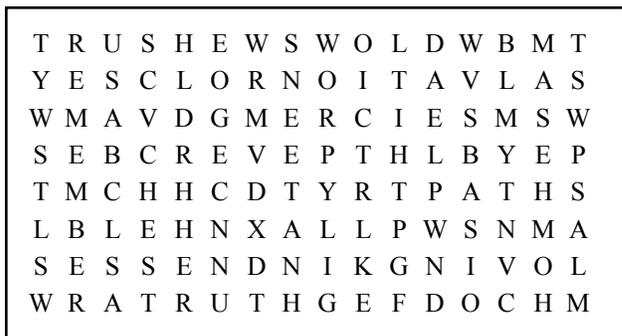
Among his other duties, Wolmar tutored a young boy in his home at Bourges. The boy’s name was Theodore Beza. The twenty-year-old Chauvin became acquainted with the twelve-year-old Beza at Wolmar’s house. In the providence of God, their paths would one day, significantly, cross again.

But for now, Jean Chauvin studied law, and Scripture. He had many learned friends, and we can only imagine the discussions between such men, young and old, who lived in these times of persecution and upheaval in the church—men who sincerely and diligently sought to know the truth.



Find the following underlined words in the puzzle below:

Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Psalm 25:4-6



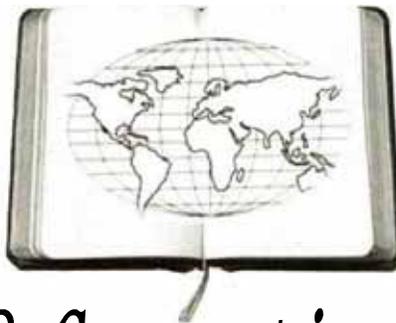
Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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