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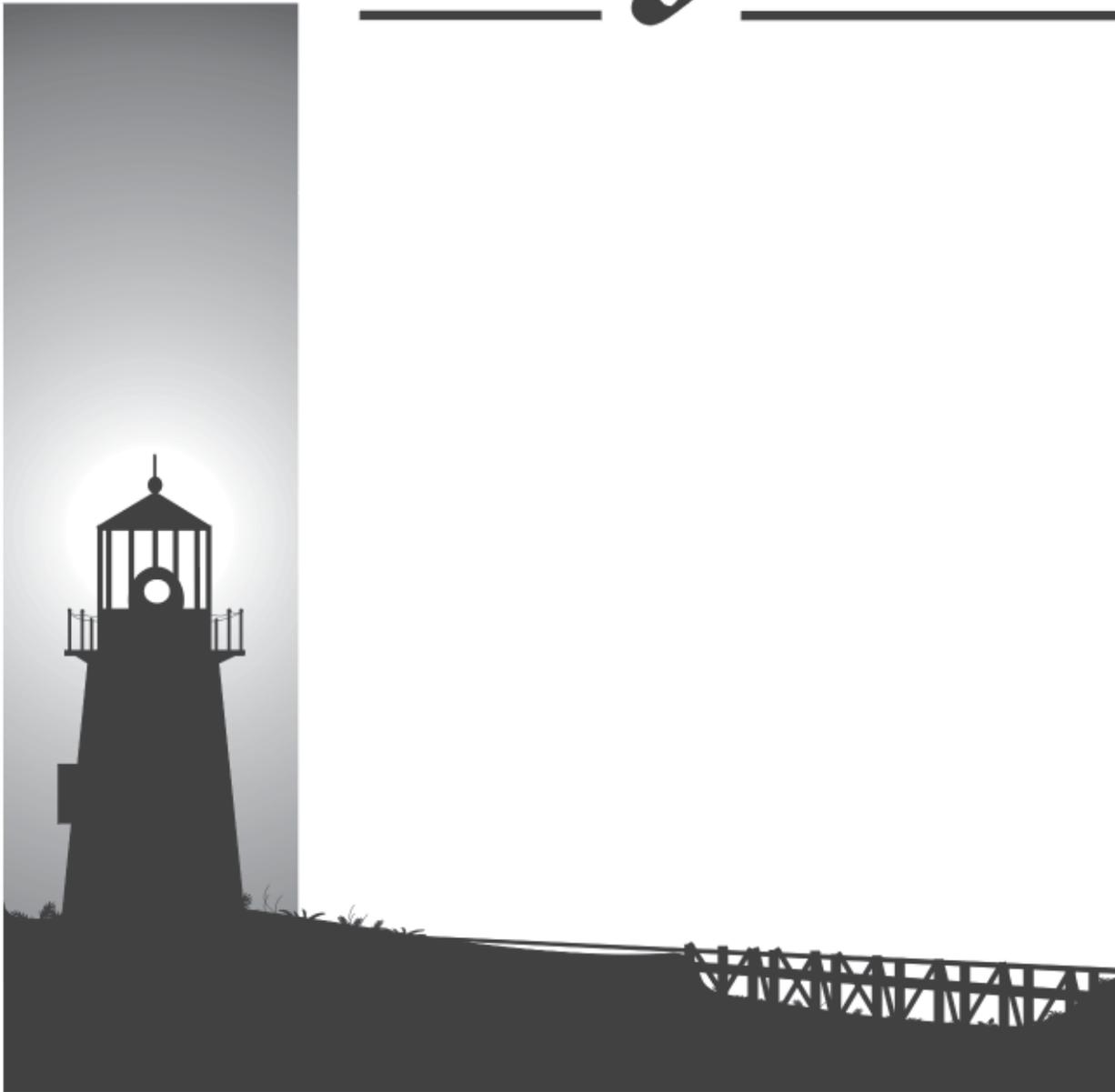


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A 20th Century Version of Proverbs 31:10-31



*Now finding a place in the homes
of our own churches*
by John Huizenga

10 Who can not find a working mother? For her income is very much needed. 11 The heart of her husband is proud of her, for he now has money for a better house and a boat. 12 She will keep him in the upper middle class all the days of her life. 13 She shops diligently to keep up with the latest fashions, and has no need to mend the worn out knees of her children's pants. 14 She calls her family into the minivan and takes them out to eat twice a week. 15 She goes to the grocery store late at night to pick up quick and easy frozen dinners for her family. 16 She desires a new car, and buys it: with her personal income, she pacifies her home with cable television. 17 She joins the health club, she strengthens her mind and body with aerobics. 18 She perceives that her income is good; she stays up late at night to study the trends of the stock market. 19 She has no need for mending or sewing, for the clothing of her family is always new. 20 If it fits into her busy schedule, she may drop off the unwanted clothes at Good Will. 21 She is not afraid of being looked down upon, for all her household are clothed in the latest fashions. 22 She can treat herself with a luxurious fur coat, for she works overtime for her boss. 23 She is highly esteemed among the women as she talks about her work with the ladies at church. 24 She works in a factory, she works in an office, she works as a clerk in the store. 25 She is in control of her life and filled with confidence in her value as a woman independent of her husband; she is secure in her future. 26 She opens her mouth with finesse and in her tongue is the law of philanthropy. 27 She works hard to supply her household with riches, she is not the mother of leisure who sits at home to "baby sit" her own kids. 28 Her children get up in the morning and ask, "where is mother?" Her husband praises her. 29 Many mothers have worked hard at home, but this woman does that and even more! 30 An old car is shameful, and second hand clothes are to be abhorred, but a woman who works outside the home, she shall be praised. 31 Give her that for which she works and let her own works praise her in the gates.

This is by no means an accurate version of Proverbs 31, but it would appear that it is the version that some mothers who work outside the home hold dear. Mothers who stay home to take care of their children often get the feeling that the mothers who work look upon them as ladies of leisure. Mothers who work speak freely and with zeal about their jobs as though they are blessed indeed of God. One begins to wonder, "how would the church treat a family that comes to the deacons with a financial need and refuses to send the mother out of the house to work?" Because these verses in Proverbs 31 praise the hard working mother, they are quickly seized and twisted by women who would like some biblical support for leaving their home and children to work for pay. Let's be clear, Proverbs 31 does not support working mothers; neither does any other text in the Bible.

Who can find a mother who works outside the home? With sadness, we must admit that working mothers are not so difficult to find. "With sadness," I say, because mothers who work outside the home are doing so contrary to the Word of God and to the destruction of their home and church. Proverbs 31 praises the woman who works diligently for her household, but it praises the woman who fears the Lord

by working in obedience to God within the sphere of the home. God instructs the aged women to teach the young married women to “love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed ...”

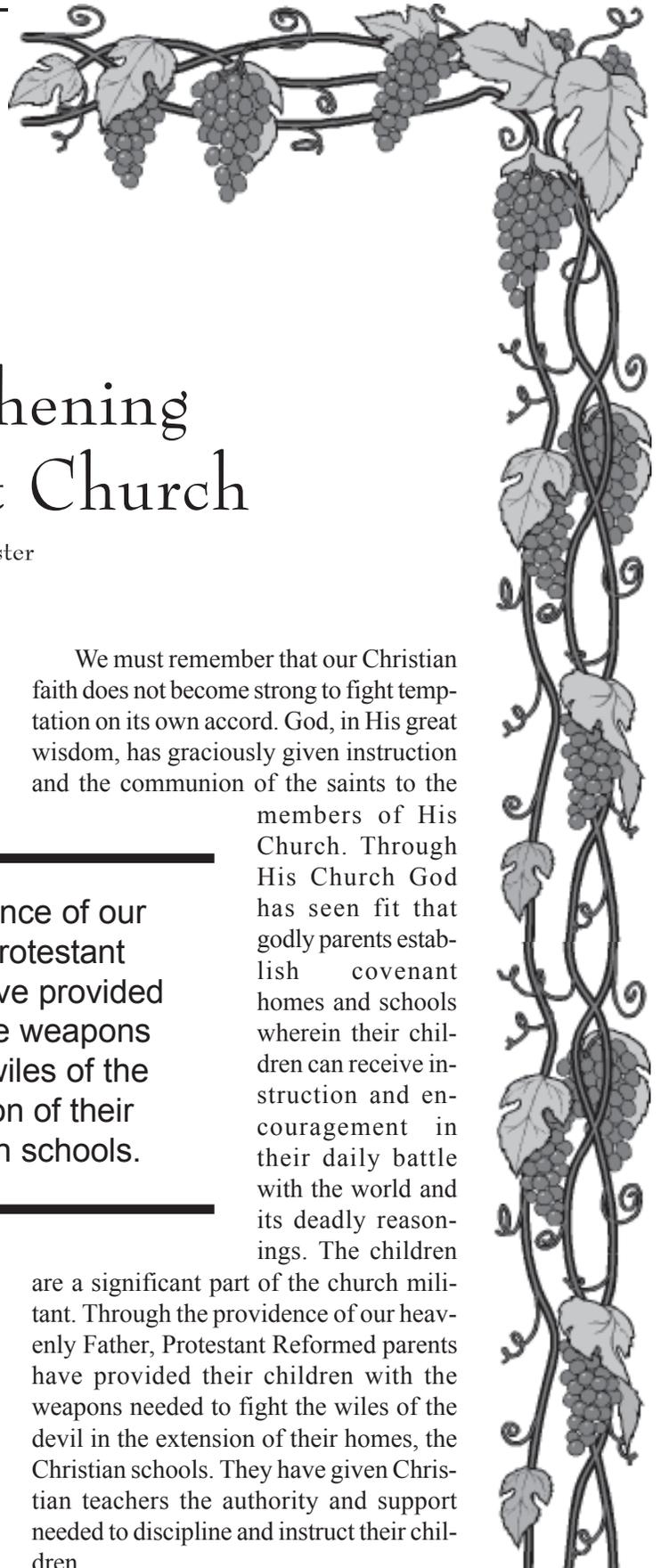
God says in 1 Timothy 5:14 “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” God exhorts the mothers with children at home to stay home and take care of their household. Nowhere does the Word of God encourage or exhort mothers with children at home to let someone else take care of her children and household while she goes out to work and provide the family with an income. Nowhere does the Word of God praise the woman who thinks she can do the work of being a mother and also that work which belongs to the father.

The women who forsake their home to find work elsewhere do so in most cases for the money: the very money which verse 10 declares as nothing in comparison to her value as a mother and homemaker! As a whole, this passage of Scripture describes a woman who is spending money rather than making money. Her spending is done carefully, in accordance with the means available to her, and always for the sake of her household. Whenever possible, she provides clothing and food for her family by producing it right at home. The money she does make by selling that which she makes in her own house is only a small part of her work and certainly does not contribute significantly to their bank account. Her value is not to be found in her ability to make money; rather, her value is the mothering of her children and care for what they have as a family. Her value is far above rubies.

The mother who leaves the home to work sells the great treasure of motherhood for a pittance. To begin with, the mother who leaves her home immediately adds significantly to the cost of living due to the extra transportation, expensive frozen dinners and eating out, and baby sitting. Even if there is a net profit, ten, twenty, or even one hundred thousand dollars extra income is nothing in comparison to the value of a godly mother taking care of every need of her children. A godly mother is so valuable because God uses her to nurture and prepare each individual believer for a joyful life of service to God as a member of the body of Christ. The young child is very tender and powerfully shaped by mother. Every word of instruction and moment of time spent with the child in faith and within the sphere of the godly home adds to the depth of blessed covenant fellowship when the child enters into the life of the church. Her work as mother is, by the grace and power of God, of eternal value. Every absence of mother is a dark spot in the development of the child. Every substitute for mother opens up the child to disfigurement and corruption that will bring suffering and pain. Is that worth a few extra dollars which quickly disappear?

The working mother may boast, “I can work and be a good mother besides.” Others say, “I need to get out of the house awhile to calm my nerves, it makes me a better mother.” These do not realize the full extent or real value of a mother’s work. Proverbs 31 illustrates a woman who is extremely busy with her work as mother and makes clear that her work is not limited to the four walls of her house. Modern conveniences save time, but God provides work to fill that extra time. It is work of service to the church. She takes visitors into her home, she relieves the afflicted, and she helps out the fellow members of the church (1 Timothy 5:10). She does these things with her children and in doing so instructs her children also concerning life within the church.

God says in Proverbs 31:28 that the children know a good mother. They reveal their love for a mother who is with them all the time doing her work faithfully by giving her praise. Children who must make their own lunch, go off to school themselves, and go back to an empty home or baby sitter after school do not readily rise up and praise their mother. Children whose mother are too tired to look over their papers when they come home, too busy to remind the children to take school supplies, not present to lead in prayer and devotions, and spends her prime energy on work for her boss have no reason to praise their mother. They become bitter and resent that their mother sold something so essential for their life in the church for a few extra dollars that quickly disappeared.



The Strengthening of the Militant Church

by Tamara DeMeester

Many scientific theories and discoveries have come into existence in the past century. Incredibly advanced technologies such as cloning and the further advancement of evolutionary theory have recently become significantly entangled in the Christian life. Today's church world has readily embraced these new ideas in an attempt to remain influential and popular with the new-agers and other, "more dignified" scientists and thinkers of modern and future times. Many churches and Christian schools have accepted each new idea in order to escape the strict, antithetical biblical thinking that still characterizes the Protestant Reformed Churches. While the Protestant Reformed denomination is characterized as overly strict and antithetical, we must not conclude that we are immune from the temptations and concepts of the world. As of yet, we must still fight the battle of faith; but armed with the weapons of God's Word and the gift of faith, these new scientific breakthroughs serve not to threaten the Christian faith, but rather to strengthen it.

Through the providence of our heavenly Father, Protestant Reformed parents have provided their children with the weapons needed to fight the wiles of the devil in the extension of their homes, the Christian schools.

We must remember that our Christian faith does not become strong to fight temptation on its own accord. God, in His great wisdom, has graciously given instruction and the communion of the saints to the members of His Church. Through His Church God has seen fit that godly parents establish covenant homes and schools wherein their children can receive instruction and encouragement in their daily battle with the world and its deadly reasonings. The children are a significant part of the church militant. Through the providence of our heavenly Father, Protestant Reformed parents have provided their children with the weapons needed to fight the wiles of the devil in the extension of their homes, the Christian schools. They have given Christian teachers the authority and support needed to discipline and instruct their children.

Teachers in the Protestant Reformed Christian schools have a responsibility that would be overwhelming if it were not for the grace of God. They must emphasize distinctly reformed (more specifically, Protestant Reformed) doctrines in and through each discipline, no matter how difficult it may be. God has entrusted His children to the care of the teachers; therefore, the lessons must reflect the wisdom of His Word. As the extension of the home, the Christian school must teach those areas of study that parents are not qualified to teach, and it must do so in a way that is pleasing to the Lord.

Perhaps one of the most challenging subjects to teach from a Protestant Reformed perspective is science. As technology and scientific theories develop, the more loopholes seem to be thrown at the science teacher. Ethical questions arise such as, “Is man playing God through the technique of cloning?” and concerning evolution, “Does life evolve?” and, “Is adaptation a synonym of evolution?” Each and every day, the Christian teacher faces the challenge of teaching the truth to the Church of the future that must stand firm in the increasingly evil days. As each new scientific discovery attempts to break down the blockade of the church militant, we must remain faithful and remember that our faithful God and Father will always care for us. The Psalms comfort us with these words: “the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil...” (Psalm 121:7). Because Christ won the battle on Calvary and our Protector keeps us in His almighty care, we can go on. Through faith we can continue to teach God’s children.

When seen through the eyes of faith, science remains a challenge but is also one of the most beautiful areas of

study because it helps us to experience directly the orderliness and awesome care our Creator has for each of His creatures. Faith allows us truly to understand that “the worlds were framed by the Word of God so that things which are seen were not made by things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3). God answers our every question in His Word. With His Word as a lamp unto our feet, a light upon our path (Psalm 119:105), and the guide of our life, we cannot help but see the world through the eyes of faith.

Perhaps even more beautiful than science however, is the astounding fact that God not only created us, but that He claims us as His own and so preserves us that even if a hair should fall from our heads, He will know. And not only will He preserve us, but He will strengthen us even through such means as recent scientific breakthroughs. For we know that all things must be subservient to our salvation, thus fashioning us after Christ’s image, and strengthening our faith. These scientific means also serve to make us wiser than all our enemies, for through faith we have a greater understanding of God and His creation than all our worldly teachers (Psalm 112:98–100). Therefore, far from being a danger to the Christian faith, evil means serve to strengthen us so that with each new scientific discovery and with every up-cropping of iniquity, the church militant grows in faith and strength. Under the ever watchful eye of our heavenly Father, the Church fights each new battle with confidence and trust—even from the battlefield of the Protestant Reformed Christian schools. ❖

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

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As a subscriber for nearly 45 years, I would like to express my appreciation for many good articles in the *Beacon Lights*. In the May issue, there are a number of articles that are very appropriate and edifying. Two things that, in my opinion, don’t add to the positive image of the *Beacon Lights* is 1) the “Christian” fiction stories that are finding their way in the magazine, and 2) the articles on the various historical Churches in the Netherlands. I don’t see any real value for the readers and especially take issue with the one on the “Butress Church in Bierum Revisited.”

This article particularly offended me because the implications can be misleading to our young people. First of all, it depicted the Christ by image which is in complete violation of Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 97 which states “God neither can nor may be represented in any way” and Q & A 96 which states “that we in no way represent God by an image.” Secondly, the article leaves the impressions that this *Reformed* Church used this emblem by stating that “It is the seal used since many centuries.”

Although, I am not aware of the individual history on this particular church, I do have reason to believe

that this church followed the norm of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. All the churches (this one was constructed in the “13th century” nearly 300 years prior to the Reformation) built prior to the Reformation followed the practices of the then known church (Romish) with its images, painting, emblems, and other physical representations. Our Reformed fathers purged the building of such thing during the Reformation because they violated the Second Commandment. This happened mainly during what is known as the “Iconoclastic Movements” which took place in the Netherlands in 1566. A book by Abraham Van De Velde, *The Wonders of the Most High*—125 years of history of the United Netherlands from 1550 to 1675 makes this clear. (This book is available from Stillwaters Revival Books.) Van De Velde writes, “From Churches, Chapels, and Cloister: images, painting, and ornaments were cast out.” It is also a known fact that murals and paintings showing emblems were painted over. This is also referenced in the article in the *Beacon Lights* where it states that “The whole building is restored in 1949/1950, when beautiful

formal murals were discovered under the *paint*.” (italics mine-jvb)

It also states that “The choir was built onto the Church in the 14th century” but does not note that this again is a deviation from the practice of the Apostolic Churches. Our Reformed Fathers discontinued choirs and hymns at the time of the Reformation and restored Psalm singing to the congregation.

My conclusion is that the Lord delivered us from those idolatrous practices and we should not give tacit approval via *Beacon Lights*, not even from the purpose of admiring art, i.e. “beautiful formal murals” but rather condemn them for what they are, violations of the First and Second Commandments. There are many “beautiful works of art” in the form of crucifixes, murals, patron saints, etc. displayed in ancient churches in Europe today but let us see them for what they are “accursed idolatry” and make sure that we don’t give approval by displaying pictures in our magazines.

Sincerely,

John Van Baren

Response

We certainly do not want to give approval to the idolatry of the Roman Catholics in *Beacon Lights*. I appreciate your insight into the implications of the May article and trust that the readers of *Beacon Lights* will too. I disagree, however, that the stories and articles on various historical churches in the Netherlands are not edifying or beneficial to the reader. I know children as young as nine years old who pick up *Beacon Lights* to read the stories under the “Story Time” rubric as well as “Little Lights.” These stories are milk for our younger readers and it teaches them where to find good reading for the believer: in *Beacon Lights*, and when they are ready for more solid meat—the *Standard Bearer*. More mature readers may very well belittle these sections of *Beacon Lights*, as is natural seeing they desire meat, but this does not mean they do not edify our readers. I also

want to note in this connection that the stories under “Story Time” are not fiction, but are true stories of real people whose names have been changed.

I also know readers who turn first to the articles on the churches of the Netherlands and then proceed to read the other material in *Beacon Lights*. Many find these articles interesting and the articles also provide a lively and interesting context to our history in the Reformation. The article in this issue provides our readers with Reformation history that, as far as I can tell, has never before been published in English due to the Iron Curtain of Communism. In order to get the material on the Reformation in Slovenia, the author had to go via someone in Australia and via a minister in England who understood the Slovenian language and was trusted by the people there. I personally have never before read this history except from a short historical section on an internet web page from Ljubljana (lee-oo-blee-ahn’-uh).

A Child Asked

by J.P. de Klerk

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Floortje shook her head and proceeded with cleaning the windows.

A while later she saw mother making gestures in the direction of the low table in the living room, where a cup of tea was waiting.

“Thanks! I first finish this job!” said Floortje with a laugh. Her thoughts however went back to James, and she prayed, “Lord, help me to say the right words to this little child.”

Just when she reached the garage doors with her empty bucket, James came back, panting and blowing, with downcast eyes. He left his tricycle behind halfway



down the tiled path and trudged towards her and asked, “Was it silly, what I did? I thought, you have always told me, God made everything, and He still does anything. I thought, what does He look like? You say, he is everywhere, always. Why can I not see Him?”

Floortje put the bucket down and went sitting on her knees.

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

James wrinkled up his forehead a bit and nodded.

“I believe what you say, but I don’t understand it very well.... God is invisible, but He is alive, He is real, I can pray to Him, yes, I knew that...”

Floortje ran her fingers through his hair.

“You are the nicest boy in the whole of Appelscha,” she said. “I will read a story for you.”

They smiled at each other. ❖

J.P.de Klerk is an author and journalist from the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand.

Doesn't Romans 10:9 Mean That We Must Ask Jesus Into Our Hearts?

by Rev. Richard Moore

Question

I was talking with one of your young people, and she told me what you people believe, and I do not agree with her. You see I go to (another denomination) and we believe that you are to ask God or Jesus into your heart. If you disagree then look to Romans 10:9.

Answer

In the first place it is good to hear that young people are discussing together the doctrines of the Word of God. The only answers to our questions concerning faith are those that are given us by God in His infallible Word. And immediately as we consider together questions that arise in our understanding of God's Word we must understand that the Scripture has not many meanings. The Scripture sets forth the one true teaching of God given to His people. The Bible is not of any private interpretation. II Peter 1:20-21. And by the grace of God being given ears to hear and hearts of understanding we shall hear what God says to His church in the Word.

This means that when we turn to the Scripture for the understanding of any truth we may not use any one verse out of the context of the rest of the Scripture. The Scripture is one organic whole that teaches the one truth of God, this means further that the Scripture can have no errors. If there seems to be contradiction then we know this cannot be, the Holy God gives us a Holy (pure) Word. Thus we must understand each text in the context of that one true and Holy Word.

With respect now to salvation we must understand that repeatedly the salvation of the church is set forth in the Word as the work of God, and not of man. This is repeatedly stated in the whole of God's Word, both in the Old and New Testaments. For the moment we take

note that this is literally stated in the passage of God's Word in Ephesians 2:8-10 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Further, we must understand that Jesus says to us that apart from the work of God we cannot even see the things of God's kingdom. He does this in His reply to Nicodemus in John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Again in the context it is evident that it is the Spirit of

What if it were true that salvation was dependent on our asking God or Jesus to come into our hearts. Then we are stronger than God, for He must wait for us to do something. Then I have a God who is no more than I let Him be. How terrible!! For I am a sinner, in fact I am dead in sin apart from God's grace. If salvation is dependent upon me then I shall be forever lost, no hope, no comfort.

God alone that causes us to be born again. As we had nothing to do with our natural birth so we can have nothing to do with our spiritual birth. Paul points out that the fruit of the fall is that God's Word in Genesis 2:17 came to pass. When Adam ate of the tree man died (see Romans 5:12). Further, Paul points out that apart from

the quickening power of God, man is dead in sin and trespasses (Ephesians 2:1-3). The dead man can do nothing to make himself alive, nor can we.

The apostle Paul makes this so clear in the ninth chapter of Romans as well. It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but it is God that showeth mercy.

The Old Testament repeatedly teaches us that same truth. For example, we turn to Ezekiel 36:21-22 and read "But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went." The only reason that true elect Israel is saved or that we are saved is God's Name sake, because of His faithfulness. He does

not save us for our sake, but for His Holy Name's sake. Malachi 3:6 states this same truth emphatically.

It is in the light then of all of Scripture that we read the text that you have noted in your question. Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In the light of all Scripture we must take this word literally that all those confessing with their mouths the Lord and believing in their heart that God hath raised him from the dead, shall be saved. This is truth and it is absolute truth. But who then believe? The answer is—those that God has chosen in Christ, those that He has redeemed by Christ's blood, those that He has quickened (Ephesians 1:3-10), and those that He has powerfully called by the preaching of the Word by the true servants of God that He has sent. These believe and truly confess the Lord Jesus Christ; which is the immediate context of this text—look ahead to the verses 13 and following.

Besides, there is the practical aspect of your question. What if it were true that salvation was dependent on our asking God or Jesus to come into our hearts. Then we are stronger than God, for He must wait for us to do

something. Then I have a God who is no more than I let Him be. How terrible! For I am a sinner, in fact, I am dead in sin apart from God's grace. If salvation is dependent upon me then I shall be forever lost, no hope, no comfort.

But it is not so. My God is Jehovah, the Sovereign God Who rules and governs all things, and Whose work of salvation is His work alone. Then I have comfort because God has given His Only Begotten Son to take away all my sin and to make me His child. He loves me with a saving love, then I have the assurance that nothing can separate me from that love of God. Read Romans 8:28-end in this connection.

I hope this helps. I am glad that you take a sincere interest in the truth, may God grant that you may see the comfort of the true gospel of grace. ❖

Remember to write your questions to me at revmo@mtc1.mtcnet.net Also feel free to write follow up questions.

Rev. Moore is pastor of Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.

Church Family

True and Desirable Fellowship

by Aaron J. Cleveland

Today, more than ever, the devil is at work trying to destroy the Church. His methods are cunning, and as we approach the end, his tactics are increasingly devious. He craftily approaches the Church and her individual members with ever more pernicious attacks. Despite the deadliness of these attacks, they can seem quite harmless, and at first glance, even beneficial.

One of Satan's favorite and seemingly harmless tricks is to offer the Church something that she already has. Another one of his devices is to redefine the meaning of key doctrinal definitions, so as to conform them to the lie. It is with these two devices of Satan in mind that we will look at the concept of "fellowship."

There are in the Church today, many false notions as to what fellowship is. Any activity seems to pass as fellowship. Fellowship is to be had with anyone, even

unbelievers. Fellowship can take place anywhere, even at intensely worldly events. In fact, it seems that fellowship takes place at any event in which people are together.

In order to understand what fellowship is not, we must first understand and come to a knowledge of what TRUE and DESIRABLE fellowship is. Fellowship, in its perfection, is pictured for us in the relationship of the Trinity. There is perfect friendship, association, and agreement among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This perfect fellowship is the basis for all fellowship that we have.

While discussing fellowship, we ought to keep three key components of fellowship in mind. First of all, fellowship involves friendship. True fellowship is only possible with friends. Secondly, fellowship involves association and sharing. Finally, fellowship is possible only

when there is agreement. It is impossible to have fellowship when there is opposition.

Our fellowship is only to be with those who are in Christ. In fact, for the believer, there is no fellowship outside of Christ and those who are in Christ. Christ is the bond of fellowship. All those who are in Christ, belong to the body which is the Church, of which Christ is the Head. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5). This is a key doctrinal point to remember. Christ is the bond that unites the body in fellowship. This point is clearly stated in Q & A 55 of the Heidelberg Catechism where we read: "What do you understand by the *communion of the saints*? First, that all and every one, who believes, being members of Christ, are in common, partakers of him, and of all his riches and gifts."

This fellowship which we have, only in Christ, is a doctrinal fellowship, for it is doctrine which we have in common and share. Doctrine is the basis of our agreement; the doctrine which we have in Christ. In his commentary on Acts 2:42, John Calvin notes that "doctrine is the bond of brotherly fellowship among us." In Amos 3:3 we are asked, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" It is obvious that two can walk and fellowship together if they are one in doctrine.

When we read II Corinthians 6: 14-17, we are reminded of the impossibility of fellowship with those outside of Christ. In the second part of verse 15 we read, "Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" In this passage of Scripture we are commanded to forsake all association and companionship with the world. We are to be separate (vs. 17). We are to be separate because as believers, we all occupy the office of priest. The office of priest involves holiness and separation from the pollution of the world (I Peter 2:9). God has set us apart, as a royal priesthood, for the spiritual worship of Him.

When we do have partnerships with unbelievers in drawing the same yoke (vs. 14), we become partakes in their pollutions. We partake in their unrighteousness and join in their darkness. In fact, anything that is construed as fellowship, that involves drawing the same yoke as the unbeliever, must be exposed for what it is: sin. This is what God's word says. "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (II Cor. 6:14.15).

For these reasons, we must avoid all the so-called fellowship which the world has to offer us, for it is not fellowship at all, but rather that which takes away from the true fellowship which we have in Christ. The fellowship of being one in doctrine and in Christ. We already have fellowship. Satan has nothing to offer but worldimindedness and pollution wrapped in the appealing paper of fellowship.

To these advances of Satan and the world we must say "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" as Nehemiah answered Sanballet and Geshem. This response is recorded for us in Nehemiah 6:3. It is important to note that Nehemiah knew very well that this invitation of Sanballet and Geshem was not meant for his well-being. But rather, his acceptance of this invitation would have led to his certain destruction. Such would certainly be the result of our acceptance of any invitations of fellowship which the world has to offer us.

There are Sanballets and Geshems around today and Satan is working through them harder than ever. But we must be alert. There is no friendship, there is no association, and there is no agreement with the unbeliever. Our friendship is with Christ, and with those who are one in Christ. Our association is with Christ, and with those who are one in Christ. Our agreement is with Christ, and His doctrine, and with those who are one in Christ.

Our fellowship is not the spiritually void fellowship that is found in the bleachers at a basketball game, as some would maintain. Neither is our fellowship that of activity after activity, night after night, week after week. Rather, ours is a spiritual fellowship of doctrine. The fellowship to be found in the reading and discussion of God's word. The fellowship which we read of in the second half of answer 55 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "secondly, that every one must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully, to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members." And what are these gifts? In reading Romans 12 we have a comprehensive list of these gifts. In the proper exercise of these gifts we have fellowship.

Is this the kind of fellowship we desire? By God's grace it is. For it is in the way of this fellowship that we are built up spiritually. It is in the way of this fellowship that honor and glory is given to God, through Christ, the Head of the body. ❖

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The Song of Zion

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

July 1 Psalm 63

Psalm 63:1 This Psalm was written while David was evading Saul near the town of Keilah. After protecting the town from the Philistines, David was betrayed by the town to Saul. He had to escape into the wilderness of Judah for safety. David truly found what needing God meant during this incident. He found that man's fickle feelings could not be counted on. David turned to God in prayer for help and safety from his enemies. This must be our response when we are feel that there is not help for us. We must remember that our help comes from our covenant God who made the heavens and the earth. We may and will go through trying times in this life. We must remember to go to God through His Word and by prayer. Only then will we find the refuge we need in this dry and thirsty land. Sing first stanza of Psalms 153 and 164.

July 2 Read I Chronicles 16:7-14

Psalm 63:2-3 Our Scripture reading for the next several days is taken from a Psalm of David composed as the ark was returned to Jerusalem. David as he was running from Saul knew what it meant to be away from God's house. He longed to be in it. He hoped for the day that God would return him to Jerusalem so that he could praise his heavenly Father. Is this our desire? As we spend the summer enjoying God's creation do we sometimes "vacation" from God's house and His worship? We may not, you know. Each week we must long to be in the places where the Word is purely preached. To see God's power and glory must be done on the Lord's Day in the house of God. It is only there that we will find that His "lovingkindness is better than life." Let us resolve to seek God in His house every Lord's day so that we can experience His goodness. Sing Psalms 163:2 and 164:2 & 3.

July 3 Read I Chronicles 16: 15-19

Psalm 63:4-5 This is a continuation of yesterday's thought namely attendance in the House of God. First of all, we must bless God through prayer. To bless means to speak well of. People of God, is this your goal as you pray? If we do speak well of God, He will bless our souls with the spiritual good as found in the first part of verse 5. David's desire to bring the ark back to Jerusalem was founded in the knowledge that the ark was the symbol of God's presence. He knew that God's presence brought spiritual good to Israel. God's presence in our lives will also bring spiritual good to us. Another activity to be found in church is singing. Singing is one of the chief means that we have to glorify God. Sing God's praises, people of God. We must attend the divine worship services so that we can sing His praises with the congregation of saints in the presence of God. We must also make sure that we sing songs that glo-

rify God and His attributes not man and his failures. Sing Psalter 164:4 & 5.

July 4 Read Ephesians I, Chronicles 16:20-29

Psalm 63:6-8 People of God, as you lay down to sleep at night, do you meditate upon the goodness of God in your lives? Do we remember what He has done for us in that day and in the days gone past? Tonight is Saturday. We go unto the house of God tomorrow. We need to stop tonight and meditate upon the bountiful mercies that God has showered down upon us in the past week. "Oh", you say, "I had a bad week with no good in it." Then you must turn to Romans 8:28 and read that "all things work for good to them that love God" Then reevaluate your week and prepare to enter the house of God with praise on your lips. God is our help. Though all troubles He lead us by His almighty hand through all dangers. We will be safe under the wings of our heavenly Father. Meditate tonight, people of God, and ready yourself to enter His presence on His day. Sing Psalter 164:6-8.

July 5 Read I Chronicles 16:30-36

Psalm 63:9-11 As we enter the house of God today we will notice many who desecrate the Sabbath. Some may even tempt us to desecrate it ourselves. Others may mock us or even cause us to lose our job because we keep the Sabbath holy. David felt these sorrows as he hid in the wilderness from Saul. Maybe this was one of the reasons he worked hard to reinstate the worship of God at the ark and wished to build a temple for God. We must have the same zeal for Jehovah. We must know that God will reward the evil doer according to his works. This is a comfort because we also know that he rewards us according to our works. This is the testimony of Scripture in Ecclesiastes 12. David could rejoice in God in his troubles; can we? Sing Psalter 163:3

July 6 Read Psalm 64

Psalm 64:1-4 In these four verses we run head long into the truth that there are people who hate us. You do not feel it? Do they know that you are a child of God? Do they know how you spent yesterday? Or was it not any different than many of your neighbors' lifestyle? Is your television viewing governed by the eighth commandment? Or do you partake in the most heinous sins by watching the movies of the world in your home or at the theater? If you live an antithetical life, the world will hate you. Should that cause us to fear? Absolutely not! We must bring our cares to God in prayer. He will hear our prayers and deliver us from the wicked and the wicked one. God will protect us and lead us in safety to our heavenly home. Sing Psalter 165:1.

July 7 Read I Samuel 23:7-15

Psalm 64:5-7 We saw in the last Psalm that the men of Keilah schemed to deliver David to Saul. Wicked men are scheming against today, as well. Oh, it might not be so evident in the world today, but Satan is not idle. The time will come, and it is coming soon, that he will work to make life difficult for the child of God. As the child of God lives an antithetical life, hatred will grow against him by those with whom he works or plays. We had better be ready for it. David went to God in prayer. We, too, must go boldly to the throne of grace knowing that our God will hear us and answer us. God will shoot at the wicked and they will fall. That is His promise to us. Believe it child of God and go to Him in prayer for help in all difficulties. Sing Psalter 165:2.

July 8 Read Philippians 4:1-9

Psalm 64:8-10 The answer to the prayer of the righteous is that God will protect him. The day is coming in which all men will bow before the glory of God. The wicked will call for the mountains to protect them, but no protection will be found there. We must consider that which is Godly and remember those things. We must seek that which is honest and of good report and know that it is from God alone. When we do this we will be glad in the Lord. Then we will trust Him to deliver us from all evil. This cannot be done if we enjoy the things of this life. This can only be done by thinking on those things which are from above. Consider the Lord's doing. See how good it is. Go to Him in prayer. Be thankful for the victory Christ has wrought for us. Then we can glory in the Lord and in all His works. Sing Psalter 165:3.

July 9 Read Psalm 65

Psalm 65:1-2 The Psalmist begins by addressing God as He dwells in the church. He is acknowledged as the only one to Whom prayers are to be addressed and as the only one by Whom prayers are answered. Is this our attitude as we come unto God in prayer? Do we pray with utmost confidence in the One to Whom we pray? Are our prayers expressions of that confidence that He will hear us and answer our prayers. Do we acknowledge Him as the only One Who hears our prayers? If we do not pray with such confidence, we will not have the assurance for which we crave. We need to pray daily. We need to do this so that through the work of the Holy Spirit God will answer our prayers. Let us pray often, let us pray sincerely, and let us pray confidently to the One who hears and answers prayers. Sing stanza 1 of Psalters 166, 168, 170, and 172.

July 10 Read Hebrews 9:11-15

Psalm 65:3 After acknowledging God as the one who hears and answers prayer, David realizes that because of his sins it is hard for him to pray. Is this our realization? How many times do we pray and then wonder if the prayer rose higher than the ceiling? Our sins cause us much doubt. Our sins leave us with a lack of confidence in our prayers. We wonder how we dare pray to such a holy God in the conditions we find ourselves. David had the same feelings, but David had the confidence that God would purge his sins from him so that he could pray in confidence. We have the same blessed assurance. God can and will forgive our sins so that we can boldly come to the throne and seek the grace that we need. Pray, people of God. Pray often. Pray for repentance and then for help knowing assuredly that our God will forgive our sins and hear our prayers. Sing Psalters 166:2, 168: 2-3, and 172:2

July 11 Read John 15:1-11

Psalm 65:4 There are at least two major truths described in the verse. First of all we find the truth of election's blessedness. Being

chosen to dwell in God's presence is not the work of any man no matter how noble he may be. Being elected by God brings happiness. This is the happiness that can not be found anywhere on this earth. This is the happiness that belongs to those who have been chosen by God and redeemed by the land. The second truth is the truth of the goodness of the house of God. On this earth we will participate in a picture of this goodness tomorrow as we attend church. People of God, are you anxious for tomorrow? Young people, do you look forward to the Sabbath so that you can be helped to prepare for the eternal rest. The house of God is a phrase signifying heaven. We see this in the last verse of Psalm 23. For this we should long. For this we should earnestly seek after. Let us enjoy the blessedness of our election tomorrow and in the days and years to come in heaven. Sing Psalters 166:3, 170:2, and 173:2-3.

July 12 Read Exodus 19:16-25

Psalm 65:5 When we read the word "terrible" in this verse we must not get the wrong idea. The words "terrible" or "awful" show the power of God over against the wickedness of man. Israel saw the terrible things of God as they came to Mount Sinai. The elect were comforted that their God was almighty. The reprobate were truly terrified of God's might against their sin. We can see God's terrible acts when we see a summer thunderstorm. The crash of thunder which accompanies the flash of lightening gives to us a good picture of His power and might. We need never fear because our God is able to deliver us from the storm. Today as we attend church let us bow before our terrible God who is our confidence and salvation during any troubling storm on this earth. He will deliver us and lead us to heaven. Sing Psalters 166:4 and 170:3.

July 13 Read Mark 4:35-41

Psalm 65:6-7 We find more evidence of God's power in these two verses. Yesterday we meditated on God's help through storms. We see this expressed in our reading for today as the disciples were delivered from a powerful storm by Jesus who is Lord of all. Yesterday we attended church. There we were safe from the world. God has given to us that refuge from the storms of evil which rage about us. He can keep us safe because He is our creator. Those who have replaced a creator God with one who works through some system of evolution can have no confidence in God. Those who say that changing Genesis 1-6 has no effect on the salvation of God's people are wrong. Through creation God provided the way of salvation. Let's not lose our comfort by believing any other doctrine than that of a comforting Creator. Sing Psalters 166:5 and 168:4.

July 14 Read Job 35:1-16

Psalm 65:8 God is omnipresent. There are times when we forget about this attribute of God. We some times think that God does not see us and our sins. This is not true. God is everywhere and knows what happens everywhere. This is an awesome idea. But it is also very comforting. This God who is omnipresent sees what happens to His people where ever they are. He not only sees them; but he also sends help in accordance to the measure His people needs. Ponder this attribute of God and rejoice in it. Sing Psalters 167:6, 168:5, and 171:1.

July 15 Read Leviticus 26:1-13

Psalm 65:9-10 God is our Lord is the truth spoken of in these two verses. Those of us who live in areas where agriculture is an important part of our daily life can understand these two verses well. Farmers understand very well their dependence upon God for the proper growing conditions needed to produce a crop. They are given the grace to understand that God controls all weather condi-

tions. There is a spiritual parallel found here. In order for the people of God to prosper spiritually, there are growing conditions which must be satisfied. The child of God will only prosper when God sends showers of blessings from on high. Sometimes we do not understand how a spiritual condition will help us prosper. But as we read in the Psalms affliction is for our profit. We also can confess with Paul that *all* things work together for our good. Sing Psalters 167:1-2, 169:1, and 171:2.

July 16 Read Psalm 65

Psalm 65:11-13 We come to the end of this Psalm of praise to our God. We have seen many truths found in it. None is so precious to us than the truth of our salvation. We find this in these last verses as the harvest is discussed. The harvest comes at the end of time and God by His servants will gather the elect and bring them to glory. This truth should and must cause us to be joyful. It should help us be joyful when the way in which God leads us is hard and rocky. It should cause us to be joyful when the wicked seek to do us harm. We need to express the joy of our salvation to those who are around us. Our neighbors must know by our lives that we are indeed the blessed happy ones who have been chosen by God and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. People of God are you shouting for joy; are you singing God's praises? Sing Psalters 167: 3-4, 169:2-3, and 171:3.

July 17 Read Psalm 66

Psalm 66:1-2 Once again we have a song of praise before us. Once more we are called to make a joyful noise to our mighty God. The content of our songs are directed as well in these verses. We must only sing songs which proclaim the honor of God's name. As we examine songs we hear in the church world today we see many kinds. We see those that proclaim a gospel other than that found in the Word of God. We find those that extol man and his glory. We find others which trivialize God and His attributes. These kinds of songs we may not use to worship God either in church or in our daily life. Our songs must only be those which extol the honor of God's name and His works. Our praise of Him must be glorious because He is the God of all glory. Songs about God are numerous. The number of songs which glorify God is less. Let us be discerning as we sing songs of praise and glory to the honor of God's name. Sing Psalter 173:1.

July 18 Read Daniel 4:28-37

Psalm 66:3 This verse continues to show to us what the content of the praise of our God should be. It shows us that our God is so majestic that even the heathen must confess that He is God alone. In our Scripture reading today we see Nebuchadnezzar being forced to confess that Jehovah is God. He did not want to do it. It was not of himself that he said the words of Daniel 4. But even this great king saw that God alone was God of heaven and earth. What about us? Are our confessions forced? I hope not! I hope that by grace we can look at the wonders of God and be able to confess His greatness. Let us pray for that grace. Sing Psalter 173:2.

July 19 Read Isaiah 24:1-14

Psalm 66:4 The fact found in this verse of Psalm 66 and in the passage from Isaiah is that the world will worship and sing unto God. How is this possible? It is only possible as the gospel is spread throughout the world. God commanded the church in Acts 1 to preach to the uttermost parts of the earth. We are part of God's church. This is our calling. Are we listening for calls for help? Are we looking to find the neighbor who needs the truths that God has given to us? It is easy for us to say all the world must praise God. Is

it easy for us to know that God may and will use us to bring the gospel of his name to them? Let us make this part of our prayers today. Let us want to have God's name spread to the four corners of the earth, and especially let us want those distinctive truths with which He has so graciously entrusted us, to be spread to all lands. Sing Psalter 173:3.

July 20 Read Revelation 7:9-17

Psalm 66:5 The Psalms are replete with commands for the child of God. Here is another one. We are commanded to come and see the works of the Lord. Yesterday we were called to the house of God. Did you go? Were you blessed with the goodness of the Lord in His house? We are also commanded to look around this world and see what God is doing. John was given a glimpse of the future while on the island of Patmos. We are given to see that activity and terrible works of God as we look for the day of Christ's return. Even as I write this two months in advance, I am sure that something will happen in the world which should cause us to stop and notice the work of God upon man. Are you watching, people of God? Are you listening to what God is telling you through *His* works? Sing Psalter 173:4.

July 21 Read Exodus 14:21-31

Psalm 66:6 One of the reasons for the manner of the deliverance of the children of Israel from the Egyptians was for instruction. God's people then were to learn from His marvelous ways so that they could rejoice in Him. We, too, must learn from Israel's journey through the Red Sea. We must know the history involved, and this means we must study. We must also seek to see God's purpose in such a deliverance. Egypt did not learn through ten plagues upon its land. They still did not see God as God. There was no grace for them to do this. In Israel there were those who were hard-hearted and were not ready to confess that God was the I AM. Even in the church of today there are those who need this kind of instruction so that they can learn to rejoice in the God of our salvation. Are we studying? Are we learning? Are we rejoicing? Sing Psalter 173:5.

July 22 Read Acts 4:23-31

Psalm 66:7 God's people have faced troublous times ever since sin entered this world. Abel had to undergo the torments of Cain and was eventually killed by Cain. Enoch was taken by God even as he preached the Word to the wicked world. Noah preached as he built the ark. This list goes on and on. The Scripture passage for today speaks of the persecution brought upon the early church. After Peter and John had been released from prison and returned to the church, they gave thanks for the deliverance that God had given them from the wicked. We, too, either are or will be oppressed by those that hate God. They are rebellious against Him and His people. But we need not fear. God sees all those and He will protect us and bring us safely through each trial and tribulation that comes upon us. Sing Psalter 173:6.

July 23 Read Genesis 39:1-6

Psalm 66:8-9 Joseph must have felt very alone in Egypt. He had no one to turn to except God. But God was all he needed. God would not let Joseph's soul be moved by any wickedness in Egypt. God would keep his feet on the path of life which would take him to heaven. We know little of Joseph's worship except that he must have worshipped. This can be ascertained by his responses to his brothers when he revealed himself to them. Joseph must have blessed God daily and praised Him for the strength that God gave him during his trying times. We can trust that God as well. He is our God. He will keep our souls and not allow our feet to be moved. Each

day let us bless Him and thank Him for the goodness He has shown to us. Sing Psalter 175:1.

July 24 Read I Thessalonians 2:1-12

Psalm 66:10-12 These verses are a continuation of the way in which God leads His people. That way often contains many trials which afflict both our bodies and souls. He sometimes leads us on the way of sickness. Some of God's people are riddled with cancer or some other disease. This takes faith to realize that it is for our profit. Others have trials of financial hardship. Some live in countries where the government is hostile toward God and His cause. Through these trials God refines His people even as a metal smith refines metal by the fire of the forge. God does not let us pass through these trials alone. No, He is right there by our sides taking us through these things and bringing us safely to the heavenly Jerusalem. We need to remember these things even as we lie on the sick bed, or we attend to the dying friend or relative. This is for our profit and for God's glory. Sing Psalter 174:1.

July 25 Read Micah 6:6-16

Psalm 66:13-15 Tomorrow we go to church. That should give us great pleasure. What will be our attitude toward going to church and keeping the Sabbath. Are we desirous of those who use the Sabbath for their benefit and pleasure. Are we unhappy when we worship in the way God has commanded us? If we are, we have already forgotten the deliverance He has given to us in trials. We have forgotten all the benefits He has bestowed upon us starting with salvation and including physical good. Worship is a time of speaking well of our God. It is a time of bowing before our sovereign King in humble submission. God is the God who keeps us from all evil. How will we thank Him tomorrow? David speaks often about worship in the Psalms. It must have weighed heavily upon his soul. Does it weigh upon ours? Are we content to worship the king in the way He has appointed? Sing the second stanzas of Psalters 174 and 175.

July 26 Read I Timothy 1:12-17

Psalm 66:16-17 How many of us can tell the story of our salvation like the apostle Paul? How many of us were murderers of God's covenant people and became ministers of the gospel? Paul had quite a story to tell. So do we. Oh, outwardly we might not seem as bad as Paul, but our natures are the same. We would kill if we saw it would be for our benefit except God's grace prevent us. We have a story to tell of our salvation. Do we tell it? Or do we hide the glorious truth of the gospel? What do your neighbors know about your church attendance today? Have you forgone some pleasure today in order to keep the fourth commandment? David was glad to tell of all that God had done for him. So was Paul. Are we? Sing Psalter 175:3.

July 27 Read Jonah 2

Psalm 66:18-19 I never tire of reading Jonah 2. I pray that I may be able to pray such a beautiful prayer of gratitude when God delivers me from my sin. I hope that I do not have to go through the depths that Jonah did. But if I do, I pray that God will be as gracious to me as He was to Jonah. God does hear our prayers. He also answers them. His answers may not be our wishes, but His answers will be good for us. Of that I am confident. As we begin another week of work let us put aside the sin that besets us. Let us go to God in prayer knowing that He will hear us and will answer us. His answer will be good and will be a blessing for us. Sing Psalter 174:3

July 28 Read Psalm 66

Psalm 66:20 We come to the end of this Psalm of praise. The psalmist has taken us through life's trials, he has shown us our sin,

and he has made known that deliverance is only by the hand of God. He ends the Psalm as he begins it. He praises God. Do we do that? Today is a week day. Do we remember that this is also a day that God has made? Do we remember that we are to rejoice and be glad in it for *His* sake? David could praise God because he had tasted of God's goodness. Look around you, people of God, most of us must realize that we have more that we need. All of us must praise God for the realization of our salvation. Praising God must come easy to us no matter what our station and calling in this life is. Praise God, people of God. Praise Him, young people. He has done wonderful things for us. Sing the fourth stanzas of Psalters 174 and 175.

July 29 Read Psalm 67

Psalm 67:1-2 Verse 1 makes a statement of desire. This should be the desire of all God's people. We must desire the mercy, blessing, and favor of God. We need these things. The reason is given in the second verse. The reason is very different than what we might expect. We might think we need God's favor in order to prosper or to endure upon this earth. We may even think that we need His favor for our salvation. This is true, but it is not the reason given here. We need God's favor so that his name may be known throughout the earth. This must be done so that Christ will come. This gives to us the impetus for mission work. Are we answering the call? Do we desire Jehovah's favor so that we can spread His name to the four corners of the earth? We need to ponder this idea and respond to it so that God's Name will be magnified. Sing the first stanza of Psalters 176, 177, and 178.

July 30 Read Matthew 25:31-46.

Psalm 67:3-5 Praising God seems like a good thing to do, doesn't it? It even seems like it could be pretty easy to do most of the time. Singing for joy can be very enjoyable to the people of God. Think of the pleasure we get from hearing or singing some of the majestic songs of God. Do we sing for joy because God is coming as our judge? True, we know that He will judge the wicked, and this brings us much comfort, especially those of us who have to face persecution from the wicked. How ready are we to face our judge? How confident are we of hearing, "Well done thou good and faithful servant?" Will it be said of us that because we have helped the least of these we have helped Christ? Our praises can only be praises when our actions match the words that we sing. Sing the second stanza of Psalters 176 and 177 and stanzas 2 and 3 of Psalter 178.

July 31 Read Revelation 19:1-9

Psalm 67:6-7 What is the final outcome of our praising God in a proper way and with a proper heart? God will bless us. I am sure that this blessing is both physical and spiritual. Oh, we do not look on physical things the way the Old Testament saint had to. Christ has come and has fulfilled all of those ideas. But yet our life on this earth is affected by our attitude toward God and His commands. He also blesses us spiritually in this life. We receive comfort from reading and hearing God's word. We also feel the assurance that our prayers have reached His ears. We also read that the ends of the earth will fear God. We saw this was a reason for the expressions found in the first verse of this Psalm. God wants His gospel to go forth and it will by way of God's people bringing proper praise to their maker. Is this our prayer and desire? Sing the third stanza of Psalters 176 and 177 and stanza four of Psalter 178.

Psalter #7— Quieting Thoughts

by Beth DeVries

When we sing Psalter number 7 we are reminded that God has set His love upon His faithful people. God blesses His people for calling on Him in prayer and serving Him in our lives. We are called in God's word to live a life glorifying to God and to be holy. This life consists of good and loving deeds. These deeds are brought about by the work of the spirit in our hearts that we may desire to do good for the glory of God's name. We are called to sin not, though this is impossible for us in our sinful nature. Through Christ our sins are blotted out and we are made white in God's sight. This reminds us of Romans 6:1-2 which states "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." A life that is glorifying to God shows itself through good works.

We are reminded in the second stanza of this Psalter to trust in God to supply our needs. We often become

anxious and despairing but we are to walk in the light God has provided in His word. We see this truth again in

the New Testament in Phil. 4:6 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." God provides for all of our needs even when we doubt Him. May we ever rest in this comfort. The wicked see their wealth increase and we can be envious of this, but God in Psalm 4, from which this Psalter is taken, assures us that we will have gladness in our hearts that exceeds the wicked's wealth. This gladness and peace that is in our hearts is from the

Lord and will guide us to remain near Him in our difficult times. We may safely rest in this comfort from our Saviour and sweetly sleep on our beds at night. ❖

7 Quieting Thoughts
PSALM 4 6s and 5s PENITENCE Spencer Lane

1. On the good and faith - ful God has set His love; When they call He
2. Lay up - on God's al - tar Good and lov - ing deeds, And in all thing
3. In God's love a - bid - ing, I have joy and peace More than all the

sends them Bless - ings from a - bove. Stand in awe, and sin not, Bid your
trust Him To sup - ply your needs. Aux - ious and de - spair - ing, Man - y
wick - ed, Tho' their wealth in - crease. In His care con - fid - ing, I will

heart be still;..... Thro' the si - lent watch - es Think up - on His will.
walk in night;.... But to those that fear Him God will send His light.
sweet - ly sleep;.... For the Lord, my Sav - iour, Will in safe - ty keep.

By per of C. L. Hutchins [Selected Stanzas]

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

Our Great Creator God

by Sherry Koole

So many and great are the works of our God
That through all of nature His grace shines abroad.
He formed out of nothing the land and the sea
Revealing Himself both to you and to me.

Revealing Himself in each little thing...
The flowers that bloom, the birds that sing,
The fish of the sea, the fruit bearing trees,
A gentle spring shower or soft blowing breeze.

The sun in the heavens—our great source of light,
The moon and the stars that rule the night
Are God's great creation to us in the skies
We hold from the earth with wondering eyes.

There's grass for the cattle: for man, herbs and grain
For the earth is enriched with His showers of rain.
The hills and the vales that cover our land
Show forth in great splendor the work of God's hand.

The trees branching out so grand and so fair
Are sheltering homes to the birds of the air.
The fish and the mammals He also doth keep
Some finding their homes in the waters of deep.

The unnumbered sand grains on each seashore,
The billowing waves, or the ocean's great roar,
The wild beasts, free to roam over our land
Were all the creation of God's mighty hand.

In all things created—both great things and small
We see it was God who created them all,
And know that there's none who with God can compare
For the life of each creature the Lord makes His care.

So is God's great creation a wonder to us?
Or do we take it for granted seeing no need to fuss?
Do we not see the power of the great mighty God,
For in viewing creation, are we not simply awed?

Do we not see the truth that our God is great?
For who but our God could have power to create?
We read in His Word of all things He has done,
No other could do it—He's the Almighty One.

The Scriptures reveal to us creation's story
But we, here below, see creation's great glory.
We see how all nature—we see EVERYTHING
Proclaims the great glory due to our King. ❖

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

“My Spirit Doesn’t Levitate” (Or, The Reformed View Of The Holy Spirit Of Jesus)

by Rev. Barrett Gritters

When I was in seminary, much of my income came from coating roofs of mobile homes. The work took me all over the Grand Rapids area, and into the homes of some unusual people. Often the people knew that I was studying to become a minister, so they would feel free to tell me about their religious views. One of the most memorable visits I had was with a Pentecostal man whose stories were as strange as his religion, but who in every other respect seemed sane and intelligent.

Since the day was hot, he invited me into his house for a cold drink and began to regale me with “true” stories of the “spirit” of the Pentecostals. He would never forget the day that he and his friends were gathered in a friend’s “mansion of a home” without any food. Hungry, they began to pray fervently for food, believing that God would always provide for their needs. As soon as their prayer was ended, they heard simultaneous knocks on three of the outside doors. To their amazement, at each of the doorsteps were enough ingredients to make an oven full of apple pies. To their greater amazement, going down the driveway was a panel-van with a man standing on the back bumper—nine feet tall. “And men aren’t nine feet tall!”

I was ready to get back on the roof to finish my job, but he had one more story for me, I suppose to convince me that what he said was true. So filled with the power of the spirit were they that one day his acquaintances were able to *levitate* him from one room to another.

You know this spirit. You can see him blowing people over on Benny Hinn’s television program. You may have seen him raise people out of the wheel chairs or make them speak in languages that they never knew before.

This is the spirit of Pentecostals. But he is not our Spirit. Our Spirit—the Holy Spirit—doesn’t levitate.

Would *you* have been able to explain to someone what *you* believe the Spirit does today? Let me help you in this article to see briefly what is the Spirit’s work in the church.

The Spirit of Truth

The Spirit of the Bible is the Spirit of truth, Whose nature, “identifying mark,” voice, and work, are truth. Read what Jesus tells His disciples about the Spirit which He will send them. Find there that he says the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (see John 13-16).

The Spirit that came on Pentecost is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Spirit of God, the third person of the trinity, Who was given to Jesus at His ascension to become *Jesus’* Spirit. When this Spirit returned to us, *Jesus* returned to us. Jesus said, “I will come to you.” He did, in His Spirit.

Since the Spirit is *Jesus’* Spirit, and since Jesus is *truth*, the Spirit is the *Spirit of truth*. Jesus is “full of grace and *truth*.” He’s the “way, *the truth*, and the life.” And *Jesus* is truth because He’s the reflection of the *Father* Who is truth. The Father “keepeth truth forever,” and is “a God of truth.” For this reason, three times *Jesus’* Spirit is called the “Spirit of truth.” Please read John 14:16; 15:26; 16:13.

So it’s not very difficult to understand that the Spirit’s *work* has to do with *truth*! If the Spirit’s nature is truth, voice is truth, identifying mark is truth; well, His work will be truth. He does truth! He does nothing contrary to truth! More, He does nothing unrelated to truth!

Irresistibly, He works regeneration (giving the life of Jesus Christ) in the hearts of His children. In this, He *prepares* their hearts to receive truth, and *inclines* that heart to the truth. He works in them to *comprehend* the truth and *love* it. He does this by showing them Jesus Christ, the truth of God. He will “testify of me” Jesus said (John 15:26). And, to ward off any misunderstand-

ing, in John 16:13,14, Jesus says, “He will not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak... He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

What a different Spirit than the spirit of the Pentecostals! Their spirit ignores Jesus, goes “beyond” Jesus, says that Jesus is only half the gospel. That’s why their churches are often called “full gospel” churches. That’s quite a criticism of your church—a “half-gospel” church! What ruinous, fatal mistake!

Always, our salvation is bound up with the truth. *All* our salvation is bound up with truth. To ignore truth is to ignore *God*; but it is to ignore salvation as well! We are *chosen* through belief of the truth (II Thess 2:13). God’s people are *born again* by the word of truth (James 1:18). When Jesus prays for our *sanctification*, He prays, “sanctify them through thy truth” (John 17:17). Even the fruit of the Spirit in us is “truth” (Eph 5:8).

If you believe that about the Spirit, what would you expect to find the Spirit-filled believers doing at Pentecost and afterwards? Why, what else but speaking the “wonderful works of God” preaching sermons—doctrinal sermons and continuing “in the apostle’s doctrine”! (Check out Acts 2:11,14-36.)

Then the Spirit continued to be the Spirit of truth. He inspired the apostles to *speak* the truth about Christ. He empowered them to *write* the truth about Jesus in the gospels and epistles. He enabled the church to be *faithful* to the truth, calling judgment of anathema on those who *denied* the truth (Galatians 1), and warning that many would *depart from* (divorce) the truth. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth!

What a marvelous Spirit Who leads us to see the beauty and truth of Jesus Christ!

Do you want this Spirit?

Not everyone is so enthusiastic about this Spirit. But Jesus forewarned us that would happen. “The world cannot receive the spirit of truth, because it does not see him, nor know him” (John 14:17). Already when Jesus promised to send the Spirit of truth, He foretold of His rejection.

The Spirit of truth is rejected; a new spirit is adopted.

The new spirit also guides. But not into truth. Is this anything new? There were lying spirits in the Old Testament. If you would, please read I Kings 22:22,23, and Ezekiel 13:3,19. So the prevailing spirits today are different spirits. The people believe them today, just as then. To the destruction of their souls.

You can identify this false spirit.

He’s in your prof or classmate who is a *critic of Scripture*. With a kind of hissing sound, he says, “Yea, hath God said?”

He’s in your neighbor who *adds to the Scripture*. New revelations are given. He speaks apart from the Scripture. He doesn’t need the Scripture. He fills people with strange words so that the people listen to them instead of the Scripture. Have you never heard them speak? “God laid it on my heart...” “God told me that I should witness to you.” “God revealed it to me that I should buy this truck.”

Worse, this spirit is *indifferent to truth*. Do you recognize this spirit in those who disdain doctrine, regard it as cold, loveless, divisive, and worthless? He brushes aside confessions as irrelevant to the present situation of the church. He refuses to educate people to distinguish between truth and error, much less to love the truth so that they embrace it at any cost and reject the lie at peril of their lives.

This new spirit seems to give all the emphasis to *feeling*. This is the main thing, if it isn’t everything. Worship is emotion; joy in Jesus is feeling good; love for the neighbor is a warm, accepting, tolerant feeling; and peace in the church is the member’s feeling for the other members, but certainly not a desire that the other members know the truth. (Some of these feelings are certainly praiseworthy; but never may we sacrifice the truth for feelings.)

Everyone seems to want this false spirit!

Seeking that spirit, a person rejects Jesus’ Spirit.

Try the spirits to see whether they be of God!!!

Without Jesus’ Spirit there is no comfort, no joy. You may seek joy, seek comfort, but there is none from the spirit that hates Jesus’ Spirit—the Spirit of truth.

In the end, they are “damned who believed not the truth...” “They received not the love of the *truth* that they might be saved” (II Thess. 2:10,12).

Reformed young people, you need the Spirit of truth. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

He won’t levitate you from room to room... or bring you apple pies. But when you love Him as the Spirit of truth, reading daily in His love-letter to you, you will know Jesus well. And knowing Him, you will be free indeed! ❖

Rev. Gritters is pastor of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Through Strife to Victory

Chapter 6

The Controversy Spreads

by Rev. C. Hanko

As was seen in Chapter V, at first the controversy was only among the leaders, but gradually the ‘common folk,’ the members of the church also became involved.

This was evident, first of all, in the Eastern Avenue congregation. It had been in 1920 that the congregation received a new minister. Along with the new minister there was also an awakening. The people heard a message from the pulpit which warmed their hearts. The congregation immediately noticed a new emphasis, and an important one. The emphasis was on God, not on man. Rev. Hoeksema preached the organic idea, as expressed in the words of Paul “All things are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” He also stressed the antithesis between Christ and Belial, the church and the world. There was also a new emphasis on Predestination, including election and reprobation.

I have in my library a book containing a sermon of the late Rev. Groen, who was the former minister, on Acts 13:1-3:

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Nigar, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Here, plainly the emphasis falls on the wonderful blessing that the Lord had laid upon the church of Antioch. He had given them capable men, full of the

Holy Spirit. Still more, He made them the calling church for spreading the gospel, according to the command of Jesus. God even qualified Barnabas and Saul for the work, and designated them as called and qualified by the Holy Spirit to be sent out by God. Yet the sermon of Rev. Groen emphasized the church and the men sent out. The emphasis falls on man, instead of on God. His theme was: The First Sending Forth of Missionaries to the Heathen by the church of Antioch. Under that he had two points: I. Here we have a real mission church as our example. II. We are pointed to two real missionaries.

One can well imagine the difference in the preaching when Rev. Hoeksema occupied the same pulpit. People sat up and took notice. They discussed these



Preaching prompts much discussion.

things in their homes and with one another. Some were offended, but by far the majority delighted in the preaching that they heard from Sabbath to Sabbath.

This had long been so sorely missed. The truth of God's sovereign grace was once more being preached in all its fullness. Rev. Herman Hoeksema was not only an orator, a powerful speaker, but he was also a thorough exegete, who expounded the Scriptures from Sunday to Sunday.

But this was not all, there was also a different note in his preaching. He denied the theory of common grace, which in the past had simply been accepted or taken for granted by the majority. He proved the fallacy of this theory, the evil and its consequences. He did this at every opportunity: the pulpit, in the catechisms and in personal conversation. He was always ready to discuss problems with young and old in the congregation.

Besides that, brochures were being published and articles concerning this matter appeared in the church papers. Teachers spoke of it in the classroom, and there were obviously also differences of opinion among the members of the church. These differences were discussed in the homes (often at the supper table), when friends visited together, on the street corners and in the grocery stores. When one would see a group of men busily engaged in conversation at one place or another, that person could be sure that the discussion dealt with this one great topic of the day. As could be expected, the conversation led to definite lines being drawn and groups pro and con. The young Rev. Hoeksema could hardly be unaware of this.

Across the street from the parsonage of the Eastern Avenue Church were two stores, a hardware store and a shoe store. From the pastor's study it could be seen that

on many mornings, five or six men would gather at the corner hardware store. There, gathered around the stove in the winter, these men from the Eastern Avenue congregation discussed the problems of the day, namely, the attack upon their minister, Rev. Hoeksema, by those who defended the deposed Prof. Janssen. This naturally brought up the matter of common grace, which they had learned and believed was a serious error that had crept into the Christian Reformed Churches and had been the basis for the erroneous views maintained by Prof. Janssen and his followers.

Just to the south of this hardware store was a shoe store operated by Mr. Wobko Hoeksema. It so happened that Wobko was opposed to the stand of Rev. Hoeksema and defended the theory of common grace. At this store also, various men gathered and spent time discussing matters there. Among them was Wobko's brother, who was a minister in the Christian Reformed Churches. Knowing this, it is interesting to note that presently Wobko would be one of the three men within the Eastern Avenue congregation to bring a protest against their minister, Rev. Herman Hoeksema.

Such was the case not only in the Eastern Avenue congregation and in Grand Rapids, but this had spread throughout the country, wherever a Christian Reformed church had been established. Let me give you one example. An elder in Hull (the great grandfather of Rev. Barry Gritters) had read the brochure of Rev. Van Baalen, "Innovation and Error" and he stated that all these brochures coming out of the post office should be buried in the mud of the Main Street of Hull. Anyone acquainted with the Iowa mud will understand his observation.

Conversations often ran something like this. The one defending common grace asked: Are rain and sunshine not good gifts of God? Do they not fall on the righteous and the wicked alike? Is that, along with so many good gifts - food, clothing, a home, a family, not a blessing for both?

To that one would likely answer: A proper amount of rain and sunshine is a good gift, but too much or too little rain can be hurtful. *Besides, blessing is not in things.* God's blessing is upon His people, (Psalm 3:8), while God's curse is in the house of the wicked (Proverbs 3:33).

It can be seen here that the fact of God sending good gifts upon all



Eastern Avenue parsonage with church in the background.



Photo courtesy of Calvin College Archives

Rev. Van Baalen: Vocal foe of Hoeksema and Danhof and their asserting the God of particular grace.

In the last issue, the caption of these two pictures were accidentally switched. We reproduce them here with the correct captions.



Photo courtesy of Calvin College Archives

Rev. H. Danhof

men was being pointed to in order to claim that God's grace is given to all men. Two questions will show the flaw in this claim.

First, would you say that when God sends prosperity to the wicked He blesses him, while when He sends adversity to His people He curses them? The wicked are usually the multi-millionaires in the world while God's people often suffer adversity. In Psalm 73 Asaph faces this problem and concludes that God places the wicked upon slippery places and dashes them down to destruction, while He blesses His people. A ride down the Niagara river might be a pleasant and exciting experience, especially as the boat travels faster and faster. But when the occupants realize that their boat is beyond control and that they are headed toward the falls the pleasure becomes a panic. Secondly, does God change? Does He love and bless the reprobate wicked now and ultimately turn against them in wrath and judgment by casting them into hell?

The defender of common grace would also raise questions regarding the restraint of sin. If the depravity of Adam and Eve had not been checked after the fall, would they not have become like beasts or even like the devil? How about the tower of Babel - was there not a restraint of sin there? And does not all history testify of a restraint of sin? Or if a police prevents the robbery of a bank, is he not restraining sin?

Regarding the restraint of sin, one would have likely answered: Adam and Eve remained, after they fell, rational-moral creatures. Besides, you are confusing God's providence (control and guidance) and asserting it as

grace in the hearts of the wicked. No one denies that God, in His providence rules over the hearts and purposes of evil men so that in spite of themselves they carry out His counsel (outward restraint). But God in no sense bestows favor, or grace upon the wicked (inward restraint). God does the very opposite, he gives the sinner over to his sin, so that there is a development of sin in the hearts of the ungodly. See Romans 1:18-23.

Sin develops throughout history according to the plan and purpose (Providence) of the Almighty. Can you imagine what could have happened if the power of electricity had been discovered before or soon after the Flood? Can you imagine how fast the measure of iniquity would have filled if television, the computer, the automobile and the airplane had been invented in the early history of man kind? God's mills grind slowly, but surely. All history runs its course for the ingathering of God's church. God is wise in all His ways and works.

But, the opponent asks a third question, How about all the good that sinners do? A wicked man who comes to the aid of someone in an accident, or risks his life to save a stranger is surely doing a good deed. Or would it be better if he ignored the man in trouble? Also when a farmer works his field efficiently he will likely receive a good crop. Is the world not full of benevolence, philanthropy, generosity and kindness, even among wicked unbelievers? How about all the advancements in science and culture? Is not all that the fruit of common grace?

To that, one might expect the answer: All that appears to be good to us is not good in the sight of God. This is the question: *Does God show favor upon the reprobate wicked, so that they can still do good in His sight?*

Two passages of scripture teach us about this question. Romans 14:23 states:

And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

I Cor. 13:31 states:

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God.

In order for God to show favor on the reprobate wicked that they could still do good in His sight, He would have to give them faith. The reprobate has no faith nor does anything glorifying to God. He then does nothing pleasing to God.

A fourth question is then raised, Does not God love everybody and wish to save those who come in contact with the gospel (John 3:16)? To this it is agreed, true, the Scriptures do say that “God so loves the world.” But in no instance does the term ‘world’ refer to every individual upon the face of the earth. It is always limited by its context. The term ‘all’ also must be taken in its context, just as we say: “All of Grand Rapids came out to see the fire.” We certainly do not include with that infants, invalids, sick folk or the like.

These questions from defender of common grace raise many questions in return. Have the five points of Calvinism been lost sight of? How does the truth of predestination fit in with a general, well-meant offer of salvation? How about total depravity? How can a dead corpse respond to an invitation to come to life or to accept a gift? Such a well-meant offer attempts to make our God a helpless, dependent God and exalt man above God.

Besides, how can God offer that which does not exist, since Christ atoned only for His people? He laid down His life for His sheep. True, we do not know who are the elect, nor is that our concern in preaching the gospel. But God makes His Word efficacious in whom He will, either as a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death. (II Cor. 2:16).

We must be Theo-centric (God centered) in our thinking and in our lives, not anthro-po-centric (man-centered). We must be Scriptural! ❖

Rev. Hanko is an emeritus minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America and is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

The Reformed Church of Slovenia

by J.P. de Klerk

You see here the church of the “Evangelisticna verska skupnost” (Reformed, but mainly based on the Reformation of Luther, but also Calvin) in the city of Ljubljana (lee-oo-blee-ahn’-uh). Built of yellow bricks, the roof of the tower covered with copper, which has become green. The name of the street is the Gosposvetska cesta. The language the people speak here, you will hear nowhere else, because Slovenia, completely isolated, has its own. A handful of people can speak German.

The man who brought the Reformation to this country, was Primus Trubar, born in 1508 in Raschica (near

Velike Ljubljana). The picture was made in 1572, and you find it in almost every house in Slovenia (which has 50 years been part of Communist Yugoslavia, in the northeastern part).

Trubar went to school in Rejeka, in neighboring Croatia, in 1520, but already the next year he had to flee, because of the Moslems from Turkey, to Salzburg (Austria). In 1524 already he became private secretary of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Trieste, Count Bonono. There he became very interested in religious matters. The Lord opened his eyes to what was wrong in the Roman Catholic churches and he took up contact with

Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. It was in fact Calvin who inspired him to start the Reformation in Slovenia, though it had not in those days a written language yet. In 1527 he went to study in Vienna. In 1529 he went back to Trieste. In 1530 he became a priest and he used his position to tell the people about all that was wrong with the teaching from Rome.

In 1533 he was sent to Ljubljana. There he taught the Reformation till he was fired in 1540. To his amazement Count Bonono did not agree with this action and made him canon, and he could continue to bring the message of the Reformation to his own people. In 1547 however, he had to flee to Germany because the government ordered the imprisonment of all the theologians who were in favor of the Reformation. He went to Dr. Veit Dietrich, a pupil of Luther, who lived in Neurenberg.

In 1549 he married Barbara Sitar. Now he found the time to publish a catechism in the language of Slovenia, and he started the translation of the Bible. He encouraged teachers to teach people the language, so that they could read what was published themselves.



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The Duke of Wurtemberg agreed and provided money to print as many books as possible about the Reformation, both in the languages of Slovenia and Kroatia. In 1560, in Carniola (Slovenia), Trubar became the head of the first Reformed Church of Slovenia. He worked as much as he could. In 1561 he became the founder of a Reformed Bible Institute in the German town of Urach. He went back to Ljubljana but in 1564 Archduke Charles II came and ordered him to leave the country.

In the list of books written or translated by Primus Trubar, there are *A Prayer of the Christened* (1555), *The Slovenian Calender* (1557), *Two letters of St. Paul* (1561), *Articles from the works of the true old Christian faith* (1562), *Church Order* (1564), *A Spiritual Psalm Against the Turks and All the Enemies of the Lord's Church* (1567), *The Whole New Testament* (1582).

He had translated the Old Testament with the help of Jurij Dalmatin who wrote this footnote: "The Lord, in his special mercy, showed us, through the honorable and learned master Primus Trubar, Slovenian by birth, and chosen instrument, that our language also can be suitably, and just as well as any other in Latin letters, written."

The Slovenian historian Janez Vajkard Valvasor wrote later "After he sowed the seed of the faith throughout Ljubljana (the capital) and the country far and wide, so that he could no longer do everything alone, the Lords



This is the grave of the Slovenian Rev. Primus Trubar, at the cemetery of the German city Derendingen (Tøringen), where he had to flee to because of the Roman Catholic persecution of the Reformed people. The tomb was damaged during the war of 1940-1945, but carefully restored. He lived from 1508-1586. He was a friend of Calvin as well as Luther.

of Council named, in 1563, Sebastian Krelj to be his assistant.”

Archduke Charles harnessed the fast spread of the faith and confiscated and prohibited on the pain of great punishment *The New Church Order*, printed in Vienna in the Slovenian language, and did so despite strong protests from the Land Council.

The deathblow to the faith was delivered in 1601 in the heart of Kranjska (province): in Ljubljana. Then, two commissioners named by the Archduke, His Ducal Grace Tomaz Hren (the Roman Catholic bishop of the capital)

and Jurij Lenkovic (the Governor) called before them all citizens and inhabitants and ordered those counting themselves of the evangelical faith, to leave in six and a half weeks, not only the town, but also the lands of His Grace; but before doing so, to sell all unmovable belongings, pay their debtors and leave the tenth to His Ducal Grace.

The people had to flee, the cemetery was devastated, its fence torn down and burnt. The same happened to all Reformed books that were then in the city. The soldiers searched and collected them and burned them in a public place. Trubar had predicted this would happen much earlier. He went to Derendingen (Germany), where he was welcome as a minister of the local Church. Rev. Dieter Roser wrote about him in 1986: “Primus Trubar was a notable citizen of two worlds, living from the springs of homeland, culture and natural strengths of his people and from *the everlasting springs of the Gospel of the Word of God.*”

By the end of his life, Trubar dictated to his son Felicijan: “When after all the sufferings and troubles, they finally recognize that they are the most interesting people in Europe, and that nothing of this world can smite them, then they will know how to leave. Oh my dear Slovenians! The most sturdy, authentic, stubborn and faithful people! Live from spirit for the spirit, be creative as the Lord himself, for it is spirit that breathes life into reality.”

So, the Slovenians suffered and battled, in the beginning of their history under the Moslems, next the Roman Catholics, and finally the Communists. Volunteers have rebuilt the destroyed churches, including the church where Trubar preached and the house where he was born (a water mill at the hillside). He died June 29, 1586. On his gravestone wrote the author Anton Sovre:

He fought a good fight, finished his race rightly,
 He faithfully kept his beliefs, as much as he owned
 them.
 Together with great Paul he already wears the heav-
 enly crown,
 The shine of which time shall never dim. ❖

J.P.de Klerk is an author and journalist from the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

Raining Words

... let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

It rained and rained. All day it had rained. Jennifer sighed and closed her book. There was nothing to do except read, but now she was tired of that, too.

"Mom, what's there to do?"

Mother thought for a moment, "Well, you can always clean your room."

By the look on Jennifer's face, that wasn't what Jennifer had in mind.

"Or," she tried again, "you can help me in the garden pretty soon. The rain is supposed to stop and I can already see some blue sky peeking through."

That wasn't exactly what Jennifer had in mind either, but she'd rather do that than clean her room. She looked for another book to read while she waited.

"Perfect. The rain has stopped. We can go out now!" called Mother.

Armed with boots and gloves and pails, the two set out for the family vegetable patch.

"Make sure you pull the weeds out with all their roots," Mother instructed. "Then put them in your pail."

Jennifer had thought that weeding was a hard job, but now it seemed easy. Her pail was full before she knew it. "Wow, look at all my weeds!"

"Yes, we'll be done in no time. It's amazing how the rain affects everything. It makes the ground soft, so we can pull the weeds out easily. And it makes everything grow, too. I can tell the plants are bigger and greener even than they were yesterday."

Jennifer looked around and nodded.

Mother quoted, "My word shall not return unto Me void."

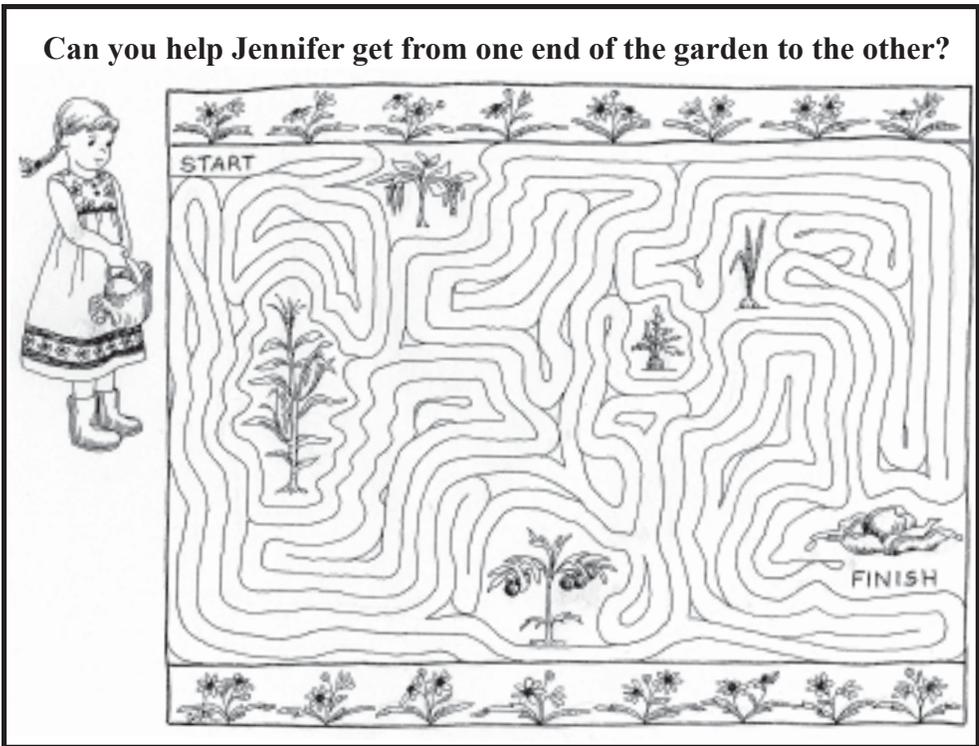
"Huh?" said Jennifer.

"The rain made me think of that," Mother explained. "The rain comes down and does its job. So does God's Word."

Jennifer looked around again and saw all the effects of the rain. She wasn't sure she completely understood, but she was sure that it was true."

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11). ❖

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



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Jenison, MI
(UPSS046-840)

Church News

BAPTISMS

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

Mark 16:16

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Amy Nicole, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Kaiser—Byron Center, MI

Jacob Daniel, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Kramer—Georgetown, MI

Mariah Dawn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Oostra—Hull, IA

Zachary Alan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Koole—Hope, MI

Noah Allan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Rod Griess—Loveland, CO

Grace Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Huizinga—Randolph, WI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 10:10

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

Rosie Kuiper—Hudsonville, MI

Deb Poortinga—Loveland, CO

Jeremy Van Donselaar—Pella, IA

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

Matthew 19:5

United in the bonds of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Chad Engelsma and Miss Pam DeBoer—Grandville, MI

Mr. Brad Bruinsma and Miss Trish VanDyke—Faith, MI

Mr. Clayton Spronk and Miss Allison Bylsma—Hull, IA

Mr. Jeremy Van Donselaar and Miss Becky Bronderhorst—Pella, IA

Attention Young People!

There is still time to register for the 1998 Young People's Convention hosted by Southeast Protestant Reformed Church July 20-24. The theme of the convention this year is "Living the Antitheses," and will be held at the beautiful campus of Grand Valley State University.

Theme Text: Ephesians 5:8

Theme Song: Psalter #203

Feature Speakers:

Prof. D. EngelsmaWhat Is Living the Antithesis?

Rev. J. LaningDating and Marriage

Rev. J. SlopsemaPractical Antithetical Living

Don't miss any of the exciting events this year, including rock climbing, a hayride, swimming, a day at the beach, a unique banquet and much more. Registration forms are located in all churches for your convenience. If you have any questions regarding registration, please call Kelly Dykstra at (616) 667-0782. See you there!