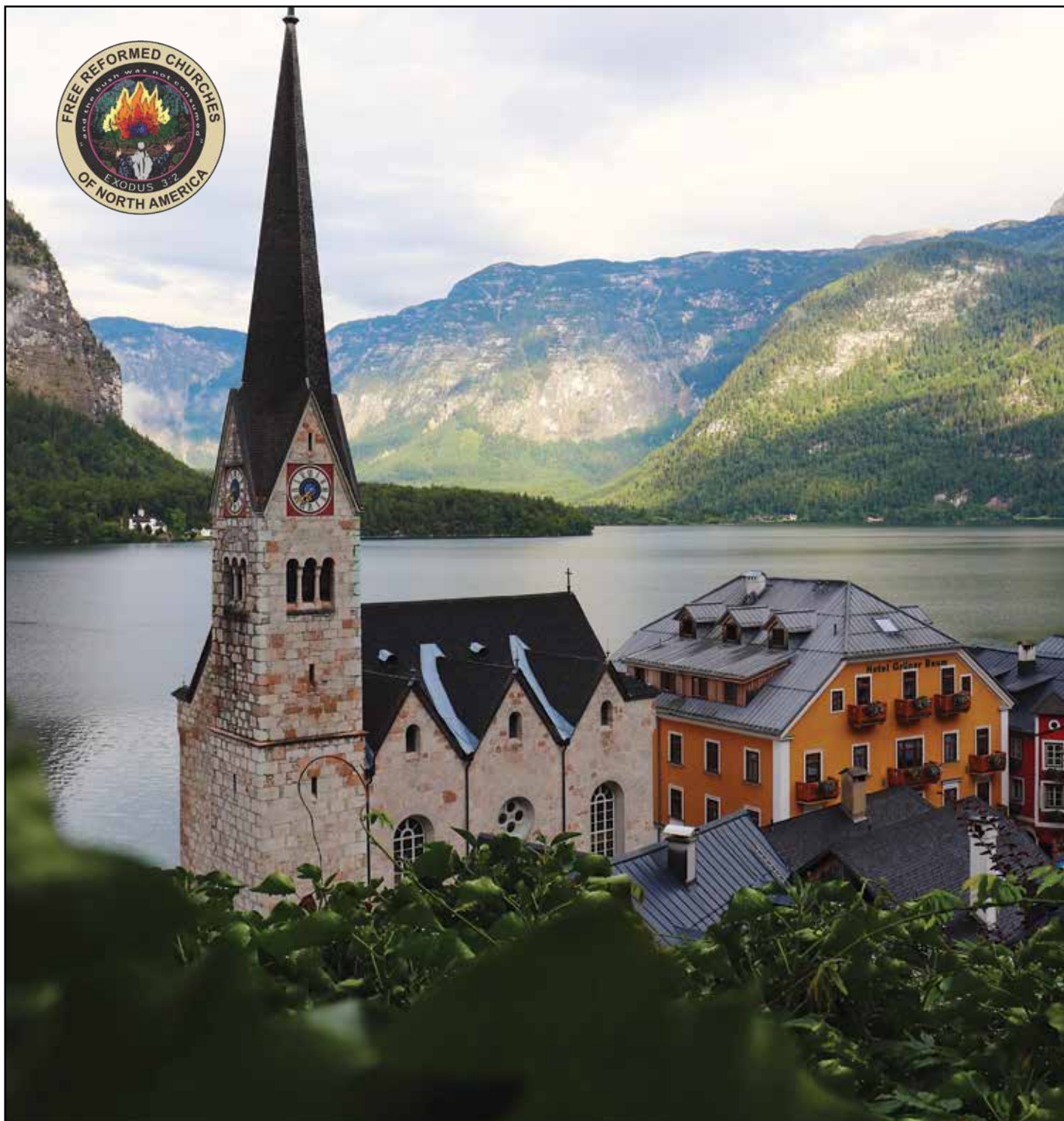


VOLUME 71 NUMBER 02 · FEBRUARY 2024 EDITION

THE MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA



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BLESSED ARE
THE MERCIFUL

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DISCERNING A TRUE
MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

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A WINTER'S SLUMBER

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” - Matthew 5:7

What is meant by the distinguishing characteristic “merciful”? In other words, who are the merciful? The merciful are of a gentle, forgiving, and compassionate spirit. They express the feelings of their compassionate hearts by the comforting words of their sympathetic lips and by the use of their benevolent hands. They are much needed in the world of our day. The merciful act this way towards their fellow believers. They actively sympathize with them in all their various sorrows and afflictions. They overlook weaknesses and provide comfort as much as they are able. The merciful are also compassionate towards their fellow sinners, even towards those who persecute them.

A merciful person has a marked sense of compassion towards his fellow creatures. This compassion goes deeper than that which is at times displayed by the natural man. The natural man may show a certain measure of compassion towards his fellow creatures; however, he never shows a serious concern for them as persons who are in misery on account of their sinful and lost condition.

The person who by divine grace has been made spiritually alive views his fellow sinners, who are still without the grace of God, and it causes him a deep distress. His heart is filled with a genuine compassion. He has a living and active concern. Why is this so? First of all, he is personally acquainted with the real nature of man’s misery and wretchedness. He has a true knowledge of sin; he knows what it means to be a lost and undone sinner. He views sin as man’s greatest enemy.

Secondly, he has a personal knowledge of the precious Remedy. He has experienced the power and comfort of God’s redeeming love revealed in Christ. Therefore, he points needy sinners to the precious Saviour who alone can meet the desperate needs of a helpless sinner. The merciful are well aware that they cannot measure how much they owe to the mercy of God. In their own estimation, they are the chief of sinners. If God has saved them, then He is certainly able to grant the selfsame precious mercy to their fellow sinners. Indeed, humbled sinners know their own imperfections and do not look down on others. Those who are merciful love to encourage their fellow sinners to flee the wrath to come and to lay hold of eternal life. In tender

compassion, they tell them about the serious nature of their need and urge them to flee to the perfect Refuge that is set before us in the gospel.

The merciful delight to speak about the royal invitation of the gospel, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). This invitation is not founded on human worthiness or ability. It has a much better foundation: the finished work of Christ. The merciful also love to unfold the precious promise of the gospel, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Neither are they silent about the sacred command of the gospel, “But [God] commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). Most of all, they like to portray the wondrous all-sufficiency of the most gracious and compassionate Saviour of the lost. It is a precious comfort to the merciful that they may plead for their fellow sinners at the throne of grace; this is one of their sacred delights. They trust God that He is able and willing to save the most troubled sinners. They pray to God that He may be pleased to bless the hearts of needy sinners by His Word.

“They shall obtain mercy,” or they shall be shown mercy. Divine mercy is the secret of their lives. Mercy made the merciful what they are. Mercy delivered them from the wrath to come. Mercy was the fountain of their pardon and caused the love of God to rest on them. Mercy brought them on the way to their eternal home in heaven. Mercy gave them a merciful disposition and made them act accordingly. They have received mercy, and they are promised that they will obtain mercy whenever they need it—all throughout their lives and even in death. Mercy is and ever remains their foremost need.

God will provide all the mercy they need in this life on earth. He will pardon all their sins and shortcomings. They will obtain His heavenly mercy to sustain them when they are tried and tempted. The afflictions of the merciful may be many in number, but they will ever experience that the everlasting arms of God will be there to uphold and to comfort them. Their foes may often seek their downfall,

but the Lord, in His abundant mercy, will always grant the needed relief. The enemies may be rather strong and oppressive, but heavenly mercy will provide sufficient support. Satan may threaten like a roaring lion; however, to Christ he is a defeated foe.

In His infinite love and mercy, Christ will ever be the Advocate of His needy people. No harm will befall them without the will of their merciful Protector. He makes all things work together for their good. The need of God’s children may be of a very serious nature, but their faithful Redeemer will ever grant His gracious and timely help. Even in the solemn hour of their death, He will provide the necessary mercy. ①

Rev. G. Hamstra (1927-2018) contributed many meditations to The Messenger as a Free Reformed Pastor. These are available in The King in His Beauty, a hardcover book published by Free Reformed Publications in 2012.

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DISCERNING A TRUE MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

Last time, we considered how to discern a true church according to Scriptural marks. We must belong to a faithful church and pray and labour that the church be kept true in shifting times. Yet, there is another matter for discernment: Are we true members of the church?

We saw that it was important to be a member of a true church. However, what kind of member of the church are we?

Some presume that all members are true members of the church. As long as people are on the rolls of the church, they are treated as true members. This, however, is far from Scriptural. If Paul says that “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Rom. 9:6), then they are not all true members of the church who belong to the church. The Saviour said: “No every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). The division between the godly and the ungodly does not run between the professing church and the world. It runs right through those who profess to be Christians. The Bible shows that there was a Cain as well as an Abel; an Ishmael as well as an Isaac; an Esau as well as a Jacob. Regarding the latter, God says: “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Rom. 9:13).

None of the prophets or apostles treated everyone in the covenant people as all converted people. Jeremiah said to the people who put their trust in the temple: “Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit” (Jer. 7:8). He called them to genuine repentance instead. John the Baptist censured those who presumed that since Abraham was their father, they didn’t need to repent (Matt. 3:9). According to the forerunner of Christ and all the preachers in the Bible, none can afford to rest in a mere profession of faith apart from “fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:8).

The Covenant

Some will object that we need to treat the covenant people of God in accordance with their profession or the profession of their parents. It is true, the covenant of God is a rich blessing, not to be despised or minimized. To despise it is precisely what Esau did when he despised his birthright (Heb. 12:16-17). However, the apostle Peter did not simply appeal to the covenant to soothe people who had rejected the Messiah sent from God. He said: “Ye are children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the

kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*" (Acts 3:25-26). In other words, the covenant is precisely the ground to appeal to turn from sin to the Saviour in order thus to partake of the promised blessing of the covenant.

In his commentary on Genesis 17:18, where Abraham prays to God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee," Calvin makes clear that there are two different children of the kingdom or covenant. He acknowledges that "they who were unbelievers among the Jews are yet called the children of the celestial kingdom of God." This does not contradict Paul's words in Romans 9:8 that they are only children who are children of the promise. In that place, Paul is not speaking of the promise as "that outward word, by which God conferred his favour as well upon the reprobate as upon the elect; but must be restricted to that efficacious calling, which he inwardly seals by his Spirit." Calvin goes on to say that "the promise by which the Lord had adopted them all as children, was common to all: and in that promise, it cannot be denied, that eternal salvation was offered to all." In Romans 9, Paul, says Calvin, is "no longer reasoning about the externally offered grace, but about that of which only the elect effectually partake."

Calvin then writes:

Here, then, a twofold class of sons presents itself to us, in the Church; for since the whole body of the people is gathered together into the fold of God, by one and the same voice, all without exception, are in this respects accounted children; the name of the Church is applicable in common to them all: but in the innermost sanctuary of God, none others are reckoned the sons of God, than they in whom the promise is ratified by faith. And although this difference flows from the fountain of gratuitous election, whence also faith itself springs; yet, since the counsel of God is in itself hidden from us, we therefore distinguish the true from the spurious children, by the respective marks of faith and of unbelief.¹

Calvin thus distinguishes between the church, which includes all the children of the covenant, and "the innermost sanctuary of God," where none are considered children of God except those "in whom the promise is ratified by faith." This is exactly the same tenor as Lord's Day 7 of the Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 20: "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ? No, only those who are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits, by a true faith."

What then are the marks of those "in whom the promise is ratified" (Calvin), or "who are ingrafted into" Christ (Heidelberg Catechism)? In other words, how may I know if I am a true member of the church of Jesus Christ.

Faith in Christ

Calvin emphasizes the importance of faith in distinguishing true members of the church and those who are not. This is the hallmark of the Reformation. Though the true Christian will not be devoid of good works, he or she is not saved by them, but by faith (Eph. 2:7-10).

In article 29 of the Belgic Confession, where we confess the marks of the true church, we also find the marks of true members of the church. There Guido de Bres highlights the crucial importance of faith: "'With respect to those, who are members of the Church, they may be known by the marks of Christians: namely, by faith....' Faith comes first and holds a unique place among the marks of true members of the church. The Confession further explains "faith" as "receiving Jesus Christ the only Saviour." Here the appropriating nature of faith is clearly expressed. The apostle John uses this description in his first chapter: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). Here is the essence of faith, not unlike what the Heidelberg Catechism says in Lord's Day 7. There we confess that faith is "not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel in my heart, that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits" (Answer 21).

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SUBSCRIPTION RATE
 Canada & U.S.A. - **\$35.00 ANNUALLY**
 Overseas - **\$75.00**
PER SUBSCRIPTION The Messenger is published 11 times per year (July & August issues are combined).

SUBSCRIPTIONS/REMITTANCES
 Subscription requests, invoices, and payments should be addressed to:
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SUBMISSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/NOTICES: All articles, notices for family announcements, obituaries, anniversaries, and non-commercial advertisements for the **MARCH 2024** issue should reach the editor no later than **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH, 2024** and should be sent to:
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OPEN WINDOWS
 This bi-monthly publication for children is under the direction of the Free Reformed Publications Committee:
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In other words, they are true members of the church who, lacking all they need from their own side, receive the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation through Him. Notice that it is not ultimately even faith *per se* that saves, but the Lord Jesus Christ who saves. Faith unites us to Him. Faith receives Him. By faith we are ingrafted into Him. By faith we receive all His benefits. When sinners realize they stand exposed to judgment and lack everything they need to be received by God, the truth of God, they must look outside of themselves. They need the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. They must have Him for themselves. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, they receive Him. In other words, they trust Him. Paul writes: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13).

Fruits of Faith

The Belgic Confession, however, does not leave the description of the true member of the church with a simple assertion of faith or receiving the Lord Jesus. It lists a number of Scriptural fruits of faith: “they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbour, neither turn aside to the right and left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof” (Article 29). The Scriptural teaching of sanctification is summarized here. Where there is true faith, there will be a forsaking and fleeing from sin (1 Cor. 10:14; 1 Tim. 6:11), and a following after what is right and true, namely God’s commandments (2 Tim. 2:22). There will be love to the God revealed in Scripture (Deut. 6:5), as well as love for our neighbour (Lev. 19:18). We will walk in the paths of the Lord (Ps. 25:1-4) and not turn aside to the left to right (Deut. 5:32; Josh 1:7-8). Finally, a true member of the church will crucify the flesh and the works thereof (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:19-24). This is a brief, but comprehensive summary of what the Bible teaches about sanctification, which Christ is made by God to the believer (1 Cor. 1:30). Believers do not have this sanctification of themselves, but from out of Christ, as they abide in the Vine, which is Christ (John 15:4).

It is not possible that a true Christian will fail to bring forth fruit. It may feel that all our fruit is perverse and corrupt. Yet, our Heidelberg Catechism confesses on the basis of the Word of God: “It is impossible that those, who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness” (Lord’s Day 24; Answer 64; Matt. 7:17-18; John 5:5).

Thus we may say that true members of the church may be known, firstly, by faith, and secondly, by the fruits of faith.

Struggle of Faith

There is a third mark of the true members of the Church. As soon as there is faith in our hearts, there will be a struggle against sin and unbelief, Satan and the world. It is not just a struggle against external enemies. There is an inward struggle and inward infirmities because of the presence of indwelling sin. The Belgic Confession has a biblical realism about the life

of faith. Having spoken of faith and the fruits of faith, Guido de Bres writes: “But this is not to be understood, as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit, all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, ‘in whom they have remission of sins, through faith in him’” (Art. 29).

To many of God’s precious children, the mention of this struggle and the reality of infirmities is a great encouragement. They are not the only ones who struggle and they need not struggle alone. The struggle against sin is not evidence that there is no faith. Quite the opposite: where there is faith, there will be a fierce struggle. The presence of infirmities is not proof that there is no faith. The Bible speaks of God’s children having “spots” or “blemishes” (Deut. 32:5). The Bible is very honest about the blemishes of Abraham, David, Hezekiah, Peter, and so many other children of God.

The Catechism says that “even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience” (Lord’s Day 44, Answer 114); that I will “have to struggle all my life long” against “my corrupt nature” (Lord’s Day 21; Answer 56); that “we are still inclined to all evil” (Lord’s Day 23; Answer 60; “that depravity which always cleaves to us” (Lord’s Day 51; Answer 126).

The Canons of Dort even speak about “lamentable falls,” “heinous sins” (Head V; Art. 4), and “enormous sins,” whereby we “highly offend God, incur a deadly guilt, grieve the Holy Spirit, interrupt the exercise of faith, very grievously wound” our consciences, “and sometimes lose the sense of God’s favour, for a time” (Head V; Art. 5).

The struggle is real and fierce. Paul writes: “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:17).

“But this is not to be understood, as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit, all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, ‘in whom they have remission of sins, through faith in him’”

Continual Refuge-Taking

This struggle is precisely so fierce so that believers would not become or remain self-reliant and self-sufficient. The way that the Belgic Confession speaks of this it is clear that Guido de Bres knew this struggle very personally and the remedy. He writes about true members of the church that they are “continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion and obedience

of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Art. 29). He mentions the *blood* first, because the blood of Christ not only appeases the wrath of God (Rom. 3:25); it purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living and true God (Heb. 9:14). To the blood of Jesus held forth in the gospel we must flee as the only refuge. For a sinner, the blood of Christ is the only safety from the avenging sword of the law. How much greater Jesus is than the Old Testament Levitical city, which could only provide refuge under certain conditions and only for a time. True and lasting refuge can be found in the blood of the Lord Jesus that speaks of pardon and peace, reconciliation, and full restoration.

Guido de Bres mentions besides the blood the *death* and *passion* (or suffering) and the active *obedience* of Christ. These things afford great comforts to the children of God. He truly died. Because He was made a curse, I need not fear the curse, but I may obtain the blessing He has purchased. His suffering or passion provides great hope in all my sufferings. May I consider Him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest I be wearied and faint in my mind (Heb. 12:3). And His active obedience is my great hope that I might have His obedience as my own in my life and experience.

In all our afflictions and assaults, we should be running for refuge to Him, whose arms are outstretched still. There is immeasurable consolation in the wounds of Jesus, and His active obedience is a firm basis on which we might lean. It will not give way.

It is never in themselves that believers find comfort; it is always outside of them in Jesus. That is why the word “continually” is so precious: “continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Article 29). The true member of Christ’s church can be known by his or her continually going out of themselves to Christ, our only Hope.

Are you a true member of the church of Jesus Christ? The Belgic Confession says that “they may be known by the marks of Christians” (Art. 29). If you lack these marks, do not rest in the privileges you may have or presume upon the privileges of the covenant of grace. Do not simply seek the marks of faith, but *take refuge in the Saviour*, who will give you all you need. Believe in Him and receive Him by faith. If by grace, you believe, then be continually fleeing to Him as long as life here shall last. 11

Endnotes

1. Calvin’s Commentary on Genesis 17:18.

CALLED TO THE MINISTRY?

Is the Lord calling you to the ministry in the Free Reformed Churches of North America? If you sense He is, please contact your consistory for more information about admission requirements and procedures. Application deadlines are Oct 1 and Mar 1. The Theological Education Committee of the Free Reformed Churches of North America



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of the Free Reformed Churches

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WALKING ALONGSIDE OUR NEIGHBOUR
speaking the truth in love

Coffee
9:30 AM

Morning Session
10:00 AM
Speaker: Pastor Hans Overduin

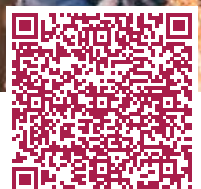
Afternoon Session
1:30 PM
Speakers:
Christine Otten (Elisha House)
Teresa Howe (Indwell)
Kelly Zantingh (Indwell)

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A link will be sent to each society and church bulletin in advance.

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FIVE LIES OF OUR ANTI-CHRISTIAN AGE

Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age by Rosaria Butterfield. Published by Crossway, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Hardcover, 344 pages.

Some amazing radical conversions have taken place throughout the history of the Christian Church. Saul, the persecutor of Christians, became Paul, a leading apostle, missionary and letter writer to the first Christian churches—and all churches since. Adulterous Augustine became St. Augustine, who shaped the theology of the 5th century Church with his written works, laying the foundation for Christian theology and thought until the present time. Profligate slave trader John Newton (1725-1807) became an evangelical minister, and a noted abolitionist, who is still known for his hymn “Amazing Grace.” It probably is not an overstatement to put Rosaria Butterfield, the author of this book, in this category.

Her “conversion story” is just as amazing. From a University of Syracuse, NY Professor of English, specializing in feminist women’s studies, and a practicing lesbian, she became a Christian at age 36. As a Christian, she married a minister in a Reformed Presbyterian Church in America, which practices unaccompanied Psalm singing. She homeschools the adopted children she and her husband are raising. She likes reading the KJV Bible translation and has an extensive knowledge of the Puritans whom she highly esteems and recommends in chapter 12, “*Eternal Life Means More than Just Living Forever*.” She quotes them, persuasively pointing out that looking to Christ is the answer as we face the *Five Lies of our Anti-Christian Age*.

Throughout the book, she occasionally mentions details about her personal life, thereby adding weight to the arguments she advances. For whom is this book? This book is for Christians, especially Christian workers, who aren’t ashamed of the Bible and its teachings—or who want to change. For young married women, my hope is that this book will encourage you to press on in holy faith and living. For young single women, I hope that you will aspire to be faithful and fruitful Christian wives, that is, to be helpers, wise counselors, and devoted homemakers to a godly man, raising children to the glory of God. For older single and married women, my hope is that you will take up your role of honor as spiritual mothers to young women in the church” (p. xix).

So, what are the “five lies”? In the Introduction she posits that “Seemingly overnight, a civil war within Christianity has broken out” (p. 1). She depicts Christians as being so overwhelmed by the sudden changes in society that they are bewildered and don’t know how to respond. She describes this new world as feeling “like we are living at ground zero of the Tower of Babel” (p. 4). The world is in chaos, and the church is divided.

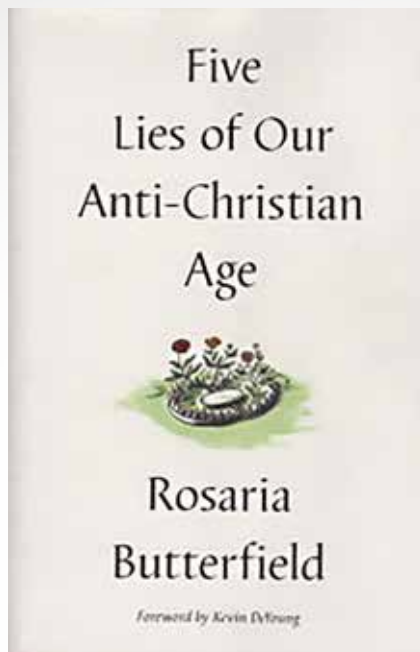
Although there are other lies, in this book, Rosaria broadly categorizes them this way:

Lie #1: *Homosexuality is normal.*

Lie #2: *Being a spiritual person is kinder than being a biblical Christian.*

Lie #3: *Feminism is good for the world and the church.*

Lie #4: *Transgenderism is normal.*



Lie #5: *Modesty is an outdated burden that serves male dominance and holds women back.*

She says that we live in Babel because the truth is being exchanged for lies (Rom. 1:21-28) and the worship of God is exchanged for idol worship. There is a progression in sin. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful... (Rom. 1:21). They exchanged the truth for lies, so God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves (Rom. 1:24-25). Therefore, God gave them up to dishonourable passions, exchanging their natural relations (heterosexuality) for unnatural relations (homosexuality), the evidence of a “debased mind” (Rom. 1: 26-28).

At the outset, she wants the reader to know that she not only believed all these lies as an unbeliever, but that these lies are so “sneaky and seductive: that I needed to write this book.” She too believed some of them, but “I woke up to realize that I was on the field running the ball in the wrong direction...” (p. 17). In other words,

don’t be so easily persuaded by Christian kindness (spirituality), ignorance, and the world’s arguments. For instance, “Gay Christians tell you that they must ‘navigate’ their homosexuality.” But Rosaria says: “God equips you to overcome your sin. Why did it become wise for Christians to ‘come out of the closet’ about their sin, to tell the whole world about their sin instead of repenting of it and seeking accountability from a pastor or elders and a few close friends?” (p. 27ff.). This may sound harsh but hear her out. Based on her own experience, factual research, and Scripture, she waylays some of these wrong views in great detail in applicable parts of this book.

Central to her arguments is God’s creation order: “We are made in the image of God as *distinctly* men and women, and we are called to reflect that image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, *as men and as women*” (p. 10). Whereas some of the aspects of the gospel life are universal to both men and women, for instance, repentance, hope in Christ, and obedient lives, some are different because of God’s creation design. Wives are called to obey their husbands in the Lord (1 Pet. 3:1), only qualified men are called to be pastors and church leaders, and men and women are to conduct themselves modestly and not tempt one another (p. 10).

In Chapter 8, “*Does the Gospel Need a Feminist Rescue?*” Rosaria makes it very plain that the opening chapters of the Bible (Genesis 1 to 3) create the frame through which to examine the rest of the biblical story. This differentiation can be traced throughout Scripture and is worked out in the letters by the apostles to the churches, where specific instructions regarding the marriage relationship and the limiting of the offices in the church to women are based on the creation order.

“The institution of marriage is God’s first government, and as such, marriage points to God’s purpose in the world and the church” (p. 170). Biblical headship in marriage sets the framework for how a wife serves as a helpmate. A helpmate is not a doormat. She is intelligent and strong and knows how to think and advise her husband when called upon. While she may also have a job or career that contributes to the household, being a helpmate means that the husband’s vocation comes first... For many Christian women, God’s pattern feels

burdensome and unwelcome, and may even be seen as dangerous, outdated, and unfair. But God's pattern is not the problem. God's commands are never burdensome (1 John 5:3-4). "God's commandments express God's love. If the problem is not God's commandment, what is it? The problem is our sinful response to it" (p. 172).

In response to churches which are giving in to expanding on the Bible's position, it is especially Lie #2 which she applies to well-meaning people who espouse the view that *"Being a Spiritual Person is Kinder than being Biblical Christian."* Rosaria refers to Christians who have become accepting and promote an attitude of kindness by softening biblical principles rather than upholding the standards of God's Word. It should be pointed out that Rosaria is not unkind but loving in the way she points out that God has the last Word.


In the part of Lie #4, *"Transgenderism is Normal,"* Rosaria tells us that *"Transgenderism is taking our world by storm. The idea that men can transition into women or women into men defies logic, sanity, and history. It creates a world where defining woman has become the domain of biologists instead of kindergartners. Transgenderism has erased parental authority in government schools"* (p.193). Here she mentions the stories of people she has known who called themselves transgendered. Sadly, this led to a chaotic and tragic existence. She states: *"The root problem is that transgenderism is a sin. It is sin that tears apart truth and tears down families"* (p. 200). Here, she also offers a lot of help, *"Godly help for the gender dysphoric understands medical and psychiatric problems as serious and does not believe that a gay Pride parade, ... or an opportunity to appear in drag and read to children at a public library offers an adequate solution"* (p. 203).

The chapters that describe transgender mutilation are followed by Lie #5, *"Modesty is an outdated burden that serves male dominance and holds women back."* It may seem surprising to add this as one of the lies of our age, but when you think about it and read her exposition, it makes sense to include this. Do the sexual sins of our age not have a lot to do with loss of modesty, especially on social media? Rosaria refers to various ways privacy in public is blurred. *"And when privacy disappears, so does modesty. Indeed, a social media-infused Christian life will always choose exhibitionism over modesty"* (p. 281).

So, here you have it. A very well-researched, up-to-date book answering lies about sexuality that are destroying our culture, especially our youth, by an author 'who has been there,' but has fully embraced biblical Christianity, its morals and lifestyle. Hard-hitting but permeated with God's great grace.

Much more could be mentioned, such as her tribute to Floy and Ken Smith (a retired missionary couple of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, who disciplined her with their witness, Christian character, and hospitality.) At times you think that you don't want to read all about the sexual perversions that are named, especially when it includes body mutilation and transgendering. This is not a pleasant book to read, and I would recommend it more as a manual to consult in our confused and morally chaotic age.

Rosaria began her book this way: *"My prayer is that our generation would be known for faithful prayer, fervent worship, diligent church membership, and sacrificial hospitality, blessed by and magnified by the Holy Spirit. May your faith fail not, and may you see your loved one restored to truth and to Christ"* (Preface, p. xxi). I think we can all agree with this, especially if we have loved ones who have left God's ways.

The book has a Foreword by Kevin De Young and is recommended by several pastors. 

This book and others may be purchased in Canada at Reformed Book Services in Brantford, Ontario, and at Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

3RD ANNUAL SENIOR'S DAY

What is our Identity?

Coffee

9:30 AM,

Morning Session

10:30 AM

Speech in English

Lunch:

12:00 PM

Speaker

Pastor Lipsy

followed by singing

When

Tuesday

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"Let the people praise Thee, O God; let ALL the people praise Thee" Psalm 67:5



THE ORDER OF SALVATION (16)

SANCTIFICATION (2)

In Romans 5, the apostle Paul compares and contrasts the work of Adam and of Christ. Both men have done something that has had enormous consequences for those whom they represented. By his act of disobedience, Adam brought death and damnation upon the whole human race. By His act of obedience, Christ secured life and salvation for all who believe in Him. Just as we all share the guilt of Adam's sin, so believers share the gift of righteousness obtained for them by Christ. Paul stresses that this righteousness is indeed a gift. While we all deserve condemnation because of our connection with Adam, our first father, believers receive salvation as a free gift because of their union with Christ. We are saved by grace through faith not by our own works, but by Christ's finished work. That is true of our sanctification as well as our justification.

Many people question the last part of this statement. They are so used to hearing about Luther's insistence that justification is the doctrine on which the church's survival depends that they think sanctification occupied a less important role in his thinking. But they are wrong. Luther may have placed less emphasis on good works than Calvin did, but both had a keen awareness of the danger of trying to earn salvation the Roman Catholic way. Both Luther and Calvin firmly believed and taught that justification and sanctification are received by grace alone and faith alone. Both phases of the order of salvation are experienced out of the believer's union with Christ.

Sanctification and Union with Christ

In his famous book, *Redemption-Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray wrote, "Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation... It is not simply a phase of the application of redemption; it underlies every aspect of redemption."¹ Although this union has its roots in divine election in eternity, it is based on the redemptive work of Christ in time and the operation of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Regeneration is the supernatural birth from above whereby spiritually dead sinners are brought into living union with Christ.² Through their spiritual rebirth, the Holy Spirit brings them back from serving Satan to serving Christ, their true Master.

Union with Christ is a doctrine to which Reformed Christians have subscribed. For John Calvin, "Union with Christ" was an important internal theological principle around which he sought to arrange his whole doctrine of the appropriation of the salvation achieved and revealed in Christ.³ Yet, while all who call themselves Reformed hold to this doctrine, not all understand its meaning in the same way. Much depends on how one views the role or function of faith. Calvin and most of his followers in Europe and North America regard faith

and repentance as fruits of grace bestowed on sinners at the moment of their regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

Thomas Boston, one of the main spokesmen of the *Marrow Controversy* during the early 18th century in Scotland, taught that union with Christ is established when the Holy Spirit severs our connection with Adam and joins us to Christ. Boston describes this process in terms of branches being cut off from Adam, the old vine, and being engrafted into the new Vine, Jesus Christ. He based this on John 15, where this analogy is recorded. By nature, Boston says, we are all branches connected to the old vine, Adam, from whom we receive our life, energy, and fruitfulness. Originally, Adam was a vine of the Lord's planting – a choice, noble, and fruitful vine. Because he was created in the image of God, he possessed enough vitality to nourish all the branches, enabling him and his descendants to bear fruit unto God and earn eternal life. But when Adam fell, he became a corrupt vine which of course ruined all the branches connected to him. Because the root was poisoned and ultimately died in Eden, all the branches were infected, causing whatever fruit they produced to be wild grapes of wickedness (Isa. 5:2).

How, then, are sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, saved? Only by being severed from Adam and implanted into Christ. The cutting off from the natural vine takes place in the new birth, when the Holy Spirit, using the pruning knife of the law, convicts us of our sin and guilt so that we see ourselves standing condemned before the bar of God's justice. According to Boston, while the sinner is cut off from Adam by the law, he is united to Christ by the gospel because the law cannot save but only convict and condemn. The gospel alone saves sinners. The law lays open the wound, but only the gospel heals it. Sinners are not driven to Christ by the bare terrors of the law, but they are drawn to Him with tender words of love. The Holy Spirit works faith by the preaching of the gospel whereby the sinner lays hold of the promise that Christ will receive all those who come to Him; the result being union with Christ.

When in Lord's Day 7 our *Heidelberg Catechism* asks, "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?" the answer is: "No, only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits" (Q&A. 20). These received benefits are all the graces needed for our salvation – that is, faith, repentance, justification, sanctification and the forgiveness of sins. Notice that the first of the saving graces listed is faith, and rightly so, because the sinner being now united to Christ totally depends on Him, particularly for justification and sanctification (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30).

The Meaning of "In Christ"

Those who are saved not only believe in Christ but are *in Christ*. The expression *in Christ* is mentioned in the New Testament no less than 132 times, mostly by the apostle Paul. We often come

across the apostle's statement *in Christ* as well as *Christ in us*. Both point to an amazing truth which we often overlook. If we are true believers, we are one with Christ (Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2), He being the Head and we members of His body. Just as by nature we are one with Adam, we become one with Christ. As Paul writes to the Corinthian church: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" -- *all* meaning the elect (1 Cor. 15:22). The difference is enormous because our union with the first Adam leads to eternal death as punishment for our sins, whereas our union with the second Adam, Christ, brings us eternal life.

To be in Christ or to experience union with Christ means to be the beneficiary of Christ's redemptive work on behalf of His people.

When Paul speaks of "in Christ," writes Pastor Carl Schouls, "he is referring to the objective standard which all believers have received by which they are by grace, through the Holy Spirit, as much included in the saving work of Christ as every person is by nature included in the sin and subsequent punishment of Adam."⁴

To be in Christ or to experience union with Christ means to be the beneficiary of Christ's redemptive work on behalf of His people. He had been appointed by His Father to come to this earth to save them from their sins. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul expresses his joy with them that, though being former pagans, they had been chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:3,4). Notice what the apostle says regarding the real purpose of Christ's mission. In Matthew 1, the angel tells Joseph the name of Mary's Child will be Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. But here in Ephesians 1:4, Paul mentions another reason for Christ's coming to earth. He was to save His people from their sins so that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Some people are so focussed on the importance of forgiveness of sins that they would rather hear sermons on justification than sanctification because the latter deal more with holiness and striving against sin. This is wrong. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us of God's ultimate purpose for our salvation, namely that "we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." When sinners are regenerated, they are joined to Christ and begin to pursue holiness or sanctification, for "without which no man shall see the Lord." What they were not interested in while still in Adam becomes their main objective because they are in Christ and Christ is in them (Gal. 2:20).

They may not understand this right away, but they soon begin to take baby steps along the path of God's commandments, following their Saviour's example who kept God's law perfectly. They soon copy David's prayer: "Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach

me thy paths” (Ps. 25:4). Union with Christ unites both the Saviour and the born-again believer to say, “Oh, how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Ps. 119:97).

The young believer, however, unlike his Saviour, who has kept His Father’s law perfectly, needs to grow in love and obedience to God’s law. That love is challenged by remaining sin and weakness of the flesh. That challenge of the power sin impeding growth in sanctification is not just an occasional one in a beginner in grace. Just think of the apostle Paul, a mature, fully assured believer in Christ, crying in Romans 7:18, “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” Like every Christian, the apostle had these moments of despair. Yet he could say afterwards, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin” (v. 25). Every true Christian is still bothered by indwelling sin but is nevertheless dead to sin and alive to God.

The True Meaning of Baptism

Paul illustrates this grace by the sacrament of baptism. In Romans 6, he explains what baptism really means. Baptism symbolizes the washing away of our sins by the blood of Christ and the cleansing of our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We are united to Christ by faith and receive the benefits of His death and resurrection. Christ’s death was connected with sin, not His own sin for He had none, but the sins of His people which were laid on Him by His Father. So, Paul concludes in 6:10, “in that He died, He died unto sin once.” We can also translate it this way: The purpose of His death was to defeat sin and to sever all connections with it.

It is a great blessing to understand that Christ’s death took care of our sins. He paid the full price for them and therefore offers a full pardon for them. That is what justification is all about. There can be no union with Christ without the blessing of forgiveness, but also without the blessing of sanctification. Salvation without sanctification delivering from sin’s power is no salvation. Anthony Hoekema is so right when he writes: “We are [also] sanctified through union with Christ. Sanctification in the progressive sense may be defined as that work of God by which the Holy Spirit progressively renews the life of the believer and enables him or her to live to the praise of God. This aspect of our salvation, too, can only be experienced in union with Christ.”⁵

Endnotes

- 1 John Murray, *Redemption-Accomplished and Applied*, p. 201.
- 2 Anthoy Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, p. 54.
- 3 Philip Ryken, *Thomas Boston as Preacher of the Fourfold State*, p. 205.
- 4 C.A. Schouls, *Grazing in God’s Pastures*, p. 247.
- 5 Hoekema, *Saved by grace*, p. 62.



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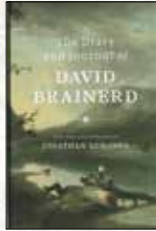
The Diary and Journal of David Brainerd with Notes and Reflections by Jonathan Edwards

By David Brainerd

At the request of the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, which was supporting his missionary work amongst the indigenous peoples of North America, David Brainerd took the gospel to the North American Indians of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts.

He willingly took any risk and accepted any hardship to fulfil his calling as a missionary. The Diary covers the period from April 1742 to October 1747.

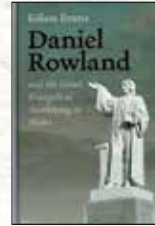
The amount of work which he achieved in such unpromising and difficult circumstances now seems almost incredible. Although written as a private and personal record, his diary was published in abridged form by the great New England pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards in 1749. Jonathan Edwards' own 'Reflections and Observations' on Brainerd's life, included in this volume, are, according to Iain H. Murray in his Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography, 'among the most important descriptive pages on the Christian life which Edwards ever wrote.' It has been said that few books have done so much to promote prayer and missionary action as The Diary and Journal of David Brainerd. This edition features a fresh, new typeset. Hardcover, 510 pages, Banner of Truth Trust **RBS Price \$35.00**



Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales

By Eifion Evans

J. C. Ryle described Daniel Rowland (1711-1790) as 'one of the spiritual giants of the eighteenth century.' Lady Huntingdon considered him to be 'second only to Whitefield.' Howel Harris wrote of him, 'In his pulpit he is second to St Paul,' while others acclaimed him as 'the greatest preacher in Europe.' Yet he has been one of the least-known leaders of that age. At death, when reminded that he had been instrumental in the conversion of thousands to Christ, Rowland protested, 'It is nothing. I die as a poor sinner depending fully and entirely on the merits of a crucified Saviour.' Dr. D. M. Lloyd-Jones asks, 'Has there been preaching which has had anything like the effect of his preaching since those days?' The loss of manuscripts shortly after his death, the Welsh language barrier, and the fact that all his closest friends were also preachers rather than authors, all contributed to leaving only a shadowy impression of his greatness. However, after many years of work, Dr. Eifion Evans succeeded in breaking through a multitude of difficulties to present for the first time a full-scale biography of Daniel Rowland. This volume is a record of revivals, friendships with other leaders, persecutions and divisions, and the birth of a new age for Wales. Dr. Evans' volume not only fills a major gap in church history, but it is also an inspiring testimony to New Testament Christianity. Hardcover, 470 pages, Banner of Truth Trust **RBS Price \$42.00**



Grace: The Truth, Growth, and Different Degree

By Christopher Love

"Christopher Love was a brilliant young Welsh preacher and rising star in the world of Puritan ministry," wrote the late J.I. Packer. Love was highly regarded by his peers. He was a staunch Presbyterian and a Covenanter. The American preacher, Jonathan Edwards, read Love and had his books in his library. Christopher Love was arrested by Cromwell's forces for his alleged involvement in a plan to raise money for the restoration of the monarchy, a charge Love denied. He was tried and convicted on charges of treason. Though several other prominent London ministers were also arrested, including Thomas Watson, they were all released. Christopher Love was beheaded on Tower Hill, London, on August 22, 1651. Here are Love's 15 sermons on grace, taken from 1 Kings 14:13: "Because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel." Endorsements: Christopher Love is one of my favourite Puritans. And this book on "Grace" is, in my opinion, one of the 3 best books I've ever published in over 30 years of reprinting the Puritans. If there's a single theme to this book it is this: Christ is a better Saviour than I am a sinner. --Dr. Don Kistler, Editor. Hardcover, 150 pages, Northampton Press **RBS Price \$25.00**



RECENT BOOKS

Facing the Last Enemy: Death and the Christian

By Guy Prentiss Waters

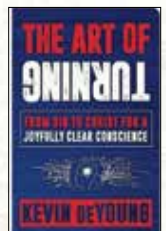
When we're standing at the gravesite, death gives little closure and leaves many questions unanswered. Despite the common claim that "dying is just a natural part of life," people seem to avoid this unsettling subject more than ever. Yet the Bible doesn't shy away from the reality of death. God's Word has the answers we need to face the grave with confidence in our risen Redeemer. In this book, Dr. Guy Waters provides the Bible's answers to essential questions about death, dying, and what comes after this life. Here is a balm for the grieving, counsel for caretakers, and guidance to help God's people rest in Christ's victory as we come to life's final battle. Dr. Guy Prentiss Waters is Professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson and author of several books, including How Jesus Runs the Church and The Life and Theology of Paul. Hardcover, 157 pages, Ligonier Ministries **RBS Price \$14.00**



The Art of Turning: From Sin to Christ for a Joyfully Clear Conscience

By Kevin DeYoung

The conscience seems somewhat mysterious. We're often not really sure how to listen to it, if we can trust it, or what role it should play in our lives. Kevin DeYoung shows us it isn't something to be puzzled over, but rather that a conscience is something good, given by God. As you read this book, you'll discover freedom from the low-level guilt and shame we commonly experience. DeYoung explains that when we daily turn to Christ, we experience a clear conscience that comes with knowing that Jesus' blood covers all our wrong. "Our conscience is always with us yet its unique purpose in the Christian life is not often explored. This book takes a practical look at the role of the conscience through the lens of Scripture and puts a spotlight on needed truth. It is a resource that gets the reader to dive in with both feet and experience the powerful encouragement and fundamental conviction that the conscience brings to the Christian life... As a biblical counselor, I am grateful for this resource as it is sure to be helpful for anyone who reads it." Kevin DeYoung is senior pastor at Christ Covenant Church. Softcover, 40 pages, 10 Publishing **RBS Price \$4.50**



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A WINTER'S SLUMBER

*“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past...” Song of Solomon 2:10-11*



In this text, Solomon describes a spiritual winter. It is a season characterized by soulish dormancy and a landscape-covered cold, a lifeless embrace of ice and wind. The soul is in a slumber, perhaps complacent, surely weary. When the soul is seemingly distant from the warmth of spiritual communion with Christ, it is a horrible season. It is a necessary season. And at times, it feels like it will never end.

But as winter's frost melts to spring's embrace, so the frozen heart, warmed by Christ's love, blossoms in renewed faith and holy affection. Let the winter of pride [because let's be honest,

all sin is pride] give way to a spring of humility, for it is the lowly heart that receives the refreshing rains of God's grace. In the depths of spiritual slumber, the voice of Christ calls us, awakening the soul to renewed life in Him. So, the winter's chill is but a prelude to a spring's warmth.

Dear one, in the winter of despair, let the knees be bent in humble prayer, for communion with Christ melts the stone-cold heart. Let the Holy Spirit do His thawing work.

Our Saviour had a winter of the soul. Did you know that? The cross's winter was bathed in sorrow. But from the Root of



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Dear one, know that He has entered your winter and endured its bitterest chill. He has drunk the cup of divine wrath to its dregs that you might drink the sweet wine of His love.

Jesse, the tree upon which He was slain, budded. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and "It is finished!" speak of winter. But from that barren tree called the cross of our Lord, the first buds of our salvation blossomed and then came to fruition through His Resurrection. His forsaken cry was the wintry howl that heralded a new season about to begin in Him. O believer, in your winter of soul, when Christ seems distant and hope seems lost, think on that forsaken cry. He was forsaken by God so that we would NEVER be forsaken. In Christ, the cold chains of sin are broken, and the warmth of pardoning grace hugs the soul. We are never left to freeze in our sin but called into the warmth of His love. Dear one, know that He has entered your winter and endured its bitterest chill. He has drunk the cup of divine wrath to its dregs that you might drink the sweet wine of His love.

Through the winter of Christ's forsaken cry, He has secured for you an eternal spring, a never-ending communion, where all tears are wiped away, and joy is forever in season. Cling to Him, dear soul, for He has clung to the cross for you, and His winter of the soul has brought you an everlasting spring. ^M

Rev. J. Lewis is pastor of the Free Reformed Church of Pompton Plains, New Jersey. This devotional was first posted on his blog (<https://between2gardens.substack.com/p/a-winters-slumber>) on August 19, 2023.

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WHITER THAN SNOW: GOSPEL CONCERN FOR A CHILD

Below is a letter of Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843) to a young boy. As such, it is a model for adults and valuable for children to read. M'Cheyne was a minister in Dundee, Scotland, who witnessed revival in his congregation. As this letter shows, his writings are marked by simplicity, earnestness, urgency, and winsome Christ-centeredness. His writings are highly recommended!

To J. T., A young boy anxious about his soul
Collace, January 27, 1842.

My dear Boy, —I was very glad to receive your kind note and am glad to send you a short line in return, although my time is much taken up. You are very dear to me, because your soul is precious; and if you are ever brought to Jesus, washed and justified, you will praise Him more sweetly than an angel of light.

I was riding among the snow to-day, where no foot had trodden, and it was pure, pure white; and I thought again and again of that verse: “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” That is a sweet prayer, —make it your own. Often go alone and look up to Jesus, who died to wash us from our sins, and say, “Wash me.”

Amelia Geddie was one day dressed in a new white frock, with red ribbons in her bonnet, and someone said to her, “No doubt you will think yourself very trim and clean?” “Ah! no,” she said, “I will never think that until I have the fine white robe of my

Redeemer’s righteousness put upon me.”

I am glad, my dear boy, you think that God is afflicting you to bring you to himself. It is really for this that He smites you. His heart, his hand, and his rod are all inscribed with love. But then, see that He does bring you to himself. Do not delay. The lake of fire and brimstone stretches beneath every soul that lives in sin. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” If the Lord Jesus would but draw the curtain and let you see his own fair face, and his wounded side, and how there is room for the guiltiest sinner in Him, you would be drawn to Jesus with the cords of love.

I was preaching in Perth last Sabbath. When I came out, a little girl came up to me, I think about three or four years old. She wanted to hear of the way to be saved. Her mother said she had been crying the whole night before about her soul and



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"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."
Colossians 3:17

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would take no comfort till she should find Jesus. Oh! pray that the same Spirit may waken you.

Remember, Johnnie, you once wept for your soul too, and prayed and sought Jesus. Have you found Him? or have you looked back, like Lot's wife, and become a hard, cold pillar of salt? Awake again, and call upon the name of the Lord. Your time may be short, God only knows. The longest lifetime is short enough. It is all that is given you to be converted in. They are the happiest who are brought soonest to the bosom of Jesus.

Write me again. At present I must draw to a close. Give my kindest remembrances to your mamma, and to A. when you write. Tell him to write me. May you all meet at the table of Jesus above; and may I be there too, a sinner saved by grace.—

Ever yours, etc. 11

R. M. M'Cheyne

SAVE THE DATE

HERITAGE SPRING RETREAT

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"WALK WORTHY OF THE VOCATION WHEREWITH YE ARE CALLED..."
EPHESIANS 4:1

MAY 18-20, 2024 DV

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CHILDREN OF THE CONGREGATION

Much has already been written about the children of the congregation. This topic is related to the question: How should we view the congregation of the Lord? Having written about that elsewhere, we will focus on something else.

Children of the congregation are indeed children of the covenant. But they are also fallen children, damnable before God. They are children of wrath. Jesus' saying applies to children of the church: "Ye must be born again." The necessity of this rebirth is at times too much ignored.

A child of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins, cannot cooperate in being born again. The child is – as we all are – wholly passive in regeneration. Is it not then useless to give attention to children in the sermon? What can they follow of the sermon? However, while elders may be able to follow a sermon far better than a child, they are no less dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit than the smallest child.

If a preacher thinks only of himself and the young children, then he has reason to say: "Let the children stay home." Yet, that preacher would then be thinking very wrongly. We know that the Lord regenerates young children. The examples in Scripture are clear.

So, what should we think concerning preaching to children? In the springtime, farmers sow seed on their fields. That field cannot cause that seed to die and live without God's blessing; the seed cannot make itself die and live to produce a plant. But the farmer quietly scatters the seed, sowing at times with tears, but sowing nonetheless. If he is a Christian, he sows prayerfully. He cannot make a single seed bear fruit, but his God can bless the means.

Children in Christian households can be laboured upon to become living Christians. The parents cannot make them living Christians, but they sow seeds of regeneration. One seed can be used by God's re-creative power. One seed can be enough for God's Spirit to use to raise a dead sinner, including a dead child, to spiritual life. That is why parents must be much more serious about parenting and, above all, much more serious about praying for the Spirit's recreating work for their child(ren).

Let parents also bring their children under the ministry of the Word as much as possible and as early as possible. More often people ask: "What do the children gain from the sermon? They just twist and turn or sit there bored." But when it rains in the spring and the children walk outside, don't they get wet?

Even though they are playing outside and not thinking about the rain? Does the rain fall only on the big, tall trees or also on the young grass and small flowers? Well, can the Holy Spirit not work in that restless or bored boy in church by pouring living water into his heart? Let us see what the Holy Spirit is able and willing to do and let us also not be too hastily annoyed by a child who twists a little in the bench. Let us pray more for those little ones who catch our attention in church.

When the water flows from the mountains and forms a rivulet, does that water fill only great depths or also the little holes? The Holy Spirit can also cause the water of life from the Temple stream to enter the hearts of little ones. But then those little ones must also be there, where the Lord directs the temple stream to flow.

The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is indispensable to make our children living Christians. The benefits of God's covenant are rich, firm, and unchanging. God's promises do not fail. Yet, our baptismal form makes clear enough that, without regeneration and incorporation into Christ, our children are not living covenant members.

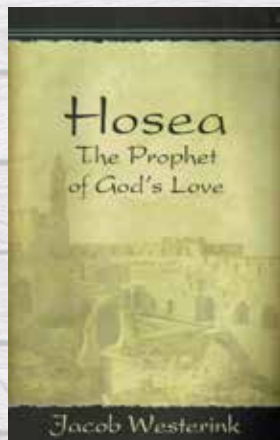
I fear we think far too poorly of the covenant of grace and plead far too little upon that covenant. That failure needs to become our guilt that we confess before God. One of the reasons for lack of pleading on God's covenant promises may be that we gloss over the fact that children of the covenant must be born again to enjoy the riches of that covenant. This is too much forgotten and too little desired in prayer.

Is the cause perhaps that we think too little about these holy matters in our own lives? Are we ourselves living Christians and is God pressing this earnest concern on our own heart? We can possess so much, even religiously, and miss the one thing needful!

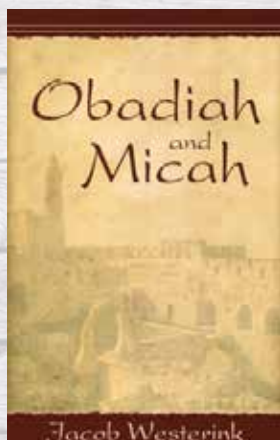
Let the child of the congregation be more the object of our prayer. May we give ourselves more in love, also to the children of the congregation. Parents, do not forget your children. Soon the LORD will call us to give an account. ¹

Prof. L. H. vanderMeiden served as professor in Apeldoorn Theological School, when the first Free Reformed ministers were trained for the ministry. Many Free Reformed confessing members have received his God's Yea and Your Amen at their confession of faith. This article is translated from: "Het kind der gemeente," De Wekker (December 5, 1958): 2-3.

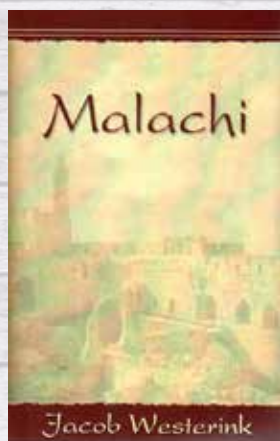
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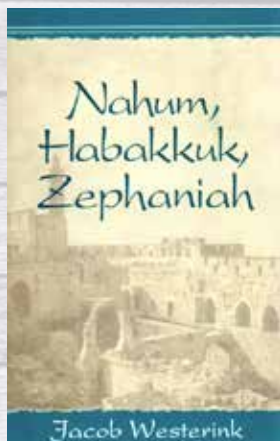
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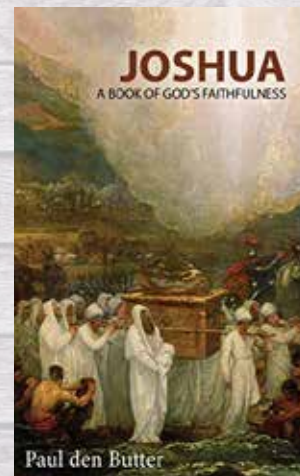
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COMPASSION CARE
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Introducing Compassion Care Free Reformed Association
We are a non-profit organization serving the Southern Ontario Reformed community. We provide in home/institution nursing services, PSW care, companion care and respite to families who are caring for elderly (or not so elderly) family members. This is a paid service. We also plan to hold education sessions directed towards the elderly and their families – to help them prepare for the future while navigating the sometimes difficult stages of aging. We have been in operation for just over one year now and have recently been formally incorporated. We are currently serving Southern Ontario with a view to expanding as we get more caregivers.

If you have a heart for service and align with our mission of wishing to fulfill the mandate of Galatians 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ", we welcome you to apply for a part-time position as a caregiver. A PSW certificate or nursing license is optimal but there is also a need for Companion Care which requires no formal education. If you have a need in your family, don't hesitate to reach out & inquire about our services. All inquiries may be directed towards our Director of Services, Tanya Kleinjan (905)-519-2829 or compassioncarefrc@gmail.com.

Our goal is to keep our clients' fees low while paying our caregivers a fair wage. In this regard, we gratefully accept donations of any size to help realize this goal. Do note that we do not have charitable status at this time and so cannot issue tax receipts. Donations may be sent to our treasurer: Tracey Gritter 11 Baker Rd. N. Grimsby, ON L3M 2W9. E-transfers also accepted at: compassioncarefrc@gmail.com.

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AND THE FIRMAMENT
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PSALM 19:1

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attention of Mr. Paul Wagenaar at principal@ourjcs.ca.



Trinitarian Bible Society (Canada)

The Central Ontario Auxiliary of the Trinitarian Bible Society

Invites you to attend their 2024 Annual Spring Meeting to be held, The Lord Willing, on Thursday April 11, 2024, at 8 PM, at the **Hamilton Free Reformed Church, 1114 Old Mohawk Rd., Ancaster**. The main speaker will be the new **General Secretary** of TBS (Canada), **Mr. William Grisnich**, of Coaldale, Alberta. After graduating from Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, in 1984 with a Bachelor of Education degree, he became a teacher at Calvin Christian School in Coalhurst, Alberta, where he has taught for the past 38.5 years, including 17 years as principal.

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