

Finally, it is necessary that the teacher become familiar with the night sky. This requires repeated observation. One can work alone, but viewing with an experienced observer is best. No apparatus is necessary although a pair of low-power binoculars is helpful. (7 X 35 or 7 X 50 binoculars are best. Higher powers are difficult to hold still without a tripod.)

You will need a good star map, a map of the type that shows the heavens as they appear during the evenings of a particular month. The best of these, in my opinion, are those found in the magazine *Sky and Telescope*. Printed white on dark blue, they are easy on the eyes. Simple enough for beginners, they contain sufficient detail to satisfy even experienced observers. *Astronomy and Natural History* magazines also publish monthly maps, but I find them somewhat inferior to the above.

Begin your observations with the stars near the north celestial pole. Then, having learned the circumpolar constellations, move southward. A few evenings should suffice to familiarize you with the basics. Where you go from there is up to you.

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,  
 When the proofs, the figures, were ranged  
 columns before me,  
 When I was shown the charts and diagrams,  
 to add, divide, and measure them,  
 When I sitting heard the astronomer where  
 he lectured with much applause in the  
 lecture room,  
 How soon unaccountable I became tired and  
 sick  
 Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by  
 myself,  
 In the mystical moist night-air, and from  
 time to time  
 Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.<sup>7</sup>

1 Lewis, C.S., *The Discarded Image, An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*; Cambridge University Press, 1964; p. 10

2 *Ibid*, p. 10-11

3 *Ibid*, p. 12

4 *Ibid*, p. 74-75

5 *Ibid*, p. 96-97

6 Dreyer, J.L.E., *A History of Astronomy From Thales to Kepler*, Dover Publications, 1953, p. 352,353

7 Whitman, Walt, *Leaves of Grass*; J.M. Dent and Sons, 1947

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## THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR

by Mr. Fred Hanko

Mr. Fred Hanko teaches in the junior high school of Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School. He serves as assistant principal and writes a weekly essay on the "Wednesday note" to the parents of Hope school. The following essay served as the initial contribution of 1976, the U.S.A.'s Bicentennial Year.

I know that I really don't have to remind you that this is the beginning of the Bicentennial Year. In fact, I suspect that already with the year just beginning you would prefer not to be reminded. For months now we have been bludgeoned

with that information by means of coins, books, advertising, and all sorts of means. It is not my purpose to add to the clamor. I just want to make a few observations that may help to retain a proper perspective and to point out some direction for Christian parents and teachers during this year.

In the first place, we are going to have to work hard to counteract the great barrage of propaganda that is already beating upon us. The Declaration of Independence, which is the focus of this year's celebration, was an act of rebellion supported by ideas that are contrary to the

teaching of Scripture. We will have to be careful to avoid the blind adulation of the "founding fathers" that is so much a part of the celebration.

If we use our Christian perspective to analyze and criticize, we have an excellent opportunity this year to increase our knowledge and understanding of the history of our country. It will be easy to arouse interest in our history. There will be available throughout this year many new and excellent materials that we and our children will be able to use. If we use these materials wisely, we will gain greater insight into the things that God has done in our land.

Now is a splendid time to remind ourselves and our children of the great benefits that God has given us in this country. We have the great privilege that we may worship God without interference from our government. God has given us the opportunity and the prosperity so that here we can maintain schools to bring up our children in the way that God has commanded us. We have the means and the freedom to witness in this land and to preach the Gospel of Christ to those outside of our churches. Let us appreciate

these benefits with gratitude to God and resolve to use these benefits with all our might.

While we focus upon our country and our government, we will have many opportunities to teach our children about their responsibilities and obligations. While many today mock those who rule, we must increase our efforts to teach our children respect for those who are in authority because they have been placed there by God. While obedience to authority steadily declines, we must insist upon strict obedience to those in authority for God's sake. We must emphasize by teaching and example the obligation we have from God to use the resources of this rich land as faithful stewards.

All of this is training in citizenship for those who are also citizens of the kingdom of Heaven. In fulfilling our duties here we will "seek a better country, that is, a heavenly". This bicentennial year gives us many opportunities to teach these things in our homes and in our school. Let's not be drowned in propaganda or carried away with false emotions, but let's use these opportunities for Christian training.