



Read The Christian's Reasonable Service

by *Wilhelmus à Brakel*
in two years

Use this reading plan, brought to you by Chapel Library (www.chapellibrary.org), to read Wilhelmus à Brakel's *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (4 volumes). Joel Beeke, who made this book available through Reformation Heritage Books (heritagebooks.org), gives the following introduction:

In my opinion, this is one of the most valuable set of books available in English today. I don't say this because I had the privilege of organizing the task, raising the funds for its translation and printing, and serving as its final editor a quarter of a century ago, but I believe this is true because of the rich doctrinal, experiential, practical, pastoral, and ethical content this classic conveys. When one reads Brakel, one is not surprised to learn that for centuries this set of books was as popular in the Netherlands as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was in English-speaking countries. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most Dutch farmers who were of Reformed persuasion would typically read a few pages of "Father Brakel," as he was fondly called, every evening to his family as an important part of their family worship. When he completed the entire work, he would start over!

This massive work is arranged in three parts. The first volume consists of a traditional Reformed systematic theology that is packed with clarity of thought, thoroughness of presentation, and helpfulness of application. The concluding applications at the end of each chapter, applying the particular doctrines discussed to the lives of believers and unbelievers, are the highlight of this section. I believe that à Brakel's practical casuistry in these applications supersedes any other systematic theologian, both in his day and ever since. They represent Reformed, Puritan, experiential theology at its best.

The second part expounds Christian ethics and Christian living. This part covers the concluding section of volume 2, all of volume 3, and most of volume 4. It is the largest and most fascinating section of à Brakel's work, packed with salient applications on a variety of topics pertinent to living as a Christian in this world. In addition to a masterful treatment of the Ten Commandments (chs. 45–55) and the Lord's Prayer (chs. 68–74), this part addresses topics such as living by faith out of God's promises (ch. 42); how to exercise love toward God and His Son (chs. 56–57); how to fear, obey, and hope in God (chs. 59–61); how to profess Christ and His truth (ch. 63); and how to exercise a host of spiritual graces, such as courage, contentment, self-denial, patience, uprightness, watchfulness, neighbor love, humility, meekness, peaceableness, diligence, compassion, and prudence (chs. 62, 64–67, 76, 82–88). Other topics treated most helpfully include fasting (ch. 75), solitude (ch. 77), spiritual meditation (ch. 78), singing (ch. 79), vows (ch. 80), spiritual experience (ch. 81), spiritual growth (ch. 89), backsliding (ch. 90), spiritual desertion (ch. 91), temptations (chs. 92–95), indwelling corruption (ch. 96), and spiritual darkness and deadness (chs. 97–98).

The third part (4:373–538) is devoted to a history of God’s redemptive, covenantal work from the beginning to the end of the world. It is reminiscent of Jonathan Edwards’s *History of Redemption*, though it is not as detailed as Edwards; à Brakel’s work confines itself more to Scripture, and has a greater covenantal emphasis. It concludes with a detailed study of the future conversion of the Jews from six passages of Scripture (4:511–38).

The Christian’s Reasonable Service represents, perhaps more than any other work, the Puritan heartbeat and balance of the Dutch Further Reformation. Here systematic theology and vital, experiential Christianity are scripturally and practically interwoven with a covenantal framework, the whole bearing the mark of a pastor-theologian deeply taught by the Spirit. Sweeping in coverage, nearly every subject treasured by Christians is treated in an unusually helpful way, always aiming for the promotion of godliness.

In my opinion, this pastoral set of books is an essential tool for every pastor and is extremely valuable for lay people as well. Happily, you can now read it in contemporary English in little ten to fifteen minute chunks in your daily devotion time over a two-year period by using this pamphlet. Buy and read this great classic—and let it be an important part of your spiritual diet for the next two years. You won’t be sorry. As publisher, we have already sold nearly 25,000 sets and have never received a single complaint about it; rather, we have been inundated with encouraging comments about its merits and its spiritual benefits for a great variety of readers. –Joel R. Beeke

**Use this five-day-per-week reading plan to complete
The Christian’s Reasonable Service in two years**

(4 volumes) by pagination: t=top of page; m=middle of page; b=bottom of page.

Year 1, Week 1

Day 1 Vol. 1, xix-xxvii
Day 2 xxxi-xxxv(b)
Day 3 xxxv(b)-xl(m)
Day 4 xl(m)-xlvi(b)
Day 5 xlvi(b)-lii(t)

Week 4

Day 1 7b-12b
Day 2 12b-17t
Day 3 17t-22
Day 4 23-27b
Day 5 27b-32

Week 7

Day 1 83-88t
Day 2 88t-93t
Day 3 93t-97b
Day 4 97b-102m
Day 5 102m-107m

Week 10

Day 1 157m-162m
Day 2 162m-167m
Day 3 167m-172t
Day 4 172t-176b
Day 5 176b-182m

Week 2

Day 1 lii(t)-lvi(t)
Day 2 lvi(t)-lx(m)
Day 3 lx(m)-lxiv(m)
Day 4 lxiv(m)-lxxi(m)
Day 5 lxxi(m)-lxxix

Week 5

Day 1 33-38t
Day 2 38t-42
Day 3 43-48t
Day 4 48t-53m
Day 5 53m-58m

Week 8

Day 1 107m-112b
Day 2 112b-117b
Day 3 117b-122m
Day 4 122m-127m
Day 5 127m-133t

Week 11

Day 1 182m-187m
Day 2 187m-191
Day 3 193-198t
Day 4 198t-204m
Day 5 204m-209

Week 3

Day 1 lxxxv-lxxxix(m)
Day 2 lxxxix(m)-xcvi(m)
Day 3 xcvi(m)-ci(t)
Day 4 cxiii-cxvi
Day 5 3-7b

Week 6

Day 1 58m-63b
Day 2 63b-68m
Day 3 68m-72m
Day 4 72m-77m
Day 5 77m-81

Week 9

Day 1 133t-138
Day 2 139-144t
Day 3 144t-148t
Day 4 148t-152m
Day 5 152m-157m

Week 12

Day 1 211-216m
Day 2 216m-221m
Day 3 221m-225b
Day 4 225b-230t
Day 5 230t-234t

Week 13

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Day 3 243b-250
Day 4 251-254m
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Week 14

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Day 2 265-269b
Day 3 269b-275t
Day 4 275t-280t
Day 5 280t-284

Week 15

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Day 4 299t-303
Day 5 307-311b

Week 16

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Day 5 331-335

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Day 5 355-359t

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Day 4 375t-380
Day 5 381-386t

Week 19

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Day 5 407-411t

Week 20

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Day 3 420b-425
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Day 5 431b-437t

Week 22

Day 1 437t-440b
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Day 3 444t-449t
Day 4 449t-453b
Day 5 453b-458t

Week 23

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Day 3 470m-475m
Day 4 475m-479b
Day 5 479b-483b

Week 24

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Day 3 493-497b
Day 4 497b-503b
Day 5 503b-508t

Week 25

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Day 3 517-521m
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Day 5 527b-532b

Week 26

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Day 2 539-543t
Day 3 543t-547b
Day 4 547b-552b
Day 5 552b-556m

Week 27

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Day 2 561-565m
Day 3 565m-568b
Day 4 568b-574
Day 5 575-579b

Week 28

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Day 3 589b-594m
Day 4 594m-598b
Day 5 598b-603b

Week 29

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Day 4 618b-623
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Day 4 647m-652b
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Day 5 18m-23b

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Day 5 44m-49m

Week 33

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Day 4 65t-69m
Day 5 69m-75m

Week 34

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Day 3 87-92b
Day 4 92b-97t
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Week 37

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Day 5 171m-174m

Week 38

Day 1 174m-178t
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Day 3 183t-187
Day 4 191-195m
Day 5 195m-200m

Week 39

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Day 3 211m-216t
Day 4 216t-221t
Day 5 221t-225m

Week 40

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Day 3 238t-244m
Day 4 244m-248t
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Week 41

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Day 5 275m-280m

Week 42

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Day 3 291t-295t
Day 4 295t-300t
Day 5 300t-306

Week 43

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Day 3 316t-321t
Day 4 321t-325b
Day 5 325b-329b

Week 44

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Day 3 341-345b
Day 4 345b-349b
Day 5 349b-354b

Week 45

Day 1 354b-360m
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Day 3 366b-371t
Day 4 371t-376t
Day 5 376t-381m

Week 46

Day 1 381m-385b
Day 2 385b-391b
Day 3 391b-396b
Day 4 396b-400b
Day 5 400b-404b

Week 47

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Day 2 409b-413
Day 3 415-419m
Day 4 419m-423b
Day 5 423b-427b

Week 48

Day 1 427b-433m
Day 2 433m-438
Day 3 439-444t
Day 4 444t-449t
Day 5 449t-453

Week 49

Day 1 455-458b
Day 2 458b-463t
Day 3 463t-467
Day 4 469-473b
Day 5 473b-477b

Week 50

Day 1 477b-481m
Day 2 481m-485
Day 3 487-491b
Day 4 491b-496m
Day 5 496m-501t

Week 51

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Day 3 557m-561b
Day 4 561b-567
Day 5 569-572b

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Day 3 582-587t
Day 4 587t-593m
Day 5 593m-596

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Day 4 609m-615t
Day 5 615t-618t

Week 4

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Day 2 621b-627t
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Day 4 632b-638
Day 5 639-644t

Week 5

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Day 3 653b-659t
Day 4 659t-664m
Day 5 664m-671t

Week 6

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Day 2 677t-681m
Day 3 681m-685m
Day 4 685m-688b
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Day 1 45b-50m
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Day 3 55m-59b
Day 4 59b-64b
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Week 10

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Day 2 72b-77
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Day 5 88m-92b

Week 11

Day 1 92b-98t
Day 2 98t-103
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Day 4 109t-112b
Day 5 112b-117

Week 12

Day 1 119-124m
Day 2 124m-128m
Day 3 128m-132m
Day 4 132m-137
Day 5 139-143b

Week 13

Day 1 143b-149b
Day 2 149b-154m
Day 3 154m-158t
Day 4 158t-162m
Day 5 162m-167m

Week 14

Day 1 167m-172b
Day 2 172b-178m
Day 3 178m-183
Day 4 185-189t
Day 5 189t-194

Week 15

Day 1 195-199b
Day 2 199b-204
Day 3 205-209t
Day 4 209t-213
Day 5 215-221m

Week 16

Day 1 221m-225
Day 2 227-231b
Day 3 231b-235
Day 4 237-242
Day 5 243-247t

Week 17

Day 1 247t-252m
Day 2 252m-256
Day 3 257-261
Day 4 263-268b
Day 5 268b-272b

Week 18

Day 1 272b-276
Day 2 277-280b
Day 3 280b-285b
Day 4 285b-290
Day 5 291-295m

Week 19

Day 1 295m-298m
Day 2 298m-302
Day 3 303-307m
Day 4 307m-311m
Day 5 311m-315

Week 20

Day 1 317-321t
Day 2 321t-326b
Day 3 326b-330
Day 4 331-336b
Day 5 336b-341b

Week 22

Day 1 341b-347
Day 2 349-352b
Day 3 352b-358b
Day 4 358b-364t
Day 5 364t-369t

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Day 1 369t-374t
Day 2 374t-378
Day 3 379-384b
Day 4 384b-389
Day 5 390-395

Week 24

Day 1 397-402b
Day 2 402b-408b
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Day 4 413-419m
Day 5 419m-425

Week 25

Day 1 427-431m
Day 2 431m-437b
Day 3 437b-441
Day 4 443-448
Day 5 449-454t

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Day 1 454t-458b
Day 2 458b-464b
Day 3 464b-471t
Day 4 471t-476t
Day 5 476t-481

Week 27

Day 1 483-487t
Day 2 487t-491
Day 3 492-497t
Day 4 497t-502t
Day 5 502t-506

Week 28

Day 1 507-512m
Day 2 512m-516b
Day 3 516b-521
Day 4 523-529m
Day 5 529m-533b

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Day 1 533b-538
Day 2 539-543m
Day 3 543m-548t
Day 4 548t-554
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Day 5 79-83m

Week 34

Day 1 83m-86b
Day 2 86b-90
Day 3 91-95b
Day 4 95b-101
Day 5 103-106m

Week 35

Day 1 106m-111
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 Day 3 117b-121b
 Day 4 121b-127
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 Day 5 180b-186t

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Day 1 186t-191
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 Day 3 199-202m
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Day 1 214t-219t
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Day 1 239t-242b
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 Day 3 246b-250
 Day 4 251-255m
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Week 42

Day 1 284-288t
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 Day 5 303-307b

Week 43

Day 1 307b-311b
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 Day 4 346b-351m
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 Day 3 365-370
 Day 4 373-377b
 Day 5 377b-382t

Week 46

Day 1 382t-386t
 Day 2 386t-390m
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 Day 5 400b-406m

Week 47

Day 1 406m-410b
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 Day 3 416b-420
 Day 4 421-426t
 Day 5 426t-431m

Week 48

Day 1 431m-437m
 Day 2 437m-441b
 Day 3 441b-446
 Day 4 447-450t
 Day 5 450t-456

Week 49

Day 1 457-461t
 Day 2 461t-464t
 Day 3 464t-468t
 Day 4 468t-472b
 Day 5 472b-477t

Week 50

Day 1 477t-480b
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 Day 5 492b-496b

Week 51

Day 1 496b-502
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Week 52

Day 1 517b-520m
 Day 2 520m-523b
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