BEACON LIGHTS
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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Young people, did you know that it is almost Easter? Yes, that’s what I’m asking. That’s a stupid question, you say. Of course we know it’s almost Easter. Don’t we see the signs of it all around us? Does not almost every store window show something we should buy because Easter is coming? We see Easter made the reason for buying almost everything you can think of: hats, coats, shoes, gloves, candies; there are Easter bunnies, Easter chicks, Easter bonnets, complete Easter outfits. As soon as we open our morning paper we are reminded that Easter will soon be here. We read many advertisements centered around the idea that we are nearing Easter Sunday. We read of plans that are being made all over the country to somehow celebrate Easter. How could anyone in this country have his eyes and ears open and not know that Easter is coming?

Well, perhaps I should rephrase my question. Young people, do you know that the day on which we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord is almost here? That’s different, isn’t it? The world is full of devices to remind us that Easter is coming, but we find little to remind us of Resurrection Day. Yet, if we but look around us, in “My Father’s World,” we see much that tells us of the Resurrection. And listening to the language that God speaks to us in nature makes quite a difference in our celebration of Resurrection. And listening to the language that God speaks to us in nature makes quite a difference in our celebration of Resurrection Day, which we call Easter. Our hearts become filled with a joy unspeakable as we contemplate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, a joy that finds expression in praise and thanksgiving to our God, Who hath raised Him from the dead, in singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. That constitutes a proper celebration of Easter.

In a broad sense, Easter is not merely the observance of one day, or of one season of the resurrection, and is full of pictures to remind us of it. Are we so busy that we fail to see them? Let us pause many times in the rush that living in the present day has become: pause, I say, to drink in the beauty with which God has surrounded us and meditate upon the resurrection of our Lord. That Christ is risen is strikingly pictured for us as we see nature awaken: the frozen streams and lakes again flow; the grass,
trees, and plants come to life again, with a fresh, new green. The air is filled with the sweet incense of spring. The music of birds is everywhere. Everything that seemed dead has suddenly come to life. What a beautiful illustration of the resurrection, and yet, how often do we stop to think of it that way? Christ Himself uses a picture taken from spring in talking about His own coming death and resurrection when He says “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12:24. When we see the wheat coming up in the fields, are we reminded of these words? Does a song of praise burst from our lips because our Lord died on the cross for our sins, and was raised again the third day? God speaks to us in the language of spring and shows us a picture of the resurrection. May our response as children of God be a prayer of thanksgiving. Then we are beginning to celebrate Easter.

Of course the symbolism of spring, beautiful that it is, is not enough. We are not even able to read it perfectly. We must have the Word of God read in the Scriptures, and preached to us. So, as we read or hear the Easter story, although we have heard it countless times before, do not miss the wonder and the glory of that Resurrection morning. Rather, walk with the women, heavy of heart, to the sepulchre, as they go to do one last loving honor to the dead body of their Lord. Stand with them in amazement and fear as you see the angel sitting upon the great stone that had been in front of the tomb. Hear the words of the angel, “He is not here: for He is risen, as He said, Come see the place where the Lord lay.” And when you finish, don’t thrust it into some far corner of your mind. Remember, this is vital! This has to do with our hope! For Christ is the first-fruits. Our own resurrection is sure because “He tore the bars away.” Christ was raised for our justification, so that His resurrection is the seal that we stand righteous before God, and we may look forward in hope to the day when He will give us a glorified body, and we shall live with Him in perfection forever. No wonder our hearts thrill with joy at the angel’s words, “He is risen!” No wonder we feel like celebrating Easter!

And we do, don’t we? Of course we do. For our rejoicing and our thanksgiving is as sure as our salvation itself. The same God who justifies us also leads us on in the way of sanctification, so that He places the song of praise upon our lips, and He causes the prayers of thanksgiving to arise from our hearts. And though many things distract us, so that, as in everything else, our very commemoration of Easter is shot through with sin, the principle is there, nonetheless, the joy is there, and the song.

In the early days of the church, Christians used to keep a night-long vigil on the Saturday night before Easter. A cock-crowing the stillness of the early morning was shattered by the joyful shout, “The Lord is risen! The Lord is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!” So let us celebrate Easter. May we be knit together even more closely as the body of Christ, and let heart answer to heart, “The Lord is risen indeed!”

—Lois Kregel

Y. P. News

(Grand Rapids area)

The young people of our churches in Grand Rapids and vicinity enjoyed a most inspiring Singpiration held Sunday night February 21, at our Creston Church. Mr. Al Heemstra led us in the singing of the well-known, well-loved songs of the church which we find in our psalter. To me, and I’m sure to many of us, they are today, and promise to remain, the most beautiful of sacred music.
In his introductory remarks our director observed that it was once said by Rowland Hill that the devil had all the good tunes, but that our Psalter contradicted this for a certainty.

Our young people, it appears, particularly enjoy Singspirations at Creston since the building is rather small and the voices carry well there. We look forward to being there again.

Special numbers on the program which were capably rendered were: A solo by Miss Nancy Bolt, accompanied by Miss Fran Flikkema; an organ solo by Miss Doloris Vos and a reading by Miss Ruth Dykstra.

The Public Relations Committee of Beacon Lights, which sponsors these Singspirations, has another planned for March 21, at our Hope Church. The plan of committee is hold a Singspiration the third Sunday of each month.

Recently both Rev. Ophoff and Rev. Hoeksema have travelled to Lynden, Washington to preach for our people there. Before Rev. Hoeksema left for his trip there he was pleasantly surprised with a getogether in his honor given by

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The question is: Are good works the condition to our salvation or the fruit of our salvation? Again we will use faith as an illustration to keep the issue clearly before us.

There are in particular two ways that faith is spoken of as a condition to salvation. The first is that our salvation in the full sense of the word is contingent upon our act of believing. We must believe first, and then, and only then will God save us. This means that while we are yet in darkness and far from the light, while we are yet dead in sins and trespasses we of ourselves believe, and then God saves us. This seems to have been the position of some in our churches when the discussion on conditions first started. It is certainly implied in the second statement of De Wolf. Notice: "Our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of heaven." That means that while we are still in darkness and far from the light, while we yet are dead in trespasses and sins we can convert ourselves. And if it is true that in that spiritual state we can convert ourselves, it must follow that we can also exercise faith. Now we need not go into a detailed criticism of this contention. It is exactly the error that the fathers were fighting in the Synod of Dordrecht.

But there are some among those that now embrace conditional theology that use the expression "Faith is a condition to salvation" in another sense. They argue this way. Granted that we are saved principally in regeneration. Granted also that we have faith principally in regeneration. Nevertheless in the conscious life of the Christian he must exercise that faith in active belief apart from the faith which is principally present in regeneration in order to be saved. They say that they are not now talking of the faith that a person has in regeneration. Let's forget about that for a moment. Entirely apart from that faith a person must believe if he is going to be saved. And if you put the question to them what they mean by salvation, since a person is saved already in regeneration, they usually answer that they have reference to salvation in the final sense of the word. They mean by salvation that final revelation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ when salvation is completed in perfection. And they usually appeal to such text as Mark 16:16, Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9 and the like.

Now this all sounds very nice. And it may even sound like it is Reformed. Salvation is a gift of God; and therefore faith is a gift of God; but we must believe if we are ever going to be saved in the final sense of the word. It all sounds so good, and we are almost led to believe that it is true. But basically it is no different than if we can believe and must believe while in the kingdom of darkness in order then to be translated into the kingdom of light.

There are especially three things wrong with this presentation however.

First of all, their argument is remarkably absent from any exegesis of the texts which they quote. And therefore they base their view on a complete misunderstanding of the texts. In the second place, they separate faith which is principally present in regeneration from the
so called "activity of faith" in the consciousness of the believer. And finally they made the mistake of separating the final manifestation of salvation from the salvation principally received in regeneration.

Concerning these three we would like to say just a word.

As regards the texts concerned, they have been amply treated before in our papers. I refer those interested to the Standard Bearer Volume 26, pp. 271-275, 292-294, where Rev. Hoeksema discusses them rather in detail.

As regards the second criticism let me remark the following:

1) That faith is first of all the bond, the spiritual bond that unites us with Christ. The elect are ingrafted into Christ by faith. They stand constantly united to Christ by means of faith. Just as a peach branch may be ingrafted into an apple tree, so the elect are ingrafted into Christ. And faith is that graft that holds them together. Just as an electric light bulb is connected to the dynamo by a wire and receives its powers from the dynamo, so the elect are connected to Christ by faith and receive their life from Christ. This faith is wrought in regeneration by the Spirit of Christ below the level of our consciousness. Cf. John 15:1-5.

2) Secondly, therefore, faith becomes a spiritual condition of the heart of the elect. And this is usually called fidei potentia or the potential of faith. It becomes a potential not yet active which makes the person able to appropriate the blessings of salvation. By nature, he cannot appropriate the blessings of Christ. Faith is the potential whereby he is made able. This too is wrought solely by God apart from anything we may do. Just as an acorn has the potentiality to produce an oak tree but is not an oak tree, so faith at this stage is only a potential to appropriate Christ although not an appropriating of Christ. Cf. Canons III and IV, 14: "Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of its being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure; but because it is in reality conferred, breathed, and infused into him; or even because God bestows the power or ability to believe, and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free will, consent to the terms of salvation, and actually believe in Christ; but because he who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also."

3) Therefore faith is in the third place, composed of two elements: Knowledge and confidence. Knowledge is the knowledge of God as the God of our salvation. It is a knowledge of experience. I may know quite a little of President Eisenhower, but I do not know him from experience as I know my own bosom friend. The knowledge of God is a knowledge of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ Who dwells in us by His Spirit, and therefore it is a knowledge of experience. And so it is also a confidence, a trust, a reliance. We trust in the God Whom we know, we rely upon Him for all things, we trust in Him. And again these two may never be separated from each other. The one is impossible without the other. They always go hand in hand.

4) And so fourthly, faith is the instrument whereby we appropriate all the gifts of salvation merited by Jesus Christ. All the gifts of salvation can be summed up in one word, the life of Christ. And that life flows into us because of the bond that unites us to Him. The life of the Head flows into the body.

Now although we may distinguish these different elements in faith and phases of faith, they may never be separated. That stands to reason. The bond that unites
us to Christ is the means by which the life of Christ flows into us. And if we are living, it is only natural that we manifest certain signs of life. And among these signs of life is the conscious act of believing. Therefore, although we may distinguish we may never separate. And that is what conditional theology does. It separates the act of faith from the essential character of faith. Of course, it has to do this if faith is going to be a condition to salvation. For this reason, principally all of salvation is bestowed upon our hearts in regeneration. And faith is only a part of that marvelous work. So unless a distinction, an impossible distinction is made, how could faith ever be a condition to salvation? Faith is one. It develops and grows ripe and becomes conscious in the life of the child of God, but it remains that same faith.

And that leads us to the third criticism. In this connection it may be remarked that it is somewhat along the same line as the second. Salvation in the final sense of the word may never be separated from salvation as it is worked in the elect in time. In regeneration salvation is principally complete. So much so that Paul does not hesitate even to say in Ephesians 2:6 that the elect are already sitting at the right hand of God. And that salvation in regeneration is completed and perfected in glory. All that which is in the heart of the child of God is fully revealed in heaven. And therefore faith is perfected in heaven also. We do again certainly distinguish, but we never separate. Salvation is one word of God. And if faith were a condition to salvation in the final sense of the word you would have such a nonsensical construction as the activity of faith a condition which man must fulfill in order for that same faith to be completed in glory. Faith a condition to faith.

There is one more point that should be brought up. There is one way to steer clear of this dilemma. There is one road of escape. There is one way that would solve the conflict presented above. It really is the only way, and therefore it is the way that is often used. In fact more that means of escape is appearing on the forefront of the writings of "the condition men." That way of escape is this. The activity of faith can be separated from the rest of faith by saying that the act of believing is the work of man himself without any help from God. Man himself can believe. Apart from God's grace, apart from the work of salvation man can believe. That is the only avenue of escape. Because then that kind of faith has nothing to do with the work of God who "works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also." Then faith can be a condition to salvation. But only then. That is the only way it makes sense. That is the only way faith can be construed as a condition. And that is exactly what is happening with those who hold this doctrine. But then we are back where we started and we say that the very thought is blasphemy to God. It is Arminian in the worst sense of the word. No, faith in no sense of the word is ever, or can ever be a condition to salvation.

Herman Hanko

Y.P. NEWS

(Continued from page 3)

the old and new consistory of the First Church.

The Radio Committee of the Reformed Witness Hour has announced that it now presents our radio program over Station KELO in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

R. D.
The Opponent

Let us look once into the other camp over which the banner, "Error" proudly waves. We will try to get a general view of our opponent together with the forces he has mustered under his command.

Our first impression is astounding. We cannot fail to notice the "bigness" of the enemies camp in proportion to our own "smallness." Those included in its ranks number legion. Were we to judge the outcome of our battle by numerical power our defeat would be inevitable. Not only do we see myriads of men, women and children serving the foe but the whole world is made subject to him. Culture, science, art, invention, music are found there. Mighty institutions the world over are bent to do "Error" homage. Governments, nations, industries, business, churches, schools, homes, all patronize this master. And to add still more to this "bigness" we see hosts of spiritual creatures of various ranks toiling unceasingly and giving directive to this great company. Angels, principalities, dominions, and powers are seen leading the affray. Indeed, we are confronted with a mighty foe.

But let us look again. This time we get a view of the captain of this vast horde. What a terrible monster he is. Oh, do not get the wrong impression of him. He is not some ugly sort of being, part man and part beast, with hoofs and horns and forked tail as some have seemed to think and as others who even belong to his camp still depict him on sign-boards and magazines. Neither, however, is he a relic of superstition or an imaginary bogey with which naught children are to be frightened. We must not think of him as one that has a physical form of flesh and blood and yet he is very real. He, too, belongs to those spiritual powers of wickedness. He is their chief and terrible he is because in him can he found every conceivable corruption and wickedness.

His names reveal his vile character. He is called by several, perhaps because no single name can fully express what he is. Some of them are: "Satan, Devil, Slanderer, Adversary, Father of Lies, and Prince of Darkness." We are not at present interested in discussing these names but are concerned with this evil chieftain only in his relation to the truth. The words of Christ in John 8:44 are very instructive in this respect. Concerning the devil Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it." (Hold ours, G.V.)

Now, if this was all that there is to be said it would not be so serious but in the same passage Jesus accuses the unbelieving Jews (all unbelievers) of being "children of the devil" and in no less than three other places He calls Satan the prince of this world. The fact is then that Satan is the instigator and father of the universal apostasy from God. As such his true character is unveiled to us in the early pages of Holy Writ; the sphere in which he works is clearly revealed; and the methods he employs are expressly set forth. We refer, of course, to Genesis 3 where the narrative of the fall of man is recorded. Although he is not expressly mentioned here by name.
there is no doubt that he, the devil, is the real tempter. "His subtlety is indicated in that he used a serpent through which to approach our first parents; his cowardice in that he assaulted the woman rather than the man; his evil nature in that he lied to her and sought her ruin under the false pretense of seeking her good; his character of tempter in that he captured his victim by means of an attractive bait; his sphere of operations in that he incited Eve to commit not a moral but a spiritual sin — transgression of God's command; and his real object of attack was God's Word — THE TRUTH!" (Pink's "Satan And His Gospel") Do not forget that that is just the kind of enemy with whom we have to do in the battle of Truth vs. Error!!

The apostle declared in II Corinthians 2:11 that "we are not ignorant of his devices." This enemy, together with his allies, has been throughout history busy in leading the attack upon the truth. Always his methods are the same. He uses subtlety, deception, cowardiceness and, perhaps, one of his most effective weapons is that of "imitation."

He poses as an angel of light. (II Cor. 11:14) He imitates God in as far as he possibly can. God has a Son and so has Satan — "the son of perdition." God is Triune and so in Revelation 20:10 we read of the trinity of evil — "the devil, the beast and the false prophet." God has children and so there are "the children of the wicked one." (Matt. 13:38) God works in the former both to will and to do of His good pleasure and so "Satan is the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2) There is a "mystery of godliness" and a "mystery of iniquity." (II Thess. 2:7) God seals His servants in their foreheads and so Satan by his agents sets a mark in the foreheads of his devotees. (Rev. 13:16) God performs miracles by Christ, His Son and the son of perdition doeth "signs and lying wonders." (II Thess. 2:9) Christ has a church and Satan has his synagogue (Rev. 2:9). Christ appoints apostles whom He commissions to preach His Gospel and Satan has "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." Through all of these imitations many are deceived.

At this point we must see that a superficial view of the camp of our enemy may easily leave us with the impression that it is much like the camp of truth because of these false imitations. Yet, the antithesis of these two becomes clear when we weigh the message of these apostles of the evil one in the light of the truth. Even though they also attempt to imitate the gospel of Christ, they cannot hide the fact that their gospel is of the lie and contradicts and opposes the truth. It is plainly and unmistakably "Error." Its antithesis to the Gospel of Truth may be seen in this that it always destroys those that are captivated by it while the Gospel of Truth is the power of God unto salvation and eternal life. The apostles of the lie have "words in their mouths that are smoother than butter but war is in their heart; their words are softer than oil, yet they are drawn swords." (Ps. 55:21)

Their gospel can easily be detected by those who know the truth. Next time, D.V., we will write of the tenets of their evil gospel but meanwhile let us remember this truth of Scripture: "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." (Rev. 21:8) And, "there shall in no wise enter into it (the Holy City) anything that maketh a lie." (Rev. 21:17) Mighty though the foe may be, truth alone shall prevail. It cannot be quenched or conquered.

Rev. G. Vanden Berg
God's Hand on the Earth

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." How do we know? "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. 11:3)

Reason, mere human calculations, cannot fathom the depths of creation and certainly is incapable of confessing the evidence of the hand of God in it.

When God asked Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?", he is unable to answer. How can we expect our modern scientists to do better than Job? However we are constantly confronted with scientific facts, which are alleged by their discoverors to disprove the many 'myths' of scripture. They have established the age of the earth to be in the millions of years. As proof for this assertion they offer such striking examples as the age of certain stars which they are able to determine by a comparison of a certain star's absolute brightness with it's brightness shown through the telescope. Some of these stars have appeared for the first time during our lifetimes and are known to be at least hundreds of thousands years old. Thus we may see, this very night, a 'new' star whose light has been traveling to us unseen for perhaps 850,000 years.

This is only an example of one of the many convincing facts uncovered by scientific investigation. It points to the fact that the earth is older than many of us believe it to be. However, the exact or even approximate age of the earth and heavenly bodies has never been accurately determined by theologians or scientists. We need not worry however that the scriptures will be proven false if our traditional idea of the age of the earth is shattered. Nowhere do we read of the earth's age, although God often presents it as being 'of old.'

We should be prepared to meet the challenging assertions of science though. Ever since man began to study the earth and the universe scientifically, he has proceeded upon three false assumptions. First he has emphatically denied God, secondly he has explained his findings by natural causes, and thirdly he has maintained that all things have developed uniformly through the ages. Because of this third premise they maintain that since coal forms at a certain rate today for instance, and that there are large deposits in ancient beds: therefore these beds are very old and the elements from which they arose, and the earth itself is much older still. However, these conclusions can never be reached without their hypotheses. Remember also that on the basis of these many facts, the evolutionists will make bold to originate fantastic stories of the origin of matter as we know it. This is just as much science fiction as the comics of Superman. They cannot offer any reasonable proof for such ideas as the collisions and resulting fragmentation of suns or planets to explain the origin of our present solar system.

One of the biggest obstructions that the evolutionist hurls in the path of Christians today is his findings and conclusions based upon his study of the earth. We noted his reference to coal deposits; examples can be multiplied. The formation of oil fields are made possible only by ages during which extreme pressure is
exerted upon decaying vegetable and animal material. Certain places in our country where we find fossil remains of fish, etc., are pointed to by them as proof of the constant and progressive change in the earth. Cited also are numerous rock formations which are composed of layer upon layer of varying materials. This they say is evidence of ancient processes which are still going on today and at such a slow pace that they can proceed to estimate the age of these rocks. It seems that the facts of these investigations are in conflict with scripture as we certainly believe that the various conclusions are. It would be enlightening at this point to examine closely just how true and scriptural many of these findings are however. We might quote Dr. C. H. Benson who writes, “Indeed, there is no conflict between science and Scripture today. In reality the controversy exists between superficial scientists and faltering students of Scripture.”

We can confront science with scripture because it is God’s word and cannot be in conflict with his creation. Remember throughout the following paragraphs however, that the Bible is not primarily a science textbook and therefore only gives occasional but accurate observations concerning the universe. Scientifically speaking though, the Bible is a modern rather than an ancient document, and the only explanation of its marvelous accuracy is that it is not man-made but divinely inspired.

It is truly remarkable that the events recorded in scripture which were of world wide significance such as the flood, re-establishing of the race in Noah, the dispersion at Babel, etc.; are also recorded in striking similarity to the Biblical accounts in the myths and traditions of ancient nations. The world history written in the early part of Genesis is even better established than the annals of the Jewish people, since it is so largely confirmed by these records of widely scattered nations.

The records of the Chaldeans reveal that they believed that there were ten antediluvian kings whose lives were prolonged a thousand years. The Chinese begin their history with the lives of ten divine men who were the first emperors. The Scandinavians believed in the ten ancestors of Odin. The Arabs say that ten kings ruled over the Adites or primordial people of their country. All these records substantiate the account of the ten patriarchs mentioned in Genesis.

Modern excavations of many spots where ancient biblical cities were built also confirm scripture. We are all familiar with the typical evolutionistic order of things; the complex and advanced stages of matter as well as civilization have evolved from simpler origins. Therefore they proclaim such well known ‘facts’ as the ice age, stone age, iron age, age without fire, tent age, city age, etc. Scripture however records that Tubal-cain worked with brass and iron early in man’s history. Cain is said to have built and lived in a city. It was not until Jabal, who was the father of such as dwell in tents, and such as have cattle” that cities were abandoned by some. Vulcan, the blacksmith god of the Greeks and Romans corresponds with Tubal-cain. The ancient Phoenicians ascribed the discovery and use of metal to the seventh generation—Tubal-cain was the seventh from Adam. It is not strange that these early humans developed a high level of civilization since they lived so long.

Many nations have interesting accounts of the flood. The Greek tradition states that Jupiter chained the north wind and let loose furious tempest upon the earth to punish the wickedness of man. The rain poured in torrents and Neptune heaved the land with an earth quake and dashed a mighty tidal wave over it. Everything living was destroyed
and all the works of man were swept away. One mountaintop, Parnassus, was left above the water, and there a pious man and his wife, who had been floating on a raft, were grounded. The Chinese tell us that Fohi (Noah) was saved from the flood with his wife, three sons, and three daughters. Many of these ancient accounts, which are all independent from scripture, agree in some of their main features. Many of them also go on to explain that the formation of our seas, mountains, seasons, etc. stemmed from this mighty catastrophe.

The location of Babel is identified by an inscription found a few years ago in the great pyramid of Borsippa which was made by the order of Nebuchadnezzar. On it we read of seven stages which the tower went through during its construction. It relates that lightning and earthquakes shook the structure and reduced it to a pile. Parts of this gigantic 300 foot structure still stand to witness his ancient undertaking.

Another thing must be kept in mind in this connection. Shem, one of the eight who helped build the ark and who passed through the terrible experiences of the Deluge, did not die until Isaac was fifty years old. Thus Abraham and Isaac lived with those who for one hundred years of their early life witnessed and assisted in the building of the greatest vessel of ancient times, saw the foundations of the deep broken up, heard the cries of the perishing world, and even witnessed the building of Babel's tower and the confusion of tongues. Thus the clear record of these events were passed by word of mouth from ancient generations to the fathers of Israel.

The 'enlightened' scholar of today refuses to believe the witness of scripture. He relegates sacred history to the realms of myths. He even claims that the stories of the Bible have their origin in the mythology of Greece, Rome, Egypt, etc. However, there was no contact between these ancients and the men who wrote scripture. The American Indian as well as the Hebrew had knowledge of early universal phenomena. Strange that the important annals of history coincide so remarkably! Yet, the history of Israel which follows the early chapters of Genesis is unknown to the other nations.

We can even use pagan mythology to strengthen our opposition against those who refuse to listen to scripture. We shall see too, that the rocks, seas, glaciers, etc. yield invaluable material which point to the catastrophe of the flood. Listen to Jeremiah who says that the heavenly hosts cannot be numbered. Yet Egyptian astronomers had counted only 1,022 stars. Ask modern astronomers; they will confirm Jeremiah's inspired observation. God truly works in wondrous ways.

Dwight J. Monsma
Communism
Part VII
ITS ULTIMATE FAILURE
In my foregoing installments on this subject we have seen how the secret controlling powers of Communism, that is the Devil, and its “sacred cow,” Jew controlled Freemasonry, seek to dethrone the Triune God from the heavens, if possible, by their means of persecuting the True Church of Christ and their attempt to gain absolute control of the whole world — religiously, morally, socially, politically, and economically. We have also observed that the first three verses of the second Psalm contained the religion of Communism in a nutshell. If you will take time to read this entire Psalm, you will also notice that verses four to twelve contain the ultimate failure of Communism as well as its predecessors in a nutshell. Yes even at this very moment God is vexing the secret controlling powers of Communism in His sore displeasure by giving them over to their vain imaginations, that is their attempts to banish the Lord, His Anointed, and His people from the face of the earth. But they shall not succeed because every man that has lived, is living today, and that will live upon the face of the earth knows that there IS a God, because He has not only revealed Himself in His Word, but also throughout all of His creation, and also in the soul of every man. Communism also confesses that there is a God when it tries to dethrone Him from the heavens. Also, the wicked in general confess the same because they always have His name upon their lips — even more so than us Christians do. I am thinking about that terrible sin against the third commandment. The reprobate wicked are also continually aware of the fact that God does punish sin with everlasting torment in Hell, which is also very evident from their words of profanity. Even the Devil and all his hosts are well aware of this too as they tremble at the sight of His presence (Matt. 8:28-29; Rev. 12:12). Wicked men of all ages turn their backs upon the Living God and try to destroy everything on the earth that reminds them of God, because they are actually AFRAID of Him. Wicked men are always struck with terror whenever they come in contact with the Living God. Was not Pharaoh and all the Egyptians struck with terror when God executed His ten plagues! The kings of the Canaanites were also stricken with fear “when they heard that the Lord dried up the waters of Jordan!” (Joshua 5:1). Certainly the Philistines had reason to be afraid when they saw the Ark of the Lord in the camp of Israel (1 Sam. 4:6-8). Space does not permit me to list all of the Scriptural references. Think of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:24-30; also chap. 4); of Balshazzar (Dan. 5:5-6; of Herod, the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Jerusalem (Matt. 2:3); of Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:3-5); of the keepers of Jesus' grave (Matt. 28:2-4), etc. Was not the trial of Christ like a “hot potato” in the mouths of Pilate and Herod, who both tried in vain to brush the case aside? Were not the people pricked in their hearts at the preaching of Stephen! This fear of the reprobate wicked is by no means changed today. In World War II we were repeatedly reminded of the fact that “there are no atheists in foxholes.” Just before God sank the great Titanic, its passengers were filled with terror.

Seymour Beiboer
(To be Continued)
Open Forum . . . OUR READERS — "WRITE" OR "WRONG"

The OPEN FORUM offers to all our readers the opportunity to express their opinions and thoughts concerning articles and contributions published in Beacon Lights. It also extends to our readers the privilege of space for comment on any other issue or development within our sphere of interest. If you wish to place a contribution in OPEN FORUM, please feel free to do so. All we ask is that copy be typed (double-spaced).

P.S.—And not too long, please.

March 7, 1954
Holland, Mich.

Dear Mr. Editor,

In the light of recent events, the letter in OPEN FORUM written by Hollis D. Heemstra was very much out of place. In these trying times we should not be busy condemning and calling the church of God names. Instead we should be praying and asking God to guide our feet down the right path in these troublesome times. Name calling does not help things but only goes to show that the name callers conscience bothers him. In order to have a false peace with his conscience he must call the opposition names and condemn them.

How glibly Mr. Heemstra talked when he said, and I quote, "But their conception of God isn't big enough. He couldn't command their attention. He is such a frail little fellow in their eyes that they have the audacity to fight and lie before His face!" Where does he get such ideas and what proof has he got to back up his words?

Fortunately we still have or at least should have the true love of God in our hearts. A heart with the true love of God in it does not say and do rash things.

But the conception of our religion by Mr. Heemstra is untrue and without grounds. Deep down in his heart he knows as well as I do that we all the elect hold God in high esteem and not one of us considers God to be so small that man is above Him.

Whereas being members of the true church we can find comfort in the fact that God watches over all and that whatever He does it is for our own good.

I Corinthians 13:13—And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is CHARITY.

Stanley H. Windemuller

MILITARY MAIL BAG

Hello Fellows:

We come again with another issue of BEACON LIGHTS. Again we do not have any letters from you men. By this time the first issue has reached you where-ever you are in the service so you know that Beacon Lights is again being published and that your pages are open for letters from you.

Just take a few minutes now to write us a letter so we can hear from you and know how you are all doing. A few lines will do for now and will be most welcome. When you write, your name will of course appear in the magazine and thus you may find out there is someone else near you from one of our churches. Most of the time the men in service from our churches are all by themselves among the men of the world. They are left without a true fellowship with other christians. By writing a letter you can let it be known just where you are and what you are doing. Your ad-
dress means a lot. It tells a number of things, such as location, branch of service and so forth. Our people are all interested in knowing whether you are stationed in a division, company or other individual unit and with what branch of the service you are connected. So let's hear from you soon.

There is a text in II Timothy 2:3 which reads as follows: "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

This text is speaking of the path a Christian has to walk in this world. It is likened unto that of a soldier. Jesus Christ is the commander-in-chief and we must follow Him. We must obey Him in all the ways that we are commanded to go by Him. We should put our trust in Him, knowing that He is all-wise, knowing that He knows what is the right way.

When we are in the service we know that the man in charge is a man the same as we. He has imperfections just as we have. But he has knowledge which equips him to fulfill his charge. Christ is perfect in all ways and so we can surely put our trust in Him more than in the men of this world. As the text says we have to endure hardness, as a good soldier. The hardness here spoken of is that which we must endure as Christians in this world.

In the time of apostasy we must endure hardness. When surrounded with apostasy we should not be easily laid in the wrong path. But we are to endure all the things put in our way as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

As Christian soldiers in the service we are to endure hardness in a certain sense. We have to endure evil speaking by those in command. There are those wicked men we have to live with, with all their evil speaking. We endure their hardness as good soldiers of Christ by putting our trust in Him and not in things, and not in men of this world.

To close this department let us as good soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ together say "To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ. For of Him and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever."

Send us a letter now, men. Send it to Military Mail Bag

Everett Buiter
R. R. 2, Box 120
Tinley Park, Illinois.

**QUESTION BOX**

Question. What do they mean who say that they believe in the **plenary** but not in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures?

Answer. Let us listen to one, the late Dr. A. Pieters, who held to this position. He writes in his "Notes" and I quote:

"The position taken by the author of these notes is that the Bible is the Word of God, in all its parts,—the position usually designated in theology as the belief in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

"He believes also that the inspiration involves the trustworthiness of the Old Testament it its statement of facts of whatever kind, as well as in all its teachings with regard to religious truth and duty.

"It is to be carefully noted, however, that the trustworthiness of the Old Testament is not the same as inerrancy in every detail. When it comes to statistics, dates, and similar matters, there are certainly errors in the Bible, as we have it. It is possible that many, perhaps most, of these errors are errors in transmission, and didn't exist in the original documents (by which he means the Scriptures
as they left the pens of the prophets and
the apostles—O.); but no one can be
sure that this is true of all of them. If
the innerraney of the original documents
is asserted, this is not on the basis of
evidence, but merely as an inference
from the doctrine of verbal inspiration.
The author of these notes holds to ple
nary inspiration but not to verbal in
spiration . . . A document can be a trust
worthy source of information even though
minor errors exist in it; and therefore
it is not inconsistent with the position
here assumed to believe that some minor
errors may have existed in the original
documents." End of quote.

This makes it clear what they mean
who say that they hold to the plenary
but not to the verbal inspiration of the
Scriptures. But their position is unten
able certainly. The word plenary is from
the Latin plenus and means full, entire,
complete. Thus to say that inspiration
was plenary but not verbal is to play
with words.

Inspiration was certainly plenary in the
sense of verbal. What is meant thereby
is that the men of God through whom
He gave us His word wrote under the
infallible guidance of His Spirit so that
their productions were in truth God's
very own Scriptures also certainly as to
the form of their words including dates,
numbers and statistics. Why should the
guidance of the Spirit not also have
covered dates and numbers? Involved
in the question of the accuracy of the
dates, numbers and statistics of the
scriptures is the varacity of the whole of
the religious and ethical teachings of
Holy Write. It was only because Abra
ham was a hundred years old when Isaac
was born and not, let us say, 30 years
old that Paul could write," Who (Abra
ham) against hope believed in hope, that
he might become the father of many
nations, according to that which was
spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being
not weak in faith, he considered not his
own body, now dead, when he was about
a hundred years old, neither yet the
deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered
not at the promise of God through un
belief; but was strong in faith, giving
glory to God; and being fully persuaded
that, what he had promised, he was able
to perform. And therefore it was imputed
to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:18-22).

That the Bible is the infallible Word
of God as to all the form of its words
without exception is an article of faith.
For it means that all the Scriptures
originated with God. And this cannot be
demonstrated. Hence, making an excep
tion of dates, numbers and statistics
must necessarily lead to the denial of the
whole idea of the verbal inspiration of
the Scriptures. Dr. Peters (for some
years a teacher of Bible in Hope college)
did just that. From the above quote it
appears that he held to plenary but not
to the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures,
as if the two are not the same.

To deny the verbal inspiration of the
Scriptures is to be arguing the point that
God imparted the ideas and that men
put the thoughts of His heart into words
without His guidance. It is to argue that
God imparted the discourse in outline
form and that the finished product is of
men.

If the inspiration of the Scriptures is
not verbal without exception, it did not
take place at all, and we are shut up to
the view that the Bible is a collection
of fallible and even deceptive writings.

That the inspiration of the Scriptures
was verbal does not mean that it was
mechanical. That is, in being used of God
to produce His Word, the state of the
human writers was not such as warrants
their being compared to a lifeless pen in
the hand of a writer. The human writers
of the Scriptures were indeed pens in
God's hand but as rational beings and
living saints. Writing God's Scriptures
and speaking His Word was their act into the performance of which went all that they were as God's workmanship—
their gifts, talents and individuality and their entire apperceiving mass: but the act was at once God's own work in such a way that its product was His very own infallible Scriptures.

Certainly, the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is a mystery, as are all of God's works. It defies our powers of penetration. Basically it is a question of how God can do all His good pleasure with, in and through His moral creatures without reducing them to automatons.

Of course, the Scriptures themselves tell us that they were inspired also as to the form of their words. II Ti. 3:16: "All the scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Now certainly Paul could not be telling us here that all the Scriptures are given —mark you, given—of God by inspiration if men wrote them, i.e., if the finished product was of men and if all that God did is to supply the ideas.

That the inspiration of the Scriptures is verbal is clearly evident from Paul's reasoning at Gal. 3:16. From the fact that in making His promises to Abraham, God said not: 'And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And thy seed', Paul, as infallibly guided by the Spirit, concluded that the promises are to Christ in the first instance. It shows that in His selection of the word "seed" the human writer of Genesis was infallibly guided by Christ's Spirit.

That the formula, "thus saith the Lord," occurs over and over in the discourses of the prophets, and that they continually introduce the Lord as the speaker can only be because their discourses were God's very own infallible Word as to all the form of their words without exception.

The position that the Scriptures were not verbally inspired must lead to the denial of revelation, i.e., the act of God whereby He communicated the thoughts of His heart to the mind of men—the prophets and the apostles of the Scriptures. For thought can be communicated only by the vehicle of the word. A thought is a word so that to think is always to think words. Without words thought is impossible.

Now the original Scriptures soon waxed old through much handling and vanished away. But many copies had been made of them. These copies, let us call them manuscripts, would go the way of the original Scriptures. And so copies continued to be made of copies and thereby the Word of God was fully preserved. This is clear from the marvelous agreement between the manuscripts that have come down to us. Variations do occur. But about nineteen-twentieths of them have so little support that, though they are various readings, no one would think of them as rival readings; and nineteen-twentieths of the remainder are of so little importance that their adoption or rejection would cause no appreciable difference in the sense where they occur. So, the church is still in the possession—and how could it be otherwise—of God's infallible Scriptures.

—George M. Ophoff

Our readers will note the appearance of The Question Box in this issue. This department is conducted by the Reverend G. M. Ophoff. You are urged to send in any question you may have to the following address:

Rev. G. M. Ophoff,
343 Eastern Ave., S. E.
Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.
14th ANNUAL
P.R.Y.P. CONVENTION

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