“The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come . . .”

Song of Solomon 2:12
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Life and the Law of Liberty

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." So states one of the most famous documents in the history of our country: the Declaration of Independence. And, according to some men, this document as well as the entire movement for independence in this country was strongly influenced by Calvinistic Protestantism. I do not at all desire to write on this question except to say that at that time, as well as now, there was very evidently a gross misconception of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

There are particularly two terms in the title above which warrant closer consideration—life and liberty. Life, of course, is something with which we are all familiar. There are generally two ways according to which the subject "life" is viewed in the world about us. First of all, there is the physical aspect of life, the mysteries of which the scientists are yet probing with little success. Secondly, and probably most often, life is expressed in the terms of enjoying to the fullest extent all of the things which this world has to offer. Such seems to be the idea behind such expressions as, "Man, you've really lived!"

Yet isn't this actually nothing but foolishness? Or, more correctly, isn't this in reality nothing but death? The idea of true life is very clearly revealed in the Word of God: John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." On the other hand, the Psalmist writes: "For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee." It then becomes evident that the child of God can not be in agreement with the world. Life for him is love, fellowship, and communion with his covenant God. Everything opposed to the Word of God is of death.

The same essential difference can be noticed with regard to our conception of "liberty" overagainst that the world proposes. Liberty is considered to be the right to do what one pleases, whenever he pleases, and in whatever way he pleases. It is true, of course, that such liberty must be limited to a certain extent by laws for the mutual benefit of
all the people. However, the greater the degree of liberty, the more free he is to do as he pleases.

But the child of God cannot maintain such a liberty. True liberty is not that the child of God does as he pleases, but as God wills. Paul writes in Galatians 5:1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Although the world speaks of liberty, in reality it is in bondage, for it is in the bondage of sin and death. We are free, for we can worship God according to His Word. That liberty remains even though our government would take away the so-called freedom of worship. The liberty is spiritual, and neither man nor the devil himself can ever take that from us.

Of course, you understand that we do not have this liberty of ourselves. We too by nature are under the curse of the law of God. We also were under the bondage of sin and death. From that we of ourselves could not escape. The law of God comes to us as that which must be obeyed perfectly, for else there is death. And that law must condemn us, not only because we transgress it in thought, word, and deed, but because we are held accountable for the sin of our first father and representative head—Adam. The law of God is not liberty to us, but condemns us to the bondage of sin and death.

But we become free through Jesus Christ our Lord. The obedience demanded of us He performed perfectly. He suffered and died as one who was willing and able to save us—for He is the Son of God in our flesh. He bore the curse which the law required of us.

And it is in the light of that perfect work of Christ we must also understand the law of liberty. Through Christ we are righteous before the law of God. Now the law no longer condemns. That does not mean that the law is no longer in effect. We must still obey the perfect law of God; and through the righteousness of Christ which is ours, we can and desire to obey it. That is liberty—the perfect liberty of the righteous.

The subject of this article implies the question: what has the law of liberty to do with life, and particularly our life as young people? If we keep in mind the true idea of our life and the law of liberty, there should be no problem. The trouble is that our sinful nature sometimes likes to hide behind what is called the law of liberty. We like to explain that we are under Christian liberty which means then that if we convince ourselves that something is all right, then we can do it. If we ourselves think that movie attendance is not wrong, then it is our Christian liberty to attend. You understand, we may not use the law of liberty to excuse our sinful walk. The fact is that the child of God, according to the principle of new life, will not speak such language. We confess that we sin every day, but we no longer live in sin nor do we try to excuse ourselves for our sin.

Rather by God’s grace through the cross of Jesus Christ we are free to serve God. That means that whatever we do, we do because we believe it to be in harmony with the Word of God. Our single desire is to worship God in perfect liberty. We confess that we also possess that true life, and according to that life of Christ within us we always strive toward holiness and perfection. The law of the Old Dispensation commanded: do this and live. That was for us forever impossible. Now in Christ we live, and in that life we desire to do the will of God.

You still have individual questions, young people? I imagine you do. The
world surrounds us more and more. It comes with new inventions and new pleasures. The question forces us continually; may we do this or may we do that? Do not try to escape the question and say that it is our Christian liberty to do what we please. That, of course, is false. Rather, study the Word of God. There is revealed the paths of righteousness, the perfect liberty of the children of God. It is our desire as covenant youth to glorify the Lord our God, and by His grace we do.

And even as young people who by God's sovereign grace partake of the true spiritual life, we have our hope fixed in heaven. When Christ returns upon the clouds of heaven, he shall take us unto himself in glory. There will be revealed the fulness of the liberty of the church of Christ. Sin and death have no place there. All weeping and tears will cease. There we will praise God in perfection and sing with the saints, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." In perfect liberty we shall forever glorify God. Nor in heaven will we ever, nor can we, ever fall in sin again. O glorious liberty!

Rev. G. Van Baren

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Come, all ye people, bless our God
And tell His glorious praise abroad,
Who holds our soul in life,
Who never lets our feet be moved,
And, though our faith He oft has proved,
Upholds us in the strife.
We come with offerings to His house,
And here we pay the solemn vows
We uttered in distress;
To Him our all we dedicate,
To Him we wholly consecrate
The lives His mercies bless.

Psalm 66:1, 2
LOST — A MEANING

Have you ever heard a phrase so often that its meaning was actually lost in the over-familiarity of the words? I am thinking of such a phrase as "God is near to us." Each of us must have heard that phrase or a similar one dozens and dozens of times and each time we let it pass without further consideration since we recognized it as a familiar concept and our minds let it go at that.

But just for a few moments, let's take the phrase "God is near to us," and look at it closely to see if we haven't perhaps missed much of its meaning to us.

The most common use of the term near is in connection with the relationship of physical objects. For instance, we say that a certain town is near the state highway or a table is near the door. Now granted, we must not think of God as something physical, but we can use physical objects to illustrate God's attributes. For instance, notice the paper you are holding in your hands as you read this editorial. Look at it closely; grasp it even tighter between your fingers until you are as aware of it as you possibly can be. Now say to yourself, "God is just as really in this room as this paper is that I'm holding here in my hands.

Since He actually controls all economic, natural, and social forces and does so in a manner which will benefit me, His creature, I haven't a thing to fear! The future is as certain as the present or the past. I haven't a worry in the world regardless of war, economic depression, sickness, drought, or persecution.

All this comfort, and much more can be realized from a new look at an oft used phrase if we will only take time to grant this phrase the little time and effort it takes to transpose it into a different setting.

Just one more illustration of a repeated phrase that we are inclined to pass by quickly only because of its familiarity is "We have but a small beginning of that new obedience." We quickly say to ourselves, "Oh yes, that means that although we are now already redeemed and walking in the light of Christ's teachings, we are not nearly as righteous as we will be in heaven." And we let it go at that.

But it can mean so much more with some additional thought. For instance, we prepare ourselves for our occupation with much study, worry, and seeking of advice because our occupation is a goal to be achieved. Yet our whole life, childhood, schooling, occupation, sickness, church life, social life, military life perhaps, in essence the sum total of our life, is less than kindergarten compared to the glorious role that will be ours in heaven. Our minds, then released from the bonds of ignorance imposed by sin, will comprehend all that is about us much in the manner Adam knew the creation when he named the beasts. More important, we will be able to comprehend God in his infinity, for our minds will no longer be limited to time or space. And comprehending God in all His glory, we will recognize Him as being the power that brought us in this "new obedience.

(Continued on page 15)
In the last issue of the Beacon Lights, we discussed the question of authority in relation to the unions. We noticed that these organizations flaunt all authority — flaunt the authority which God has placed over the working man. They do this by means of their weapons — strikes and boycotts. And this is not merely a last resort of the unions to achieve their ends, but is a principle upon which they are founded. They know that they would be helpless without the power of coercion through strikes, and so they incorporate the weapon of the strike into their constitutions. It is the calling of the working man to subject himself to the authority of his employer for God's sake because he knows that it pleases God to rule over him by his employer's hand. But when he refuses the work, and still claims a right to his job so that no one else can take his place, he violates this principle of authority. This is probably the most serious principle objection that there is against the existing labor union. Such a violation of the authority of God may never receive the approval or support of the Christian. It is the calling of the Child of God to submit to the authority of his employer within the sphere of labor for God's sake. If he refuses to work, which is his prerogative, he may not claim a right to his job in that factory anyway. His relations with his employer cease.

But there is more.

Not only do the unions operate on the fundamental principle of a violation of the law of God, but their organizations are thoroughly corrupt. That is clearly indicated in all their actions and the means which they have used in the past and still use today to achieve their desired goals. When labor first began to organize on a large scale, the vicious character of the organizers was not only a denial of the principle of authority, but was even a breaking of the law of the land. And although the union has put on a mask and front of respectability in re-
cent years, it is a well established fact that the policies of the union and the conduct of those in power are oftener than not outside the boundaries of law and good order. Racketeers and hoodlums are used by the unions to control vast industries of vice and gambling which are under the protection of these organizations. Bribery and blackmail are the things of the day to achieve power and wealth. Extortion and embezzling are the means by which men in power live in luxury and ease. If you have recently read your newspapers or news magazines, you will undoubtedly have noticed the recent congressional investigation of the Teamsters Union. Several high officials are being investigated for mismanagement of union funds; organized vice and gambling on the west coast were directly related to the activities of this organization; the vice president of this union of 1,500,000 members has recently been arrested and is awaiting trial for an attempt to put one of his own men on the committee to supply him with the records of the investigation; politics in several cities were controlled by union officials and directed by union monies.

For a long time already has the International Longshoresmen Union been the object of suspicion in connection with the harboring of communists and big time criminals. So much is this true that the union has even been expelled from the CIO-AFL. All these things are common knowledge and common practice in union activities which long have enjoyed the favor of the law.

To be a member of such an organization is to become stained with the sins committed by the unions; it is impossible to keep one's hands clean and remain a member.

Sometimes it is argued that the unions support great philanthropic causes. They contribute of their funds to the erection of hospitals, to the building of civic centers, to the furtherance of the cause of international peace and prosperity; they are patted on the back for engaging in fine civic drives, in attempts to overcome social problems; they are praised for their contributions to the problems of racial inequality, of raising the social standards of the have-nots. And because of all their fine and commendable contributions to the cause of social justice and equity, they are held as objects of esteem and reverence. And church people are admonished to support them in order that this good which they perform may be supported by the people who live by the principle of "Christian influence in every sphere of life."

And I suppose that it can be granted that these causes which I mentioned are actively supported by the union. But there are several points which we ought to notice. In the first place, even the seeming good of the world is yet wickedness in the sight of God. This has always been the position of our churches and that on the basis of Scripture. That which appears to be good superficially is not good to God Who judges the heart and knows the evil intent of the man who is depraved in all his actions. A man who supports an altogether lawless cause cannot give of his funds to charity and philanthropy out of the love of God. That is preposterous. And even the philanthropies of the world are motivated by the desire to further the cause of wickedness. The goal of wicked men is to establish the kingdom of Anti-christ, and the union seeks that end, also when it appears outwardly so pious.

Shall we become a part of that?

H. Hanko
TRUTH VS. ERROR

FELLOWSHIP IN CONTRARY DOCTRINES

(Conclusion)

In our last installment in Beacon Lights we promised to draw some practical conclusions with respect to the matter of our having fellowship in contrary doctrines. We have seen that Scripture, and, therefore, God Himself, forbids us to have fellowship or to receive into our house those that bring doctrines contrary to the doctrine of Christ. In other words, we are to have no fellowship with the lie but are to walk in the truth. We can ignore, disregard and be indifferent to this Word of God only to our own hurt. When we violate it, we become partakers of the evil deeds of those with whom we fellowship and, consequently, objects of the same judgment. The seriousness, therefore, of adhering to this injunction cannot be over emphasized! And because we have especially you, Protestant Reformed Young People, in our hearts, we write these things concerning Truth vs. Error!

Now the question arises, “How does this affect our daily lives?” Before we attempt to answer this, we must mention and keep in mind the following assumptions:

(1) It is assumed that we agree that doctrine and life are always inseparable. The former is not like a coat that you wear or change as you see fit and during certain seasons of the year store away in the moth bags. Doctrine is life! As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Out of the heart proceeds the issues of life!

(2) It is assumed that we agree that the doctrine taught in our Protestant Reformed Churches is the true and complete doctrine of salvation and life. This can be shown if need be but further comment is not necessary at present.

(3) It is assumed that we agree that our calling, therefore, is to conform our lives in every respect to this doctrine and to oppose everything that is contrary thereto and refuse fellowship except on the basis of the truth. This assumption follows from the Word of God in II John 10 which we have discussed in previous articles.

How then does this affect our daily lives? It is not difficult to see that our entire life is affected by the measure of faithfulness with which we adhere to this calling. It is especially evident that such important, major spheres of our life are vitally touched by this matter of “fellowship in doctrine” as the following: our marriage relation, our recreational life, our relation in the sphere of labor and industry, our relation in the schools, our relation to our flesh and blood relatives, and our friendships with those of other denominations. All of these relations cannot possibly remain unaffected except when we live in doctrinal indifference which is principally living the lie. If we live our faith in these relations, as is our holy calling, they must needs be stirred.

There are then but two alternatives. Let us, for example, mention now the family relation including the parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. In every family there are mixed-faiths, contrary doctrines. On the one
hand, as you live your faith within this sphere and manifest the truth in your conversation and walk, you cannot escape experiencing the truth Jesus expressed in Matt. 10:35, "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." The variance of faith which is factually present in contrary doctrines then comes to light in the conflict of life!

This is naturally undesirable to the flesh. Consequently, the only other alternative, commonly followed, is to condone contrary doctrines, soothe over and be little all differences in order that peaceful fellowship may be continued. The consequence of this is: — "You are partaker of the evil deeds!"

Which is it? The way of truth is difficult! The way of error is for the flesh the easier way! If you walk in the former way "they shall speak all manner of evil against you falsely for Jesus' sake" but if you walk the latter way they make you their friend.

Which will it be?

Another area which is vitally affected is the young people's friendship relation with those of other denominations which not infrequently ends in marriage. This is an area in which it is extremely difficult to walk in the truth. In the schools and colleges various friendships are made. Some of these are only temporary. Others are more permanent. A young man — a Protestant Reformed young man — takes a particular liking to a girl of another faith. Not infrequently the differences in their way of life (faith) are not discussed as they should be. The friendship assumes a more serious form and eventually the marriage proposal is extended. Still little, if anything, is said concerning the "doctrine" and, if it is considered it only brings out the fact that there is a vital difference. No solution is reached whereby the "contrary doctrines" are removed. No understanding is made. Both parties assume, and wrongly of course, that marriage offers the solution to these differences and after they are then married they mistakenly think that there will be no more differences. So they marry and together they must walk through life but, — Amos said it, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

I submit that a Protestant Reformed young man or woman who give themselves in mixed marriage without settling all differences before hand is already compromising the principles of the truth. He or she is entering fellowship with contrary doctrines. This is error and the fruits of error are bound to be reaped in such unions. Either they must compromise the truth still further after marriage by forsaking it altogether and live in error with their contrary spouse, or they experience the miseries of a spiritually divided house which bears its fruit in forthcoming generations. The way of truth is never easy but then, young people, remember that we are not to gauge our lives by the standard of "Easy or Difficult" but rather by the better standard of "Right or Wrong, Good or Evil, Truth of Error." Only in the way of the "right good truth" is real and lasting happiness possible.

In conclusion it may be stated that the importance of always living the truth cannot be emphasized too much. We need not be ashamed of the glorious heritage of truth the Lord has given us. Truly it is worth more than thousands of silver

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The spacious heavens declare
The glory of our God,
The firmament displays
His handiwork abroad;
Day unto day proclaim His might,
And night His wisdom tells to night.

We have been discussing the universe as every believer should and as all who reside in this great universe must (that it is God's Great Universe).

We have attempted to hold the positive Scriptural line that all things are upheld by God and that all things display His glory and handiwork.

We stated in last month's article that we would finish or at least continue our discussion of the Solar System. This we do again this month beginning our discussion with one of the more familiar bodies of the heavens, namely, the Moon.

The moon is comparatively close to the earth. The distance seems great in comparison with distances on the earth but in comparison with celestial distances, it is relatively close, it is 239,000 miles from the earth. The moon is the earth's only satellite and affords the most beautiful spectacle and most observed spectacle in our night sky. It revolves around the earth once in 27-29 days, moving in the same direction as the earth's rotation but at a slower rate, so that it rises about 50 minutes later each succeeding night. This causes its changing phases.

The moon is a cold body and has no light of its own, but reflects the sun's light. It should be observed that the moon always keeps the same side toward the earth. A day on the moon is therefore about 14 days long. At new moon, the half of the moon facing the earth is dark and almost invisible since the sun's light is then illuminating the opposite half. As the moon shifts its position eastward from night to night, it reveals an illuminated edge as a lighted crescent. This increases until half of the lighted side is seen at the first quarter. At full moon the whole of the lighted side is visible. On succeeding nights a decreasing portion of the lighted half is seen and it passes through the last quarter and on the waning crescent, to begin again in a few days as a new moon.

When we look at the moon through a telescope, we see strange markings covering the entire surface. With the telescope we can see that great areas are dotted with thousands of round pits. These look like craters of enormous inactive volcanoes. What they really are no one knows. The largest of these craters has been named Copernicus after the great Polish astronomer.

From earliest times eclipses of the sun and moon have been regarded with superstition by many. They need not be regarded with superstition but we certainly must believe with the Bible "that these things which we behold are for signs and seasons." These eclipses are really quite natural occurrences even thought they are the exception rather than the rule. An eclipse of the moon, of lunar eclipse, occurs when the earth passes directly between the sun and the moon and casts its shadow on the moon. Lunar eclipses can occur only at full moon. An eclipse of sun, or solar eclipse, occurs when the moon, coming between
the sun and the earth, casts its shadow on the earth. An eclipse may be total or partial, according to how completely the intervening body cuts off the light from the sun. A solar eclipse can occur only when we have a new moon. To observe the total eclipse of the sun is a rare and wonderful event, experienced by only a few people because the path of the complete shadow of the moon is only a few miles wide.

The orbit of the planet Mars lies next beyond the orbit of the earth and it takes 687 days, or almost 2 years, to circle the sun. This makes Mars appear to be going backward, or retrograding in the heavens. This also applies to all the planets whose orbits lie beyond the earth's.

Around 1900, it was confidently thought by some that the planet Mars and probably other planets, too, were inhabited. A wealthy woman in Paris offered a large prize to the person who would be first to talk or communicate with people living on another planet. She made an important exception of one planet. Mars wouldn't count. That would be, she thought, too easy! These beliefs resulted in part from the discoveries and remarks of an Italian astronomer Schiaparelli. In 1877, when Mars came about as close to the earth as it can, the astronomer saw—thought he saw—fine, straight markings on Mars' surface. These he named “canali,” or channels. But when this word was translated into English, it was taken to mean real canals. Of course, canals must mean people able to build canals, because nature never forms “straight rivers.”

Beyond Mars there exists a gap where, by the ratio of planetary distances, another planet might be expected to exist. In its place more than 1,000 small bodies called planetoids, or asteroids, have been found. The brightest is Vesta. The smallest one can be detected only with the most sensitive instruments.

Jupiter, due to its superior brightness and the fact that it is always found near the Ecliptic, should not be difficult to identify, when visible. It is slightly brighter than Sirius, the brightest star. It is the largest of the planets, its diameter being thought to be nearly 11 times the diameter of the earth or about 88,000 miles. Its orbit lies next beyond the asteroids and it requires almost 12 years to complete its revolution around the sun. It has 9 satellites or moons.

Saturn makes a magnificent spectacle when viewed through a telescope of sufficient power to reveal its great rings clearly. It constitutes an object unlike anything else in the heavens. These rings or bands are made up of many separate particles whirling about the planet's equatorial belt. Saturn is more likely to be confused with stars than any of the other foregoing planets.

Uranus, the seventh planet from the sun, is very difficult for the amateur to detect since its brightness compares only to a very dim star. It was discovered in 1781 by an English astronomer (Hershel), with the aid of a telescope which he made. It is known to have 4 moons.

The story of the discovery of Neptune is one of the most unusual in the whole history of astronomy. After Uranus was discovered, the astronomers studied it to determine its path around the sun. To their surprise they did not find Uranus where they had expected to find it. Therefore it must be considerably attracted by the gravitational attraction of some other body besides the sun. Two young astronomers, an Englishman, Adams, and a Frenchman, Leverrier, tried to find out why Uranus was out of its expected position. In 1846 Adams and then Leverrier arrived at practically the same conclusion though neither knew the other's
work. Each concluded that there must be another planet attracting it. When a search of that portion of the sky was later made with powerful telescopes, Neptune was found in almost the exact place where Adams and Leverrier had predicted it would be.

Pluto, the ninth planet from the sun, was discovered last. It was not until 1930, however, that this planet was actually proved to exist. The proof was found on a photograph taken through a telescope at Lowell Observatory at Flagstaff, Arizona. There is some discussion now among astronomers as to whether Pluto is actually a planet or whether it is a satellite of Neptune. There are some astronomers who support the latter view. It doesn't matter much but it is interesting none-the-less.

The more rare solar bodies, comets, appear as luminous bodies moving across the sky, throwing jets of light toward the sun, each having a long illuminated tail extending away from the sun. They belong to our solar system and have extremely elongated elliptical orbits, one end of which loops around the sun at comparatively small distance, the other end, in many cases, extending to unknown limits beyond the orbits of the planets. They are probably made up of smaller and larger bodies of solid material scattered throughout the nucleus. When near the sun, dust or even gaseous material is produced in them by the gravitational attraction of the sun.

Some of them appear periodically and others have been observed once and may or may not return. They are usually less bright on each return and in the end become non-luminous and cannot be seen. We are due to see a comet according to astronomical report and calculation some time in April.

Halley's Comet is the most famous. It was named after Halley, a British astronomer, who first computed its orbit in 1682 and predicted its return although he never saw it. Its first recorded appearance was in 87 B.C. and it returns at periods of about 77 years. Each of the 27 returns since 87 B.C. is definitely recorded in the ancient chronicles and it is evident that this comet must have been conspicuous at each return. It was seen in 1910 and will return according to prediction about 1986, D.V.

In 1843 a comet was seen that had a tail that swept across the sky from horizon to horizon.

If you watch on a clear moonless night, you may observe or, may have observed if you have watched, streaks of light in the sky. These are called "shooting stars." They are not stars but are meteors. Meteors are thought to be small fragments of matter of various sizes which enter our atmosphere from the interplanetary spaces. They are thought to be inherently cold masses, but their surfaces become heated to incandescence by friction with our atmosphere in their rapid passage through it. If the body is small it is completely burned up. When the body is large enough a portion of it reaches the earth as a stony or metallic mass called a meteorite. One of the largest known meteorites is exhibited in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. It weighs about 37 tons.

With this we conclude our discussion of the solar system and exclaim with the psalmist:

“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . . .”

A. Lubbers
As members of the Church of God, we have often derived an amount of comfort from the fact that the Bible was still the world’s best selling book. That day is gone, and in 1956 the Bible became the world’s SECOND best seller. The first place position went to a book that stands for virtually everything the Bible opposes. Listen closely, perhaps you will be as surprised as I was. The Bible was outsold and out-distributed by a Communist book called “The History of the Communist Party in Soviet Russia,” a book which fills the same role to faithful Communists all over the world as the Bible does for Christians all over the world.

As further evidence of the growth of the anti-christian power, note that today in Russia there are about 200,000 persons training to become “missionaries” for the Communist Party. Many of these come from countries outside the Soviet Union; for instance, 12,000 of these students are from South America, and when their training is finished, they will return there to spread their doctrines with the fervor of a religious zealot. There will be one great difference, however, because these missionaries will have all the material and financial backing they can use. They will be supported by the Communist Party which never lacks capital for such purposes.

We know that as the last days approach, the true church will be driven underground, literally and figuratively. Their churches and properties will be confiscated and desecrated; their members persecuted and ridiculed. These prophecies have been fulfilled time and again throughout history, and again have been fulfilled during our times in Communist countries. By controlling the mail, the radio, television and all printed media, the Communist Party plans to stamp out every last evidence of the Church.

In religion, Communism sees its greatest enemy. A sound religion emphasizes the individuality of each person in relation to God and points to heaven as the greatest height a person shall experience. Communism teaches that all men exist for the good of each other, or as they say, “The Party,” and the greatest heights a man can obtain is to propagate the communistic doctrine until someday the Party shall rule the whole world.

It is easy to see that by training the young people in these doctrines, much as we train our ministers and missionaries, the Communist party gains not just the body and intellect of their converts but also their hearts, so that they soon become zealots for the communistic cause that fear nothing, will stop at nothing, and respect neither God nor His church.

Already some of these communistic missionaries have made an impact on our country. Think of Alger Hiss and others who managed to squirm their way into positions of responsibility. However, they have not started their big campaign against the church in this country because they are too clever to risk their whole cause on one particular principle that might prove unpopular if advocated before the time is ripe for it.

Be careful, for that time is not far away. Soon those 200,000 graduates of the Communistic propaganda colleges will

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"A composition in prose or verse portraying life or character by means of dialogue and action," is Webster's definition of drama. He goes on to distinguish plays as those for reading (known as closet dramas) and those meant for acting.

Drama had its beginning many hundreds of years ago, even before the birth of Christ. In its most primitive use, drama denotes "deed." It has always had its place in the field of the arts, and is designated as a descriptive or pictorial art. Primitive drama was much like the folk tale, taking the place of the printed page.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Netherlands as well as the other European countries, produced many worthwhile dramas. Several of these plays were allegorical in nature, and therefore taught a lesson as well as entertaining the audience. One of the most outstanding of these plays was "Everyman," a play dealing with sin and its results.

As early as the fifth century, the mass itself contained many dramatic elements. The clergy used drama, accompanied by liturgical music, to illustrate Gospel truths to the laity. Religious feasts, too, were dramatic in character.

Man is basically an imitative creature. When he sees a person doing something, he seeks to retell this event to someone else. Narration is sometimes insufficient to tell the whole story, and so he begins to use the appropriate gestures. So drama is basically only a way to relate things in a more artistic and efficient way.

(Continued on next page)
YES! (continued)

Some say that drama is a lie since it declares something to be true which really is not so. But drama does not really do this. Drama is an art which pictures the true or the fictional. It is like the work of an artist or a sculptor. No one calls the artist a liar simply because he draws a picture of his wife and then tells someone—"That is my wife." So we cannot condemn the actor who seeks to picture someone else.

Others will probably say, "But in drama you act out the sins of someone else." Sin, we all know, is a thing of the heart. It is the purpose or intent of a thing that causes it to be sinful. The activities of the heart is a sphere of life which no actor can or can even attempt to portray. Thus, like the artist, the dramatist does not picture sin, but only the outward actions of a person.

Children, who are very natural in their expression, are basically dramatic in their play. Look at one of the most common children's games, "London Bridges," a game approved by everyone. Children have fun pretending that their arms are bridges which fall down on the heads of innocent victims.

Any teacher or parent can witness to the effectiveness of drama as a teaching device. What better way is there to impress the events of history on a child's mind than by showing a film dealing with well-known historical figures? What more effective way of teaching the enjoyment of reading can one find than to have the children work out their simple stories in play form?

Many will be saying, "This is all very true in the past, but what about the corrupt drama of today? What about the motion picture, saturated with crime and sex, that presents the extremes as though they are the norm? What about the volumes of corrupt dramatic drivel

(Continued on next page)

NO! (continued)

Greece and Rome centered about and grew up out of rites to the god of wine.

But now you ask the question: "Just because drama comes out of the world, is it necessarily evil? Is the drama as such sinful? To this we answer "Yes." Note the essential make-up of drama. The original word from which "drama" came means to perform or do, and hence to act out. The drama as a stage term, therefore signifies that life is dramatized and acted out; that one person assumes the personality of another. Why is this wrong? We call your attention to three reasons.

First, the Christian may not dramatize life. Life is an immense reality. Life is the allotted time which God gives His image-bearers to serve Him. Life is God-given and that life is not a joke or a play-thing. A Sovereign God gives it, and a Sovereign God demands that the creature shall glorify Him with it. Can a Christian play and act such a grim reality? and that for amusement or profit? Shall he play the life of rebellion of the reprobate, or play the serious struggle of the child of God? Does not Scripture forbid it? Life is too serious! Don't bring in an excuse that drama can show life. Would you see life, then turn not to the stage, but to the Bible!

Secondly, the Christian may not play the part of any other human. God gave each man the stamp of personality. If a man takes a personality which God gave, not to him, but to someone else, and tries to put off his God-given personality, he is living and acting the lie. The better the actor can realize that lie, the lie that he loses his identity in that of the one he is dramatizing, the better actor he is said to be. If one plays the part of another, he is of necessity a HYPOCRITE. It will be striking to note that the word "hypocrite" as it is used in the Scrip-
**YES!** (continued)

that comes out of Hollywood each year? What about all the corrupt drama to be seen on television every day?

Of course, we all agree that this is not good. But it is merely a corrupt use of a good medium. Merely because some have misused the printed page, we do not condemn every future use of printed literature. Just because someone used a match to set a house afire, we do not condemn all further use of matches. And so, even though drama has been gravely misused by the wicked world, we need not necessarily condemn drama in itself. On the contrary, this misuse of a good means should challenge us as Reformed people to seek to improve the use of drama. We must join in the cause of bettering drama and using it, like all other things, to further the Kingdom of God.

Thelma Pastoor.

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**EDITORIAL**

*(Continued from page 4)*

I have cited just two of the many familiar phrases and doctrines that will "come to life" with new meanings and interpretations if they are but given a little extra thought or even put into different words, while retaining the same meaning. There are many, many more, and locked within their familiarity are jewels of comfort and inspiration waiting to be released by a fresh approach.

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**TRUTH vs. ERROR**

*(Continued from page 8)*

and gold. Let us live it, defend it, and manifest it always and everywhere at all costs for such is our calling in the days of our youth. And it is better to be hated of men for truth's sake than to be judged by the living God for error! Walk in the truth! It will make you free and upon you there will be no shame!

G. Vanden Berg

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**NO!** (continued)

...pictures is exactly the word the Greeks used to designate a person who takes part in a drama. And Scripture tells us that hypocrisy is a great sin. (e.g. Rev. 22:15). Note also our Belgic Confession in Art. 37: "Nay, all men shall give an account of every idle word they have spoken, which the world only counts amusement and jest... and then the secrets and hypocrisy of men shall be disclosed and laid open before all."

Thirdly, no Christian may dramatize sin. Apart from the fact that this is done for profit or amusement, to dramatize sin should be for the Christian a capital crime. Instead of abhorring it, one becomes an imitator of that which is evil. The covenant child of God, instead of playing sin (which is a denial that sin is a terrible reality and an abomination to the Lord), seeks more and more to be made free from it.

When you, Christian friend, consider this question, look at it basically and principally. Come not with petty arguments and excuses or try to compare it to other things which are acceptable and by a stretch of the imagination can be construed as remotely resembling drama. Do not ask questions about its results, such as, "Can drama not be educational?" No one will doubt this. Many sinful things can be educational. The end never justifies the means. Look at it for what it is: behold it in the light of God's Word.

"Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

"Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of God is not in him."

Let your prayer be that of the Psalmist—"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

Jim Jonker.
spread themselves all over the world. Some are supposed to be in the U. S. already, having gained entrance to the country disguised as Hungarian refugees.

We know that God is not doing this to his church in anger, but these things are caused to happen that we may be better equipped to serve him, having been tried by fire, as it were.

Pray for grace to understand the Scriptures, for a sound knowledge of the scriptures is the best guard against sin in general and now, communism in particular. The communist recognizes the power of God's word and is afraid of it; may we recognize its power and glory in it.
Everybody's Going...

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Fourth Church
Grand Rapids, Mich.