May the true meaning of Christmas be with us now as on the night of the Christ-child's birth. May the Christmas story live anew in every heart. May all of us keep Christmas as He would have us keep it. And may the blessings of Christmas be yours.

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Once again we find ourselves in those days when our attention is focused more particularly on the fulfillment of those prophetic words of God which He gave us through the prophet Isaiah,

"For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given..."

With a view to this fact the undersigned has been requested to write a few lines on the topic, "The Importance and Significance of the Genealogy of Christ." And it was suggested that the question be answered as to whether Mary was the last descendant of the line of David. We prefer to arrange our material under the title given above, Christ, The Seed of David According to the Flesh. That surely is what His genealogies reveal to us; and His genealogy has significance exactly because of that fact that He is of the seed of David according to the flesh.

As far as the question as to whether Mary was the last descendant of David, we may say that this certainly was not the case. Joseph also, very plainly was a descendant of David. For he took Mary with him to Bethlehem to be registered for the taxation which Caesar intended to impose upon the Jews. And we read, literally in Luke 2:4 that Joseph went to Bethlehem "because he was of the house and lineage of David." And, thus, we see that unless Joseph were not also a descendant of David, the prophecies of His birth in Bethlehem would not have been fulfilled. And the lineage of Joseph certainly has this significance that it served for the arrangement of Jesus' birth in the city of Bethlehem as it had been prophesied by the prophet Micah.

But if you ask whether Mary was the last descendant of David in the royal line, that is, as a descendant of Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa and so down the line of the kings that came from David’s loins, indeed then we see no reason at all for taking any other stand than that Mary was the last of these descendants of David. This we believe is the meaning also of Isaiah 53:2 that Christ comes "as a root out of a dry ground." And the words of Mary to the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" spring forth exactly from that fact that she knew, too, that this royal lineage ended in her as a virgin. Her words then mean that she does not know anyone whom she can marry, in the place of Joseph, who can, as the angel says, serve as the one through whom "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." Joseph could not give him...
the throne of his father David, for Joseph was not in the royal line of David’s seed.

But is it not possible that Mary was not of this royal seed and realizes that her husband and the father of her Son must be such and therefore asks this question? No, the text from which we borrowed our theme above makes it very plain that she is of the seed of David. Paul writes in Romans 1:3, “Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” And since Mary’s question as to how these things can be shows that she realizes that Joseph cannot be the father of this promised seed of David to realize the throne of David for Him, it is evident the genealogies mentioned in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 are of Mary and not of Joseph. To be sure each time the name Joseph appears there rather than the name Mary. But note that this is indeed the royal seed of David mentioned in Matthew 1. For it traces the genealogies of Christ through David’s sons Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, and all down the line of the kings of the kingdom of Judah. This must be the line of Mary’s father, whose name then is Jacob. And that he begat Joseph the husband of Mary means that he begot him legally, that is, Joseph was the son-in-law of Jacob.

One other point yet, could it possibly be that Mary is not the only descendant of David in the royal line of his offspring but that she had lost track of these generations and means simply by her statement, “I know not a man,” that she does not know where to find a man whom she can marry and bring forth this son of David? No, this, too, is quite impossible. And Mary’s question even precludes that possibility. For she does not ask as to where she will find such a man. She does not ask for the name of the man or whether she shall go down to Bethlehem, or at least to Judea to look for such a man. Nor does she ask as to whether she should break this betrothal to Joseph — which was far more than an “engagement” to be married as is the custom of this present day. No, she asks how these things CAN be. In her mind it is impossible! There simply is not a man left of the royal seed of David. She knows that. And she knows, too, that only a child born to her can possibly be an heir to that throne of David. For further light on this matter we suggest that you refer to pages 182-185 of the Rev. H. Hoeksema’s book on the Heidelberg Catechism, Volume III, The Death of the Son of God. And for the rest we simply point out that truth of the text from which we have borrowed our theme. Christ is of the seed of David according to the flesh. Organically through Mary and not simply legally through Joseph He is David’s royal seed and so receives the throne of His father David.

Then His lineage has significance. For all His work of salvation can have meaning for us only because He represented us on the cross, in the resurrection and even now at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. On the cross He did not simply die for sin in general. He died for the sins of His people. When He arose from the dead He did not simply rise as an individual who had conquered the power of death for Himself. He rose for our justification and therefore with resurrection victory for all His Church. That is why the graves of many of the saints were opened at His resurrection and these also rose from the dead. When He ascended up to heaven He did so unto His Father and to our Father as our head and not simply as an individual.

The world may celebrate Christmas and does celebrate a commercialized Christmas; but if the world really understood what Christmas means and could truly see Him as “He that is born king of the Jews,” as the son of David Who sits on His throne, then Christmas is not a day for carnal celebration, feasting and revelry. Instead it is a day that speaks of a terrible doom and destruction that comes upon all the enemies of the Church.
He is the seed of David and to Him IS given the throne of His father David. His genealogies should be traced by you and me, by His Church. It is important that the Church do this! For in this genealogy we see not only that He is one of us but that He is also our King and representative head Whose righteousness is ours and in Whose reward we by God's grace shall share.

But the world can find no comfort in this genealogy. (Nor for that matter can the Arminian who wants a Christ that dies for sin in general and whose resurrection and glory can be had by us only as we make Him king and give Him room and a throne in our hearts.) But let the Church trace this work of God from Adam through David and his royal seed to the Christ and find comfort in this truth that Mary's Son is our King Who delivered us from all our enemies, rules us by His Spirit and leads us to everlasting glory.

J. A. H

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One of the essays in a series called "Adventures of the Mind" in the Saturday Evening Post was an article by Mr. Aldous Huxley titled, "Drugs That Shape Men's Minds." This well-written, thought-stimulating treatise began as follows:

"In the course of history many more people have died for their drink and their dope than have died for their religion or their country. The craving for ethyl alcohol and the opiates has been stronger in these millions, than the love of God, of home, of children, even of life. Their cry was not for liberty or death; it was for death preceded by enslavement. There is a paradox here, and a mystery. Why should such multitudes of men and women be so ready to sacrifice themselves for a cause so utterly hopeless and in ways so painful and so profoundly humiliating?

"To this riddle there is, of course, no simple or single answer. Human beings are immensely complicated creatures, living simultaneously in a half dozen different worlds. Each individual is unique and, in a number of respects, unlike all the other members of the species. None of our motives is unmixed, none of our actions can be traced back to a single source and, in any group we care to study, behavior patterns that are observably similar may be the result of many constellations of dissimilar causes."

On the other hand there is total depravity — simple, logical, decisive, all inclusive.

In a sense I feel sorry for the highly educated and respected scholar who, after no doubt years of study and research, still comes up with an inaccurate answer. An answer in which the means are confused with the cause, for he continues in the course of his dissertation, to cite such factors as heredity, and body chemistry as causes of addiction to the drugs that dull one's senses.

There is no doubt that physical characteristics, inherited or otherwise acquired, have a bearing on addiction or for that matter, on much of our behavior. But contrary to what Mr. Huxley writes, there is a single source to which irrational behavior can be traced. There is a single cause, a single fault in our structure from which this and all other wanton behavior results.

This one source of our incapability to conform to that which is right, is the breach that exists between God as He dwells in His righteousness and ourselves as we try to conduct our own affairs with nothing but imaginary strength.

It is remarkable, how frequently the antithesis of humanism and Christianity (although supposedly from the same fountain), can be observed in the popular goals, e.g. world peace, 'enlightenment' of primitive nations to civilization, more leisure for everyone, eradication of crime, alcoholism, etc.

Should anyone be so rash as to question the validity or possibility of these goals, his sanity would be under sudden investigation. Try it once, yourself. Mention to someone that you think the idea of lasting peace on earth is a vain wish. Or you might mention that the purpose of our existence is the enhancement of God's reputation rather than to leave a footprint on the sands of time to guide succeeding generations to greater cultural or social heights.

Try this little experiment sometime — it

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When it was time again to write the article for the November issue of the "Beacon Lights," I somehow forgot that I was not yet finished with all that I wanted to say with respect to this matter of Courtship and Marriage. The result was that I started on another subject, the subject of a Protestant Reformed World and Life View. However, we had in our own Young People's Society a discussion of these articles and of the whole matter of dating. This reminded me of the fact that there was one more article to write yet in this series under the general heading which appears above.

You recall perhaps that we were discussing the meaning of marriage and its place in the lives of the people of God. We were discussing also the fact that it is exactly a Scriptural view of marriage which determines the pattern of our dating and courtship. Concerning this we have already spent the greater part of one article. There is nevertheless the very practical question of whom we should date which warrants a little discussion, and with which we can very well close out this series. And therefore I would like to interrupt our discussion of our world and life view to write an article on this subject.

The whole matter really resolves itself into the question of whether or not we may date boys and girls outside of the sphere of our own churches. Is it proper for us to seek dates and accept dates from those who do not go to the same denomination that we go to?

Those who would defend this proposition usually have two arguments especially by which they place their stamp of approval on this custom. The first argument runs something like this: when a boy or girl begins dating, they are not immediately serious about the whole matter. They are simply seeking companionship from the opposite sex for a night out to a party or program where all who come have dates. It is not proper to say that this is immediately such a serious business and that marriage is contemplated at that point. Those who express concern about dating outside of the churches need not be unduly perturbed about the matter, for after all, "We are not going to marry that person."

Concerning this objection, I would like to make a few remarks. It is true, of course, that the mere fact that one has a date, perhaps for the first time with a person, does not guarantee that marriage will be the outcome. Yet, it is also not true that a young boy or a young girl can go out with someone from the opposite sex just for the sake of companionship. It is naive to the extreme to say that a boy goes with a girl simply because he wants company, and that there is no difference between going with a girl or going with some of his own boy friends. Dating is more than companionship. And to say that it is not is simply to ignore the facts. For when a boy has a date with a girl or when a girl accepts the invitation of a boy to spend an evening with him, there are certainly emotional factors that must be considered. There is certainly something to this business of "falling in love." And one, in going on a date, cannot ignore the possibility of becoming so attached to his or her partner that it is difficult, to say the least, to break up such a relationship. The possibility always is there that you will like a boy or girl so much that severing the relationship becomes almost impossible. And the longer
you go with one person, the more of a reality this becomes. Dating is not something to be played with. It is not simply “playing the field.” It is not true that a peaceful and happy marriage is possible only on the condition that you go out with many boys or girls before you finally settle down to married life, as is sometimes maintained. Possibly you will go with more than one boy or girl before the Lord leads you to your marriage partner, but this is not an indispensable prerequisite to a happy marriage. There is not much of worth in this first objection.

There is however another reason which is usually brought up in support of one’s policy of dating those from other churches. And this is, as is said, the possibility that the Lord may use you to bring someone outside the church into it. Through your dating of someone outside the church, you may be instrumental in bringing your boy friend or girl friend into the church.

This sounds like a very good argument; and it would appear that there is validity to it. Besides, the fact remains that our churches, because of their size do not make it easy for a boy or girl to find their life partner within the sphere of our own churches. And, I presume that there is some truth to the adage, “Familiarity breeds contempt.” There is also the obvious argument that it has happened before and that therefore the possibility exists that it may happen again.

Now, I certainly do not intend to ignore the problems involved and to brush them aside without consideration. After all, a girl is not in a position to take the initiative. Perhaps no one from her church ever asks her out for a night. A boy may try again and again and fail in securing a date if he limits his field to his own fellow society or convention girls. What then? Must he or she face life without the joys of married happiness?

A few things can, however, be said about this. One indispensable prerequisite of a happy and blessed married life is that both husband and wife have unity in their confession. They must agree as to what is the truth of the Word of God. They must agree in their confession of the truth, and therefore also in the matter of church attendance. If there is not this basic unity in the home, there will be unity in nothing. They must be able to go to church together, to desire to teach their children the same truth, to go together to the cross of Christ, to look together to the coming of the day of Jesus Christ, to be one in their battle of faith so that there is not division in their own ranks. If this is not true, then there will never be unity in anything.

For this reason the church matter is not settled between a young man and a young woman until this matter is resolved. If you go with a boy or girl from another church, you have not settled the church matter until you have agreed on this fundamental point. And if you love the truth as you can and do confess it within our own churches, you have not settled this all important matter until the one with whom you are going has also learned to love it and confess it. A promise is not sufficient; your partner must not go with you to church for your sake; he or she must learn to love the truth. Until this happens, there is no possibility of happiness in your marriage.

Now, taking both these things into consideration, the fact that dating is more than mere companionship and that this question of church affiliation must be settled, it stands to reason that to go with one outside of your church is walking on pretty thin ice. While you may be the means to lead such a one into the church, they may be the means to lead you away. If you become attached to a boy or girl, but cannot settle the church question, it will only lead to heartache and pain. And if you go through with marriage anyway, then you are simply making for yourself a life in which you will have nothing but grief and sadness, a life

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TRUTH VS. ERROR

TRUE GIVING

Truly the spirit of Christmas is a spirit of giving!

By this is not meant that the worldly practice of pouncing upon every opportunity to commercialize the most sacred of all events and use it merely for lucrative gain is the proper spirit of Christmas. Neither do we have in mind to condemn without further qualification the common custom of giving and receiving that is so prevalent during this season of the year.

Rather, we want to emphasize that sanctified giving is fitting to the idea of Christmas. Only, then let us consider whether all our customs are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ so that our giving is in harmony with those holy principles set forth in His Word. Since this is obviously not the case so that even in the church much of what is done is imperfect and polluted with sin, it may be profitable to recapitulate those principles by which all our actions of giving are to be governed. We must know the truth and error of these things also!

What then are you going to give for Christmas?

Perhaps before you even consider this, you have to compose a list of those to whom you are going to give. You begin, of course, with mother and dad, brothers and sisters. Then you consider those intimate friends who you are assured will also reciprocate and none of these may be forgotten. Now, as though the list isn't already long enough, you remember that there are at least a half-dozen or more of those annual Christmas parties to which you will be invited and a gift must be had for each of these.

And now then, what will you give?

Before you can decide this the factor of cost must be considered. You remember that you have a few dollars put away for all this in that Christmas Club you started a year ago but that won't begin to cover all that is needed. Especially not since, as usual, the cost of everything has again gone up. Well, you have a few savings in the bank too, and with this you can probably just make it but, as the saying goes, "It's Christmas time again and I'm broke." But even that isn't regarded as too tragic (it's a sort of accepted thing by now) if only the new year can be started with a clean slate. So it is all figured out. For mom so much and so much for dad and a smaller gift for each of the "kids" and about an equal exchange on the rest and the budget is balanced. What a relief!

But wait! Wasn't there something that is being forgotten?

In all of this planning, nothing special or extra was figured for missions, the church, Christian schools, the institutions for the handicapped, the sick or even the poor who are always there but who cannot reciprocate! If we begin along these lines, there is no end to it all and so why not just conveniently exclude all those things on the very simple ground: Insufficient Funds! After all, first things must be put first and Christmas is not time to be reminded to "seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness," is it? Besides, no one asks for contributions to Christian Schools, Building Funds, Standard Bearer, Beacon Lights, etc. in December! Drives for various kingdom causes are never conducted at this time of the year because everyone knows that it is quite impossible to give when there are so many other pressing needs (?). Even
Uncle Sam gives us a few months’ time after Christmas to scrape together enough to meet the income tax needs.

This is then what we mean when we say that so much of our giving is unsanctified. We so easily forget that God, not we—is the sole proprietor of all that we possess. We fail to reckon with the reality that we are only stewards of this earth’s goods and called with a heavenly calling to use all things wisely and to give a good account of our every deed. Custom and tradition easily become the incentive of our giving instead of the holy principle of true love; love of God first and, hence, also the love of His cause and covenant as these are manifest in the midst of the present world. Certainly we know that all our giving that is not motivated by this love is evil, “For though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing” (I Cor. 13:3). If only half of what is spent on non-essentials and another half of what is wasted on worthless objects was diverted into proper channels, it would not be necessary for so many of the various Kingdom causes to go a-begging!

Christmas joy is also the joy of true giving!

But, one may say, it’s easier to give when we know we get something in return. It hurts to always give to those things from which we receive no material return. Very well, but to such a one we would say it is high time to look seriously into your heart so that you may discover what is wrong. One cannot reason that way who has a sense of appreciation for that great, unspeakable, glorious, incomparable gift of the love of God,—the wonderful gift of Jesus, “Who hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour” (Ephesians 5:1, 2).

Oh, it is true that giving to the cause of Christ is not materially rewarding. But, if that is the motive of our giving, our giving is terribly wrong. And it is also true that real giving, spiritual giving often hurts,—hurts our flesh because it interferes with the pursuit of our carnal ambitions—so it should and such hurting is profitable for us. What is far worse is that our lack of giving or our wrong-giving “grieves the Holy Spirit”!

What then will you give?

Let me answer this for you in the words of Rev. R. Veldman: “And the more we by the grace of God are constantly mindful of God’s great gift to us, the more we, by the power of that same grace, will give ourselves whole-heartedly unto God.”

In such giving lies the joy of Christmas.

So, while we give, may we remember: “There was a little girl who told an older friend that she was going to give her papa a pair of slippers for his birthday. ‘Where will you get your money?’ asked the friend. She opened her eyes wide and said, ‘Why, Father will give me the money’. For a moment the friend was silent as he thought that the father would buy his own birthday present. And the father loved the little girl and appreciated the gift, even though he paid for it himself. We have nothing of our own to give to God.” (Selected)

And another story told in the “Earnest Worker” has it: “A story is told of an old colored preacher who was exhorting his congregation to give freely to the church; he was interrupted by a deacon, who rose and said: ‘Pahson, you done told us dat salvation am free—as free as the aih we breathe and as free as de watoh in de rivahs. If dat am true, how come you always asking for money?’ The old preacher adjusted his spectacles and solemnly replied: ‘Brothah Jones, you am right. Religion am free—salvation am free—like de aih am free and de watoh am free; but if you wants watoh in youah kitchen you gotta have watoh pipes, and somebody has got ter pay for de plumbin’.”

G. Vanden Bery
Most of the trees have now shed their colorful autumn foliage. Nature is bleak and already awaits the falling snow as I write this article. We’ve had a beautiful fall but our thoughts are turned by the activities in nature to the coming cold of winter. These days also turn our thoughts to the frigid wastelands and fringelands of the northern and southern extremities of this our Father’s world. Our thoughts are often accompanied by speculations and ramblings concerning the animal world of these wasteland areas.

For that arm-chair adventure let’s transport ourselves to the wastelands of the south for a look at “Willie” the penguin, one of our feathered friends in these cold lands of the south.

The penguin is not at home in the wastelands of the North although a relative of his, the great auk — now extinct — is a native of this area of the globe. In fact the very name “penguin” was originally applied to the great auk of the North Atlantic.

The stout-bodied penguin is one of the best known and most loved of birds despite the fact that few people ever see the wide, wobbly-legged, short-necked creature on its home grounds. The penguin is one of the most “human” and most “comical” of birds. Its upright but awkward stance, flat feet, short stump of a tail and gawking stare are boons to the artist and the caricaturist. He even serves as the “trade-mark” for one of the leading mentholated cigarettes in our land.

Some seventeen species of penguins have been classified and naturalists group them in the order Sphenisciformes (Short-winged birds). The range in size of the birds of this order is from the Little Blue Penguin of Australia and New Zealand waters, about 12 inches tall, to the Emperor Penguin of the Antarctic continent, which is more than three feet tall. These clumsy friends of the south range from four to ninety pounds.

We are apt to think of these birds as native only in the South Polar regions and yet only two species, the emperor and the Adelie penguins live on the Antarctic continent. The remainder live in the southern seas far from the influence of civilization and occupy islands and barren coasts in the sub-Antarctic or Temperate Zones as far north as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and South America. In western South America, which is washed by the cold waters of the Humboldt Current, penguins reach Peru and the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador and Peru.

On land the penguin stands up straight on short legs and walks with a clumsy waddle simulating somewhat the waddle of our overly stuffed domesticated ducks. The back of the penguin is black and its breast is white. The penguin has often been described as the bird with the “tuxedo-like outfit.” They have short flipper-like wings which from a distance look like arms and are useless for aerial flight but most advantageous in the water. The only means of defense apart from his swimming ability is his ability to use his sharp bill. The penguin’s bill is plated like that of an albatross, to which he is somewhat related.

The penguin is most at home in the water. It is in this environment that his quill-less wing is most advantageous. It is modified
to such an extent that it resembles a flipper. (This accounts for the first part of the bird’s scientific name, the Greek work *sphen* meaning “wedge-shaped” — an allusion to the modified wing.)

When the penguin navigates he literally flies under the surface of the water with the aid of these flippers and his web-like feet. He swims with a powerful overhand stroke and has amazing endurance. Despite his inability to fly, the penguin has been known to navigate great distances, cleaving through the water with great speed, alternately diving and leaping with the ease and grace of a porpoise. The Adelie penguin swims to the edge of the Antarctic ice shelf and then waddles many miles inland on foot to the rocky ridges where she nests. At times the penguin will lie down and push himself along on his belly, sometimes attaining considerable speed in this “sled-like” position.

One author writes that it is interesting to watch a group of penguins leap from the water onto the ice floes. He says it is like watching a film of divers in reverse to see a platoon of emperor penguins plummeting three to five feet in the air out of the water onto the surface of the ice. Here they “toboggan” to a stop and pick themselves up like clumsy “wrestlers.”

It is generally conceded that the penguin is a gregarious and social animal. Penguins will waddle along in groups or single file, they swim in groups and they occupy the breeding and mating areas in groups. The nesting colony (sometimes as large as one hundred thousand we are told) is frequently on a hill top near the seacoast or on tiny islands. Well-worn trails mark the way to these areas and the little fellows seem to be incessantly scrambling along these paths.

The mating and breeding habits of the penguin are quite unusual and singularly interesting. The penguin courtship also has a very practical aspect because the male tries to interest a promising mate by presenting her with pebbles — one at a time — for her inspection. This is practical because the pebbles are used by the penguins to raise the level of their nests as a protection against the melting snows when warmer weather makes its appearance. It is even believed and has been proved to be true that males who lack pebbles will attempt to steal a supply of them for presentation to a promising mate.

The nest of the penguin is usually constructed of grass and weeds and is placed in the hollow or cavity in the rocks. Some species or groups of penguins nest on the bare ground or ice. The penguin lays one to three almost round white eggs. The young of the penguin is fed fish, squid or crustaceans. The parents pre-digest the food and regurgitate it, so the babies may eat it more readily.

The Emperor Penguin, the largest and the one with the most southerly range of any bird in the world, has an amazing nesting habit during the long Antarctic winter. It lays one egg and cradles this one lone egg (and later its chick) on its wide flat feet under a canopy or pouch of loose abdominal skin to shield it from killing temperatures. The adult even manages to move about slowly while carrying the egg on its feet. From time to time the female is relieved of her burden by transferring it to its mate. By the time summer comes and the accompanying comparatively mild weather the young are too big for the pouch and they can survive when left to shift for themselves.
III. The Journey to Jerusalem, 20:7 - 21:16 (continued)

B. To Miletus: 20:13-16

1. How did Paul's companions travel from Troas?
2. How did Paul leave Troas? Why? How is it that Paul could travel more quickly afoot?
3. Where did they meet?
4. Trace their journey from Assos to Miletus:
   a. Why did they tarry at Trogyllium?
   b. Which important place did Paul by-pass on this return to Jerusalem?
   c. Why did Paul do this? Does "Pentecost" here refer to our New Testament Pentecost or to a feast of the Jews? If the latter, why should Paul be so eager to be in Jerusalem on time?

C. At Miletus: 20:

1. For whom did Paul send while at Miletus?
   a. How far away was Ephesus?
   b. Why did Paul call for the elders?
2. Of what does the first part of Paul's farewell speak? 18-21.
   a. Why does Paul refer to the manner in which he served at Ephesus?
   b. What does he mean by the tears and temptations which befell him by the lying in wait of the Jews? Does this have anything to do with what Paul writes in Romans 9-11?
      1) Did Paul have an easy time in Ephesus?
      2) Do we get the impression that all the details of his labors in Ephesus are not recorded in Acts?
   c. How had Paul taught at Ephesus?
3. Of what does Paul speak in the second part of this farewell address? 22-27
   a. What does the future hold in store for him?
      1) What does "bound in the spirit" mean?
      2) What does Paul know of what is to happen to him at Jerusalem?
         a) Does he know the details of the future?
         b) How did Paul know of his coming imprisonment?
         c) Does the earlier record of Acts tell of this testimony of the Holy Spirit? The later record?
         c) Does the earlier record of Acts tell of this testimony of the Holy Spirit in his writings? Cf. Rom. 15:31
b. What is Paul's attitude toward this coming tribulation? 24
   1) Is he afraid? Does he want to avoid it? To what extent is he ready to go?
   2) How does Paul consider his life and labors? What is the meaning of the word “course”? Is this a course which he has mapped out for himself?
   3) Does Paul speak of this course elsewhere? Cf. I Cor. 9:24, ff.; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; II Tim. 4:7.
   4) Does Paul speak elsewhere of this same readiness to surrender his life if need be? Where?
   5) How does Paul conceive of his ministry? What is his calling? Does the apostle have joy in this course and this ministry? Why?

b. What does he tell the elders of Ephesus? 25
   1) Does he include in this the whole congregation?
   2) What had he preached among them? What does it mean that he “preached the kingdom of God”?
   3) Why does he take them to witness that he is free from their blood?
   4) What is the basis of Paul's certainty that he is free from the blood of all men? What had he declared unto them? What is the meaning of “all the counsel of God”?

4. How does Paul close his farewell to the Ephesian elders? 28-35
   a. What admonition does he give them?
      1) What is the meaning of “take heed”? What must they take heed to do. What is included in this?
      2) Who appointed them to take heed? What is their position in the church? What is an overseer?
      3) Why is this admonition so serious? vs. 28 With whose blood was the church purchased? What does this expression prove concerning the one who died on the cross? What does it prove concerning the atonement?
      4) Why, vs. 29, 30, is this admonition so urgent?
         a) What is meant by “grievous wolves”? Why are they called such?
         b) Whence would these enemies of the church arise?
         c) What would they speak? What is meant by “perverse things”?
         d) What would be their purpose?
         e) Did this actually happen at Ephesus? Is Ephesus an exception, or is this the general rule in the church?
      5) What must be the attitude of the elders? What example does Paul give them? Is this still to be the attitude of the overseers today? Do you think this example of Paul is quite generally followed?

b. Does Paul intend here to trust the future of the church to men? Does he expect the church to stand fast, or not?
   1) To whom does he commend them?
   2) What is meant by “word of his grace”?
   3) What is the power of this “word of his grace”?
   4) Is this a matter of certainty or contingency?
c. What must be the attitude of the elders in all these labors toward the flock? 33-35
1) What example does Paul give them in this respect?
2) Are the overseers to look for any material gain?
3) What should be their attitude toward the “weak”? Who are these “weak”?
4) Of what words of the Lord Jesus does Paul remind them? Can these words be found in the gospel narratives?

5. The farewell: 36-38
a. How was this meeting ended? Why? What was the contents of this prayer?
b. What was the attitude of the elders toward Paul?
1) For what did they sorrow most of all?
2) What does this show of Paul’s position at Ephesus?
c. How did Paul leave Miletus?

H. C. H.

TAPE LIBRARY

The Senior Young People’s Society of First Church in Grand Rapids has built up a collection of tape recordings for the use of individuals or other churches. This collection includes many recordings of Rev. T. Hoeksema, Rev. C. Hanko and a few other ministers.

Anyone desiring to use a recording for one or two weeks should send $1.00 to cover the cost of postage and mailing cartons to Ken Vink, 1552 Adams St., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich.

All donations to this library will be used to buy more tape for the collection.

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 4)

will soon be most obvious that humanism has penetrated into each of us to such an extremely large degree that although we disagree with it as a principle, we think along its pattern.

To return to the article which stimulated this editorial; man is a victim of virtually uncontrollable, biochemical laws, of heredity, and of an innumerable complex of human relations. Otherwise, he’d be a pretty good guy.

Or would he?

CHARLES WESTRA

CHRISTIAN LIVING

(Continued from page 6)

of constant regret. Marriage is too important and to sacred a relationship not to consider all this.

Certainly then, if you do go with someone outside our churches, for your own happiness as well as for your own faithful walk before the sight of God, you do well to settle this matter finally and definitely before you become so involved that it is impossible for you emotionally and psychologically to break your relationships.

But, on the other hand, if there is between you and the one whom you hope some day to marry, that true spiritual unity of the faith, then your marriage will be happy and blessed. It will be a relationship in which you have the constant assurance of the favor of your God to be your support through the difficult path of life. You will have companionship and happiness in the highest sense of the word to enjoy life here below in God’s church and to look together to the time when you will enter into the perfect relationship of Christ and His elect bride forever.

H. Hanko
Every child has a pattern of growth that is as unique as his appearance or the way he walks. By carefully studying the growth patterns of children, researchers have found that these generally fit into six groups.

A child may start with a deficit or advantage and maintain the one or the other parallel to the normative growth line, that is, one unit of growth for every unit of time.

A child may be an early starter and a rapid grower. That is the kind we all like to have in our classes—the "gifted" child.

We may have a late starter and a rapid grower. Sometimes parents and even teachers are very much concerned because a child is in the second grade and hasn't learned to read yet. This phenomenon of the late starter and rapid grower appears quite frequently in families.

There are children who are early starters and slow growers. This type may also cause consternation and parents may say, “But my child started out so well and now he doesn't seem to be making much progress. What's wrong? Is it the teaching? Is the child lazy? Should I punish him for not doing as well as he did at first?” Our answer is, “That's the way some children grow.”

Finally, the child that starts late and grows slowly is one we have all worried about and struggled over and perhaps even spent too much time with at the expense of others. We're attempting to "get them up to grade level."

One may as well try "by taking thought to add one cubit to his stature" as to change the nature of the human material with which he works. Some of us may know how difficult it is to gain or to lose weight. One may make some progress, but as soon as he returns to his normal habits, whatever is gained is soon lost or whatever was lost is too quickly regained. Surely it is reasonable that the same sort of process occurs with respect to mental growth. The body always attempts to maintain its balance. Therefore it will resist forces which tend to displace or interfere with its normal rate of development.

When we teach, then, our goal is not to eliminate differences in achievement, but rather to realize an increase in differences within a given grade. If we regularly test achievement, we will know what range of ability we are handling in a given class. It is the teacher's business (and parents', too) to provide materials to meet the needs of all the levels in her classroom. To expect all third grade students to read third grade books is unrealistic. It is normal to find many levels of achievement in one class.

A policy more in keeping with this philosophy of growth would be that in teaching the slow learners, we use more audio-visual and "doing" techniques because these children are more easily impressed by graphic illustrations than if we require them to handle verbal symbols beyond their capacity. It doesn't mean they possess less intelligence, but rather that at that time they require a simpler tool to handle the job of learning.

The group that we are much concerned about is that of the fast growers, the children who are accumulating more mental age than chronological age per unit of time. Are we helping them to return double what they have been given? Have we provide
them with enough challenging material so that their cup, too, may run over?

Idleness leads to mischief and naughtiness. Might we not be leading these young children into temptation by failure to provide them with profitable spare time activities?

A testing program in our schools will help us to know how far a child has advanced. Those responsible for his training can help him grow comfortably, securely, using his endowment in the service of his Creator. Each child may then realize the greatest possible returns and receive his reward for a task well done. A. Borduin

PRE-SCHOOL PREPARATION

Have you ever stopped to watch a little girl playing with her dolls, or a little boy playing with his trucks? My! how busy he is, putting himself wholeheartedly into his play. Yes, this is the nature of a child; what he does, he does wholeheartedly. It is for this reason that a child is such a joy to teach; he listens well, absorbs everything. Because a child is so easily led, we must be very careful what we impress upon his little mind.

These small children are entrusted to us by God, first as parents, and later as teachers and parents. It is our duty and calling to instruct these children, to train them. We often think this instruction begins after the child is old enough to understand or to reason. If you wait until the child is a year old to begin this instruction, I fear you have already wasted one precious year. Instruction begins immediately; a child soon knows his Mother, the touch of her hand, the sound of her voice. And very soon he knows that Mother and Dad mean what they say, or he may learn that if he cries they will give in. So we see the training process going on in the very small child.

As children get a little older their learning capacity becomes greater. A mother doesn't have to say, "Well, today I'll sit down and teach Johnnie his Sunday School verse." No, learning comes gradually through repetition, and a mother can teach her child as she goes about her work each day. She can talk to her child, sing to him and with him, look at picture books, and later read to him. She can show him the way of a Christian in her daily life. Children learn by doing, so help your child to do the right things and to do things right. Teach him obedience for God's sake, and respect for adults. Teach your child to observe God's creation round about him. Tell him who makes the seed grow, the flowers to bloom, the sun to shine, the snow to fall, etc. Give to your child all you can.

Oh, but you say, that takes time; we just don't have that much time. Our calling is to train our children in the way that they should go, and that way is the way of God's people. Yes, it certainly does take time, but first things first. For the very reason that this is a time consuming thing and a real necessity, Mothers should be at home all the time and should not feel compelled to work out. You have a great and wonderful responsibility; don't underestimate the ability of your child by thinking he is too young to learn these things; but rather teach him all his little mind is able to absorb.

With a training of this nature at home, the five year old child will be well prepared to enter school. You will have laid the foundation not only for school days but for life. Upon this firm foundation we teachers can build; we can instruct your child, to the best of our ability, in the ways of our God. Indeed, we count it a privilege to train these covenant children to be stalwart sons and daughters of Christ. To quote John Ruskin: "It is a painful, continual, and difficult work to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise, but above all— by example."

Miss Ruth Dykstra
II. THE MILLENNIUM: OUR VIEWS

We have shown that the so-called "amillennial" doctrine has the support of Scripture. It also has the support of the doctrinal standards of the Church, such as the Westminster Confessions, including the Larger and Shorter Catechisms (Presbyterian), the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion (Episcopal), the Philadelphia Confession (Baptist) and the Three Forms of Unity: the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort and the Heidelberg Catechism (Reformed). The word "millennium" cannot be found anywhere in the first mentioned documents. The Larger Catechism does speak of "the time of His second coming, and our reigning with Him for ever" (A. 191), but nothing of a reign of merely 1000 years. Neither has the Belgic Confession any mention of this, but Art. 37 testifies that "we believe, according to the Word of God, when the time appointed by the Lord (which is unknown to all creatures) is come, and the number of the elect complete, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, corporally and visibly, as He ascended, with great glory and majesty to declare Himself judge of the quick and the dead; burning this old world with fire and flame, to cleanse it. And then all men will personally appear before this great judge, both men and women and children, that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being summoned by the voice of the archangel, and by the sound of the trumpet of God. For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies ... As for those who shall then be living, they shall not die as the others, but be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and from corruptible, become incorruptible. Then the books shall be opened, and the dead judged according to what they shall have done in this world, whether it be good or evil ... The faithful and elect ... and their cause which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates, as heretical and impious, will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God. And for a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory, as never entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Our Heidelberg Catechism asks, "What comfort it is to thee that Christ shall come again...?" and answers, "that ...I look for the very same Person ... to come as judge from heaven, who shall ... translate me, with all His chosen ones, to Himself, into heavenly joys and glory" (Q. & A. 52). A future millennium is not part of this Christian comfort. In our form for the administration of the Lord’s Supper we are exhorted, "with uplifted heads (to) expect our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, where He will make our mortal bodies like unto His most glorious body, and take us unto Him in (not a future millennium, but) eternity." In the Consolation of the Sick we are told that after the general judgment we shall "inherit the kingdom" and there shall stand with greater confidence against those who have distressed us: then we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father, there we shall come to (not a thousand year reign, but) the hope of an innumerable company of angels. There we —
shall reign from eternity to eternity. Amen."

This is sufficient to show that Dispensational premillennialists are not the only ones to believe in the return of the Lord, and that our views of His coming are based thoroughly on Scripture. Notice, too, that this implies that every Scripture reference to the second coming of Christ points not to a "millennium," but to the end of this world, and the beginning of the eternal state. For the N. T. conceives of this Gospel age in the highest possible thought. It is referred to as the period of waiting for His Son from heaven (1 Th. 1:10). That which is to follow cannot be less significant than Christ's final kingdom of glory (II Th. 1:7-10). This is the inescapable implication of the latter passage. For that which follows the coming of the Lord is not the kingdom of Christ (as Dispensationalists would like to think), but "the kingdom of God" (II Th. 1:5), the kingdom of the ultimate end, with no intervening temporary kingdom (I Cor. 15:24). If the last days were to be followed by a period of a lower order than the state of heavenly perfection and glory, it would be an anticlimax!

Revelation 20 must be interpreted in the light of all the rest of Scripture. There, in the first resurrection antithetical to the second death, we have a special spiritual resurrection, a particular stage of the resurrection of the righteous. The rest of Scripture views the believers as being raised spiritually, and sharing in the bodily resurrection at Christ's coming. Revelation 20 speaks of the reign of Christ for 1000 years. All foregoing Scripture views His reign as being for ever. Revelation 20 presents the enmity between Christ and His foes as centering in a war at the end of the millennium. The rest of Scripture depicts this antagonism as continuing especially during the present kingdom of heaven. Revelation 20 presents during the millennium a reign of peace while Satan is bound. Paul speaks of this age as the time in which Christ subjects His enemies to Himself (I Cor. 15: 24-26). Revelation 20 mentions no earthly reign of Christ; and all other Scripture puts His kingdom in the heavenly realm (Luke 19:11-15, etc.). Our view of the millennium is therefore severely consistent with all Scripture.

Revelation 19 and 20 are not chronological, for chapter 19 would then put the marriage supper of the Lamb (v. 7) before the millennium (chap. 20), whereas chapter 21 places it after the realization of the new creation. Nor are 16 and 17 chronological, 16:20 stating that "every island fled away and the mountains were not found," but in 17:9 we find the (re-)appearance of "seven mountains." Of the final judgment on the wicked (16:17), it is said, "It is done." But if chapter 17 follows chronologically, it is not done! Neither are chapter 6 and 7 consecutive, for that would make the day of wrath (chap. 6) to be followed by another day of salvation after this present long day (1,958 years). The Revelation is not necessarily consecutive, but is progressive and climactic. What we are then to expect in Scripture, and what we are to set our hope on in the future is not a temporal reign on the old earth, nor the Antichrist, but Christ, "looking for and hastening unto the Day of God...for new heavens and a new earth." We "look for such things!"

R. C. H.

Will all the secretaries of the societies for the 1958-1959 season please send in the names and addresses of your leaders, secretaries, and treasurers as soon as possible to Karlene Oomkes, 1312 Rosewood, S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich.
Last time we reported a Reformation Day program at Southwest Church for Young People in the Grand Rapids area. Hull's Young People's society also sponsored a Reformation Day program in the Community Building. Rev. Heys spoke on the topic "Children of the Reformation — We."

Rev. H. J. Kuiper, who accepted the call to Loveland, Colorado, was forced to postpone his farewell sermon in Redlands Church due to being hospitalized for a few days. He is in much better health now, however, and plans to move from California to Colorado during the last week in November.

Our Redlands Church has made a trio consisting of Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. R. Veldman, and Rev. C. Hanko.

Hope School is well underway with its building project. They are adding two rooms to their present four-room school, and hope to have them completed by February to accommodate the thirty kindergarteners scheduled to start school at that time.

Hope School also plans to present a Christmas program in First Church, Thursday, December 18, featuring chalk artists from the student body. In songs, speeches, and pictures they hope to develop the theme: "The Lord is my Shepherd."

The 9th grade at Adams School is sponsoring a Spaghetti Supper December 12 at the school gym. You may come to eat any time from five to seven. The work is being done by the 9th grade and their mothers (and a little I suppose by the teachers!).

The Young People's Society in Doon meets on Sunday evenings. They are discussing Genesis 6 before recess. Their after-recess programs sound interesting: an essay "Our Schools" by Joanne Mantel, musical numbers by Sally Blankespoor and Cynthia Mantel, and a pamphlet report, "Why Protestant Reformed" by Karen Lems.

The Edgerton Young People's Society invited Doon and Hull to a Skating Party at Edgerton, Nov. 17.

A Pre-Thanksgiving Day hymn sing was held in Creston Church Sunday evening November 23. These hymn-sings are sponsored by Beacon Lights.
This business of writing news has its ups and downs! I am told that the Adams Athletic Club served about 600 people at their pancake supper instead of 250. I must have counted wrong! I have a little sign hanging in my classroom which reads:

WHEN I AM RIGHT
No One Remembers
WHEN I AM WRONG
No One Forgets

Well, anyway, I'm glad the supper went over big.

Sunday, Nov. 16, the Senior Young People's society of First Church met with the Holland Society at Holland, and the Junior Young People from First met with Southeast at Adams School. Among other things there were several papers on the timely subject of "Segregation."

We owe therefore to Him that we are, that we are alive, that we understand; that we are men, that we live well...we owe to Him. Nothing is ours except the sin that we have. For what have we that we did not receive? —Augustine

(Thank you, Rev. Harbach, Lyden, Wash.)

A.R.

Waning Interest

In the past, the smallness of the Protestant Reformed Churches, which has been explored by many, has led also to various desirable characteristics. Paramount among these was the closeness experienced by the young people in the different congregations. This closeness has been consummated yearly in the Young People's Convention. A bond of fellowship and friendship has existed among Protestant Reformed Young people which could scarcely be equalled elsewhere. Especially, this was true of the relationship between congregations which were located near enough to each other to allow for frequent physical communication, although the bond also was present among all congregations as Convention Time.

There are logical reasons, of course, why it should be so that a rather unique and strong relationship of friendship should be present among our young people. In the first place, the smaller a group becomes, the better acquainted the members become with each other. This has been true in the case of our churches. The young people are able to know, and know well, practically all the members in the churches. Knowledge produces interest and interest often produces friendship. But this certainly is not the only reason. The young people must have a common ground, basic to their friendship if the friendship will ever amount to anything. Protestant Reformed Young People have this common ground in the Truth. This interest and concern of the young people became correspondingly more real, more personal; and showed fruition in their ever increasingly strong desire for fellowship with other Protestant Reformed young people.

No doubt you have noticed that past tenses were used at the beginning of this article in describing the closeness between Protestant Reformed Young People. The reason for this is simple. That closeness which once characterized our young people seems now to be disappearing. Interest and concern of our young people for common causes are disappearing. Oh, it is a gradual process, but nonetheless it is obvious. The cause of Beacon Lights does not really, vitally concern very many of our young people any more. The Conventions are regarded by many as an opportunity to obtain
for oneself as much as possible without contributing anything and by some as a gathering to be shunned without any pretense of concern at all.

But there is even a more noticeable decline of closeness among our young people in the attendance of Singspirations. This holds true for the young people in the Grand Rapids area. The policy of the Federation Board has been to hold one Singspiration per month in one of the various churches in the Grand Rapids area. At first it was noticed that there were certain congregations which were poorly represented or not at all. Now, it becomes increasingly evident that even the heretofore “faithful” societies are slackening.

Oh, don’t get me wrong. By no means am I here writing the obituary of Protestant Reformed Young People. Certainly there are young people who enjoy such gatherings, who actually anticipate Singspirations and Mass Meetings with relish. I merely wonder why, why, to be very specific, cannot a Singspiration, held only one a month, even fill up the auditorium of Creston Church. This becomes much more puzzling when one notices that almost one half of the audience is older persons. Singspirations are for old and infant, but especially for the youth and when a Singspiration held in the vicinity of surely 200 young people, once a month, on a Sunday evening fails to produce even a third of this (underestimated) population; one has the right to wonder. Wonder why! Wonder why the closeness, the bond of friendship is disappearing. The Protestant Reformed Churches haven’t become appreciably larger. Nor has it lost the basis for closeness . . . the Truth. If neither of these two possible solutions is true, can it be possible that the cause of the lack of interest and concern of Protestant Reformed Young People be in the individual? In YOU?

David Engelsma.