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A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

Light and Glory

REV. GERRIT VOS

"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." Luke 2:32

This text is part of the song of Simeon, just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Hence, we may take this expression as the truth of God.

Later, much later, Jesus called Himself the Light of the world.

Now what does this mean?

Light is in the Holy Scriptures the embodiment of all that is good, lovely, attractive, comely and sweet. I wish I could continue. But I have but small space in this meditation. You could go on and on, for God is a Light and there is no darkness at all in Him.

Darkness is the very opposite of Light. And Holy Scripture will tell us the significance of darkness. “Unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedience to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implaceable, unmerciful.” Romans 1:29-31

Light in Scripture is the very opposite of all those horrors.

And the baby Christ is the very opposite of all those horrors. His name is the Light.

Christ Jesus is the most beautiful Thing (Luke 1:35) the Lord God has ever shown to this sorry earth. Unto all eternity you will never see anything as lovely as Jesus.

And the text tells us that Jesus will be a Light to lighten the Gentiles. What may that mean?

It means, first, that Jesus will take away their darkness. Our darkness is our sin. And Jesus will take it all away. All our sin is placed upon Him, and He paid the price for all that sin on His cross.

There is a double imputation.

First, there is the imputation of sin.

Christ Himself is innocent, the very Son of God. But God imputed, that is, God placed this sin on Jesus Christ, and made Him answerable for us. We, that is, the total number of all God’s elect people, were given to Jesus. He speaks of that in John 17. And when we were given unto Jesus. He received also all our sin and guilt. So the great Innocent was made the guilty.

Second, there is the imputation of righteousness.

Christ stood as our Covenant Head before the Face of God, and paid and paid and paid. He died the eternal death which we otherwise would have to die.

And the manner of that dying of Jesus was so intense, and the motive for that dying was so Divine, so glorious, so sweet in its obedience to the Father, that He merited a great reward. And the reward is Eternal Life. And this reward is first of all for Himself, and second, for us. His reward is with Him and we will surely receive it.

And this Light that lightens the Gentiles is greater than any light which clothed Adam in Paradise. He could fall. We cannot fall again. His light was earthly, ours is heavenly. His rested in his obedience, ours rests in the Son of God. As we have born the image of the earthly, so also
we shall bear the image of the heavenly, and that is your Christ.

The Gentiles are the elect which are drawn out of all, kindreds, peoples and nations of all the world and from all the ages.

There will be a time (?) when you will see all this throng before the throne of God. They will be a beautiful spectacle, for they lightened. And that means that they shall be made as beautiful as the Son of man. You will be able to trust them implicitly: they shall be good men, true men, upright men. They bear the Image of Christ.

Moreover, Jesus Christ is also the glory of God's people Israel.

This may mean the descendants of Abraham, that is, the elect out of the Jewish race.

But is may also mean the Israel of God, that is, the people of God of all the ages, before the flood, before the calling of Abraham and after that event. It would include the whole Church of Christ of the New Dispensation also.

I am persuade that Simeon had in mind the first of these suppositions. I know, I know that we may have here the parallistic way of writing the truth in a double way, as it is found hundreds of times in Holy Scripture. And I also believe that the church of Jesus Christ from Paradise to the last hour of history is Israel, the Israel of God.

But here is my reason for thinking that Simeon had in mind the Jews as a race.

Wherever you read in the New Testament or in the Old the words Israel and Gentiles in close proximity, their distinction is maintained. But when you read the word Israel all alone by itself, it may mean the New Testament Church.

However, let us see what is said here.

Christ is the glory of Israel.

And that is true.

There is an advantage in being an elect from the Jewish race.

You see, it is very difficult for us to believe this, for we are so selfish. It is not easy to put yourself in some one else's shoes. That is a fact whether you have to do with miserable things or pleasant things. It is oh so difficult to do as Paul tells us: Weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that do rejoice. For we are thoroughly selfish creatures.

But imagine for a moment that Jesus was of Holland descent. How would we feel today? Suppose the whole or almost the whole of Holy Writ were written in the Dutch originally? Suppose Moses, Elijah, David and Paul were Dutchmen?

But they were all Jewish.

And Christ is their glory. Glory is diffusion, radiation of virtue. And that is Christ for Israel. Christ makes the Jews that are elect to stand out in glory. For how many years did the elect of God exclusively come out of the natural children of Abraham?

They are the beloved for the fathers' sakes.

EDITORIALS


The Federation Board welcomes Rev. Harbach to Beacon Lights staff and assures him of their interest in forthcoming articles.

With this issue, Beacon Lights loses the services of its Editor-in-Chief, Chuck Westra. Beacon Lights will keenly feel the loss of this capable organizer and thought-provoking writer. Some consolation can be taken in the fact that Beacon Lights' loss is the gain of our Southeast Young People's Society. Having added the leadership of this Society to an already busy schedule, Mr. Westra felt it necessary to resign from Beacon Lights.

The Federation Board and the Staff of Beacon Lights thank Mr. Westra for his past efforts and extend best wishes to him in his continued work with our young people.
Are You a fifth amendment CHRISTIAN?

C. H. WESTRA

Sometime ago one of our young people told me that he was a Fifth Amendment Christian and that this bothered him immensely. He didn’t use this particular phrase, but he did say that like many union officials recently, he refused to testify because this testimony would be embarrassing to him. This same young man continued to tell me that this reluctance to witness troubled him because it conflicted with a deep conviction that he should be both able and willing to give a definite witness of the fact that he was a Christian.

He also stated that although he felt compelled to be of some witness for Christ and His Kingdom, he could not picture himself standing on the corner singing and preaching little sermons to passersby. For this I can hardly blame him. I am convinced that standing on the corner and conducting street meetings is neither the most sincere form of witnessing nor the most effective tool God has given us for telling others of His influence in our own lives. It seems to me that the witness of a Christian conduct is a far more convincing (and often a thousand fold more difficult) just as Christ’s conduct is a guide and witness to each of us, so in a lesser degree, but yet very certainly, each of us can be a powerful witness to those who observe us.

As an example of just how much more powerful is the witnessing of a Christian conduct compared to mere verbal testimony, project yourself for a moment into the following situation: you are a farmer in a rural community and are informed that one of your neighboring farmers has suddenly been incapacitated due to illness and that his crops consequently are about to rot in the fields. Which course of action would prove the more effective witness, to visit the ill neighbor and with much wringing of hands urge him to pray for grace to accept this setback, or would it be a better witness to spend some time harvesting his crop or if this were not feasible, to ask others to help you with the harvesting of the ill neighbor’s crops?

Just one more example, isn’t it easier to gather with a few friends to sing a few hymns on the corner than to stir out of a cozy, comfortable chair on a blustery winter evening to help a neighbor push his car out of a snow drift? There is no question but both of these are witnessing, and we should never fail to take advantage of an opportunity to give fitting verbal witness, but the simple act of lending a hand to a neighbor in a predicament is doing “good unto all men” and is often of greater impact than much preaching and singing on the corner.

This concept is nothing new. The Samaritan who befriended the robbed stranger in Christ’s parable is cited as an example which we would do well to follow, while the Pharisees who make a public spectacle of their “witnessing” (long prayers, long robes, long faces) were pointed out as despicable examples of the sort of conduct we should emulate.

This does not mean that every one who feels constrained to witness on the street is insincere and therefore a hypocrite, but it does give an indication of the greater value Christ placed on Christian conduct even above that of public street preaching and praying. Notice also how frequently we read phrases like “by their fruits ye shall know them” not “by singing” or “by their speech”.

This witnessing by our conduct continues every day of our lives whether we are aware of it or not, for almost everything we do is observed by others and our (continued on page 11)
In our last article we discussed the fact that the position of common grace implies a world and life view of its own, unique in its own character and shaped and fashioned according to the foundation upon which it stands. Through the years this matter of the ability of the unsaved man to do good in the sight of God by the operation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ has served as a blue print according to which pattern a world and life view has been developed. But we noticed also that this same blueprint is the pattern for a view of the world and life which is in great danger of becoming post-millennial in its practical application to the problems of life. Facing the stern realities of life, common grace has been instrumental is bringing some to consider that the kingdom of Christ will be a kingdom realized here upon the earth in the evolution of society when the world becomes Christian in every sphere and Christ reigns over all here below.

It remains for us now to turn to a more positive development of a world and life view which is based upon the foundations and patterned after the blue print of the principles of our own churches.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

The principle of the Calvin Calvinic Reformation in distinction especially from the Reformation under Luther was the glory of God. This fundamental and undoubtedly correct principle of all the truth is also the principle that is hailed by all Calvinists as being essential to understand in order to formulate a proper world and life view. Even the proponents of common grace recognize this fact. It is important therefore to understand this principle and see how it does indeed become, if properly understood, the cornerstone upon which we can take our stand to view life and the world in its proper perspective.

God is absolutely sovereign. This sovereignty which God possesses is absolute in Him because He is God alone and the Creator of the entire universe with all its inhabitants. He is the eternal God of heaven and earth besides Whom there is no other. He is not dependent for His life and His existence upon any other creature or being. This would be inconceivable. All the creatures in heaven and on earth and in hell, all else besides God are dependent creatures. They are dependent for their life and existence, for their being and place in the creation upon the will of the almighty Lord of heaven and earth. But this cannot be true of God as if He in turn were yet dependent upon some higher being. Were it true, He would be God no longer. He is eternal. No one created Him. No one called Him into being. There is no fountain and source of His own existence outside of Himself as there is with us and with angels. He exists perfectly and eternally for no other reason than that He is God. He has the fountain and source of His life and existence within Himself. He is therefore absolutely independent.

It is this independence of God which also forms the basis for His sovereignty. A dependent creature who is dependent for his very life upon a being higher and greater than himself can never be sovereign. He is always under a continual debt and obligation to the one to whom he owes his life and existence. But this is not true of God. He owes no man anything and is indebted to no one. He is God above all most
blessed forever to Whom the hosts of heaven and earth owe their undying allegiance and love.

Thus His sovereignty is a very real fact.

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY IS HIS FREEDOM AND POWER

Because God is sovereign, He is free. He can do everything that He pleases to do without the necessity of giving account to anyone of what He does. He has the right and the privilege which He alone possesses to do all that He wills. Everything that is in harmony with His own being He can do and may do without ever explaining His actions or defending His deeds. He is the sole criterion and standard of what is right and wrong. He is the only bar of justice and truth. There is no court of appeal higher than God. What He does is well done, and no one, not even the highest angel in heaven would care to quiz Him as to the righteousness of His deeds. He stands inexorably exalted above all, far lifted up above the tribunals of men and the petty bickerings of finite creatures as to what is right and what is wrong. He is the ultimate standard of all things. He does all His good pleasure without entering into the counsels of the wise or asking their advice and consideration. It is the height of folly and sinful presumption for man to question Him in any respect. To bring God before the Bar of human reason, of human justice, of human standards is to make God a man and to exalt man to the throne of the eternal Creator of all things, the sole Judge of heaven and earth. And while man in actual fact can never do this, in his repeated attempts he becomes guilty of the most detestable and repulsive arrogance and conceit, of the most devi-

lish lies and distortions, of the ultimate expression of the lie of the devil in Paradise, “Ye shall be as God...”

But He is not only free to do what He pleases to do, He is also the divine Ruler of all. If He is Creator, and if He is free in all that He does, He is also the Ruler Who actually brings to pass all that He purposes to do. He does not create all things and leave them to the fickle hand of chance and happenstance. He does not form all things by the Word of His power and turn His works over to certain inexorable and instituted “laws of nature”. He creates all things indeed. But He rules also over all the things that He created in order that the purpose for which He created them may be realized as He personally tends to their development in time and the course of their progress upon earth until they are guided by His almighty hand to their eternal destination. He rules over all His works guiding and controlling, commanding and bringing to pass as He determined in His own counsel were the worlds were. The sun in the heavens runs its circuit in obedience to a divine command. The lion seeks after its food, because its Creator directs it through the silent paths of the forest in search of prey. The snow and the wind are guided in their trip from their source to their destination by His power. The inhabitants of the earth and heaven and of hell itself move and live and walk according to His sovereign dictates. For He sits upon the throne of the creation ruling mightily and gloriously over all His works. He is Lord and He alone.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD’S RULE

Ye He rules over all things according to His purpose. He does not rule for the mere joy of ruling. He does not guide and direct all things for the mere pleasure to be derived from holding all things in the palms of His hands. He has a purpose in it all. This purpose is the glory of His name through Jesus Christ His own Son Who entered into our flesh in order to suffer and die on the cross and rise from the tomb in Joseph’s garden for the sins and guilt of His elect people.

The point of this is that the sovereignty of God is a sovereignty which is always revealed and exercised through Jesus Christ. This is always true throughout the ages; but this is exactly realized fully when Christ is seated at the right hand of God. God rules over all things indeed. But God rules over all things through Jesus Christ His own Son. Jesus Christ is placed in glory over the whole household of God as its glorious Head, and He rules in the name of the Father and by His power over all the works of His Father’s hands.
six **WRONG** questions

and

their **WRONG** answers

REV. R. C. HARBACH

Have you ever hesitated to ask a question of your teacher or minister because you feared “revealing your ignorance,” sounding stupid, or appearing ludicrous? Because of this attitude some never show any natural inquisitiveness. Their silly pride keeps them in the same old rut of mental stagnation. Of course, the better trained we are doctrinally, the more intelligent will be the questions that press to the forefront of our minds. Therefore a Reformed young person will ask more intelligent questions than the youth of Fundamentalist persuasion. We should, however, be encouraged to give free vent to our inquiring spirit by the assurance that our patient instructors can be relied upon to furnish comprehensive, trustworthy answers.

Recently, while Evangelist Billy Graham was in Australia, he was approached by young people and asked, as he puts it, certain “penetrating questions.” One youth asked, “Is it possible to be a Christian and have fun?” The answer given was, “Yes, you can have fun. Joining hands with God can be a thrilling, exciting experience.” Now though the inquirer reveals the most superficial thinking, we do not criticise him for this. We encourage the inquiring mind, no matter how undeveloped. Yet the question itself needs doctoring. For accept a sick question and there very well may result a sick answer. Jesus often showed His inquirers how they might have better put their question. For example, the rich young ruler who queried, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Jesus indicated to him that his question should not have presupposed Jesus to have been good unless he also was convinced He was God! So this inquirer should have been taught that it is far more fundamental to ask, Is it possible to be a Christian? Then there would be an opportunity to inculcate the doctrine of total depravity, the truth that no one can become a Christian merely by deciding to be. ("Without Me ye can do nothing.") Also it should be shown that the question is self-centered, and chiefly concerned, not with being free from sin (wherein lies the being a Christian), but with having a good time, and probably, in addition, toys with the idea of being a Christian on the side while mainly enjoying the pleasures of sin. The question would be more interesting if it could mean, Can the Christian enjoy the same earthly things that others enjoy? I.e., does the Christian have earthly enjoyments in common with the wicked? The answer is, we have the enjoyment of all things in common with the wicked, except the enjoyment of grace. However, the question should have been primarily concerned with the thought, How may I as a Christian be well-pleasing unto Him? The answer actually given is worse than disappointing. It is based upon the thrill received in "holding hands."

Then a young woman enquired of Graham, “If I get religion, will it interfere with my career?” His answer was, “Assuming that you choose a legitimate career, being religious should increase your chance of success, not lessen it.” To this he appealed to the witness of John Wannamaker and J. C. Penney, at the same time warning against the impression that religion necessarily makes one materially prosperous.
We may readily understand that these questions come from the untrained and the unchurched, but the answers are calculated to pander to mere human desire, and to render the cause of Christ palatable to sophisticated tastes. The questions were, generally, presumptuous, yet were naively entertained as though they were in every respect valid. This query may justly be paraphrased, Will being a follower of Jesus interfere with following my own interests? This deserves the answer Jesus gave to a would-be follower, that even foxes have holes and birds have their nests, “but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head” (Luke 9:57). Such an answer plainly teaches that Jesus would find no place in a purely worldly career. Nevertheless the question does not come up to the level of the frame in which we have put it. It is concerned with only the acquisition of a smattering of religion. But religion never interferes with the earthly pursuit of anyone. It was not religion which interfered with Jesus’ career; not a soul in the world would have interfered with Him had He merely founded another religion alongside the world’s popular religions. It was the true religion which brought against Him interference and contradiction of sinners. Indeed, if Jesus had done no more than to foster a religion, and not as He did, to proclaim the one only true religion, He would greatly have increased His chances (?) of worldly success, and the scores of ostensible disciples never would have gone back to walk no more with Him! Christianity does not permit less than absolute allegiance to Jesus Christ. The question might better have been, If I belong to Jesus, what vocation should I enter? (“Lord, what wilt Thou?”)

There were other, similar, crassly selfish questions asked, such as, Can the Bible give me a workable philosophy of life? Won’t being converted make me unpopular with the gang? ‘I’m all for religion, but will I still get a kick out of life? Will being a Christian really bring me happiness? In answer we were informed that the Bible is the only workable philosophy; that “a truly religious way of life is almost certain to increase one’s popularity;” that finding proper kicks is “to find the music in ourselves;” and that happiness is the “built-in ability to take whatever life offers,” yet “not as an innovation of one’s own, but in a strength given of God.” Not only are the questions faulty, implying as they do the philosophy that self-love is the supreme good or the highest motive in human conduct, but the answers are not on a higher level and are identical with those which frequently appear within the context of the “theology” of Modernism. We have much more than a religiously-colored humanistic philosophy. We have the Reformed Faith (truth of Scripture), and the glad salvation of God in Christ. Because of this we are not concerned with whether we are popular with the throng, but that we belong to our faithful Saviour. And early in our Christian training we learn that the chief end of man is not the ability to inflate ourselves to a certain temporary pressure of excitement, nor to attain an ethereal and elusive happiness, but to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever. Although they are wrong questions we felt they are deserving of the right answers!

The Infallibility Question
AGATHA LUBBERS

Ever since the appearance of two controversial articles in Stromata (the Calvin Seminary periodical) many articles have appeared in periodicals and theological journals of the Christian Reformed Church concerning the infallibility of the Scriptures.

The views expressed by several students who were members of the editorial staff of Stromata were views which were upheld by some of the Calvin Seminary professors. The whole debate became very explosive when one of the graduates was at first refused candidacy in the Christian Reformed churches because he would not subscribe to the total infallency of the Scriptures. Matters were all the more
complicated by the introduction of a protest on the floor of the 1959 Synod by one of the Seminary professors against the stand of part of the faculty of the Seminary concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures. The Synod also met in closed session to discuss several communications from students and professors concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures and because of these "secret" sessions there is much misgiving and distrust of the Seminary among members in the Christian Reformed Church. (see "Was the Synod Inconsistent", Torch and Trumpet, Vol. IX, No. 5, Oct. 1959.)

In the '59 October issues of both Torch and Trumpet and the Reformed Journal the question of the infallibility of the Scriptures is explored and discussed. Marten Woudstra, professor of Old Testament at Calvin Seminary, writes "Infallibility Explored," in the Torch and Trumpet; and Rev. Andrew Bandstra, Instructor in Bible, Calvin College, writes "Infallible in What It Intends To Teach" in the Reformed Journal.

The undersigned having read both of these articles finds that the scholarly article written by Prof. Woudstra is founded more definitively upon traditional concepts and creedal affirmations. He is to be commended for his scholarly approach and his confessional integrity. Rev. Bandstra's implies what seems to me to be a more medial position. He tries to reach a midpoint of two extremes in his discussion of the problem. If you read these articles and I think you should, I believe you will find that Rev. Bandstra presents extreme positions that have been held concerning infallibility and then disproves these to show, it seems to me, that we have here a problem which allows for discussion because of many misconceptions concerning infallibility.

I submit that even the caption of Rev. Bandstra's article, "Infallible in What it Intends to Teach", implies that in some things the Scriptures are not the infallible Word of God; i.e. in the things that it does not intend to teach. It would seem to me that Rev. Bandstra necessarily would have to hold that there are certain things in the Bible which are not the infallible Word of God.

May I suggest, however, that you read the two articles commented upon and form your own conclusions concerning this very timely discussion.

The Covenant... The basis for Christian Schools?

The October Issues of the Reformed Journal and the Torch and Trumpet also contain articles concerning the basic reasons for Christian education and Christian schools.


These articles appear simultaneously in two different periodicals and express two opposing points of view concerning the subject of the covenant of grace as a basis and a warrant for Christian Schools. Rev. Koops takes the position that the covenant is not the basis for Christian schools or for Christian education. Rev. Heerema takes the opposite position and paraphrases the position of Rev. Koops as follows:

The main thrust of this assault (of Koops, A.L.) is that our schools should be based on educational principles and not theological ones.

Rev. Koops in his article in the Reformed Journal first defines and states what has traditionally been believed to be the Covenant of Grace in the Christian Reformed Church. He then distinguishes between the Covenant of Grace and parental responsibility. Rev. Koops believes that the doctrine of the covenant is the basis for evangelism but that it is not the basis for Christian education. He believes that the basis for Christian education is the "doctrine of parental responsibility." We quote Rev. Koops as follows:

Let us build our program of evangelism, rather than our program of education, upon the doctrine of the covenant. For the doctrine of the covenant belongs to theology, and not to education. This doctrine is a
foundation for a church, not for a school. A theory of education must be built upon the doctrine of man rather than upon the doctrine of salvation. For the Christian this doctrine of man will be doctrine of the saved man, the Christian man. But salvation leaves man a man. A Christian theory of education finds its roots in Christian anthropology rather than Christian soteriology. And in anthropology we find the doctrine we have often confused with the doctrine of the covenant. Here we find the doctrine of responsibility, particularly parental responsibility. (I underscore, A.L.)

Now parental responsibility as such, it seems to me, does not require a separate school system. Parental responsibility only insists that parents are responsible for the education of their children, but it does not declare how they are to meet this responsibility. Perhaps they will so this through a class in their home; perhaps they will hire a tutor. They may cooperate with other parents and construct a school building and hire a schoolteacher. Perhaps they will send their children to a school operated by other individuals, or by the state. Parental responsibility states only that the parents are responsible for the education of their children. (I underscore, A.L.)

Rev. Heerema in his article in the Torch and Trumpet takes quite the opposite position as he writes against the views of Rev. Koops and Donald Oppewal who has written previously in the Reformed Journal on this very same subject. Rev. Heerema takes exception to Rev. Koops distinction that there should be educational reasons for the existence of Christian Schools and not theological reasons. Rev. Heerema writes as follows:

The very genius of our Calvinistic way of life has been that our basic religious and theological principles are regarded as permeating our entire life. And this is the very genius of our Christian Schools. It is not the addition of Bible reading and prayer that makes our schools Christian, we have always insisted, but rather the infusion of every subject with the principles of our faith... As a Christian of Reformed persuasion the educator in our schools could do nothing other than base his "educational creeds" on Reformed statements of faith.

Rev. Heerema very boldly brands this position of Koops and Oppewal as being secular.

The serious element in this either-or between theology and education is that this is in essence the spirit of secularism that we have all decried in modern life and education. Secularism is that spirit, that attitude toward life in which God and our religious faith become more and more irrelevant. It seems inescapable that the distinctions made by both Koops and Oppewal play right into the hands of the secularist. Yes, it is a refined secularism but secularism nonetheless.

Rev. Heerema takes the very strong position that:

...our theological creeds may not be pushed back into a place where they are regarded as solely the stock-in-trade of the organized church and the seminary classroom. To do this is to betray a first demand of our rich heritage, namely, that our beliefs, our theology, shall furnish the life-blood of meaning and direction to all of life, also to the educational endeavor. Have we permitted the impression to grow among us that theology and creed are terms that speak more of sterile dogma than of pregnant, living truth? Can it be that we have failed to keep faith with our splendid heritage by failing to give vivid articulation to our basic beliefs in all significant areas of life and interest, also education? Such failure can further the growth of the refined kind of secularism herein called to judgment.

Rev. Heerema states that he is afraid that the educational enterprise will "lose its way in the wastelands of humanism and pragmatism" if the position of Koops is followed.

We anticipate the conclusion of Rev. Heerema's argument in the next issue of the Torch and Trumpet. In the next issue of Beacon Lights we shall attempt to make some pertinent comments concerning
this discussion in Torch and Trumpet and the Reformed Journal.

We should be aware of this debate in the Christian Reformed Churches, it seems to me. There is an element in these churches that believes that the Christian school movement should be abandoned entirely so that Christian teachers may have a more prominent and decided impact on the modern world by teaching in the public schools. This view is particularly prevalent on the West Coast among the followers of Dr. James Daane.

Possibly a discussion could be conducted in Beacon Lights concerning the reasons for Protestant Reformed Christian Education on both the elementary and secondary level.

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**THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BODY**

JOHN PETERS, M.D. *

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" So wrote Paul to the Corinthian church. In this day of ever-present temptation it is well that we ask ourselves this question. Many of us tend to take our physical being for granted. Few of us realize what an amazingly intricate and complex group of systems comprise the physical aspect of our being. Man with all his rapidly progressing knowledge will never approach the efficient complexity of the human body. Consider the fact that in one-twenty-fifth of a drop of your blood are contained five million red blood cells. This means that if you weigh about 150 pounds, you have thirty-three million million red blood cells circulating through your body at this moment. Laid side by side, they would cover more than three-fifths of a modern football field, or if laid end to end, they would circle the earth more than four times. Man will never fashion a pump as efficient or durable as your heart, an organ the size of your fist. It beats thirty-six million times a year or two and a half million million times in an average lifetime. It pumps seventy-five gallons of blood per hour while you are resting, or as one scientist so practically put it, "it pumps enough blood to fill an average gasoline tank four times an hour just to keep the machinery of the body idling." During strenuous exercise, such as playing tennis, your heart will pump eight time more blood or more than fourteen barrels an hour. In your lifetime, your heart will pump eighteen million million barrels or eight hundred forty million million pounds of blood.

Then contemplate the fact that the vessels which carry this blood to each of the many million cells in your body, if made into a single tube, would stretch more than sixty thousand miles. Or have you ever thought of the startling fact that your brain alone contains twelve thousand million nerve cells, or that the nerves in your body placed end to end could be wound around the earth more than fifteen times? And one could go on and on and present many more such facts. How anyone, when confronted with evidence such as this, still says that there is no God and that all this is due to chance alone, is almost beyond comprehension. But to us, we as Christians, these facts do but strengthen our belief in Him and cause us to sit back and reflect in awe his almighty power and omniscience. We can say with David, "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." This, coupled with the much more important fact that our bodies are the temple of God, that He, in His Spirit dwells within us, should make us treat our bodies with great rever-
ence. The famous American poet who said, "If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred," was obviously not a Christian and his emphasis was grossly misplaced. But he does have a point. Our bodies are sacred and are to be treated with wonder and respect. We must remember that when we abuse our bodies or put them to some sinful use we are not just hurting ourselves, but also, and this is much more serious, we are literally tearing down the walls of one of God's sacred dwellings. Our bodies, even in their fallen and sinful state, are living examples of the awesome majesty of our Creator. Furthermore, each of us is blessed with certain talents or abilities. It is just as much a wrong to allow our know talents to lie unused as to misuse them. Our prime, in fact, our only purpose in life is to glorify God. As Paul said, "...ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Many of us tend to conveniently forget this most of the time in order to serve our own evil purposes. This is becoming more and more of a problem in these modern fast-moving days when ever more efficient transportation and communication place more temptations within our reach.

I am not necessarily of the opinion that people as individuals, and we in particular as Christians, are sinning more these days, but only in a greater variety of ways. This does not mean that we may not take advantage of many of the material gifts God has undoubtedly placed here on earth for our use, but only that as these gifts become more and more corrupted by the people of the world we must ever more be on our guard to be able to discriminate between what is a gift of God and what is not. It is a great comfort and at the same time a challenge to know that we are not our own, but our lives are under the ever-present control of our God. This, of course, does not allow us to sit back and relax. Paul's words to the Christians of Rome almost two thousand years ago are as timely now as they were then, "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

* Dr. Peters is a graduate of Calvin College and Northwestern University. At present he is serving his internship at Blodgett Memorial Hospital. Now a member of First Protestant Reformed Church, Dr. Peters hails originally from California.

ARE YOU A 5TH AMENDMENT CHRISTIAN

(continued from page 3)

actions are either a positive or negative witness for or against the Christian community. As Christian young people, there are many areas of conduct each day that could serve as positive witnessing, but due to their frequency are often overlooked.

For example: a few minutes after the young people's society has adjourned, a car speeds out of the church driveway spewing gravel in all directions. It reaches the street and with the squeal of tortured tires and the thunder of twin exhaust pipes it races away into the night. A fine Christian witness! The neighbors in the area must certainly be impressed with the high standards of Christian behaviour taught in this church! In the same vein, what kind of witness are we when we cheat during an exam in school? Or engage in petty (and sometimes not so petty) vandalism in youthful exuberance after a victorious basketball game?

Okay, so you want to be a witness. That's fine and an indication of a healthy Christian attitude, but let's not lose sight of the trees for the forest. Only when our behaviour is itself a witness will any other witnessing become meaningful.

NOTICE

Due to the change in editorship of BEACON LIGHTS all material for publication should now be addressed to the new editor, Mr. David Englesia, 1310 Kenowa, S. W., Grand Rapids 4, Michigan.
Outlines on the Book of REVELATION

by REV. H. HOEKSEMA

The Bible Outlines for the coming year have been supplied by Rev. Herman Hoeksema. These outlines were written in 1944, and distributed by Rev. Hoeksema to his congregation in connection with a series of sermons he preached on REVELATION.

These outlines are more concise than those now appearing in The Standard Bearer and thus leave more room for societal discussion. The series in The Standard Bearer will certainly make excellent reference material if more information on certain passages is sought.

LESSON I (Revelation 1:1-3): The Superscription

1. These verses inform us: a. About the character and the contents of the book of Revelation; b. About the way in which this revelation was given to us; c. About the blessedness of receiving this revelation and keeping it.

2. Vs. 1: “The revelation of Jesus Christ.” The word revelation (apokalupsis) signifies the act of exposing, laying bare, uncovering that which is hid from view. Scriptural revelation exposes the mysteries of the kingdom of God. These are things “which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, neither have arisen in the heart of man”. The phrase “revelation of Jesus Christ” may mean: (1) The revelation of which Christ is the author, or (2) The revelation of which Christ is the object, that reveals Christ. The first is the common interpretation. We prefer the second. Grounds: (1) This is the meaning of the phrase in other parts of the Bible; 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7. For similar phrases see Rom. 2:5 (the revelation of the righteous judgment of God); Rom. 8:19 (the manifestation or revelation of the sons of God).

(2) Not Christ, but God is the Author of all revelation; this is even the case here: God gave it to Christ. (3) In the book of Revelation we do, indeed, have a revelation of Christ as He is coming throughout this dispensation; through the things that “must shortly come to pass,” in His final advent in glory.

Note: For a correct interpretation of the book of Revelation it is of the highest importance that we bear constantly in mind that the book means to be a revelation of Jesus Christ. It does not purpose to satisfy our curiosity by making us know beforehand just what will happen in this world; but it would have us view all things in the light of the coming of Christ; in the light of the revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

The article “the” does not occur with
"revelation" in the original. This does not make the phrase indefinite, however, so that it should be translated: "a revelation of Jesus Christ". "The revelation of Jesus Christ" is correct. (Robinson's Grammar, pp. 780, 793).

"Which God gave unto Him". God is the Author of all revelation. Even Christ as Mediator, in His human nature, receives it from Him. With Him this receiving of God's revelation is direct and immediate by virtue of the personal union of His human nature with the divine. See also John 5:19, 20; 7:16; 8:28.

"To shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass". This denotes the purpose for which this revelation was given to Christ. "His servants" are here Christ's servants, and refers to all the saints in general, 1 Peter 2:16; Rev. 2:20; 7:3; 19:2; 22:3. "Shortly" means quickly, swiftly: the Lord is coming quickly. The things must come to pass, because they are determined by God's counsel. Their end, therefore, is the glorious kingdom of our Lord. This cannot fail.

"And he sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John". Angels are often the media of revelation: Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Rev. 22:6. The word "signified" like "to shew" refers to the form in which this revelation was given, the form of signs, visions. Who John is we are not told. Some believe that it was the apostle; others deny this. Again, some believe that this book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem; others that it was written about 95 A.D. We believe the latter, and that it was the apostle John who wrote it. We do not consider the question important.

Vs. 2: This may refer to the office and work of John as an apostle, in general. Better it is to understand it as referring to the "word of God" and the "the testimony of Jesus" in this book. The things "he saw" are the things that were shown him. Of these John bare record by writing what he saw. When he wrote this book cannot be determined.

Vs. 3: "He that readeth (singular) refers to the public reader in the church; "they that hear" (plural) to the listening congregation. To keep is not merely to keep "in heart"; but also to obey. The blessedness is ultimately that of the kingdom of glory; but it also refers to the blessedness of the comfort of hope in this present time for those that in the midst of the tribulation of this present time hear and keep the words of this prophecy.

LESSON II (Revelation 1:4-8): Dedication and Greeting

1. In this section we have: 1. A salutation or blessing vss. 4, 5a.

2. A doxology to Christ. vss. 5b, 6:3. A solemn assurance of Christ's coming. vss. 7, 8.

II. Vss. 4, 5a. 1. The book is addressed to the "seven churches that are in Asia". More about these later.

2. The contents of the blessing: "grace and peace": a. Grace is the source and implication of all spiritual blessings, also of peace. b. Peace is peace with God in Christ and, therefore, with all things in the midst of this present world of trouble and tribulation.

3. The Author of the blessing: a. "Him who is and who was and who is to come". See also vs. 8. (1) Refers to the Triune God. (2) Reference seems to be to the name Jehovah: (a) He Is. This stands on the foreground, meaning: The Uncaused, Self-existent, Eternal, Immutable One. (b) He was and is coming: as God Revealed and, therefore, with relation to the world and its history, He was (in creation, in Christ) and is coming until that revelation shall be complete in the eternal kingdom and covenant. God is coming! Always coming until He shall be with us forever in His tabernacle. He is coming in Christ,
the One that Is and Was, and Whose promises shall never fail b. The seven Spirits that are before His throne: (1) The Holy Spirit (grace and peace come from Him). (2) However, as the Spirit of Christ, sent into the church (before, not on the throne; seven churches, seven candlesticks), and in His sevenfold fulness of covenant-grace. c. Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, Who is: (1) The faithful witness. He is such in general according to His prophetic office, bearing testimony to the truth of God; He is this still as He was such when He was on earth; He is such with a view to the contents of this book. Faithful, because nothing can persuade Him to speak less or more than what He receives of the Father. (2) The first begotten of the dead. Not only is He the first who arose from death into life (all other resurrections were from death into death); but He opened the womb of death, preparing the way for all His brethren. (3) Prince of the kings of the earth. The kings of the earth are especially the powers of the world that set themselves against Him and His cause. Christ rules over them by His power, so that they can only serve His purpose.

Note. Not three sources or authors of grace and peace are meant, but only one source: God, through Christ, in the Spirit. Note, too, that the terms of this benediction are purposely chosen in harmony with the contents of the book. Nothing can prevent "the revelation of Jesus Christ!"

III. Vss. 5b, 6. A doxology or ascription of praise by the Church ("us"):

1. To Christ: (1) Who loved (R. V. "loveth") us, a love that is supremely manifested in His death on the cross. (2) Who washed (or "loosed", R. V.) us from our sins in His own blood. His death is atoning. He himself applies this atoning death to us through faith, so that we are delivered from both the guilt and the dominion of sin. (3) Who made us to be kings (or: a kingdom, R. V.) and priests unto God and His Father (better: unto His God and Father, R. V.). Believers are a royal priesthood, or a priestly kingdom, consecrated to God. The priesthood (consecration, service) cannot be separated from the kingship (rule over all things). The Servant of the Lord alone must be king under God!

2. The Church ascribes glory and dominion forever, i.e. confesses that He is glorious, that He has dominion, that this will be forever.

IV. Vss. 7, 8. A solemn assurance of His coming:

1. Solemn: "Behold"; and "even so, Amen" (it shall surely be!)

2. He will come: a. For judgment (with the clouds, symbol of judgment.) b. Visible to all, friend and foe (every eye, they that pierced Him, first of all the hostile Jews, but also they that "crucified Him afresh"; and all the tribes of the earth). c. And they shall mourn "towards" Him, i.e. all the hostile world, not in repentance, but in terror.

3. Corroborated by God, vs. 8: a. The Alpha and Omega (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), out of Whom and unto Whom are all things, b. And Who is the Almighty as well as the Eternal. He never fails!

**LESSON III (Revelation 1:9-20): The Vision of the Candlesticks**

How entirely proper that the first vision of this "Revelation of Jesus Christ" should be this vision of The Glorified Christ in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks! Note that it contains the following elements:

1. A description of the circumstances under which the vision was received; vss. 9, 10a. John writes of himself, vs. 9: (1) That he is a brother (in Christ, born like all the brethren from above) and companion (one that has fellowship of the believers. This fellowship is described as threefold; they share alike the tribulation, the kingdom, and the patience of Jesus Christ (R. V. in Jesus). Note here (a) That the Church is presented as in tribulation. (b) That all three: tribulation,
kingdom, patience, are fundamentally Christ’s. All are the believer’s only in Christ. (c) That kingdom is placed between tribulation and patience. For the sake of the kingdom believers suffer tribulation; and in the hope of the kingdom they can be patient. (2) That he was on the isle called Patmos, (a small, rocky island, not far from the coast of Asia Minor) for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus, i.e. (a) Not to preach it; (b) Nor to receive this revelation; (c) But because he had been a faithful witness. Banishment, persecution, perhaps, under Domitian. (3) That he was in the spirit on the Lord’s Day. The Lord’s Day is here the day of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week. “In the spirit” means in a state of spiritual ecstasy, necessary to receive visions.

2. A commission to John to write; vss. 10b, 11, 19: The commission comes to John by “a great voice, as of a trumpet”, strong and clear, which John heard behind him, and which introduces the speaker as “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last”. For the meaning of this last expression see under vs. 8. Here, however, Christ is thus designated, while in vs. 8 it was God. See also Col. 1:15-20. And the commission is: (1) vs. 11. That he must write in a book what he sees, i.e. not only this vision but also subsequent ones. (2) This is further defined in vs. 19 as “the things which thou hast seen” (this vision); “the things which are” (not merely the letters to the seven churches, but all present things); and “the things which shall be hereafter” (i.e. from John’s time till the end). (3) That he must send the book to the seven churches in Asia. Concerning these churches we note: (a) That they were actually existing churches in Asia Minor. (b) That they are mentioned here according to their geographical order: from Ephesus north to Pergamum, thence south to Laodicea. (c) That there were other churches in Asia, but these are mentioned because seven denotes the fulness of God’s covenant, and the conditions of these churches were such that they could best represent the church of all ages.

3. A description of Christ in the midst of the candlesticks, vss. 12-16. Vs. 12: “to see the voice” is to see the speaker. The candlesticks are seen first. They are (1) The seven churches” of Asia; of all time, the Church in it fulness. See vs. 20. (2) Symbolic representation of the Church as bearing the light of life in Christ. Christ is in the midst of them; without Him they are nothing. (3) Not in one line, but in a circle (church universal, not one nation); and not connected: their union is spiritual in Christ. Then the glorified Christ is seen as follows: (1) “One like unto the Son of man”, i.e. Christ according to His human nature as He is ordained to inherit the Messianic glory. See Dan. 7:13. (2) His long robe, vs. 13, is the priestly robe. The girdle is there, but the robe is not girded up, hangs down to the foot. The priest is ready for service, but not for sacrifice, it is finished. (3) White hair. Like the Ancient of days in Dan. 7:9. Divinity, eternity, vs. 14. (4) Flaming eyes, penetration, judgment, holy wrath, vs. 14. (5) His feet like white, burning, fiery brass: ready to tread down the enemies, vs. 15. (6) His voice like the sound of many waters: power and majesty, vs. 15. (7) Stars in His right hand: the pastors, see vs. 20. (8) Twoedged sword from His mouth, His mighty Word, judgment. (9) Countenance like the sun, glory and majesty, vs. 16.

4. A word of comfort, vss. 17, 18: (1) John is terrified by so much glory and majesty. (2) But Christ lays His right hand upon the prostrate form and comforts him and us. There is no reason to fear (a) He is the first and last (vss. 8, 11; (b) The one that lived through death, lives forever. (c) Has power (keys) over hell, Hades, the abode of the dead; and over Death itself. Fear not!

QUOTE FROM LUTHER

“When Moses writes that God has created heaven and earth and what therein is in six days, keep it at that; that it was six days, and that you must not find a gloss explaining how six days were one day. If, however, you cannot understand how it were six days, then pay tribute to the Holy Ghost that He is more learned than you are.” (WEIMAR AUSBAGE 12, p. 440)
Concerning Alice, the bulletin of First Church reports: “Miss A. Reitsma is looking forward to the time of her deliverance to be with the Lord.”

We have been informed that two of our ministers have accepted calls. Rev. G. Lanting will be the new pastor of our Holland congregation and Rev. John Heys of our South Holland congregation. May the Lord’s blessing rest upon these decisions.

Hope School’s ninth grade sponsored a Rummage Sale on October 28th, and Adams St. School’s Mothers’ Club held a Rummage Sale on November 10th and 11th. The Mothers’ Club also sponsored a “Koffee Kletz” on October 28th. A pancake supper sponsored by the Athletic Association was held on November 7th. These are activities in which most of us are able to take part, and a small amount of effort on our part can give our schools a nice lift!

The bulletin of First Church announces the marriage of William Oomkes and Ardith De Vries on October 22nd. Oak Lawn announces the marriage of Martin De Vries and Emma Rutgers on October 30th. We wish both couples God’s blessing on the new life which lies ahead of them.

A Fish Supper is scheduled for December 11th at Adams St. School. This is a project of the “senior” (ninth grade) class.

From Loveland we hear that a Singspiration was held on October 18th after the evening service, sponsored by their Young People’s Society. The program included special numbers by the young people, Psalter numbers, and a few German Psalms. We wonder if Rev. and Mrs. Kuiper sang along in Dutch (?).

The Hope Male Octet is planning a sacred concert at Hope Church on November 22nd. The collection will be donated to the Protestant Reformed Christian High School movement.

While Rev. A. Mulder filled classical appointments, the Kalamazoo pulpit was occupied by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, Student J. Kortering, and Rev. C. Hanko. These “available” ministers have certainly been keeping busy during the past weeks.

Hope Church has received membership papers of two of our young people: Roger Harbin from Holland and Delaine Huber from Loveland. Audrey Klaver transferred from First Church to Oak Lawn. Kalamazoo Church accepted the papers of Mrs. John Triezenberg, Jr. from the Christian Reformed Church.

Rev. G. Lubbers has received the call from our Edgerton congregation.

We have just received word that Rev. B. Woudenberg will spend the first three weeks of December in South Dakota preaching for the congregations of Forbes and Isabel. Mrs. Woudenberg will accompany him.

**QUOTE FROM LUTHER**

“When you hear people, who are so entirely blind and obdurate that they deny that it is God’s Word that the apostles have said and written, or doubt it, just keep silent; do not speak with them with a single word and let them go.” (WEIMAR AUSSGABE 12, p. 362)
Season Greetings

From the Staff of Beacon Lights