February 1960

Classical Music in Grade School
MISS H. KUIPER

Who Shall Separate Us?
REV. R. VELDMAN

Christian Liberty
REV. G. VAN BAREN
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In This Issue

THE RELATION OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY TO YOUNG PEOPLE
Rev. G. Van Baren

EDITORIAL – A MATTER OF STANDARD
David Engelsma

BEACON LIGHTS 1941-1959
Rev. C. Hanka

A LETTER TO A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER ABOUT CONDITIONAL “THEOLOGY”
Rev. R. C. Harbach

WHO SHALL SEPARATE US?
Rev. R. Veldman

A PROTESTANT REFORMED WORLD AND LIFE VIEW
Rev. H. Hanka

TEACHING CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Hulda Kuiper

OUTLINES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 2:18-29)
The Church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)
The Church in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)
Rev. H. Hoeksema

THE COVENANT: THE BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?
Agatha Lubbers

NEWS, FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES
Mrs. C. H. Westra
What can young people do? What may they not do? Young people, members of the Church either by confession or baptism, must face these questions very often in the midst of this world. And, almost needlessly to say, their parents face the same questions.

The question seems most often involved with the matter of entertainment; however, it is certainly not limited to this. Because of the very problems involved, the answer may seem to be that a list of rules and regulations be drawn up to govern in these things. Yet such has not been done — and for very good reason. Because we walk in liberty, Christian liberty, we don't need all kinds of rules to govern us.

If Christian liberty is the answer to the questions that our young people face, we must be sure that we understand it in a proper way. Christian liberty is far removed from the general idea of liberty in our day. Liberty in our day and in our country is understood to be the power of free choice. One may do as he pleases without any interference by those in authority. So one has the freedom to worship or not to worship God. One has the freedom to curse or not to curse the name of God. And we boast that we live in such a free country that we have this liberty.

That idea of liberty is often understood to be the idea of Christian liberty as well. According to this interpretation of Christian liberty, the child of God no longer need keep the law of God, but he can walk in whatever way he please. Christ has fulfilled the law; He has paid for all our transgressions. Now I can do whatsoever I please. Although we may not be so bold as to maintain this in so many words, the fact is that often this is the way in which we would act.

Christian liberty is the complete freedom to obey God and His Word in all that we do. All that opposes God is the opposite of liberty — it is the bondage of sin and death. This liberty we have now principally in Christ. He has removed our transgressions and has made us holy before God. From the heart, though we have but a small beginning, we would worship and praise God. That liberty shall be perfectly ours in glory. There we shall praise our God in both body and soul without sin. We shall perfectly obey Him — that is the glorious liberty of the child of God.

Now, as we live on this earth, we are not bound by all kinds of laws and regulations. In the Old Testament that was different. Then the children of Israel had laws concerning what they might eat, what they might wear, how they had to perform sacrifice. They were under these many laws and had to obey them. But Christ was the fulfillment of these laws. We, therefore, are no longer under all of those regulations for our life.

However, that does not mean that now we do not have to obey the law of God. The fact is that even in heaven we shall have the Word and law of God. It is true that we do not, and can not, obey the law of God in order to receive life. The command of God in the Old Testament: "Do this and live," revealed clearly to spiritual Israel, and us, that we can not obtain life through that law. Christ also obeyed that law perfectly for us. In Him we do live in harmony with the just requirements of God. And having life in Christ, we have the spiritual desire and will to obey God's law in love. That is Christian liberty — because we live in Christ, therefore we have the freedom to
obey the law of God. In-so-far as we now obey the Word of God, we walk in Christian liberty.

And Christian liberty does not only apply to the older members within the church. God's promise is to the spiritual parents and their covenant seed. It is not true, as is often alleged, that young people before they make confession of faith can do anything that they please. That after confession of faith then they must also walk in this perfect law of liberty. Within the covenant God has established with the Church of Jesus Christ, that is not correct. The spiritual seed are in Jesus Christ, and therefore also must walk according to the law of liberty in Him.

How must this Christian liberty be a guide to you as young people? Remember first of all, according to this liberty you are not free to sin as you please. If you indeed walk in true liberty, you can not simply neglect the Word of God, and instruction in the Word of God. To neglect that is not walking in liberty, but in bondage. To ignore the study of God's Word in societies, to neglect catechism in attendance or preparation, is not liberty at all; that is bondage. True liberty is the desire of the child of God, whether he be young or old, to know intellectually and spiritually the revelation of God in Christ. It is the spiritual desire to walk according to that revelation of God no matter what the consequences for the flesh.

This same truth ought to guide us in the midst of this sinful world. There are many things which confront especially young people. The world has much entertainment to offer. That is offered not only in the theaters and shows of the land, but is equally presented upon television and on radio. And what must the young people do? How must they use their spare time? Again let it be said, we need not a long list of rules and regulations. The Spirit of Christ guides us. According to the liberty which is ours in Christ, the answer to these questions ought not to be difficult. Whatever we do, we shall do according to the Word of God. That probably means that many things we now do according to our flesh, we could do no more. For the law of liberty does not give us the right to do as we please, but in Christ it gives us the right and privilege to do as God pleases.

To walk according to Christian liberty surely requires then a knowledge of the Word of God. By the Spirit of Christ we desire to walk according to the Word of God. Then we must diligently study it also as young people. It is our guide in the liberty we possess in Christ.

If we as children of God, and young people, indeed walk in such liberty, it will not be said of us that we are seen in evil places, that we may corrupt things, that we care not for the Word of God nor the study of that Word. Rather, we too will be seen as pilgrims and strangers who look for that time in which we shall live in perfect liberty forever. And until then, by grace we shall even now walk principly in that same law of liberty.

NEXT MONTH LOOK FOR

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN EDUCATION
STIGMATA AND STIGMATIZATION
SUICIDE
A CATHOLIC PRESIDENT?
A Matter of Standard

It is an impossibility to play any game without knowledge of the rules. After the rules are known it is folly for one to play the game without adhering to given rules. So too, it is impossible for anyone to go through the experience called Life without any rules. The situations and circumstances which confront a person are often extremely complex and paradoxical. Yet they all demand from the same person a response. Everyone must adopt a standard by which he judges how he is to react to Life. There is a standard, typified by Ernest Hemingway's facing Life, especially its bitter aspects, with one's chin up, ready to meet its cruel attacks without flinching, never compromising the dignity of man. There is another standard which advocates enduring hard knocks as best one can but which urges one to get as much pleasure and enjoyment out of this life as possible. The most prevalent modern standard is that of doing everything with one eye cocked on the "good of humanity." Do all for the glory of humanity.

Christian young people adopt standards for Life also. Here lies the entire issue, for by virtue of the name Christian is implied reliance upon The Standard, in conjunction with which all other standards are seen to be rebellions. There may not be standards (in the plural) for life, and the fact that men do adopt standards does not negate their subjection to the only rightful One. Continually, the Almighty God reveals to man one measure with which every deed and every speech must be judged. This mighty measure has been mouthed by so many that it is now expressed in a tired, old cliche, the glory of God. But its tiredness is due only to the meaningless way in which men have verbally tacked it on to empty statements. This Standard has infinite depth and power; and its power, brought to bear on all other standards, shows in glaring contrast their hideous worthlessness. The "dignity of man" and the "good for humanity" are rebellions, but they are pathetic rebellions. Then to say that Christian young people adopt standards for their lives is to speak in contradictions. To speak of Christian young people is to speak of young people who are committed to The Standard. To them, the glory of God is a living, potent force. It is exclusive, that is, it allows no companion standards. Possessors of The Standard are possessed by The Standard. Now it may be that what the majority of men hold as their goals is included under the Christian's, yet the common standards never exist as co-equal with The Glory of God. A Christian seeks pleasure, but not as an end in itself. A Christian deals with men in a manner that results in their good but only as such dealing follows from the principle of the glory of God.

The Proposer of all other standards is in a favorable position today. He has no trouble in getting his children to accept his standards, and because the lines between his children and God's children are so hazy (there is no persecution to delinate them), Satan feverishly waves his standards before God's children.

And Christian young people adopt standards for life.

Of course, Satan hides the either-orness of choosing a guiding principle. That one lives by God's Standard or by a God-less standard is minimized by the Salesman as he presents to Christian young people a great stock of possibilities. Won't you take Pleasure? Or perhaps Fame? The merchandise is alluring, but remember the price. The price is high. The price is The Glory of God.

The first step in Satan's procedure is to get their attention. Necessarily, their eyes must be turned from God before they can mull over Satan's warehouse of Guides for Life. There has to be boredom stimulated in young people's society. Criticism
must be aroused against the always susceptible minister. The Bible has to be shown to be unintellectual and sissified for young people. Then the standards of the Deceiver can be appreciated. Pleasure and enjoyment become the criteria; one must have a good time you know. The consciousness of God’s complete ownership over life itself disappears, and young people begin choosing vocations where the most money and the most prestige reside. They are made to feel that their lives are their own and that they must do the best for themselves. Teaching in Christian schools should be avoided since incompatible with high finances, but if chosen for a vocation, it is chosen because of the high prestige value within the Christian community.

However, God’s demand upon the life that for some amazing reason He has given you is not satisfied with pat answers. If His demand upon your life is that you teach in a Christian school, His demand also includes that you do it for His glory, not your glory. The fact of being a good member within a church or a member with a good church, as such means nothing. Certainly, compliance with The Standard demands both, but only as ablaze with the glory of God. His Rule for our life knows no holidays. There is no New Year’s Eve that permits discarding His Rule and putting on Satan’s of pleasure in drunken revelry. Such a thing as claiming exemption from “doing all to the glory of God” until one becomes twenty-one or thirty is impossible. The Standard of God is absolute; it is relevant to every person at every age in every situation. Yet only by a few is it admitted and only by a few is it grasped with a grasp of love.

For you see, to speak to a Christian of The Standard being only a duty or obligation is to present but a part of the total picture. Eating and drinking are duties but whoever concentrates on that aspect alone does injustice to the complete view of eating and drinking. To victims of the Deceiver, The Standard is an obligation and a real one. For those, in whom God has imbedded His Standard, the duty is one of desire and love. The glory of God is the measure of all they do because they want it to be. Their eyes have been made capable of seeing that only this guide solves all problems. In the very presence of death, where every God-less assurance is laid bare in its puniness, the Christian’s confession has a confident ring.

Inevitably, there will be a distinctiveness about Christians. The Christian young person, although no beatnik, will be a non-conformist. The things he will not do and the reason why he does what he does, mark off a Christian young person as clearly as a snowball in a coal bin. C. S. Lewis in his symbolic novel, Perelandra, tells about spiritual beings who, having come to earth, were conspicuous in that they were not “straight up and down.” They walked at an angle as if the earth’s center of gravity were not their center of gravity. They were drawn by a heavenly “gravity.”

In some such way the Christian’s walk in life must be. It must be apparent to all the world that the Christian is not “walking straight” but is walking at that true angle determined by God’s gravity.

d.e.

The February issue begins the nineteenth volume of Beacon Lights. Naturally, it reflects upon the past history of this youth magazine at such a juncture. Beacon Lights has had an eventful and occasionally stormy past. It has gained the firm support of Protestant Reformed adults and young people alike and this support the Federation Board and staff of Beacon Lights pledge to maintain by continued interesting, pertinent, God directive contents.

For his thoughts on Beacon Lights in 1960, we have called upon Rev. C. Hanko, one of the originators and first editor of the publication in 1941.

Appearing frequently in future Beacon Lights will be a section called “In Our Opinion.” In this section the young people’s societies will be given opportunity to express themselves on various relevant issues of the day. Already Southeast Society has discussed the hymn question, and in March we plan to have an article by Redlands Society on the topic, “Voting for a Roman Catholic for President.” Each article will be indicative of the feeling or feelings of the individual society alone.
Today we may well say, "What hath God wrought?"

Just 18 years ago, Beacon Lights made its first appearance among our Protestant Reformed youth.

There had been talk of a young people's magazine for some time. A paper, known as the CHURCH NEWS, included a special column for young people, but the limited space was by no means sufficient to fill the needs of the youth of our churches. Our various societies felt the need for Bible outlines, wanted more articles pertinent to youth's daily problems, and sought for some channel through which the members could express themselves. In one word, they needed a magazine of their own.

The second annual convention of the young people's Federation appointed a publication committee to work toward such a publication. The societies of Oaklawn and South Holland were privileged to receive this mandate. If I am not mistaken (some present fathers and mothers in these congregations can bear me out on this) they felt not a little bit honored. But they were also filled with great trepidation. The Federation had set for itself a worthy purpose. And the proposed magazine was designated as one of the means through which that purpose should be attained. Maybe you will recall this four-fold purpose as expressed in the constitution:

(1) To unite all Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies so that they may work in close unity and secure a sense of solidarity.

(2) To seek the mutual edification of the members of this Federation and to strive for the development of talents as becomes Christian young people.

(3) To strive to maintain our specific Protestant Reformed character with a united front.

(4) To promote the welfare of the Protestant Reformed Churches in which we have a name and a place.

With that goal in mind, namely, to bring into existence a periodical that would serve such a worthy purpose, the two societies set to work. A meeting was called, a chairman and a secretary, besides various sub-committees were chosen. Determinedly, January 1st, not five months away, was set as the deadline for the appearance of the first issue. Everybody had his work to do, for there was much that had to be done. Departments had to be arranged, writers for these departments appointed, prices for printing and mailing obtained, and last but not least, some estimate had to be made of the prospective number of subscribers, for, after all, this committee had no funds at their disposal.

Every few weeks, at regular intervals, two or more cars would wend their way through the evening darkness from South Holland to Oaklawn, or vice versa. It was the time of year when one could expect almost any kind of weather. On one such night, either in the last part of October or the first part of November, the cars of the committee members converged from all directions upon the town of South Holland. There was a downpour of rain, and the headlights cast weird reflections along the way as the cars splashed through the water. Each individual wore a grim look of despair, which compared quite suitably with the weather. After shaking off the chill of the evening, they were ready to sit down and pour out their troubles. Nothing seemed to be working out as planned. Each committee had met with some disappointment. The obstacles seemed insurmountable. The flame of hope fluttered into a faint glow that night. But...
as each unburdened himself, new courage arose. The determination to carry on was stronger than ever. By the time they parted, each was filled with new zest and vigor.

And so on January 1, 1941, BEACON LIGHTS entered our Protestant Reformed homes for the first time.

All around Chicago, particularly in the suburbs, beacons send their beam of light in a wide, swinging arc into the darkness of the night, directing airplanes to the airport, which is situated just north of Oaklawn. One could see the constant flash of light and could hear from time to time the drone of planes as they unerringly followed the course of the beacons to their destination. It was a daily reminder of those other beacons which line the ocean shores to direct ships through raging storms and troubled seas into the safety of the harbor. It must have been these beacons which first suggested to the minds of the committee the name which the periodical still bears. This seemed very appropriate, since BEACON LIGHTS was intended to warn Protestant Reformed youth against the threatening dangers of heresy and worldliness, and to direct them along the straight course of true godliness as laid out for us in the Scriptures. At its first appearance BEACON LIGHTS carried this name. And this was officially adopted at the convention of 1941, at the same time when the Federation took over the publication of the magazine. The name in full reads, "Beacon Lights For Protestant Reformed Youth."

Eighteen years have elapsed. During that time this magazine has appeared regularly except for a very short interval during the troubous days of 1953. Eighteen years. Some young people reading this article will look over the top of the paper to ask Dad or Mom, "Do you remember when Beacons Lights first came out?" And somewhere some folks will say, "Do I ever, I had the privilege to help to plan it."

May our God who made this periodical possible, and has used it to guide our youth on the path of truth for so many years, continue to do so for many years to come. May He bless those who are working for the paper today, in order that it may continue to cast a clear and penetrating ray as "Beacon Lights for Protestant Reformed Youth."

TRUTH VS. ERROR

A LETTER TO A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER

about CONDITIONAL "THEOLOGY"

Dear Wesley:

Many times I have reminisced about our former conversation relative to conditional theology. I am inclined to believe that you do not hold to this "theology," actually, as it is not in harmony with the Westminster Confessions. In our own Reformed Confessions, "conditions" do not appear except in the mouth and in the mind of the Remonstrant Arminians as expressed in the Rejection of Errors. The Reformed fathers in drawing up the Confessions never used it in a Reformed (good) sense. (Canons of Dordt, I, & Rejection of Errors, I, III, V). For the term itself does not have a Reformed
connotation. It is true that there are Reformed theologians who hold to “conditions,” but without support from the Westminster or Reformed Confessions. Why then do we find in the Larger Catechism, Q. 32, that faith is represented as a condition? I would answer this question by saying that the LC does not represent faith as a condition! It says that God “requires faith as the condition to interest them in Him,” but this is not to make God’s saving grace contingent upon something out of man. For we also read in this place that God in the covenant “promiseth and giveth His Holy Spirit to all His elect, to work in them that faith.” Here God promises His Spirit, and promises faith “with all other saving graces.” Then it would be nonsense, wouldn’t it?, to speak of faith as the condition to receive the Holy Spirit, or to receive faith! We cannot believe that faith, which is a saving grace, can be a condition to receive “all other saving graces.” Nor is that the meaning of the term “condition” in LC, 32, but the meaning is to be sought in harmony with the Westminster Confessions. It is in LC, 73 that we find the true interpretation of this term, “Faith justifies a sinner . . . only as it is an instrument . . . .” Faith, therefore, is not a condition unto justification in the sense that if we exercise faith, then God will justify us. The term “condition” as it appears in the LC should be understood in the sense of “instrument.” Then we would read the words of LC, 32, that God “requires faith as the instrument to interest sinners in Him.” The meaning of “condition,” then, as used here, does not mean a prerequisite, but “an instrument by which he receives . . . Christ” (LC, 73); and “the way which He hath appointed them to salvation” (LC, 32). Wouldn’t you agree, then, that faith is a requirement, a means, a way or instrument, and that it is less confusing to use these terms than the one (“condition”) preferred by Arminians? For the fact that faith is spoken of as a requirement is supported by the Westm. Conf., VII (III), “requiring faith that they may be saved,” and God “promises to give unto all (the elect) His Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.” But if we say that faith is a condition, we as much as say that faith is a condition unto having faith! or that God promises to make us willing and able to believe on the condition that we believe!

Searching further, I read “faith . . . is the alone instrument (not ‘prerequisite’) of justification . . . and is ever accompanied with all other saving graces” (Conf. XI, II). Nor is repentance a condition unto pardon, but rather a necessity to that end: “repentance . . . is of such necessity to all . . . that none may expect pardon without it” (XV, III).

In “Presbyterian Tracts” (Pres. Bd. Pub.), Vol. 2, it is said, “If a man is justified on account of the act of believing, and that act he can perform by the power of free will, he has as much ground of boasting as he could possibly have . . . .” (P. 53). On page 54 I was happy to read that evangelical obedience is not “the condition of our justification,” but the “fruit and consequence of our justification.” For we “must be accepted in Christ before we can perform any” activity pleasing to God. And since we are by virtue of sovereign election already accepted in the Beloved One (Ephesians 1:4, 6), what can be a condition for us to be accepted in Him? On p. 77, the meaning of “condition” as “an act performed by our own strength previously to our receiving any benefit from this covenant” is rejected as basically Arminian. That man must fulfill certain stipulations before God can bestow the blessings of the covenant is repudiated as unreformed. “As the word ‘condition’ is so vague, and as it has been so commonly used in an erroneous sense, it is expedient to drop the word as it relates to faith (and) . . . justification; for all orthodox theologians acknowledge that faith itself is one of the richest blessings of the covenant . . . and cannot, therefore, be the condition of that covenant in a strict and proper sense. The sound doctrine then is, that faith is the instrument of our justification”.

Have you considered Presbyterian theology in this connection as found in the “Reformation Principles” of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Chap. IX, 3? Here we find language which plainly indicates that the promise and the covenant are unconditional: “This is a Covenant of Promise, in which God . . . promises to all whom Christ represented, all the good
things of which they shall have need in the present and future states of existence.” Concerning “all the promises of God to the elect” there are no conditions “to be performed by the elect” (IX, 4). Neither faith, repentance or obedience, “or any other thing” are conditions of the covenant (IX, 9). It is unconditional. We, as ministers, should avoid the idea of a mere offer, much worse the idea of an attempt to bestow, for “God has promised in this covenant to bestow on all the elect faith, repentance, and holiness as well as happiness; and Christ... enables them to believe, repent, and live a life of sincere godliness” (ibid.). These Covenanters Presbyterian are equally plain when they “condemn the following errors:” “4. That faith is a condition of the covenant...” “5. That God’s gracious promises are suspended upon conditions to be performed by man” (Declaration and Testimony, 172). Here is where men truly Presbyterian and truly Reformed may shake hands warmly and enthusiastically!

The other matter I discussed last with you was that of so-called “presumptive regeneration.” As I remember, you seemed inclined to this idea. We do know “that all that are baptized are” not necessarily regenerated (Conf. XXVIII, V). But with respect to infants dying in infancy, do we need “presumptive regeneration”? I think you will agree that only elect baptized are or shall be regenerated. Then there is no need to presume the regeneration of the elect. For “the efficacy of baptism is... not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in His appointed time.” Now this statement reveals not what we presume, but what we believe; namely, that the efficacy of baptism is experienced by the elect, and is, therefore, a matter of faith. This has the support of, “the promise is unto you and to your children, and to them that afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,” and “the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (Acts 2:39; Romans 9:8). Presupposed regeneration rests on a very shaky foundation. Baptism, as a result, is no more than a supposed baptism; its sealing is no more than a supposed sealing, and its strengthening of faith, as a means of grace, no more than presumed strengthening. And no more comfort or hope is had than the nourishment a starving man has from an imaginary meal. It is really the Triune God who does the baptizing, not the minister, nor the church, and He does not baptize on the basis of a supposition. Baptism, being an institution of Christ, proceeds on the ground of the command and promise of Christ that He will be a God to us and a God to our seed. Baptism speaks the same message as the Gospel, that Jesus shall save His people from their sins. Baptism is no more a sign of presupposed regeneration, than the wine in the Lord’s Supper is a symbol of presupposed remission of sins. It is a sign that He “witnesseth and sealeth unto us that He doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us” (Bap. Form). And this we believe that God does with all His elect only, as Abram believed God, and was justified. And so every baptism by a minister of the Gospel in the name of the triune God testifies!

RCH

— NOTICE —

Please send all church bulletins and church news items to:

MRS. C. H. WESTRA

845 Alexander St., S. E.

Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

— on heresy —

“For the rejection of heretics makes the tenants of Thy Church and sound doctrine to stand out more clearly. For there must also be heresies, that the approved may be made manifest among the weak.”

St. Augustine, The Confessions

— on good works —

“But whosoever reckons up his real merits to Thee, what reckons he up to Thee but Thine own gifts? O that men would know themselves to be men; and that He that glorieth would glory in the Lord.”

St. Augustine, The Confessions

Eight
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Who Shall Separate Us?

REV. R. VELDMAN

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Romans 8:35.

Well? Who shall? Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine . . . ?
Death, life, angels, principalities, powers . . . ? Any one? Any thing? Us?
God's elect? Believers in the mighty Jesus?
Really, this is not a question at all. It's a challenge. The answer is: No one! Nothing!

Isn't it comforting, dear Christian? What a strength this affords for every burden, every care, every pain. What an incentive it gives to fight to the bitter end the battle of faith, whatever the odds, whatever the sacrifice. God's comforts may be expressed in various ways. Always it comes down to this, does it not?

What a beautiful song is Romans 8, and what a mighty climax is reached as the chapter crescendoes steadily and majestically toward the grand finale that begins with the words of our meditation. As the beloved apostle goes on, his glorifying becomes more and more intense, his language of faith ever more confident, his hope more and more fervent, until he ends with that glorious shout of complete triumph:

"I am persuaded (Whether you can say that I cannot say; but I am) that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." To me this last part of the chapter is the "Hallelujah Chorus" of the grandest of all oratorios.

How wonderful, too, that we can sing all this now, while we are still in this present evil world. Paul does not rejoice here as one who has finished the battle and is already in heaven. This is the song of a believer, who is still struggling and bleeding in the arena of this life, who still lives amidst all the imperfections of this present time, all the enemies and dangers and trials and sins of this present world.

Hence! "There is therefore no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus" now. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" now. "If God be for us, who can be against us" now.

And so— "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" now.

The love of Christ!
Grammatically, this could refer to our love for Christ. However, it doesn't. True, we also love Christ, and from that love, too, no one can separate us. Nothing can extinguish that flame in the heart of the child of God. But, that is not the
love referred to here, nor is it on this that our eternal salvation depends.

This is the love of Christ for us; the love that sent the Only Begotten of the Father into this sin-sick world for a poor, lost sinner like me; the love that drove Him to the garden of sorrows, and from there to cruel Golgotha, where He poured out His soul into death that we might have life forever more.

A few verses later the apostle will call this same love "the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There he tells us, that it has its source eternally in the Triune God, while Christ is the channel through which it reaches us.

Who shall separate us from that love? Fear us away from that heart of God and of Jesus Christ our Savior?

Not: Who shall deprive us of the consciousness, the blessed experience, that God loves us? This is possible for a time, because of sin. Even then, however, our loving Father will not forsake us, but lead us back out of that fearful night to the blessed sunshine of His love.

But: Who shall separate us from that love as such? So great, for it is the love of Christ! So wonderful, for it enabled Him to bear for a sin-cursed world all the agonies of the damned! So free! So sovereign! So unconditional! So eternal!

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Is there reason for this challenge? You know there is,

Numerous and deadly foes are constantly on the prowl to do just that, and how able they are in their own evil way. Listen as Paul calls their roll: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth. What an array! And to make sure all are included he ends by saying: any other creature.

Young people, this enemy is real! Make no mistake about that. The apostle is not merely speculating on what might be, but actually isn't. He isn't dealing in mere hypotheses. Listen again as he applies the complaint of Psalm 44 to the church of all ages: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter". On their list to be butchered! Always the world hates us; breathes threatening and slaughter against the church of Christ.

Don't underestimate this enemy. He is big and strong. He seems to be omnipresent. Wherever you go, whatever you do, you meet him. He sits in the high places and lurks in the depths. And think of what he can do to you. From every direction, and through all sorts of means, he shoots his poisonous darts at the church. In last instance he has at his disposal the whole power of the sword, which can determine life and death. He can persecute and afflict, tempt, seduce, mock, cast out, kill.

And always he has only this one purpose: to separate us from the love of Christ. He will kill you as a last resort. However, that's not his real purpose. He wants to destroy you spiritually.

Is the Christian afraid?

Not if his faith is in Christ!

Listen as he taunts that whole fearful horde: "Who shall separate from the love of Christ?" Any one? Any thing? "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

You can take away all my earthly possessions! You can kill my body!

But you cannot touch my soul!

Thanks to His all-conquering love!

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**PAUL TURNED DOWN**

A church was in need of a pastor. One of the elders was interested in knowing just what kind of a minister they desired. He therefore wrote the following letter, as if he had received it from an applicant, and read the letter before the pulpit committee. It read as follows:

"Gentlemen:

"Understanding that your pulpit is vacant, I should like to apply for the position. I have many qualifications that I think you would appreciate. I have been blessed to preach with power and have had some success as a writer. Some say that
I am a good organizer. I have been a leader in most places I have gone.

"Some folk, however, have some things against me. I am over 50 years of age. I have never preached in one place for more than three years at a time. In some places I have left town, after my work caused riots and disturbances. I have to admit that I have been in jail three or four times, but not because of any wrong doing. My health is not good, although I still get a good deal done. I have had to work at my trade to help pay my way. The churches I have preached in have been small, though located in several large cities.

"I have not gotten along too well with the religious leaders in different towns where I have preached. In fact, some of them have threatened me, taken me to court, and even attacked me physically.

"I am not too good at keeping records. I have been known to forget whom I have baptized. However, if you can use me, I shall do my best for you, even if I have to work to help with my support."

The elder read this letter to the committee and asked them if they were interested in the applicant. They replied that he would never do for their church. They were not interested in an unhealthy, contentious, trouble-making absent-minded jail-bird. In fact, they were insulted that his application had ever been presented. Then they inquired as to the name of the applicant, whereupon the leader answered: "The Apostle Paul." [Western Voice]

CHRISTIAN LIVING

A Protestant Reformed

World and Life View

REV. H. HANKO

God is sovereign over all. God's sovereignty is revealed and realized through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord over His people to save them by the blood of His cross and to take them into His own everlasting kingdom.

All these things we noticed last time. But just as the sovereignty of Christ is over His people who kneel in worship before Him, so also is Jesus Christ the only Lord over the wicked men and hosts of devils and demons who oppose Him.

MAN IN PARADISE

But first of all we must inquire into the question of the place of the wicked in the creation, of their efforts to subdue the creation, of the impossibility of establishing here below a kingdom.

When God first formed the heavens and the earth and all that they contain, He placed man as king supreme under God over all the works of His hands. Man stood before His God in uprightness of heart in a position of authority over the earth which was his dominion. He was called to represent his sovereign Lord in the creation about him, and rule over it in such a way that all things were brought to the altar of service to God so that the creation might be used to proclaim the praises of its Maker. For this reason the so-called "cultural mandate" came to Adam in Paradise, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Gen. 1:28.

If, therefore, Adam had remained standing in a state of rectitude in the garden of Eden and in the whole creation, he would have been in a position to uncover the powers of the creation and discover its hidden treasures. He would have been
preeminently endowed with the necessary strength and ability to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. He would have been the most capable "scientist" this world has ever known — and his posterity with him. Not only this, however, but he would have been spiritually capable of using all these powers and treasures in the creation in the service of God; he would have subdued the earth to make use of the glorious universe in which he lived to praise and magnify his Maker.

**SIN AND ITS TERRIBLE EFFECTS**

But this Adam did not do. Nor was this the purpose of God.

Sin came into the world. Sin arose first of all in heaven in the world of the angels. And Satan, after he fell, decided to oppose God upon the earth since he could no longer do this in heaven. To do this, however, he had to enlist the aid of man. Without man as his ally, he could not hope to accomplish his purpose. He had determined to set up his own kingdom in opposition to God so that God would be cast out of His creation and universe, and the devil could reign supreme. But if man would not become a partner in his nefarious purpose, he could not possibly hope to succeed. And so he made the trip to Paradise and used all the powers of his devilish skill to persuade man to ally himself with the devil in accomplishing his evil determination. How successful he was is known to us from the record of Holy Writ.

But the consequences of this deed were universal and terrible. God could not and did not allow this terrible sin of man to go unpunished. Man, as an ally of the devil, could certainly not be allowed to remain in the creation as the representative of God. And so God cast him out. God cast him out of Paradise and cast him out of the creation by killing him and sending him to hell. "From dust thou art taken, and unto dust shalt thou return" are the awful words which ring down the centuries of world history.

**A TOTALLY DEPRAVED MAN**

But man did not die immediately at the foot of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Yet Scripture does not give us the right to ascribe this in any sense of the word to Common Grace as Dr. A. Kuyper would have us believe. It is simply indicative of the fact that God had a higher purpose in the creation, yea indeed a higher purpose with man and man's sin that could only be accomplished through a prolonged life even though eventually it would end in the grave; a purpose which was to be achieved in Jesus Christ for which man had to live for a time. Yet even while man was living in the creation, from his point of view alone this was perhaps more terrible than if he had died immediately. The heavy hand of God's wrath completely eclipsed the light that shone in him of the image which he bore. He lost all his excellent gifts. The light of the knowledge of God was darkened into the black night of the lie. The righteousness and holiness with which man had been endowed faded away into terrible unrighteousness and corruption of every sort. He no longer could serve His God and use anything in the world to seek Him. He became instead, as his evil heart had purposed, an ally of the devil and the host of Hell's demons. He set his heart upon unrighteousness and lost all that was good and holy becoming a helpless slave to the purpose of the prince of darkness.

**A SIN-CURSED CREATION**

And yet God's wrath did not even stop here. The curse settled also upon the creation. The speech of God's righteous revelation which had sounded so loudly in the garden of Eden was silenced by the terrible speech of the curse. The ground was cursed for man's sake. The creature also is held in the chains of the bondage of corruption. Just exactly what was the result of this upon the creation is perhaps somewhat difficult to determine for us, for we no longer have a conception of the true character of the creation before the fall and before the curse came; we have no means of contrasting the world as we know it now with the creation as it was then. But this is evident enough: the creation is thrown into turmoil and confusion. Death reigns supreme also over the brute creature. The whole creation wars against itself hurting itself and destroying itself. And in this man eagerly participates.

To quote from "The Christian And Culture": "Then, too, we must not over-
look the important fact that the curse of God is in the world and that man is subject to corruption and death. In discussing the subject of modern culture this is too often ignored. The possibility of 'culture' is frequently deduced from paradise and the original state of righteousness and perfection, as if the terrible fact of the curse upon creation and of death, even in the natural, physical sense of the word, need not enter into the discussion. This, however, is a fundamental error. The ground is cursed, and the creature is in the bondage of corruption and made subject to vanity. The result is that the creation gets nowhere. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, saith the preacher. The creature is like a horse in a treadmill. It labors and toils all the day long, without accomplishing anything. It is the 'vicious circle'. There is never anything new under the sun. And man himself is not only spiritually and ethically corrupt, but he is also subject to corruption and death. Death is in all his life. From every side he is limited. The work he performs he does as in a death-cell. He only awaits the moment of his execution.” pp. 9, 10.

TRUE CULTURE IMPOSSIBLE

What effects does this have upon man’s life in the world? This is the primary question that needs our attention. Is the so-called “cultural mandate” still effective? Can man accomplish anything at all in the creation? Must we, considering these circumstances, retreat from our position to acknowledge the force of the argument of evolutionism which boldly and braggingly states that we are on an upward hill climbing ever forward and onward and coming ever nearer to the sublime goal of peace on earth, good will to men by our own efforts? Must we admit the power of the post-millennialist’s eager hope of a kingdom of Christ here upon earth? Can we no longer combat the cherished dream of Common Grace that there is all kinds of good to be found in the world and in the efforts of men?

Taking all these views in the light of the stark reality of the fall and its grievous consequences we can only conclude that these opinions are but vain dreams, absurd and befuddled, smashed to pieces against the hard rock of the truth of Scripture.

PENCILS AND CHALK

teaching

Classical Music

in the Elementary School

MISS H. J. KUIPER

That music should be taught in our schools is not a debatable question. Because God has given us not only the gift of song, and the ability to bring forth music on instruments, but also the injunction to praise Him, we have our calling to instruct His children in this phase of glorifying their Maker.

The gift of song is an awesome thing. The wonder of a person’s vocal organs, his ability to distinguish between various musical tones, to make instruments “talk” — all show the might of our Creator. From tiny tots, copying their mothers and dads, to the well-trained high school and college choirs, our children are singing children. Theirs is an expression of joy and of sorrow; of happiness and of sadness; of humility, praise and glory. They are a part of that singing church of all ages — to be perfected in life eternal.

The ability to play musical instruments

BEACON LIGHTS

Thirteen
is also a great talent. As not everyone is a naturally good singer, so is not everyone gifted in this respect. Some children do not "take to" music until much later in life and sometimes not at all; others can barely crawl up on the piano bench to take their first lessons. But again, no matter what the age, playing an instrument is another means of glorifying our Maker. It is important that we provide an opportunity to develop this means, either in band or orchestra, in grade or high school. To be able to put heart and soul into a rendition of a number is not only personally satisfying — it is another expression of praising our covenant God. We become, then, an active, dedicated Church — playing our praises.

The Church also listens. Who has not thrilled to an especially well-rendered "Pastoral Symphony" of Handel's MESSIAH? or ever forgotten the stirring strains of Christian High's Band in rendering their Spring Concert? To which member of the congregation does not Heaven seem a bit closer when the majestic peal of the organ precedes the Sabbath's message? Truly, listening too is a skill and needs much practice to be perfected. We would do well, therefore, to cultivate a good musical listening and discrimination.

How then can we develop this third musical skill? The Civic Auditorium of our own city presents many programs; Christian High has its vocal and instrumental concerts; our day schools present Christmas and Easter programs; there are a variety of good records which may be borrowed from the library or bought for one's own record library. There is much good music to which we can listen.

Let us take for granted that the students have some kind of musical background such as the fundamentals of notes, sounds and singing. In this way they will also enjoy music, especially that which is rhythmic and melodic. At this time we wish to make the student aware of classical music.

We may divide classical music into several categories, all of which cannot be thoroughly discussed here. Let us take a look at a few of them.

Nationalistic music has been written by the composer with the glory of his fatherland uppermost in his mind. The music may be partly programmatic in that it tells a story, such as Smetana's THE MOLDAU, but this is not necessarily true. In introducing a piece of nationalistic music, one would most likely begin with the composer, his life and type of music, a brief exposition of what to expect from his music would be followed by the record itself. A diagram of the phases or stages may be placed on the blackboard and followed throughout the playing of the record. Thus, one could see and hear THE MOLDAU as it progresses from its beginning in the Bohemian forest to its final, quiet flowing toward Prague. This may also successfully be carried out with the 1812 OVERTURE by Tchaikovsky.

Programmatic music, or that which tells a story, is probably most easily recognized and learned. One needs to hear the story of THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE or THE CARNIVAL OF ANIMALS but once or twice to apply the words to music. What an interesting story music can tell! What a wonderful gift man has been given! One stands in awe at the brilliance God has given in order to write as he does.

Take, for instance, another form of classical music, that of the symphonic. In the studies of the lives of Johann Sebastian Bach, George Handel, Wolfgang Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven and Johannes Brahms, one marvels at their abilities at such an early age. Familiarity with their music increases our wonder. To children and teenagers, however, their music may be a mass of noise and unrelated tones; here again, the simpler ones should be taught first; these would gradually give way to the deeper, more complex ones. One may begin with the history and presentation of the suites, a group of fairly short movements in various rhythms and tempos but which are all in the same key. From this, music history tells us, developed the form of the sonata. With the advent of this new form, audiences were made aware of keys and their relationships; they listened to composers' daring experiments of modulation and transposition. This, in turn, developed into the classical symphony. Orchestras played the sonatas, enhancing and enriching the structure of the original sonata.

Symphonies are hauntingly beautiful and, once recognizable, a joy to the listener.
Children will like Tchaikovsky's PATHETIQUE SYMPHONY, Beethoven's MOONLIGHT SONATA and FIFTH SYMPHONY as well as Grieg's PEER GYNT SUITE. Once more, the teacher will undoubtedly begin with the composer's life and the background of the selection. This time, themes and sub-themes would be pointed out. Repetitious humming of favorite main themes will distinguish them and make them the pupil's own.

The main objection to teaching an appreciation of classical music seems to lie in the fact that the lives of some composers are anything but exemplary. Aside from the music itself, I would advocate little stress on the composer's life as such, but would emphasize the fact that, in no matter what circumstances a composer found himself — rich or poor, in health or in sickness — God used him in some small way to bring forth the gift of music. To know that both Smetana and Handel were deaf when they wrote their greatest works; that poverty drove many composers to sell now-well-known works for a few pence in order to get enough bread to eat in order to live — this shows that man himself is nothing. By using man as His tools in His Almighty sovereign good pleasure, God has given to us the gift of music — to sing and to play, but especially to hear. May His Church be a singing, playing, listening Church, now in the midst of sin and disharmony, but later in Heavenly perfection.

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE

Book of REVELATION

by REV. H. HOEKSEMA

LESSON VII (Revelation 2:18-29): The Church in Thyatira

1. Vs. 18. Address and self-designation: a. Thyatira; a city in Asia Minor south-east from Pergamos, on the road to Sardis. Noted for the art of dyeing. Lydia, the seller of purple was from Thyatira. Acts 16:14. b. The Lord announces Himself here as: (1) The Son of God. This not found in the vision of 1:13ff. Emphasizing omniscience, vs. 23; and referring to the quotation from Ps. 2 in vs. 27. (2) Whose eyes are like a flame of fire, penetrating into the hidden things of the heart. (3) And whose feet are like fine brass, executing judgment upon all the evil.

2. Vs. 19. Commendable features: a. The Church presents a warm, lovable, attractive picture: (1) She is not a picture of strength (in truth and discipline). (2) But presents those features that manifest a warm love and an active faith: I know thy works (this in general), and charity (active love to God and the brethren), and service (diaconia, ministry to the poor, destitute, sick and all the saints), and faith (active faith is meant, bearing fruit), and patience (presupposing that the Church had suffered reproach and been faithful). b. And in all this (and thy works) she had been increasing: the last were more than the first. In a sense it may be said that Thyatira is the very opposite from Ephesus.

3. Vss. 29, 24a: Reproof: in a very vivid contrast with the good characteristics of this church are her bad features. Notice: a. That she permits a woman to teach, who was not allowed to teach in the Church. b. That this woman claimed to be a prophetess; she taught by special "revelations", apart from the revealed Word of God. The Church, evidently, accepted her as such. c. That she taught a horrible doctrine. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes again: fornication, eating of meat sacrificed to idols. d. That this doctrine made an appeal to profound piety and experience of
sin and grace: they said: "we have known the depth of Satan", vs. 24. Hence: let us sin that grace may abound! e. That she had seduced many "servants" of the Lord. f. And that, therefore, the Lord calls her Jezebel, with reference to the wicked wife of king Ahab.

Note. The peculiar weakness of Thyatira was not that she was negligent in discipline (like Pergamos), although she was. If we take all her good and bad features together, we get the impression that she was a Church with a strong tendency to false mysticism: (1) Giving heed to the "revelation" and experiences" of a wicked woman. (2) Rather than to the objective Word of God.

4. Vss. 21-23. The Lord's judgment on Jezebel c.s.: a. Notice that the Lord does not enjoin the Church to cast out the evil ones, as He had instructed Pergamos. She could not "try them that said they were apostles". b. He Himself will manifest His wrath upon the wicked and show (1) That He proves the reins and the hearts (the hidden things of man). (2) And that He rewards every man according to his work. "Let us abide in sin that grace may abound" does not meet with His favor. c. He will do so in the following way: (1) Cast Jezebel into a bed of sickness (she had time to repent, but without avail). (2) Bring tribulation to those that share her sin, unless they repent. (3) Kill her children.

5. Vss. 24-29. Message to the faithful: a. Exhortation, vs. 24, 25: (1) To as many as were not contaminated with the corrupt doctrine of Jezebel, and who had not known the depth of Satan, as they speak, i.e. as the false teachers themselves spoke, not their opponents. (2) Hold fast that which ye have: (a) The Lord will lay upon them no other burden. The reference is to Acts 15:28; hence, a burden of precepts, not of punishment is meant. (b) But they must hold fast His precepts and truth as they possess it, until He come, i.e. until the end, the parousia. b. Promises (1) To the victor, that "keeps the works" of Christ until the end. (2) The promise of power over the nations. Reference is to Ps. 2:8, 9. Nations are there the heathen; here all the wicked. To rule them with a rod of iron is to have complete power over them. To break them into pieces like a potter's vessel is to destroy them utterly. This power Christ now has received from His Father; His people Christ now has received from His Father; His people shall share it, now spiritually, and fully at His coming. (3) The promise of the morning star. See for the figure of the star: Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43 (shine as the sun); Rev. 22:16; II Peter 1:19. Notice: the Lord will give us the morning star. Hence, to be understood as the harbinger of the eternal day: hope, the glory of the resurrection morning.

He that hath an ear let him hear!

LESSON VIII (Revelation 3:1-6): The Church in Sardis

1. Vss. 1a. Address and Self-designation of the Lord: a. Sardis, a city located in a rich plain, mostly south from Thyatira and east from Ephesus. The city was noted for its wealth and luxury. This may have had something to do with the condition of the church there. b. Christ designates Himself here as (1) The One that hath the Seven Spirits of God: the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ as He dwells in the Church. The principle or author of life in the Church. (2) And the One that hath the seven stars: the angels of the churches on earth. cf. ch. 1:16, 20. This self-designation is related to the dead condition of the church in Sardis and the threatened judgment.

2. Vss. 1b; 2, 4. The condition of the Church: a. First there is again the general "I know thy works". b. Then the condition of the Church is described in: "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead". (1) The meaning is not that there was absolutely no spiritual life left in the Church, for then the Lord would not have admonished her to repent, and, besides, some there had not defiled their garments, vs. 4; but that the Church as a whole was in a spiritual stupor, without a healthy manifestation of spiritual life and activity. (2) This applied (a) To the angel or bishop first of all. Some think that his proper name meant "life" (like Zosimus, for instance), and that for this reason the Lord writes: "thou hast a name that thou livest". Better: as a Christian, and empha-
tically as a minister he had a reputation that he lived. Yet, he was dead. There was no zeal, no faithfulness in his holy calling. He was a “dead preacher”. (b) Then also to the Church: as Church she had a name that she lived; yet she lacked in every activity of life, she was dead. Swallowed up by the world. c. This is further specified in (1) “I have not found thy works perfect before God” does not mean merely that all her works were defiled with sin (which is always true), but that her works were not complete: she did not do the works of a Church of Christ, such as the preaching of the Word, discipline, confession, charity, a holy walk, etc. (2) The fact that many had defiled their garments (only a “few names” had not, vs. 4). By “garments” in this case we may understand all that belongs to external membership of the Church, baptism, Lord’s Supper, confession, etc. The “uniform” of Christ. To defile these is to be friends with the world, live in sin. (3) And in the suggestion that the Church was about to die, vs. 2. The flame of life almost had gone out.

3. Admonition and threat of judgment. Vss. 2, 3. a. Admonition: (1) Like the whole letter the admonition is addressed to the whole Church, of course; nevertheless, we feel that the “angel of the Church” is meant first of all. (2) Be watchful; the whole Church is in a condition of sleep, must wake up, watch against the enemy; but this calling rests emphatically upon the “angel”, the office-bearers. (3) “And strengthen the things which remain”. (a) “The things which remain” may refer to the spiritual virtues and activities still left in the Church, or to the few faithful, or to both. (b) We prefer the last: whatever spiritual life became still manifest was surely due to the “few names” which had not defiled their garments”. (c) This element must be strengthened, supported, quickened, till it is the dominating element. (d) This, too, is the calling of the whole Church; emphatically of the “angel”. (3) “Remember therefore...and repent”. (a) Like the Church of Ephesus, that of Sardis must recall the former days, when they heard and received the gospel with zeal and joy. (b) She must hold fast the truth. (c) And repent of her present attitude over against it. b. Judgment: (1) The Lord will come as a thief: to take away the Church’s light (the star) and life (the “seven spirits”). (2) And He will come unawares, so that they will not even notice that He has come. The Church will die and not know it!

4. Promise. vss. 4-6: a. To the faithful (the “overcome”), that are “worthy” because they did not defile their garments (through the grace of Christ, of course), and that hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. b. They shall be “clothed in white raiment” and walk with Christ in white”. (a) White is color of righteousness and holiness and victory. (b) Hence: heavenly fellowship with Christ in glory. c. Their names shall not be blotted out of the book of life: (1) The book of life is “election unto eternal life”. (2) Hence: the promise of certain life in glory. d. Christ shall confess their names before His Father and His holy angels: before God and in public claim them as His own, for whom He died and rose, and whom He wills to be with Him forever!

LESSON IX (Revelation 3:7-13): The Church in Philadelphia

1. Address and self-designation; vs. 7; a. Philadelphia, a city situated to the southeast of Sardis. It is evident from the letter that the Church there had to suffer from the hostility of the influential Jews in that city. b. The self-designation of the Lord: (1) Is not verbally derived from the vision of 1:12ff. but certainly as to its idea. (2) He that is holy, he that is true (This with emphasis over against the lies of the Jews concerning Him). He is the Holy One, that was to come; the genuine Messiah. And as, such, i.e. as the Anointed of the Lord He has the keys of David. (3) Keys of David: (a) See Isa. 22:22. He that had the keys of David had general supervision over the king’s business; authority to admit into the presence of the king or to refuse admittance. (b) Christ alone had authority in the Kingdom of God; power to open and to shut efficaciously.

2. Condition of the Church; vss. 8, 10a: a. First again the general: “I know thy works”. b. Then, specifically: (1) The
Church had little strength: (a) This does not mean that the Church was spiritually weak, for the contrary is evident from this letter. (b) But that it was weak according to the standard of the flesh: in numbers, and as to its position in the world, in influence and possessions. (2) But she was faithful and that in the midst of adverse circumstances, hatred and persecution (a) Had kept the Word of Christ: in doctrine and teaching, in confession and walk. (b) Had not denied the name of Christ: “not denied” is “confessed”. The negative form suggests that there had been plenty of temptation and trial to deny it. The Church had suffered persecution, especially from the “synagogue of Satan”, the Jews. (c) The Word of Christ’s patience she had kept (vs. 10), i.e. the whole Word of God as it requires patience to keep it and exhorts to patience throughout. Also this presupposes that the Church had suffered persecution.

Note. In many respects this Church is similar to that of Smyrna. Both are weak. Both suffer persecution. Both are faithful. Neither (and they are the only two of the seven) receives a rebuke.

3. The promise of an open door; vs. 8, 9: a. The “open door” is an effective entrance for the preaching of the gospel into the hearts of others. See Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; II Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3. (1) Only Christ can open this door. Without His operation even the preaching of the gospel is of no positive avail. (2) And He does it irresistibly: “no man can shut it”. This is, therefore, a promise of fruit and growth; an encouragement to continue preaching the Word. b. This open door applies especially to the Jews in the city: (1) The “synagogue of Satan”, see chap. 2:9. (2) Christ will make them come to the Church they hated and persecuted (a) In humility: “worship before thy feet”. Does not mean that they will pay divine homage to the Church, but that they will repent and humble themselves before the Church. (b) Because they shall know and acknowledge that Christ loved them; the past tense “loved” or “have loved” probably refers to the love revealed at the cross. These Jews would see the cross in a new light.

4. Promise of being kept out of the hour of temptation; vs. 10: a. The hour of temptation is a period of tribulation to try them that dwell on the earth”. Concerning this we note (1) That it is called an “hour”; it will be brief. (2) That it is general: all the earth. (a) May refer to a period of persecution at the time. (b) Includes all the tribulation in this dispensation. (c) Shall be finally realized in the last “great tribulation”. b. Be kept from (1) Does not mean that the church shall not be in tribulation (contrary to all Scripture), as the Chiliasm have it. (2) But that they shall be spiritually preserved and delivered from it.

5. Exhortation; vs. 11: a. “Hold fast”, etc. (1) The Church had the word of Christ’s patience. (2) It she must hold fast. Remain faithful. (3) Which is the only way to attain to the crown of victory. (4) But this perseverance is possible only through Christ’s preservation. b. Encouragement: “Behold, I come quickly”.

6. Promise of future blessing vs. 12: a. For him that overcometh. (i) Pillar in the temple of my God: (1) The temple here is the glorified Church. (2) And pillar denotes (a) Permanence (“shall go no more out); (b) Firm support; (c) Adornment. c. A threefold name (1) Name here denotes property and identity. (2) Name of “my God”: the glory of God’s likeness; perfect sonship. (3) Name of New Jerusalem: the right of citizenship in the “city of God”. (4) Christ’s new name: share in His glory.

7. He that hath an ear, etc. vs. 13.

Contributions

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THE COVENANT: The basis for Christian Schools?
AGATHA LUBBERS

You will remember that we discussed in an earlier issue of Beacon Lights the articles of Rev. Koops and Rev. Heerema. We also promised a continued discussion of this problem after Rev. Heerema had stated his position in the Torch and Trumpet. In the November issue of the above stated periodical Rev. Heerema further delineates his position.

We should remind ourselves that Rev. Heerema is opposing the views of Rev. Hugh A. Koops who writes on this same subject in the Reformed Journal. Rev. Koops takes the position that the doctrine of the covenant is the basis for evangelism but that it is not nor should it be considered the basis for Christian education. He believes that the basis for Christian education is the doctrine of parental responsibility. We also noticed in our last article that Rev. Heerema takes particular exception to the distinctions by Rev. Koops that there should be educational reasons for the existence of Christian Schools and not theological reasons. The doctrine of the covenant is the theological basis that Koops opposes. Rev. Heerema in this connection warns against the creeping secularism which he believes to be inherent in the views propounded by Rev. Koops. (cf. Oct. issue of Torch and Trumpet and Beacon Lights, December.)

In the November issue of Torch and Trumpet, Rev. Heerema attempts to define more positively the reasons for covenant education, referring specifically to the covenant of grace. He first of all inquires concerning the necessity of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace for Christian education. His approach is to explain away several seeming problems that confront supporters of Christian Schools. There are some Christian Schools that are not based on the Covenant, and this may seem to undercut the fundamental importance of this doctrine. Rev. Heerema cites four types of Christian schools that are not based on the doctrine of the Covenant. You can check these for yourself. He also cites the fact that those who oppose Christian Schools based on the Doctrine of the Covenant state that “The precise educational significance of the Covenant of Grace is often claimed but rarely demonstrated.” Rev. Heerema admits that there may be some truth to this charge but he argues that: “Those who make this charge should temper their criticism at this point with an appreciation for two things. In the first place, the matter is complex, more so than is commonly realized. And in the second place, we are dealing with something that can never be wholly encased in a nice doctrinal statement.” He further says: “It is for this reason that many a humble Christian school supporter, with his heart and mind governed by the Word of God, can speak earnestly of the Covenant of Grace in its important relation to home, family, school, church and the whole of life, without being able to supply an adequate intellectual statement of that important conception.”

Rev. Heerema also says that the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is not the only doctrine basic to our Christian schools. He says:

“Most basic is our doctrine of God. Always in our Christian thinking and living we come back to God, the living and sovereign God, Creator of heaven and earth, Creator of man in his own image...It is in God that ‘we live, and move, and have our being’...Apart from God the educational enterprise is a sometimes fascinating and exciting journey into meaninglessness and vanity...”

Rev. Heerema comes to the heart of his problem when he develops his conception of the covenant and the implications this covenant idea has for education. He refers to his conception as the “simple covenant idea,” and defines it as follows:

“It refers to the arrangement made by

* The term secular is derived from the Latin speculum which refers to race, generation, age, or the people of any time; it refers to the spirit of the age which finds its starting point and goal in the things which are natural and temporal and not the things which are spiritual and eternal.
God for his image-bearing creature to have fellowship with him, the Lord of life and truth. When God created man with capacity for such meaningful communion with his Creator, God did not in deistic fashion turn man loose in the wide reaches of creation to work out a manner of life for himself. No, God immediately laid down certain terms for his life.” (Heerema refers to these terms as the cultural mandate.)

The author then states that because of the fall a new aspect is introduced – this is the aspect of grace as it is revealed and manifested in Jesus Christ. It is because of this original sin that Rev. Heerema maintains that:

The complex and strategic business of molding a human soul for vital covenant life requires that men be trained from the very start in this distinctive way of life and for the struggle to maintain it. This surely is an important aspect of covenantal education.

It seems, however, that Rev. Heerema ought to remember that covenant education *per se* cannot make a Christian. Christian teachers can water and sometimes plant, but only God can give the increase through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Heerema maintains that the responsible party in education is the parent. He says:

It is he who must see to it that this total program shall always have God in Christ at the center of it. This is plain from the covenant structure as such. The parent stands under the love and discipline of God’s covenant. It is in the parent-child interaction: day by day that the pattern of life and character is formed. Childhood is the seedtime of life. In this seedtime the person must be brought under the love and discipline of God in Christ.

Rev. Heerema does not deny the principle of parental responsibility which Rev. Koops wants to maintain, but Rev. Heerema wants his readers to understand that this principle of parental responsibility is guided by the principles inherent in the doctrine of the covenant.

Rev. Heerema is exactly so afraid that Christian education will end in the “waste-lands of secularism” if education is only going to be based on parental responsibility because this broad undefined concept of parental responsibility is so relative. There is no final authority of right and wrong. In this context we can quote Rev. Heerema’s last statement:

With secularism threatening to engulf us, this is not a time to place a question mark behind the importance of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace for our Christian schools. Rather this is a time to place an exclamation point behind this blessed gift of God by exploring with fresh insight and enthusiasm the educational riches inherent in it.

We can appreciate many of the arguments forwarded by Rev. Heerema. The church is definitely in danger of being swept along with the secularism of our day, but we know that God gathers, defends, and preserves his church and therefore the church shall never fail.

It ought to be underscored at this point, however, that the Christian Reformed Church of which Rev. Heerema is a pastor has these problems today, and they are so acute, it seems to me, partly because as a church they have confessionally left the Reformed position. Their adoption of Common Grace as a doctrine of the church has plunged them into the very difficulty that they are experiencing today; a difficulty that Rev. Heerema defines as creeping secularism. It is exactly because of this “doctrine” that makes God assume a favorable attitude of grace toward the reprobate that the Christian Reformed leaders find themselves in this present dilemma. The foundations are not sure and rock bound on a doctrine of sovereign love only for God’s elect people.

We, as young people, must recognize this problem because we are the church of tomorrow. I do not believe that I am being trite when I say, Rise up young people, church of tomorrow and see what your fathers have maintained because they wanted the foundations to stand. They wanted God to be God. We do too.

Heerema is correct in his position concerning covenant education, but his dilemma will only be eradicated completely, it seems to me, when the Common Grace theory is abrogated and annulled.
The new trio which our Randolph congregation has made consists of Revs. H. Hanko, G. Vanden Berg, and M. Schipper. 


Rev. R. Veldman announced that he has declined the call to Grand Haven, and Rev. Vanden Berg has declined the call from Hull. 

May God grant these flocks shepherds in His own good time.

Residents of the Grand Rapids area had the opportunity to hear several inspirational Christmas programs during the past month. On December 17th Hope School presented its annual Christmas program — “God’s Way Out” in the auditorium of First Church. The program was dedicated to Miss Alice Reitsma, who originally wrote the program a couple years ago. Is each child in Hope School a born orator? The presentation certainly showed much preparation both on the part of teachers and pupils. 

Another musical treat was the Christmas program of the Protestant Reformed Men’s Chorus on Sunday evening, December 20th. Special numbers included a baritone horn solo by Bob Decker and a vocal solo by Arnold Dykstra. 

Last but not least was Hope Choral Society’s Christmas concert rendered on December 27th in Hope Church. Their excellent performance was given to a full house and also included special numbers — an organ solo by Mr. J. G. Moelker and a vocal solo by Gerald Kuiper.

The oldest member of First Church, Mr. Peter Kooistra, celebrated his 95th birthday on Christmas Day. Sincere congratulations! How about it — other churches — do you have any members whose age tops 95? Or does Mr. Kooistra hold the distinction of being the oldest person in our denomination? 

Rev. G. Vos kindly sent us a program of the dedication of the organ at our Hudsonville church on December 4th. Besides several organ numbers played by Mr. Alvin Ritsema, there was congregational singing, Scripture reading, and a couple vocal solos by Mr. Arnold Dykstra.

Adams St. Mothers’ Club again sponsored a Holland Psalm Sing at First Church on January 10th. Mr. John Faber was the director and Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema organist. These gatherings are especially enjoyed by the older generation, and some of the younger members like to sing the Dutch Psalms too.

Loveland church has accepted a new member into their fellowship. She is Mrs. Vern Huber who comes to them from the Christian Reformed Church of Hudsonville.

Rev. Lanting’s installation was held on December 22nd and he preached his inaugural sermon on December 27th.

From Oak Lawn’s bulletin we found an after-recess topic which was used in their Men’s Society and which some of our Young People’s Societies might like to use — “Did Samson commit suicide when he pulled down the Philistine’s temple?”

Hudsonville seems to be the fastest growing church in our denomination the last few months. Again they lead the parade in the “future conventioneer department”. Mr. and Mrs. Norwin Brower are the parents of a baby girl, and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Holstege, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Miedema, and Mr. and Mrs. Tunis Dykstra have baby boys. Mr. and Mrs. J. Pastoor of Hope church have also been blessed with a son.

Many of our bulletins have little “gems...
of wisdom" on which the congregation may meditate prior to the service. Here is one from Loveland which I'd like to pass on to you:

"Supposing a living and beloved husband dies a violent death. Can his widow love and admire and value the sword, or the pistol, by which her husband lost his life? As little can true believers love sin; for by it, Christ the Bridegroom of their souls, was put to death."...Toplady.

On January 14 a meeting is scheduled for the ladies of Oak Lawn and South Holland for the purpose of organizing a Protestant Reformed School Auxiliary. This calls to mind years ago when the present Adams St. Mothers' Club was a Ladies' Auxiliary. Mrs. C. H. Westra

The Last Sunday of each Month is
SINGSPIRATION NIGHT
the next one
at
JANUARY 31, 1960
HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH
Gerald Kuiper Soloist