December 1960

At The Cross Roads
REV. G. LUBBERS

Belief And Bewilderment
DAVID ENGELSMA

Wasted Votes?
JIM JONKER
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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All material for publication should be addressed to MR. DAVID ENGELSMAN, 846 Thomas, S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to CORRaines STREYLE, 1125 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan. Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area please forward subscription dues to JANET KUNZ, 1131 Arianna St., N. W., Grand Rapids 4, Mich. Subscription price: $3.00 Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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More than once I have stood at the cross-roads in my life of half a century. When in
my memory I let these times pass in review
I can see definite moments in my life where
my life was determined in a certain direc-
tion. And here I could mention many
greater and lesser cross-roads in my life. I
could mention the time, when as a youth
of nineteen years old, I stood at the cross-
road of entering upon my life’s calling to
be a minister of the Word. Or, again, I
could mention the choosing of my life’s
partner whom the Lord brought to me with
His own hand. Then I stood before the
question of either accepting or declining a
certain “call” which was extended to me by
one of our churches. How different one’s
life would be had he done otherwise at the
great and momentous hours of his life.

However, once I stood at the cross-roads
on a meeting of Classis East. It was a Clas-
sis meeting which was to prove that here,
humanly speaking, it was a question of to
be or not to be; it touched the very essence
of the right of existence of our Protestant
Reformed Churches. It was a cross-road,
and there was a parting of the ways be-
tween those who would leave the Protestant
Reformed Churches and those who would
carry on, lift up the banner and be standard
bearers of the Reformed truth.

The matter seemed to be so inconsequen-
tial; it was but a matter of two statements
by Rev. De Wolf. However, this was but
the pin-point of deeper error and departure
from the truth. It was like a large stone in
the ground which is visible just a little
above the ground, but when one tries to
remove it, it proves to be a large and un-
moveable rock, deeply bedded in the
ground. Or, again, it was like a little visible
cancer, which had already large roots and
growth in the entire body.

I stood on that classis and tried to show
that these statements could be interpreted
in a good sense. My “interpretation” was
not unrefomed, but the point I made was
beside the point.

I stood at the cross-road. I prayed much
for grace to do the right thing. I repudi-
ated the statements as unrefomed and heretical.
I was ridiculed, received “fan-mail.” In the
Superior Court I was ridiculed by the at-
torney under the smirking smiles of those
who left us. That was painful to endure.
From a church of twenty-four families only
eight families remained, where I was then
minister. It was at the cross-roads that we
stood then, covenant young people!

The winds of the Evil one blew upon our
little ship; he would sift us as the wheat.

It is now a little more than seven years
ago that these events took place, and that
we stood at that cross-road.

As I ride through the midwest here in
Iowa I sometimes muse upon the things
that happened in my life and in the life of
our Protestant Reformed Churches since
that time and because of it. I think of
the words of the old preacher in our midst, now
almost blind, who wrote at that time that if
the Protestant Reformed Churches would
follow the line of the two ministers, who
spoke officiously in the Netherlands, then
we had better close the doors of our
churches with great spikes, and board up
the windows, for then we would lose all
right and meaning of existence. That min-
ister, who wrote this, spoke more proph-
etically than he perhaps thought. And it
was not popular. Prophets who speak the
truth generally are not.

What do I see when I ride through the
mid-west? At Orange City the church stood
empty for a while. Now it is sold to some
other church-denomination. At Sioux Center
the church stands empty. It was used for a time as a feed store, selling chicken feed. At Edgerton, Minn., where men swore before the most high God in court, that they were the Protestant Reformed Church, these very men walked out of it and the minister left the parsonage, and both parsonage and church stand as mute testimony that the oath in court was perjury! In Redlands, California, there was once a Protestant Reformed Christian School. When I last saw that building it had written upon it in large letters: "Seventh-Day Adventist School." It is a mute testimony that those who would not walk the way of truth come to ruin.

When I think back upon that "cross-road" it is with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow. Sorrow that the good work which was then performed by us was marred with much sin, and joy that the Lord prospered us since that time since we did not depart from His ways.

Did not the Lord give grace to three of our churches, Redlands, South West and South East, Grand Rapids, to buy new properties? None of our churches walked out of their buildings, did they? Did not the Lord cause Christian schools to flourish? And is not Oak Lawn-South Holland building their own school right now? I saw the basement being dug when I passed through South Holland recently. Did not the Lord add new and other churches to our number, blessing the labors of the Home Missionary? And did the Lord not grant us five young ministers during the past seven years?

Young People, I muse on these things with awe. The Lord has been good to us. He was good back at that momentous cross-road. May He continue to be so. And may we never forget to remember His mercies upon us—even in this way. When I think of the fact that in the midst of those who left us, walked the way of sinful schism, there are at the present time four ministers who left their number to join the Christian Reformed Churches, and that there are at least ten more of the remaining fourteen who are ready to go, I think back upon the prophetic words of Prof. Ophoff, "Just nail the doors shut with big spikes and nails" if that is what you want.

Those who would return to us must go back to the "cross-road" in 1953, and not back to incidental cross-roads since that time.

Yes, we stood at the cross-roads.

We shall stand there again. The battle is not against flesh and blood but against the principalities and powers in the air, Satan and all the hosts of the abyss.

May we then have the full armor of God, and, having done all, stand!

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**Books**

**My Picture Story Bible**

(512 pp.) — Dena Korfker — Zondervan Publishing House ($3.95)


The book is attractive and an "eye-catcher" for both young and older. The cover is brilliantly colored with splashes of yellow, crimson, green, purple and other sparkling combinations. This attractiveness is carried throughout the entire book by the vivid, animated pictures scattered therein. *My Picture Story Bible* includes both sketches and full color plates; these pictures realistically portray outstanding Bible characters and their scenic environment.

Another outstanding feature of this book is the list of questions which terminates each Bible story, questions which pertinently point out the main thoughts of each story. *My Picture Story Bible* would be helpful for all grade school teachers, but especially for a primary grade teacher, for the 270 stories are adapted to fit the interest span of a child: they are not cumbersome in length or in detail.

Judging from a cursory reading of the book, the stories seem to be interpreted exactly as they are told in Scripture. The unilateral covenant idea expressed in Scripture is retained in *My Picture Story Bible*. The sovereignty of God and the utter depravity of man is depicted continually.

— Mary Beth Engelsma
just a habit?

AGATHA LUBBERS

With joy and gladness in my soul,
I hear the call to prayer;
Let us go up to God's own house
And how before Him there.

I went to church this morning.
Presumably you, dear young reader, also went. As I sat there this morning listening to the strains of the pre-service music and waited for the services to start I asked myself a series of questions and wondered how many others were asking themselves the same questions on this particular, beautiful Sunday morning in November.

I asked myself a series of questions which began with the question: "Why am I here?"
Am I here because I really feel that I need to come to this place to hear God's Word preached?
Am I here just because my parents say I must come to church or if I'm old enough to make my own decisions just because my parents taught me to go to church?
Am I here because I am afraid of the consequences which might result if I do not go to church?
Am I here because I need a reason to display my new suit of clothing?
Am I here because my presence gives me an opportunity to meet friends and it's an excuse for getting away from home for a while?
Am I here because the minister is one of my favorite pulpits?
Am I here in body only — my soul being occupied in some way or other with many more interesting things?
Am I here just out of force of habit?

It made me shudder to think as I listened to the closing strains of the organ and as the consistory members took their places in our little brick church that there could possibly be reasons for my presence in church this particular morning.

So often I had heard that nothing should be done out of "custom or superstition"; in particular the things which concerned the service of the covenant God.

Twenty-five hundred or more times I have gone to church and have each time heard the same message — Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; it is He that saves from all sin and death.

For two thousand years weary pilgrims have wended their way to hear the Word of God proclaimed and each time the message has been the same and it has been a message that the saints of all ages have never tired of hearing — Jesus Christ saves.

What a habit!
That's right! Going to church is a habit but it's the best habit one can possibly form.

Because our presence in church each Sunday is such a good habit it is much more than a habit. It is basically an act of faith. The wonder is that there is no reason for this faith except our belief in the existence of a saving God.

That is why Paul can say, when speaking concerning the heart of the Gospel: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith also vain. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

We stand within thy sacred walls,
O Zion blessed for age
Wherein the people of the Lord
United homage pay.

They come to learn Jehovah's will,
His mighty deeds to own,
For there is judgment's royal seat
Messiah's kingly throne.
BELIEF AND BEWILDERMENT

Christmas comes easily nowadays. The Christmas season is a long slide which skids us, slowly enough at first, into the November region of long-term layaway, then with increasing velocity, through the early December waste lands of Yuletide Cards and Xmas Trees, and finally, having plummeted us with frenzied speed through Woolworth's maze and a party's craze, slams us down on the other side of Christmas complete with buzzing head and queasy stomach. And the feeling that we missed it.

The means with which we commemorate the Happening of December 25—not the historical day, you know—are relatively unimportant. The early Christians fasted, we lean toward feasting. Neither can claim inherent and ultimate rightness because of the manner of celebration. Both easily become victims of the same danger, that of substituting the way in which Christmas is celebrated for the fact of Christmas and its meaning. The socialite who ennemishes herself in the intricacies of how to eat, using seven different forks for seven different foods and daintily cocking her pinky skyward, pays little or no attention to the quality of the food. The Christian who involves himself overmuch with presents, decorations, and gigantic turkeys and the Christian who concerns himself only with abstaining from food altogether, remain oblivious of the birth of Christ and its soul-shaking implications.

This type of seduction away from a true and beautiful celebration of Christmas poses as a serious threat to Christians. But it is not the only one. There are some men, the "enlightened" of the age, who view with scorn the December antics of their fellows. We can share that derision, although tempered with a touch of sadness, as regards the greater part of those who outwardly and frantically celebrate Christmas. Christmas demands belief in the birth of the Divine Son of God by a virgin, not a belief in Santa and sleighbells. And the mass of humans who go all agog at Christmas has not the faintest idea of this reality. Unfortunately, the "enlightened" scoffers are not merely a menace to the bewildered folk who go through all the motions of Christmas while stupidly ignorant of its essence. They menace Christianity itself. They know perfectly well what Christianity and its holidays are based upon. This basis is the object of their learned and scientific demolition.

One of the most brilliant and outspoken of these critics of Christ and His Church is the British scientist, Julian Huxley. "There is a sharp conflict between science and Christian theology. One is destined to replace the other," pronounces Sir Julian. The loser, of course, is Christianity. Psychological insight plainly reveals, for Huxley, that Christianity is but a crutch for mental weaklings. As such, its purpose is disappearing. Science in its thorough fact-finding leaves no room for miracles, least of all for the miracle of a child, and God at that, produced solely from a female parent. The conclusion can only be that Christians forsake their exposed farcical doctrines and transfer their affections to science. Such an attack has a good deal of influence upon the Christian student—which in the broad sense includes all who read—especially, in this scientific era.

Now, Huxley's absolute disjunction between science and theology is, I feel, a false one. Nor does the Protestant Reformed student face such a "choose you this day." This is a subject for another article. However, there need not be, there may not be any intellectual cringing on our part as we concentrate upon the birth of the Savior. For we have to do here with another type...

1) Quoted from the science section of the August 1, 1960 issue of Time magazine. Huxley's would-be refuter, in the same story, is less than convincing. Robert E. D. Clark, however, does a thorough job of exposing Huxley's unscientific prejudices in his excellent defense of Christianity, Scientific Rationalism and Christian Faith.
of bewildermcnt. Huxley and his scientific iconoclasts are entitled to the observation that modern science has never encountered nor recorded a virgin birth. Christians do not expect that they ever will. What scientists are not entitled to say is that there never was any such birth. The scientific recourse to natural law is futile. Christians admit as well as scientists that there is a natural law—an observing of how things happen—according to which two parents are needed for birth of a child. The difference resolves itself into opposite basic assumptions, beliefs, if you please, about natural law. One assumes that the natural is the highest possible point of reference; the other believes it to be the work of transcendent God and finds the reliability of natural law in that belief. Scientists, claims the Christian, do not create natural law, they discover and perceive it. The regularity in the natural order does not negate the miraculous. Both owe their existence to the same Maker, and both reveal His purpose by their relation to each other.

If one takes for granted, as do most Bible-rejecting scholars, that nature and its laws are “the whole show,” self-existent and inviolable, he must regard the Incarnation as a monstrous hoax. But for one who believes that the natural was installed and is maintained by the Divine Creator, the birth of Christ is the Central Fact. The entire natural order receives its meaning from the Cataclysmic Invasion in Bethlehem, not an invasion by a resisted intruder but the long-awaited and eagerly desired Arrival of the Owner.

The scholar who heroically sheds Christianity in order to put on “scientific objectivity” is a scholar doomed to answer “What?” and “How?” and never to answer “Why?” He has “heroically” thrown away the key to science and reserved for himself a hobby pin. He may scratch a few tumblers in his life time, but the Door remains shut.

Christmas can not come easily for Christians aware of their opposition. A bewildered race may muddy up the road with its meaningless rituals or dynamite it with false assumptions but belief neither slips nor turns aside.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise . . . .”

David J. Engelsma

TRUTH vs. ERROR

A Letter to a “Pentecostal”

about: SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Rev. R. C. Harbach

Dear George:

My purpose in writing you at this time is to set down some thoughts on, “Edifying the Church by a Right Use of Gifts.” To do this I would like to consider with you the 14th chapter of First Corinthians, verse by verse. But first, let us understand this chapter in its connection with the preceding, the great Love Chapter (13). The gifts of the Spirit to the Church are mentioned and enlarged upon in Chapter 12, and we are informed at the end of that chapter (v. 28) that of all the gifts, the gift of tongues is last in importance. Then Paul closes that chapter saying, “Covet the best gifts; and yet I show you a more excellent way.” That more excellent way appears throughout Chapter 13 as Love. He concludes that chapter with, “the greatest of these (faith, hope and love) is love!” Then the chapter I would now examine with you begins, “follow after love.” It is necessary to have the love of God in our hearts in order to
properly exercise the spiritual gifts He exhorts us to desire. Paul now deals with the gift of tongues; but just by the way. The Corinthians had overestimated that gift; and he here corrects that mistake. Prophecy is more to be desired; it is most needful, and more fruitful. The gift of tongues is greatly inferior to the gift of prophecy.

What is prophecy? The gift and ability to proclaim the Word of God to others to their edification, exhortation and comfort (14:3). What is the gift of tongues? It has nothing to do with the language which will be spoken in heaven, whatever that will be. It is not the ability to speak in a non-human language. Nor is it whisperings, mutterings, nor a yiddish-like conglomeration from many languages. Nor cries, shouts and strange combinations of words uttered in an excited state at a "revival" meeting. But, rather, is the ability to speak a word of edification in a foreign tongue. It is, furthermore, a speech, while according to the Word of God, directed not to the church, but to God (14:2). Therefore it becomes *edification* only when interpreted.

V. 2. "For," the reason for that commanded in verse 1; "he that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but the Spirit he speaketh mysteries" (ASV). To speak in the Spirit is to speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit; and therefore always according to the Word of God, for the Spirit does not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears from the Father (Jn. 14:14). These "mysteries" are not the secrets of occult religions, magic or astrology; but in Scripture the reference is to divine truth once hidden to His people but now revealed. Hence, the "mysteries" of the Christian faith are the same as the wonderful things of God" (Ac. 2:11). The "wonderful things" (words) were the ability to preach the Gospel to foreigners in their own native languages. "Pentecostals" today do not have this ability, for "Pentecostal" missions must study their foreign languages as much as anyone else before they can preach to the natives.

V. 3, "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation and consolation" (ASV). Edification is the presentation of the truth of the Gospel in such a way as to strengthen and increase our faith and spiritual life. This is done by instruction in the teaching of Scripture, and by indoctrination in the system of truth contained in the Scripture. We are edified when we are enabled to know and grasp what is presented to us in the preaching and hearing of the Word of God, and so to receive it as to make it our own by faith.

Exhortation is the admonition of the Gospel which indicates the way the Christian must live, the whole conduct of his life. Exhortation is well illustrated in such passages of Scripture as Romans 12 through 16, Ephesians 4-6, and Colossians 3-4. Consolation is the consolatory discourse of the New Testament calculated to comfort the Christian in his trials, persecutions and afflictions endured in every segment of life, and how in the midst of an evil world he must face hostility, temptation and sin, fighting the good fight of faith by the grace of God.

V. 4, "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church" (ASV). This reveals just how restricted speaking with tongues is: it is not edifying (until interpreted), admonitory or consolatory (to the church). It is limited to: (a) prayer (including blessing and giving of thanks), (b) singing. But prophesy covers a much wider field of instruction: edification, exhortation, admonition and consolation, all of which is directed to the church. The "tongue" is directed to God only. It should also be noted that the "edifieth himself" means that he is not in an ecstatic state, but in the normal intellectual state as when one is engaged in discussion or conversation (cf. v. 32).

V. 5, "Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues . . . ." The difference between speaking in tongues and prophesying is, admittedly, not to be stressed in such a way as altogether to deny speaking in a tongue. Paul does not admonish not to speak in a tongue at all. But because of the inferiority of the speaking in tongues, such speaking is not to be overrated to the expense of and under-rating of
prophesying. The speaking in tongues is on a lower level than prophesying. The Corinthians overlooked this fact in their interest to gain popularity and greatness. The truth is that in the proper use of the gift of prophecy lies true greatness. For “greater is he that prophesieth.” The Corinthian Church had the gift of tongues, but it gave the Apostle Paul more trouble than any other church. For this reason he directs them to “a more excellent way” (12:31), i.e., love and edification through prophecy.

V. 6, “But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching?” Paul refers to his plan to visit the Corinthians sometime. When he does so, will he come speaking only in tongues? That would accomplish very little. But if in visiting them Paul should not speak in tongues at all, they would miss nothing. True spiritual profit comes not by any speaking in tongues, but in the forms of Christian discourse called revelation, knowledge, prophecy and teaching (doctrine). None of these forms of edification was ever spoken in a tongue, a foreign language, but was always spoken in the language of hearers. Peter, the preacher at Pentecost, where speaking with tongues first occurred, did not preach in tongues, but in the vernacular of the people. The highest function of the Church, preaching, was never, and is never done in a foreign tongue, but in the language of the hearers. Tongues were employed to speak to God in prayer, praise, blessing and thanksgiving. This is all a form of prayer.

It is important to understand the meaning of these four forms of edification. The first two, “revelation” and “knowledge,” go together: they are possessions. The speaker has these. The last two, “prophesying” and “teaching,” also go together: they are activities. The speaker does these things. The speaker must have the “revelation” in order to “prophesy,” and he must have the “knowledge” in order to “teach.” The teaching stands on the basis of Scripture knowledge, and the prophesying is made out of the revelation received from God through Christ (Gal. 1:1, 11f). This is the way edification and profit come to the church.

Vv. 7-8, “Though soulless instruments furnish a sound, be it pipe or harp, unless they furnish a distinction in the notes, how shall what is piped or what is harped be known? For moreover if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?” (Lenski).

V. 9, “And so with you; if with the tongue you fail to utter intelligible words, how will people know what you are saying? You will be talking to the winds” (Weymouth). Speaking in tongues merely makes a sound in the hearer’s ears, but “revelation” and “knowledge” convey understanding, furnish distinct speech and intelligible discourse. Without these factors, edification does not obtain.

V. 15, “I will pray with the (my own human) spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.” The human spirit moves in prayer under the guiding principle of the Holy Spirit. The controlling principle is the understanding. The moving principle of the Holy Spirit, and the controlling principle of our God-given understanding (1 Jn. 5:20) are, in the regenerated believer, combined: so that under the guidance of the Spirit he can speak so as to be intelligible to others. The Spirit never moves anyone to speak in any other way. “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (v. 32, 33a).

V. 16, “Otherwise, if you bless God in spirit only (as would be the case in a tongues proclamation), how shall any one who lacks the gift say ‘Amen’ to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you mean?” (Weymouth). This had sometimes been my experience here at Lynden when one of the consistory members prayed before the worship service in the Holland language; and although this was prayer with and for the minister, I could not properly say “Amen” to these prayers, for none were interpreted. However, they were not offered to the Lord before the church, but aside, privately, so that there was no infraction of any rules in 1 Corinthians 14.

V. 17, “For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified” (ASV). There is nothing against the use of “tongues” in private devotions. That is a good place for
them. Yet Paul says, v. 19, "in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (ASV).

V. 27, "If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn: and let one interpret" (ASV). Here is the Scripture rule which limits speaking with tongues in the church. When this was done, no more than three instances of it were permitted in one regular church service; and each one had to go by turn, and in every case an interpretation had to be furnished. Speaking in tongues was never permitted to take up the time of an entire meeting; nor was it allowed to leave little or no time for the preaching.

But now in this day of the Church "the gift of tongues" has ceased. Why so? For the same reason that the great miracles of Moses in the land of Egypt, and in the wilderness ceased; they had accomplished their purpose. The manna and the pillar of cloud were also withdrawn when the purpose for which they had been given was accomplished. And Israel never had, nor attempted to have, a "second Sinai." Nor is the Church to seek a "second Pentecost." Be satisfied with good preaching from the Word of God. That alone will bring you peace (1 Cor. 14:33).

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**PENCILS AND CHALK**

**The science of TEACHING**

**DON DOEZEMA**

The subject that prompted this particular discussion at the teacher's convention in October, was "The Teaching of Science." Now, at first glance these two subjects do not seem to be very closely related, to say the least. What does the "science of teaching" have to do with the "teaching of science?" But after further consideration, it becomes apparent that you can not have one without the other. One cannot be successful in the teaching of science, or any other subject for that matter, if he knows nothing of the science of teaching. To be an effective teacher one must have a scientific classroom technique.

The truth is (and this is straight from the horse's mouth) that many teachers don't. The trouble with too many teachers is that they shut themselves up in their rooms and let the world go by. And that's exactly what happens. The world does go by, leaving these habit-bound instructors to expound their dogma to nodding heads. One should evaluate his teaching occasionally. "Are the students interested in their work? If not, why not? Do you take field trips? Do you use motion pictures? Is your technical material up to date? Or do you, perhaps, talk too much?" These are all questions that are important today.

In the past, stress has been laid upon the attainment of special skills and the memorization of facts in the fields of arithmetic, geography, or spelling. These facts would be learned by rote and repeated automatically from memory. But content knowledge should be a secondary objective. Students must learn to apply their knowledge to new situations and strange conditions. Mere rote learning of classroom subject matter is insufficient. We must train students to think accurately; to reason from premise to conclusion. We educate in the fullest sense only when we encourage creative instinct, originality and self-expression in the student. Certainly the habits of mind thus acquired will remain with students long after the subject matter of the textbook is forgotten.

Teachers have long been aware of the distaste of many children for schoolwork
under rigid dictation. Children did not seem to learn what was set before them with a zeal that showed real interest. Many resentful pupils became discipline problems. And discipline, applied by experts (experts in the field of discipline, that is) produced little result other than increased dislike of both subject matter and instructor. Progressive thinkers in the field of education in recent years have realized the unwholesomeness of such a compulsory attitude in the classroom. Instead of dictating orders, writing them on the board, or reading them from a text, the instructor should use a more suggestive form in bringing about discussion of the subject to be considered. Children can be easily led, but driven with difficulty. Little minds should be encouraged to think and reason. By thinking, reasoning, and working for himself, the child's interest is aroused. Then discipline becomes practically unknown, or at least lessened to a large extent. For busy children are not bad children.

There is one danger, however, that we should guard against, namely, that of so sugar-coating the material that we lose sight of training in actual mastery. Good old-fashioned drill is still a part of good teaching. There are plenty of times when we must say to the students, "Now here are some facts we must know before we can proceed with our investigation, so buckle down and learn them." But there must be a limit to lecturing at any grade level, whether it be first grade or college. College students, by the way, will often praise and popularize a lecturer who spends much time and effort in order to prepare and present an interesting lecture, and yet they fail to master the subject matter. So a good lecturer may in a sense prove to be a poor teacher. Lectures are of value, of course, and should be used by all teachers in moderation but we must remember that students learn by doing.

It is not surprising that new teachers lean toward the lecture method. This is the kind of teaching to which they have been exposed for the past four years. But, there is a psychological reason also, I suspect, for leaning to the lecture method. That is the desire of the inexperienced teacher to impress his audience with a flow of words. Young listeners, awed by such a display of wisdom (supposedly), listen in rapt attention. The teacher notices this, of course, and having thus felt the power of his vocal cords, he is on his way to a semester of straight lectures with inevitable results.

But young teachers are not the only offenders. More experienced ones, too (or should I say, more experienced ones especially), talk too much, with a deadening effect on the mental activity of the students before them. Someone has aptly said that the "lecture method is a process of transferring the content of the professor's notebook to those of his students without its passing through the head of either." Perhaps there is more than just a little truth in this witticism. Working with a given subject or grade level for some years, it is only natural that the instructor should acquire a fund of knowledge which may be readily transmitted to others. Maybe pet stories have been interspersed here and there, which have proven to be effective at previous presentations. I wonder what the teacher would think if he only knew that some of his students had been forewarned as to when to expect these stories and possibly even coached as to the psychological moment at which to laugh by those who have heard them generations before. Could anything be less conducive to genuine accomplishment and mastery. Yet in thousands of schoolrooms throughout the country such situations may be duplicated.

It must be remembered that pupils will learn only to the extent to which they are interested. They may go through the motions of learning: listen attentively, take copious notes, write up reports, and mechanically perform the routine necessary for completion of the course but they don't really learn anything; if they are not interested. Since we are teaching children, not special sciences, we must be sure to arouse and sustain interest. Boys and girls, being human, are interested in themselves and in other things insofar as they affect their own well-being. Show the students why you wish them to study the subject matter, convince them of the practical application to their daily lives and you will have little difficulty in obtaining concentration. Boys and girls assimilate readily enough when they realize the personal value of what they must learn.
OF all the months of the year none has greater significance for the church of God, has more to say to us, carries with it more sentiment, than this month of December, which is with us once again. How soon! How time does fly!

First, it is the month wherein we commemorate that most blessed of all events, the birth of your Lord Jesus Christ, the coming of God’s eternal Son into our flesh to redeem us from sin and to exalt us to heavenly glory, the fulfilment of that ancient yet wondrously vivid prophecy, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” How amazing beyond all human comprehension! How worthy of all the joy and adoration God’s church can possibly express! December speaks to us, first and always, of Christmas.

However, December also comes to us with a message of an altogether different nature—the message of the end. It is the last month of the year and as such brings with it the year’s last week, last day, last hour. What week of the year is like that last week, beginning with Christmas and ending with the final minute of the entire year? It is of the latter that we are thinking now.

The end of the year speaks of the end of all things, does it not? It reminds us of the end of our entire lives, which may come who knows how soon. Perhaps it is December also in this respect for you or me. It speaks too of the end of this entire dispensation, the world and all it contains. Presently the day will dawn when the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will make an end forever of all present things. So many things seem to indicate that in this respect, as far as the calendar of all history is concerned, we are certainly in the month of December. Wars and rumors of wars, confusion and distrust among the nations, amazing inventions and developments in every sphere of human endeavor, the obvious awakening of the nations at the four corners of the earth, the world’s growing population, human accomplishments along military and medical and cultural lines—all these and many more things give great emphasis to the words of the apostle, “Little children, it is the last hour.”

The carnal world does not want to think about these things. All it craves on New Year’s Eve is a new lease on life, a new year wherein to sin and seek the satisfaction of the flesh. Therefore it spends the year’s last evening as it does—in revelry and rioting, drunkenness and hilarity such as marks no other evening of the entire year.

The church of Christ, however, would face reality and spend this same evening, the last of the year, in solemn contemplation and worship.

The day of the Lord will come, says Peter, as a thief in the night.

Then great and terrible things will take place in and with all God’s present creation. Of course they will, for that day of the Lord Christ, the “December 31” of all history, will be the day of God; the day wherein our covenant Jehovah will manifest Himself in all His power and glory; the day wherein the counsel of God will be realized with respect to all things, God’s tabernacle with men will be made perfect, and all that is of the world and sin will be destroyed forever.

You’ve read what Scripture has to say about those things that will come to pass in that day. “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and
the works that are therein shall be burned up.” II Peter 3:10. Isaiah saw it more than 2500 years ago in prophetic vision and he writes, “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as a leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.” Is. 34:4.

Indeed, great and terrible things will take place in that day, when the Maker of the atom Himself will do the splitting and all present things will be no more. The very heavens, the firmament and all it contains, the sun and the moon and the stars, all will be set ablaze and consumed with fire. Isn’t it tremendous? Also the earth and all it contains, in fact the very elements whereof all present things are composed, shall be set on fire and burned up. Everything that belongs to this present creation shall disappear forever.

“All these things shall be dissolved.” All the monuments of human labor and ingenuity. All the accomplishments of art and science, the poet and the sculptor. All that eye can see and ear can hear and the hand can touch. Everything!

But is this all? Is there no more? Is total dissolution all we look for in that day of Christ? Then, surely, the thought of the end would be only terrible-utterly so. Will nothing take the place of all these present things? Oh, indeed, something will; something inconceivably great; a new heaven and earth. We are not annihilationists. We look for an entirely new creation. In fact, it is only with a view to the latter that this final dissolution of all present things must take place. In that new heaven and earth only righteousness will dwell. How wonderful! There all will be perfect and heavenly. That new creation will not be a glorified version of this present creation. All will be different, new, heavenly, spiritual, glorious. There the tabernacle of God will be with men forever. There all tears will be wiped from our eyes, we shall see face to face. know as we are known, and walk and talk with our covenant God, in Jesus Christ, in endless perfection.

No, we cannot comprehend these things now, but we somewhat sense the glory of it all, do we not?

Of all these things we are reminded anew as we approach the end of another year.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?”

That question is pertinent. How should all this reflect itself in our lives, our attitude and conduct?

Looking, first of all, at these present things and their ultimate dissolution in the day of Christ, what should be our attitude? Shall we cling to these things, set our hearts on them, put our trust in them, live for them only, sacrifice all we are and have for them? That the natural man does – the fool! Ought we to be such manner of persons? God forbid! No. we shall not desire this present life. Indeed, we have a life to live here, a duty to perform, and to the execution of that task we shall set ourselves with all the consecration to duty of the conscientious Christian. But we shall not set our hearts on “these things.” We shall labor and plan, plow and sow as in a world that will soon be no more.

“What manner of persons ought we to be?” We ought to be a people that are looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, that are anticipating that day as the hour of our complete deliverance, that are looking for their Savior God as children look for their father to come home from work at night. And looking for that day we should sanctify ourselves, eschew all that is of sin and this present wicked world and walk in a new and holy life.

Then all will be well and we shall have nothing to fear. Then we shall be confirmed in the assurance that the new heaven and earth will also be our dwelling place forever. Then we can think of the end of all things. not with regret, but with hope and anticipation, knowing that the impending dissolution of all present things will be for us the beginning of that which is eternal and heavenly. In that hope we may join the church of all ages in that anthem of blessed expectation:

“When I in righteousness at last
Thy glorious face shall see.
Then, then I shall be satisfied.”

BEACON LIGHTS

Eleven
Many people have the idea that after one makes profession of faith, he is free from all catechetical instruction. Is this idea right? Is a post confession catechism class necessary? The Senior Society of First Church is in the opinion that a post confession class is a definite necessity. It not only increases our knowledge of the Almighty God, but also makes us more capable as active members of the Church.

We start catechism classes as small children. We become acquainted with the history of the Bible and are taught the simplest truths which God reveals in Scripture. As we grow older, our instruction passes from these simple Bible stories to the doctrines of the Bible. These doctrines are of a more profound nature and not always easily understandable. Having become acquainted with these doctrines and having recognized in our hearts that it is the pure truth, we make public confession of our faith. Many people make this their last step. Why? The person certainly does not have all the knowledge he can learn about the Church and about the Scriptures. At best he has only a basic knowledge of the Scriptures. It is not to be implied here that one must be a theologian before he can make confession of faith. When a person has made a sincere decision in his heart to make confession, even though he may have only a knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Church, he is permitted to make this confession of faith to the public. But because he has only this small amount of knowledge, he should continue to learn and to increase this knowledge. He can do this on Sundays, listening to the Word of God. But he can also increase his knowledge and become more and more spiritually alive in Christ, if he attends catechism classes after confession. Do not interpret that we exclude church, then. Definitely not!

The preaching of the Word of God always presupposes a certain amount of knowledge. This is why we attend catechism before making confession and why we should attend catechism after confession. It certainly is true that a person can be spiritually benefited from the preaching with only the knowledge he received in pre-confession catechism classes. But, God commands us to continually strive after Him, to seek His guidance and to learn more about Him. With a still greater knowledge of God and His revelation, think how we can be still more spiritually benefited and enjoy far greater the riches of grace found in the preaching.

Because we have made confession of faith, we take a more active part in the Church. We have the right to hold office in the Church; we are allowed to vote for office bearers and ministers of the gospel; we have the obligation to make use of the means of grace. A post confession class makes its members more capable of performing the tasks which have been placed before them. They are better prepared to accept the responsibilities in the true Church.

There is no age when catechism should cease. Remember, young people, the better preparation we have when we meet the preaching of God's Word, the more we will grow spiritually by hearing it and the greater will be our strength in defending it. Let us heed the command of God to "continue in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:14-17).

dave ondersma
the wasted votes

JIM JONKER

By the time you read this article, Americans will have elected a new president. And, they will have wasted many votes in the process. I don't mean to imply that a vote for the loser was a wasted vote. But many votes, for either the loser or the winner, have gone to waste. This is not due to any fault on the part of the voters. Rather, the blame lies in our system of electing the chief executive.

Many people think that the man who receives the most votes is the man who is elected. Generally speaking, this is true, but it is an oversimplification. Popular votes, i.e., the votes of the people in general, usually do elect the president, but only indirectly. Those of you who voted on November 8 perhaps thought you were voting for Nixon or Kennedy. Actually, you were not. You voted for certain men whose names you did not even know. You voted, not for a president, but for presidential electors. This is because the President of the United States, although indirectly elected by the people, is really chosen by the electoral college.

Some of you undoubtedly remember from your Civics or Government classes in school how this system works. Each party in each state appoints men to represent their party as members of the electoral college. The number of men that each party appoints in a given state is equal to the number of men that represent that state in Congress. For example, Michigan, with a representation of 20 in Congress, has 20 electors from each party, or 20 electoral votes. These men are the men for whom you vote, whom you elect to the electoral college. They in turn cast their votes for the president and vice-president. Since the members of both houses of Congress total 538, the candidate who will win must receive a majority of the 538 electoral votes, gathering 269 or more.

At first glance, this system may seem to be very efficient and even very democratic. After all, we elect men who represent us and vote for our president. But look a little closer. The problem lies in this fact: no state can split its electoral vote. Hence, if 55% of Michigan voters vote for Kennedy and 45% of them vote for Nixon, 20 Democrat electors will gain the electoral college and Kennedy will receive Michigan's 20 electoral votes. He will get 100% of Michigan's voting power, though he gained only 55% of its popular vote. The Republican vote is entirely wasted. For all practical purposes, Kennedy might just as well have gotten every single vote in Michigan. If a candidate does not get over half of a state’s popular vote, he might as well have gotten no votes there at all. No one need state that this is unfair and contrary to democratic principles.

Notice another problem that could result from this system. A man can receive the majority of the electoral votes and win the election, while getting only a minority of the popular vote. True, this is not often the case. But four presidents have been elected by a minority; two of them had opponents who gained more popular votes than they
did. How can this happen? A man can carry the big states by a small margin, and lose the small states by a big margin, thus getting the required electoral votes while losing the popular votes.

Let us take a hypothetical situation with two states to show how this works. Michigan has 20 electoral votes; Iowa has 10. Suppose that Michigan has 1,000,000 voters and Iowa has 500,000. Suppose further that 600,000 Michigan voters go Democrat while only 100,000 Iowans make this mistake. This would mean that the Democratic candidate would receive 700,000 popular votes. His opponent would receive the remaining 800,000 votes in the two states. Which man has the most votes? The Republican does. But if this trend continues in the other states, which man will be elected? The Democrat will, since he has taken Michigan’s 20 electoral votes and has a 20-10 margin over his Republican opponent.

This does not usually happen. But it has happened before and can happen again. Yet, the American people show amazing lethargy to tackle this problem. For almost 200 years this faulty system has been operating. We hope that soon the periodic cries for electoral reform will gain enough strength to give the American people their right to choose their president by their votes.

We as Christians, called to “other-worldliness,” too often neglect to take an active part in this world of which we are a part. be it only as pilgrims and strangers. We speak of a world and life view, applicable to all spheres in this present creation. Perhaps we should make our deeds give evidence to our words.

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE

Book of REVELATION

by REV. H. HOEKSEMA

Lesson XV (Revelation 7:9-17) The Innumerable Throng

1. Vs. 9. “After this I beheld”, etc. a. The words indicate that another vision is introduced. In this vision John beholds (1) “a great multitude, which no man could number.” This is evidently the fulfillment of the promise concerning Abraham’s seed, Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17. (2) “of all nations (peoples from the viewpoint of racial affinity) and kindreds (tribes, families), and peoples (nations from the

Fourteen

BEACON LIGHTS
viewpoint of their political unity), and tongues” (nations from the viewpoint of language, custom etc.). The fourfold division points to the universality of this throng. (3) “stood before the throne and before the Lamb.” See chs. 4, 5. That they stand before the throne and the Lamb pictures them as servants, ready to serve. They are in heavenly glory. (4) “clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands”, the robes symbolizing perfect righteousness, holiness, victory; the palms are also symbols of victory that is celebrated with festive joy. b. The question is: what is the relation of this great throng to the 144,000 of the first part of this chapter? (1) According to some, the fact that here a great throng is mentioned proves that this is a different group: those are the saved from the Jews, these from the Gentiles. (2) But note (a) That the relation between the two visions is evidently such that in this vision is revealed the ultimate fruit of the sealing mentioned in the first vision: they were sealed unto this glory. (b) That this throng comes out of the great tribulation (vs. 14) which evidently required their being sealed. (c) That this is the realization of the promise to Abraham. (d) That the difference in number can easily be accounted for by the fact that this throng represents the final sum-total of all the sealed of all ages. (3) Hence, we conclude that these are the same as the sealed of the first vision; only here we see them in glory.

2. Vs. 10: a. “And cried with a loud voice”, loud, not only because it was a great throng, but also because it is expressive of a mighty impulse. b. “Salvation (here used without limitation: all the work of God whereby we are delivered from sin and death unto heavenly glory) to our God which sitteth upon the throne (the only Sovereign, Who is our God) and to the Lamb” (i.e. through Him as Mediator). Note here that in glory the work of salvation is completely and unconditionally ascribed to God alone.

3. Vss. 11, 12: a. “And all the angels” etc. They stood round about the throne (see ch. 5:11), but now they fall down in worship and respond to the praise of God by the Church. “Saying, Amen (solemnly corroborating the adoration by the Church) blessing (speaking well of) and glory (the radiation of infinite virtue) and wisdom (the power to adapt all things to the highest purpose) and thanksgiving (the acknowledgment of God’s goodness) and honor (the acknowledgment of God’s ethical worth) and power (the ability to accomplish) and might” (strength, omnipotence). Note here the number seven. All this is ascribed to “our God for ever and ever”. And it is ascribed to Him exclusively, for in the original the article is used with every single term: the blessing and the glory and the wisdom, etc.

4. Vss. 13-17. These verses describe the blessed state of this great multitude. a. This is occasioned by a question by one of the elders: “Who (R. V.) are they, and whence came they?” One of the elders asks this question because he is a representative of the Church. And he asks the question because he intends to explain. John replies: “My Lord, (R.V.) thou knowest”. vss. 13, 14a. b. Their description: (1) That the present tense is used up to vs. 15b (the viewpoint of the vision: they are redeemed and in glory), from there on the future tense (the viewpoint of reality, and therefore of the promise). (2) They came out of the great tribulation. The last tribulation (Matt. 24:21) is meant, yet as representative of all tribulation. (3) They washed their robes (by faith) and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (the sole cause of their righteousness). (4) Therefore (because their robes are white and were kept white even through tribulation) they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple (as priests: in God’s house, in continuous service). c. Their blessedness, vss. 15b-17: (1) The chief cause of their blessedness is that “he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them (covenant fellowship with their sovereign God). (2) They are free from all kinds of want (hunger and thirst) and from all suffering (heat of the sun or any heat). (3) The Lamb (as the eternal Mediator) which is in the midst of the throne (see ch. 5) shall fully satisfy them with the bread and water of life. (4) And God shall fully comfort them for all their sorrow (wipe away all tears from their eyes).
The new trio for Creston is comprised of: Revs. R. Veldman, R. Harbach, and A. Mulder.

* * *

In Oak Lawn, Mr. Robert Haak, and Mr. Donald Haak made confession of faith on November 27.
In Hudsonville, also on November 27, the following confessed their faith: Elaine Holstege, Cathryn Huizinga, Marvin Kamps, Jane Kuiper, Karen Lems, Carolyn Lubbers, and Robert Vander Kooi.

* * *

This month's Future Conventioners include:
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. D. VandenBerg of Southeast.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. R. Ezinga of Southeast.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. S. VanderWal of Southeast.
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Vis of Oak Lawn.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lubbers of Hudsonville.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. P. Sietstra of Hull.
A daughter born to Rev. and Mrs. J. Kanttering of Hull.
I see the girls are running way ahead of the boys again this month.

* * *

Creston's Young People's Society invited the entire congregation to their October 25th meeting. Their after-recess program features a talk by Rev. G. Lubbers on his missionary activities.

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Here's a serviceman's change of address as listed in First's bulletin: Pvt. Arthur Vander Meer, US 55691420, Co. D., 1st ARB, 50th Inf., 2nd AD, Fort Hood, Texas.

* * *

From Hull we hear that Alvin Kooker, who is in the National Guard, left on September 24 for six months of active service. His address is: Ret. Alvin J. Kooker, NG 26786146, Co. E, 2nd Bn., 2nd TRB, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.
Let's not forget our servicemen. I'm sure a line from you would be appreciated.

* * *

On November 3, the children of Hope School gave a Reformation Day Program in the auditorium of First Church. The theme of their program was "Children of the Reformation."

* * *

Called Home: Mr. Martin Boer, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Boer of Hull.
Mrs. Sadie Reitsma, also of Hull.

* * *

On Thursday evening, November 10, a Dedication Program was held in our new Southeast Protestant Reformed Church building. The dedicatory address was given by Rev. R. Veldman, and Rev. C. Hanco was sent by Classis East to convey its greetings. Community singing, the Sunday School Band, a vocal solo, an organ solo, and a history of the church rounded out the program. Afterwards refreshments were served.
Wedding Bells rang on October 28 for Miss Marcia Ann De Young and Mr. Leonard Holstege of Hudsonville.

Ministers of several of our smaller congregations utilize the excess space on their bulletins with pithy statements and thought-provoking quotations from various writers. Here's a sample of one from Loveland: "As the wicked are hurt by the best things, so the godly are bettered by the worst."

- Toplady

Kalamazoo's bulletin announces: "Our parsonage property now features a completed garage. Willing hands and generous contributions made this possible. Please accept grateful appreciation from the pastor and his family."

The Board of the Association for Protestant Reformed Education (Oak Lawn-South Holland) conducted a financial drive during the week of November 21. Accompanying their bulletins on the previous Sunday was a letter containing an allegory which aptly described how an impossible task facing one person becomes entirely possible through united effort.

On November 15th the Young People's Annual Fall Mass meeting was held at First Church. Rev. C. Hanko spoke on "The Reformation in Holland," tracing the history of the Reformed Church in Holland from its inception to the present day. The after-recess program featured a debate on the subject: Resolved— that formal Bible instruction is the calling of the school. Agatha Lubbers and Jim Jonker were the participants.

In response to last month's plea for news, I received the following report from Mr. H. Vander Waal of the Radio Committee of First Church which I'd like to share with you all:

Many of our young people may find it interesting to learn that Rev. H. Hoeksema has begun his 20th year of Radio Ministry this month. In October, 1941, the pastor of First Church began preaching the Infallible Word of God through means of the air waves. At that time our radio program was called "The Protestant Reformed Hour." Although the name of the program has been changed, the proclamation of the Word has always been— "God is God" and remains to this date—distinctively Reformed.

Our readers will be interested to know that Rev. Hoeksema is currently treating chapters 5 and 6 of the book of Revelation. For those who live in areas not reached by our broadcasting outlets, free copies of every sermon can be obtained by writing to— The Reformed Witness Hour, P. O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Mich.

The Men's Society of our Holland congregation sponsored a lecture on October 27 by Rev. G. Lubbers, entitled, "God's Insoluble Marriage Ordinance."

Membership papers of Mr. Bernard Zandstra were transferred from South Holland to Southeast Church; Mr. and Mrs. James Pastoor and son, from Hope to Southeast; Mr. Bertus Docter from Southeast to South Holland; Mr. Albert Buijt from Oak Lawn to South Holland; Mr. Lambert Schut from Hudsonville to Southwest. Oak Lawn also welcomed Mr. G. Vroom from the Reformed Church of Lansing, Ill. Southeast also welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Peter Passchier and six children from the American Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

On November 13 Loveland's Young People sponsored a Singpiration, and the same evening the Mr. and Mrs. Society of Southeast sponsored a Hymn Sing to raise money for their Organ Fund.
There came wise men from the east to worship Him. Matthew 2:1-2

The Federation Board and Beacon Lights join in saying God Grant You Peace at Christmas Time and Through the coming Year