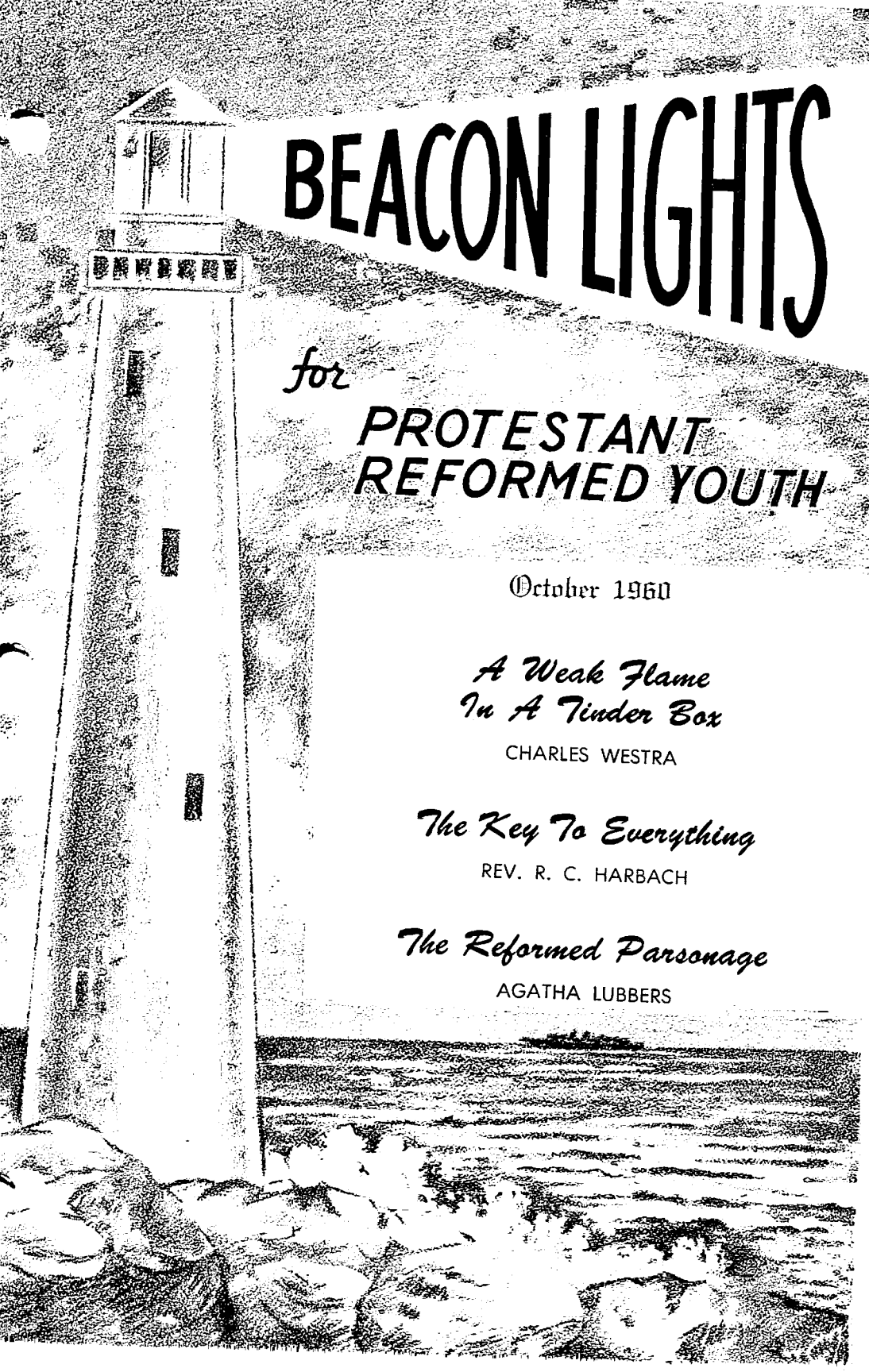

BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

October 1960

A Weak Flame In A Tinder Box
CHARLES WESTRA

The Key To Everything
REV. R. C. HARBACH

The Reformed Parsonage
AGATHA LUBBERS

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XX | OCTOBER — 1960 | NUMBER 8

Published monthly, except June and August by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

David Engelsma ... Editor-in-Chief
Rev. Alvin Mulder ... Associate Editor
Lam Lubbers ... Managing Editor
Nancy Heemstra ... Finance Manager

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Rev. Robert Harbach ... Truth vs. Error
Agatha Lubbers ... Critique
Rev. Herman Hoeksema ... Bible Outlines
Rev. Richard Veldman ... From the Pastor's Study
Mrs. C. H. Westra ... News Editor
James Jonker ... Current Comments

STAFF:
Marcia Newhof ... Clerk
Mary Pastoor ... Asst. Clerk

Roger Harbin, Chairman
Mary Pastoor
Marian Kunz
Edward Langerak } Public Relations Staff

Jim Jonker
Judy Bouwkamp } Proof Readers

Lam Lubbers
Bob Decker } Photo and Art

Janet Kunz
Christine Faber — Subscription Managers

All material for publication should be addressed to MR. DAVID ENGELSMA, 846 Thomas S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to CHRISTINE FABER, 1028 Temple 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.

All undeliverable material (Forms 3579) should be returned to CHRISTINE FABER, 1028 Temple S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Subscription price: $3.00
Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

In This Issue

A WEAK FLAME IN A TINDER BOX ... 1
Charles Westra

THE NEW LOOK ... 3
David Engelsma

THE 1960 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AT A GLANCE ... 4
Cornie Bykerk

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD ... 6
Rev. R. Veldman

THE REFORMED PARSONAGE ... 8
Agatha Lubbers

THE ACCIDENTAL REVERIE ... 9
Mary Beth Engelsma

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION ... 10
Jim Jonker

A LETTER TO CHRISTIAN LIFE MAGAZINE — ABOUT "THE KEY TO EVERYTHING" ... 12
Rev. R. C. Harbach

OUTLINES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 6:1-17)
The Four Horsemen III (Revelation 6:1-7) ... 14
The Cry of the Souls Under the Altar (Revelation 6:9-11) ... 15
The Shakeup of the Physical World (Revelation 6:12-17) ... 16
Rev. H. Hoeksema

NEWS, FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES ... 18
Mrs. C. H. Westra

A Weak Flame in a Tinder Box

CHARLES WESTRA

The popular concept of a reformer is usually of a person with a sterling, dynamic personality who slashes right and left with the sword of truth in strong, accurate, purposeful strokes while astride the white charger of righteous indignation. He thus brings absolute light to millions who had been existing in absolute darkness, and every innovation accomplished by this hero was a product of his most astute mind and existed there in dazzling brilliance and clarity from the moment of his first enlightenment.

Our own thinking has been so steeped in humanitarianism that we even think of Luther in this warped manner. Such unmitigated hero worship also surrounded him during his own lifetime and he answered it thus: "I began this business with great fear and trembling . . . no one can know into what despondence . . . I sunk . . . At that time I was ignorant of many things which now, thank God, I know." Does that sound like a typical Reader's Digest hero?

In order to view Luther as he preferred to be considered (as perhaps a small, weak flame of fire introduced into a combustible situation) it is necessary to understand his times.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the various nations of Europe were beginning to experience the heady wine of nationalism. As they began to exercise this new strength, they conflicted with the powerful Roman Catholic Church who claimed both ecclesiastical, political, and secular rights. The Romish Church maintained a surprising degree of control through threats of personal excommunication. A large portion of the Romish Church's power was the result of the considerable flow of funds into her coffers as the result of the sale of indulgences.

These indulgences had originally been intended as a papal declaration that if the bearer died in battle during one of the Crusades against the Turks, he would obtain immediate heavenly bliss. Since under Germanic law (as well as under our own) the payment of a fine can be substituted for penance or imprisonment, these indulgences soon became marketable property and were sold and bartered throughout Europe. The church, with unlimited power to issue these indulgences, put herself in the "Salvation Certificate" business and authorized the Dominican monks to act as a sales organization and travel through the various provinces. This they did, and playing upon the ignorance and superstition of her parishoners, the Dominican monks increased the emphasis on these indulgences until they became a substitute for the clergy and thereby made pastoral work by the priest almost impossible.

There were small inklings of intelligence and discernment, however, even in the great writhing masses of fifteenth and sixteenth century ignorance, and these enlightened individuals were as flies in the sweet financial ointment of the Dominican Monks who promoted the sale of the indulgences. One knight in what is now Germany, approached the master salesman of indulgences, Tetzel, and asked him if an indulgence would absolve a person of guilt even if he committed the sin intentionally. "Certainly," replied Tetzel in gleeful anticipation of another sale. "Fine", continued the knight, "I wish to take a little revenge against an enemy of mine just short of taking his life, and I would like a letter freeing me of any guilt in this matter." After agreeing on the price, Tetzel filled out the letter properly and sold it to the knight. Some time later as he was traveling to the next town, Tetzel was attacked by this same knight and robbed of the money he had collected from the sale of indulgences. When hailed into court by Tetzel, the knight admitted

the action and then showed the court the letter of indulgence Tetzel had given him to cover his "little revenge." Upon reading the letter, the court found the knight 'not guilty' of the crime as charged.

Another example of these tiny glimmerings of discernment occurred when a young university student dickered with a priest over the price he should have to pay for a letter of indulgence. When he had the price down to six deniers (a very small sum) he told the sellers that they should give him one or they would have to account to God in the judgment day for having kept a soul from his salvation for only six deniers!

The uneducated masses, however, purchased the indulgences to use as substitutes for contrition of heart and penitence for sin. It was this attitude towards indulgences that brought the entire matter to a boil in Wittenberg.

One of his duties, as priest to the church at the university, was to hear confessions. After hearing their confessions, Luther would upon occasion, admonish the wayward members. Upon this, they would simply show him the letters of indulgence they had purchased and tell him that as long as they had them, they saw no reason to change their way of living. The indulgence assured them of a swift entry into heaven without strain or pain.

This interference in his pastoral work convinced Luther that this misuse of the indulgences must stop. Since the official Catholic doctrine regarding salvation was "justification through a penitent and contrite heart" Luther was convinced that this malpractice was in opposition to the official doctrine. With this in mind, he wrote the ninety-seven and later the ninety-five, theses which he nailed to the church door at Wittenberg, fully expecting the church officials from the Pope on down to support his contentions.

Theoretically he could expect this, for nowhere in his ninety-five theses did Luther attack or even question any official doctrine held then by the Romish Church. He simply set himself to the task of defining the true character and use of the papal indulgences. In fact, shortly after he had posted these theses, and the matter was brought to the attention of the theologians and jurists of the University of Mainz, they declared that they could find nothing wrong in any of the theses.

Luther, however, had not reckoned with the impact on Rome of the possible loss of revenue from the reduced sales of these indulgences, nor had he figured with the political animosity that would arise between the Dominican Monks (who were in charge of the sale of indulgences) and the Augustinian order of which Luther was a member. As events developed, various church officials declared there was no doctrinal heresy in Luther's theses, yet the Dominicans (of considerable influence in Rome both because of their financial contribution to Rome's wealth and because the current Pope was a Dominican) forced action against Luther, claiming that he had attacked the authority of the Pope and should be killed as a heretic.

The events that follow are involved, disgusting, and smell of crooked church politics. It's only a short while and Luther finds himself excommunicated from his once beloved Romish Church. The protest he had made against the indulgences in an attempt to bring about a reformation from within had become the spring-board of an ecclesiastical revolution without his ever having intended it to be so.

Of this fact Luther said, "This is all the more proof that this movement was not my doing, but the Lord's."

° ° ° °

As can easily be imagined, Luther's name was defamed by the Catholic Church at every opportunity and in a thousand different ways during the reformation and the years immediately following. One comment about him was that he was the offspring of the union of his mother with the devil himself; that at his death the Devil appeared on the scene to carry him away to his home in hell. This view of Luther continued well into the eighteenth century. Other writers spoke of him as "the godless heretic, the stinking profligate, the filthy ragamuffin, the ribald brawler, the obscene, slanderous and execrable Luther."

In spite of their attempts to defame Luther, the Catholic Church was brought to their sense by the Reformation and some time later stopped the sale of indulgences. This tardy recognition of Luther's

protest and doctrine brought with it a revolution in the Catholic Church's opinion regarding Luther himself. In the Age of Enlightenment the educated Catholic view of Luther comes very close to our own. They have even referred to him as "a precious instrument of God," the "greatest benefactor of humanity," is a "great spreader of light." The current opinion of the Catholic Church is probably somewhere in between these extremes.

As stated by one Roman Catholic scholar recently interviewed during the preparation of this article: "Martin Luther was right in every doctrinal point. Our only objection is that he had no business protesting because by doing so he was placing himself against the authority of the Mother Church." In other words, Luther, as an individual, and even as a member of the clergy, had no right to question any action of the Roman Catholic Church according to their doctrines.

The Protestant concept that the divinely enlightened mind is the final authority regarding doctrinal matters overagainst the Roman Catholic's doctrine that the final authority in doctrinal matters is the organized Roman Catholic Church, is to my mind the most important product of the Reformation. For in the place of complacent lethargy, we may now exercise individual initiative in the study of scripture and approach God directly in prayer. No longer are we bound (through the threat of condemnation) to any doctrine superimposed by a heretical or mistaken clergy. Under the Protestant concept of the authority of the regenerated heart, we are free to select any church or clergy that preaches and practices the doctrines we consider most proper according to our own individual interpretation of scripture.

Luther himself did not recognize this most fundamental concept when he began his protest against the selling of indulgences. In Thesis No. 38 he declared: "Still we should not contemn the papal dispensation and pardon; for this pardon is a declaration of the pardon of God."

From this it can be determined that he still respected and clung to the Romish concept of church authority when he wrote his theses.

That the most significant fruit of the Reformation was not the result of human labor and striving, is another instance of the fact that God often works in very mysterious ways to perform His own good pleasure.

Editorials . . .

THE NEW LOOK

panta rei (all things change)
— Heraclitus

Not even *Beacon Lights* is outside the scope of application of the weighty words uttered by the ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus. Much as it dislikes being so audaciously classified, *Beacon Lights* has been forced to admit that it, too, changes.

Two members of the clan of regular contributors, Jay Kortering, associate editor, and Rev. Herman Hanko, editor of the Christian Living column, took on new positions in our churches and resigned from *Beacon Lights*. Jay, known for his effectively zesty editorials, e.g., "Devil on a Leash," became minister to the Hull Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. Hanko, remembered for his uniquely interesting series on such topics as "Christian Courtship" and "The Protestant Reformed World and Life View," will write the All Around Us rubric in *The Standard Bearer*. To the thanks of the Federation Board, *Beacon Lights* adds its word of appreciation and wish for continued success. Since work well done is its own best reward, both have been amply rewarded.

Spurred on by these developments, the Federation Board called a hasty meeting, and in true Dutch style produced, from a pipe, cigar, and cigarette polluted atmos-

phere, the satisfactory solutions. Rev. A. Mulder was tendered the position of associate editor, which position he accepted. Responding to the suggestion of several readers – yes, friend, there are a few who write us – that *Beacon Lights* comment on the political and cultural developments (or retrogressions, as your view may be) on the local, national, international, and interplanetary levels, the Board reinstated the defunct Current Comments column. Jim Jonker, whose first article appears in this issue of *Beacon Lights*, will edit the rubric.

The only other switches occurred within the public relations staff. This stalwart squadron of unsung Singspiration starters and subscription solicitors lost Harry Langerak to the presidency of the Federation Board. Rog Harbin replaces him as chairman of the staff, and Ed Langerak rounds out the group.

So, hoping that Heraclitus' formula applies annually, not monthly, the Federation Board and *Beacon Lights* Staff settle down gingerly, to continue with the usual endeavors.

d.e.

---

the 1960 presidential election at a glance

CORNIE BYKERK*

Both major political parties claim that the 1960 national election is one of the most critical elections in the history of our nation. They base their claim in the light of increasing international conflict which is climaxed by a fear of Russia, rumors of war, and technological advances on the part of aggressors. Both parties have launched a vigorous campaign to secure control of the national administration. We are in the midst of another political battle. Both sides are claiming that they have the best solutions to all our problems.

THE CANDIDATES

In order to secure victory both parties strived to find men of ability and popular appeal. Richard Nixon, the unanimous choice of the Republican Party, had little difficulty in securing the presidential nomination of his party after Nelson Rockefeller had refused to run for the position. Although Nixon has been a controversial political figure, he also claims a colorful political background. His father was the owner of a small grocery store-gas station. Nixon graduated from Duke Law School in 1940. He practiced law for several years until 1946 when he was elected to the House of Representatives. He was re-elected in 1948. In 1950 he became a U.S. Senator of California. Only four years later he was nominated and elected to the Vice-Presidency. After his re-election in 1956 he was nominated unanimously for the presidency this year. He is the choice of his party.

John F. Kennedy waged a vigorous campaign in order to defeat four other leading candidates for the Democratic nomination. He, unlike Nixon, originates from a wealthy family. His father had several successful businesses including a chain of movie theaters, a ship building company, a chain of banks, and the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. His father was a multi-millionaire. Kennedy graduated from Harvard in 1940. His first attempt at political office resulted in his being elected to the House of Representatives in 1946. He was re-elected by great majorities in 1948 and 1950. In 1952 he opposed and defeated incumbent Henry Cabot Lodge for U.S. Senator of Massachusetts.

---

*The writer, a periodic contributor to Beacon Lights, is now teaching at Grand Rapids Christian High School. We welcome his comprehensive analysis of the present political situation.

It is striking to note that both candidates are very young. If Kennedy is elected, he will be the youngest President to be elected. T. R. Roosevelt was President at a younger age, but this was caused by the sudden death of President Mc Kinley. Kennedy is forty-two while Nixon is forty-seven. The constitution requires that the Presidential candidate be at least thirty five.

THE CAMPAIGN

In his first address after announcing his candidacy in the Washington National Press Club, Kennedy started to press the attack against the Republicans. He characterized President Eisenhower as a weak President. Describing Eisenhower, he called him "a passive broker for conflicting interests, and a bookkeeper who feels that his work is done when the numbers on the balance sheet come out even." Kennedy claims that the next President must deal with the growing missile gap, the use of Communist China, the despair of underdeveloped nations, the explosive situation in Berlin and NATO, the lack of arms control agreement, and all the domestic problems of our farms, cities, and schools.

Nixon's campaign is built on the Eisenhower policies. He plans to implement these policies and build upon them. Nixon claims that the Eisenhower administration deserves a vote of confidence from the American people. He bases this claim on the fact that this administration got the U.S. out of one war, kept it out of other wars, and offers the best hope for peace without surrender in the years to come. Nixon has peace, prosperity, and the President on his side. He plans to add the "new-new" Nixon.

There are several distinguishing issues in the 1960 election. The first is religion. Although many people claim that religion should not be a issue in a political campaign, the fact nevertheless remains, it is an issue. The Gallup Poll indicates chances are better for a Roman Catholic to be elected than it used to be. In the late twenties Herbert Hoover, a Republican, carried seven Democratic states from the "Solid South." The predominantly Protestant South is still the heart of anti-catholic attitudes. Southerners express fears of a catholic spoils system with all Catholics getting good jobs or even more fantastic the Pope running the country for us. The fact that Kennedy is a Roman Catholic was an asset to him in heavily catholic populated Massachusetts in state elections. However, many conservative protestant groups have openly instructed their people not to vote for a Roman Catholic. Many protestants question Kennedy's stand on his interpretation of the separation between church and state. History has shown that the Romish Church will use her power whenever and wherever possible.

Another outstanding issue is the question of international affairs. The Republicans claim that Nixon's eight years of Vice-Presidential experience combined with Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge's experience in the United Nations is an unbeatable combination. Democrats maintain a few new faces could better cope with the Russians. They call attention to the U-2 incident, the failure of the summit meeting, and international distress at the present time.

In regards to our economic and domestic situation a Kennedy administration would push hard for a great expansion of government spending on desirable and essential public services. This would be done because the Democrats feel that the public sector is starved and also because they believe that spending on everything from schools to missiles is the best way to spur our nation's growth. A Nixon administration would move much more cautiously in the direction of government spending. The Republican view is that the public is not starved as the Democrats claim. Moreover, the way for our nation to grow is through higher private spending rather than higher government spending.

CONCLUSION

Before the election is over many opinions and beliefs will be expressed. Everyone of us should realize what the various candidates stand for. In conclusion may I remind all eligible voters to exercise their prerogative. Be sure to vote, and vote with intelligence!

The House Of The Lord

REV. R. VELDMAN

"One thing have I desired . . . ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord . . ."
PSALM 27:4

We often read and hear about the "house of the Lord." We often speak of it, especially in connection with divine worship; even with reference to our material, visible church home.

Really, what is the house of the Lord? Its deeper, spiritual significance?

Is it merely a matter of gold and silver, purple and fine linen, wood and stone, pews and pulpits and beautiful fixtures? We know better!

That was not the case even in the old dispensation. That tabernacle in the desert and that magnificent temple of Solomon in Jerusalem were not per se the house of the Lord. True, there was a connection between these places and God's house, closer by far than exists today, because of the typical character of the old dispensation. They were types and bore the name of the house of God. David, certainly, was thinking about the tabernacle when he said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord." And again, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." Psalm 84.

However, tabernacle and temple as such were not yet the house of the Lord. When finally the tabernacle was dismantled and replaced by the gorgeous temple of Solomon, God's house did not change. When later still that temple was destroyed by the Chaldean hordes, God's house was not destroyed. Consequently, Israel could very well enter that temple without ever entering the house of the Lord. By the same token, they could be far from Jerusalem and yet dwell, essentially, in the house of God. How well Solomon saw all this when he said in his dedicatory prayer, "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heavens of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!"

The same is true today — God's house is not a mere building of wood and stone. It is not true, that there are thousands of houses of God all over the world; that when a church burns down a house of God turns to ashes; that when you lose a church building you're losing a house of God. Actually, you're losing nothing. Nor is it true, that you cannot be in the house of God without being in a church. God's house may be in a foxhole or on the high seas, at your lathe or office desk, in your home or in bed, — anywhere!

In fact, the house of the Lord is not even the formal, visible gathering of the saints for divine worship.

This comes closer, of course. David is certainly thinking also of these blessed assemblies of God's people to serve and praise the God of their salvation. Divine worship occupies an important place in God's house, as we know and experience it in this present life. There God builds His church by His Word and Spirit, dwells in a special way with His own, reveals His beauties. There is the workshop of the Holy Ghost, where all the wonders of divine redemption are applied to the hearts of God's elect. There God enlightens the understanding, quickens in faith and hope, feeds and quenches unto eternal life; and there the Christian is refreshed and enriched in the grace of Almighty God. He who doesn't care about divine worship, or knows no true desire when there, surely cannot speak of dwelling in the house of the Lord. Your interest in God's house is measured by your interest in divine worship. The former cannot be greater than the latter.

Even so, this gathering of the saints for

worship is not yet the house of God. You cannot simply identify the two. It is entirely possible that you are present at the former without ever experiencing the blessedness of the latter. Besides, when the service is over and you return to your homes, are you no longer in the house of the Lord? How, then, can we speak here of dwelling in the house of the Lord "all the days of our lives?"

What, then, is the house of the Lord? It is the place where God dwells. Not where God *is*. God is everywhere. God is in hell too. However, hell is not God's house. God's house is the place where God *dwells*, in love and friendship.

It is God's covenant, His everlasting family life, wherever God reveals Himself as our Father, lives in love and friendship with the creature, manifests His beauties and manifold perfections to the creature, bestows His covenant benefits on His creature. By the same token, it is wherever we may dwell with Him as His children, live with Him in love and friendship, experience His beauties and blessings, know and serve Him as His covenant servants forever.

Wherever you find these you find the house of the Lord, irrespective of time or place. For Jacob it was that place by the side of the road, where the Lord appeared to him in a dream. He called the name of that place Bethel – house of God. Why? He himself tells us, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." For us it is wherever the covenant of God, communion with God, is experienced, whether in church or at home, at work or on the street.

Understanding this, we also understand that and how the house of the Lord has always been, and will always be.

It was in Paradise, – in symbol and shadow.

Certainly, that was God's house. There Adam dwelt with God and there the Most High established His covenant with man. There God lived in love and friendship with the creature, and there Adam knew and served his God as prophet and priest and king. He too, could say therefore, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord."

However, that first house of God was only a shadow, a far cry from that far greater blessedness that God had conceived for His people. In that first Paradise all was earthy and natural. Therefore it had to fall away to make room for the better house in Christ.

Of that better house we see the typical manifestation in Israel of the old dispensation. There God dwelt in and among His people. In fact, there God dwelt in and with His people in His Son Jesus Christ. All the types and shadows tell us that. Hence, Israel itself was the house of God, and when David says, "One thing have I desired . . . ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life," it certainly includes the desire for living fellowship with that people, through the typical Christ.

However, then all was only a type, still a far cry from the blessedness yet to come. Israel, Canaan, temple, sacrifices, prophets, priests, kings, – all were only types. The reality had not yet come; the Son had not yet become flesh; the Lamb of God had not yet been sacrificed for sin. Hence, the house of God was still only a type of better things to come. It was more than Adam had; less by far than we have now and will have in eternal bliss.

The central realization of God's house is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and dwelling in God's house is dwelling in living fellowship with Him. Not only does He dwell in God's house as no one else can. He Himself *is* God's house, the tabernacle of God with us. In Him the Triune God dwells in our nature. In Him all the benefits of God's covenant are realized; all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; all the beauties of God are glorified. Through Him alone we draw near to God; to see Him is to see the Father; to know Him is to know the Father. In and through Him God dwells with us; in and through Him we dwell with God.

In living fellowship with Him the church is God's house, that spiritual building whereof every believer is a living stone. Hence, not the structure wherein we as-

semble, but the living congregation itself is the house of the Lord. In that church God dwells in all the riches of His love and covenant friendship. As members of that church and in living fellowship with it, we dwell with the Lord our God. For us, that applies especially to the church as we may know it, see it, belong to it; and as it gathers together from time to time to worship and exercise the communion of the saints.

The final and highest manifestation of this house of the Lord will be heaven, of course; the living, redeemed church, under and with her living Lord, in the new heavens and the new earth. There all that is now in part will be made perfect. There we shall see face to face, and know as we are known.

That is the house of the Lord!

Next time: Dwelling in the House of the Lord.

CRITIQUE

The Reformed PARSONAGE

AGATHA LUBBERS

The parsonage, an institution which has come to occupy a rather important place in the Christian Church and is part of our Reformed heritage, has its origins (as have many other practices in the church) in the earth-shaking rejection by Martin Luther of the doctrine and the forms and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.

Because of the ordinance established in Paradise that a man take a wife and that she be a helpmeet for him and because of his insistence on a return to the Bible, Martin Luther decided to marry despite the undoubted stigma toward a married clergy and the instability of the times. Luther was thoroughly convinced that he could serve God more acceptably as head of a home than in convent and cowl.

When on June 13, 1525 Martin Luther, the reformer and former monk, became the proud husband of attractive and vivacious Katharine (Kaethe) von Bora he created an institution, the parsonage, which was to become one of the important parts of the Protestant Church.

Under the caption, "The Protestant Parsonage Today" in *Christianity Today*, September 12, 1960, Gene Lund, Professor of Religion at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, writes concerning the parsonage (or manse) which came to occupy what he calls a rather "special niche" in the history of the Western world. Recently there has been some discussion concerning the virtue of a celibate clergy in the Protestant Churches. The Roman Catholics claim reasons for rejoicing in the fact that they could boast a celibate clergy, but John Calvin deplored the conditions that prevailed in the convents of the Roman Catholic Church. He deplored the fact that the Church of his day had promoted celibacy or the single life as the highest type of holiness. This was unBiblical. Concerning the convent Calvin said: "It is scarcely possible to find one convent in ten which is not rather a brothel than a sanctuary of chastity."

Dr. Lund commences the body of his article in *Christianity Today* by discussing the products of the parsonage. He notes that particular attention has been called through the years to the human products of the parsonage, the sons and daughters of the clergy. He observes that regardless of all other considerations there seems to be something peculiarly beneficent about maturing in the atmosphere of the parsonage because Protestant clergymen have through the years sired more sons for *Who's Who* than have the representatives of any other profession.

Dr. Lund also notes that in America the rigid Victorian atmosphere of the past has been somewhat eradicated or at least relaxed so that parsonage children are as a result no longer expected to set the standards for the children of the entire community.

The writer also observes that the air

of poverty is vanishing. Even though the clergyman is still the poorest paid of all educated classes in our society a modicum of respect and economic security has been introduced into the average American parsonage.

Dr. Lund does not write the entire story on the debit side of the ledger. He points up two serious problems which have invaded the Protestant parsonage. In the first place Dr. Lund feels that the modern pastor is caught up "in a web of busy work virtually unknown to previous generations of clerics." Dr. Lund notes that the uniqueness of the parsonage was due to the fact that the father could be at home with his family and could spend a majority of his time in the study. Because of the busy whirl of activities this is no longer the case.

The writer also points out the problem of creeping worldliness in the parsonage. He quite correctly notes that it of all homes ought to be "in the world but not of the world." Even though the parsonage should not be thought of as a "coeducational cloister" it should nevertheless not be dominated by an indiscriminating television set nor should the coffee table be littered with the gaudy picture magazines of our day.

If the parsonage is not distinguishable from the average home on the block it should be because the average home has been elevated to the level of proper parsonage living and not because "the quality of the parsonage has deteriorated" because of external and internal influence.

There is no doubt in my mind that the parsonage is one of the bulwarks of the truth. God has always raised up men to occupy the parsonages of the true church to defend and preserve the truth. As the parsonage goes so goes the church in many instances.

I do not want it to be understood that I believe the parsonage is part of the church institute (for this is certainly not true) but the manse is certainly one of the hubs of activity of the Reformed Churches. Because of huge expansion programs the study has left the parsonage in many instances and has been moved to the offices and the church house. The activities of the Minister of the Gospel must be coordinated today with the activities of the Minister of Music, the Minister of Recreation, and the Educational Minister in the church. Because of all this specialization and because of the increasing size of churches, the parsonage has lost to a large extent its distinctive place in the Christian Church.

We in the Protestant Reformed Churches still know of parsonages like Luther's and Calvin's. The parsonage, where the Word of God is studied and lived, is and ought to be a place where studies begun in college and seminary are perpetuated. Parsonages ought to continue to have rooms called "studies" and the office should not take precedence over the study in claiming the pastor's time.

Certainly the life of the Church is directly related to the perpetuation of the Reformed Parsonage.

---

the accidental reverie

MARY BETH ENGELSMA

He came in and sat near the back. He bowed his head in prayer. Then, he stretched out his feet in front of him, yawned twice, popped a lemon drop in his mouth, yawned once again, rubbed his eyes, looked about him blearily – maybe to check and see if he had made it to the right place-and with another yawn, his head began to teeter rhythmically on his shoulders.

He shuffled to his feet with the opening strains of "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." With closed eyes, he "paid attention" to the law and the Scriptures. Meditating? Perhaps. Pondering? Perhaps. Sleeping? One cannot prove it.

He lurched to his feet with the announcement of the next song. He assumed a slouched position for the congregational prayer – shoulders slightly bent, his head supported by elbows bridged from knees to cheek bones. A reverent position? Perhaps. A contemplative position? Perhaps. A sleeping position? One cannot prove it.

The sermon proper could, perhaps, affirm all previous suspicions as to his actions. Without an obvious, deliberate attempt to fight drowsiness, he stretched out his cramped legs, folded his arms across his chest, gently dropped his head to form an acute angle with his chest, and . . . Meditated? I doubt it. Pondered? I doubt it. Slept? One cannot prove it.

Five minutes before the sermon terminated, he came out of this "reverie" to join the congregation in song and closing prayer.

And I tell you, this fellow went home thoroughly rested. Wide awake, he was, and fully equipped with a set of eyes sharp enough to hostily view another week of Babylon. Prepared, he was, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked – with his thoroughly rested, now alerted eyes. Armed, he was, with eyes piercing enough to withstand the wiles of the devil.

CURRENT COMMENTS

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

JIM JONKER

Those of you who have been readers of *Beacon Lights* for any length of time probably gave a nod of recognition to the heading of this department. Current Comments is back again. Perhaps many of you thought it was dead and now has been resurrected. In a sense that is true. But we would rather compare it to a person who is drowning, not to one who has been buried. A drowning man supposedly bobs on the surface, goes down once, twice, each time re-appearing. The third time down he does not come up. Thus it is with our department. Current Comments first appeared in *Beacon Lights* some years ago. It lasted for a while, then dropped under water. It surfaced again, a few years later, but soon went down a second time. Now it has re-appeared for the third time and will make an effort, we hope successfully, to stay above sea level. Your interest, suggestions, comments, and criticisms will perhaps give it enough bouyancy to stay afloat this time.

The scope of this department is going to be changed somewhat. Events and topics of interest in the particular sphere of the church, home, or school will be treated under Critique, ably written by Agatha Lubbers. Current Comments will try not to overlap. It will consider events and topics of current or perennial interest on the scene of national and international affairs – politics, history, scientific achievement, propaganda, idealogy, etc.

Your writer approaches his task with some hesitation. He can lay no claim to being an expert in this field, not even an "amateur expert." And affairs that baffle the real experts and often make their predictions seem ridiculous must be handled cautiously by the unskilled. Two considerations, however, lead him to write. The first is that he will attempt not to become an expert, not to go out on a limb with probable predictions, but only to draw a few and perhaps obvious conclusions from each situation. Secondly, he has one advantage that few commentators today can claim. That advantage is the perspective of Holy Writ, the only true perspective. Although the Bible cannot give us handy, ready-made answers in terms of every current problem, it does speak to us today and lays down certain truths which will forever stand inviolate.

THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE

The political battle-lines in the U.S.A. have once again been drawn up and set in array for the great November fight. The issues being discussed by the candidates and parties are many. There is one issue, however, which they would like to avoid. That is the religious issue. Smooth-operating John F. Kennedy, Democratic nominee for President, is a Roman Catholic. From the time of his announcement of candidacy, many eyebrows have been raised questioningly.

"Religion must not be an issue," say the Democrats. The Republicans, obligingly enough, agree and promise not to campaign on those grounds. But that issue is not so willingly wished out of existence. It is an issue quite obviously. The very emphasis that both parties give to it, insisting that it is not an issue, proves clearly that it is. The Democrats do not have to say, "The color of Jack's hair must not be an issue." The Republicans do not have to produce an agreeing statement. No one considers Kennedy's hair to be part of the campaign battle.

But Kennedy's religion is a different matter entirely. To many people, enough to make the Democrats somewhat uncomfortable, Kennedy's Catholicism is a vital concern. Anti-catholic literature is rolling off the presses; Protestant leaders are making statements to the press; Protestant ministers are warning their congregations from the pulpit. That which must not be an issue simply is an issue, and not a minor one.

Yet, the religious issue is not so much an issue relating to religion. We are not concerned regarding who is the more religious, or who has a stricter code of proper principles. One could conclude quite safely that Kennedy is probably a better "Christian" than Nixon, who apparently does not have enough religion for it to become an issue.

Rather, the issue, the religious issue, is a political issue, deriving from the nature of Kennedy's religion. The Catholic Church is far more than a religious giant; it wields political power as well. Its official teaching is that of the supremacy of the Church over the state.

But what about Kennedy's position? He, of course, could never run for office maintaining the official Catholic stand. He chooses the traditional American view and states openly that he believes in the separation of church and state. Quite possibly he makes this statement sincerely. But his position is opposed to the position of his church.

That immediately raises another question. Can Kennedy, assuming his sincerity now, maintain his position? For the present, we can answer affirmatively. American Catholicism, because it is a minority group, has been given a rather free reign by the church in the sphere of politics. But the Catholic Church in America finds itself in a unique situation: due to our democratic traditions and its minority, it cannot take over the country. But its plans and strategy are visible to all but the blind. Look at history, past and present. Whenever the Catholic Church could, without exception, it has seized political power. Its official teaching of supremacy has never been and undoubtedly never will be repudiated. Quite recently the Vatican made a pronouncement to the effect that when the Catholics have a majority of a country's population, they should run the government according to the principles of the church. The Catholic population in American now comprises one-third of our people, and their ranks are constantly growing. Their move for power, however, must wait until they have the majority, perhaps in the not too distant future. Hence, it would be folly for the church to try at the present to control Kennedy. He undoubtedly could last his term untouched. But it might not go that way if another Catholic received the highest office several years from now.

Many Catholics in America are casual Catholics, who sincerely believe in such non-Catholic ideas as freedom of religion and the separation of church and state. But casual Catholics tend to lose their casualness when faced with the threat of excommunication. Although Kennedy is perhaps not much of a risk, he could pave the way for a Catholic successor to whom the Vatican could and would dictate.

Now the Church is very inconsistent, biding its time. Consistency would demand

that Kennedy be acknowledged as one of two things, no third alternative being possible. He is either a heretic and should be declared anathema, or he is a puppet of Rome.

I can't tell you how to vote; I don't even feel that I can warn you not to vote for Kennedy. But I can tell you to consider very, very carefully and prayerfully that religious issue. You are usually urged to get out and vote, regardless of whom you vote for. That is nonsense; a vote for the wrong man is worse than no vote at all.

BOC (Bureau of Censorship) wishes to explain that the heading in last month's *Beacon Lights*, "Christian Living . . . says *Au Revoir*," referred only to the rubric by that name. Incidentally, *au revoir* is French for *auf wiedersehen*. —ed.

TRUTH VS. ERROR

A Letter to Christian Life Magazine

about: "THE KEY TO EVERYTHING"

REV. R. C. HARBACH

Dear Editor Walker:

The recent August issue of the Christian Life Magazine carries the first part of a series, an article entitled, "The Key to Everything," by Norman Grubb. The title struck my curiosity, as, to most people, the key to anything is of rather vital interest. Titles such as "The Key to Success," or "The Key to Will Power," or "The Key to Hypnotism" are attracting thousands today. Another "key," "Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures," has attracted its ten thousands. Keys there are, and "keys." But some "keys" are to doors which open only into a yawning chasm.

But the "key to everything!" It seemed almost too pretentious, as at first I thought I was going to read that this key was within man, something he had, or could get. But in this I was happily disappointed when it was stated that sinful self is "extremely unimportant," that man of himself is nothing, has nothing and can get nothing; and that this "key to everything" is not in man, nor in anything he can attain, nor in any part of the creation. The key is God Himself. He is the key to everything. This was good. This the Christian can believe.

But then the article seems to present a "God-is-everything," and "everything-is-God" philosophy. At least the idea of God presented is not the God of the Christian faith. For on p. 12 we read, "Love is exclusively a characteristic of one Person only —." If love is the characteristic of one Person only, to the exclusion of all other Persons, then the Person of the Father and the Person of the Spirit are excluded from this attribute. Love is here limited to only the second Person of the Godhead.

However, we read, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him . . . My Father will love him, and We will come unto him" (John 14:21, 23). This proves that the Person of the Father is distinct from the Person of the Son, and that the Father is love in and of Himself, even as the Son is love in and of Himself. There is also proof that the Person of the Holy Spirit is Himself love: "The fruit of the Spirit is love" (Galatians 5:22). "I beseech you . . . for the love of the Spirit" (Romans 15:30), which shows that love is of (out of) the Spirit, as is clear from Romans 5:5, Gr., "the love of God hath been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is a distinct Person in the Godhead, clearly distinguished from the Person of the Father and from the Person of the Son (John 14:16, 17; 15:26; 16:13-

15). Love, then, cannot be exclusively a characteristic of "one Person, and one Person only," since there are three Persons in the Godhead, and They all equally possess all the attributes of God.

On p. 13 it is stated that "there's only one Person in the universe who ever said, 'I am.'" This is not true, for it is the Triune God who says, "I am that I am," and not merely one of the persons of the Trinity. It was the first Person of the Trinity who said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom *I am* well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). The opinion that "there is only one Self in the universe" cannot, therefore, be correct. For there is not only one Self (Ego), but three in the one Divine Being. There are three Persons in God, three eternal Egos who say "I."

To say "there is only one Self in the universe who is really important," (p. 13) is either to regard the other two Persons of the Godhead as unimportant, or to turn the three distinct Persons of the Trinity into simply three manifestations of one sole person. The latter seems to be intended in the words, "It is exclusively Christ Who is God; it doesn't matter whether you call *Him* (*Christ*) Father, Son or Holy Spirit." For according to this view, since there is only one solitary person in the one Divine being that you could call God, you could, then, call Christ not only Son, but Father and Holy Spirit; and in doing so, you would be correct, because according to this unitarian economic "trinity" God revealed himself in the Old economy as Father, in the New economy as Son, and shall in the future economy as Holy Spirit.

This is further brought out in the author's words, "There is only one person, and the human creation is brought into a living relationship with this One . . ." Is not this the ancient philosophy of the modal "trinity," where one person acts in three different modes or manners? God merely assumes three modes of action or manifestation. The divinity of Christ, we note, is acknowledged, but any personal distinctions in the Godhead are denied. The same one Person is at once Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is no essential Trinity. The Father and the Spirit are not distinct Persons who ought to be worshipped by every believer, because "there is only one Person who is really important (existent)."

This one Person is said to have a "perfection of life and love," but, for a solitary "God" (one in person as well as one in being), this would be impossible, at least before creation, which means that in eternity, before the foundation of the world, it was impossible for "Him" to have fellowship, as there were no other persons with whom to fellowship. He could neither know himself, nor love himself. Unitarian philosophy is contradictory to God's perfect intertheistic, trinitarian, covenant life.

Besides denying the ontological trinity, the author seems to hold a kind of pantheism, that everything is God and God is everything. "The rest of creation can contain *manifestations* of God; we can contain as *Person* (ital., RCH). A person cannot manifest himself as a person through anything else than a person." Pantheism teaches that in the process of evolutionary development, God was originally very impersonal, and had to, by a process of "being and becoming," go through the stages of inanimate matter, to animal, to man. It was in mankind that God became personalized. Inanimate creatures are *manifestations* of God, but He becomes *personalized* in the human race.

This pantheistic implication is suggested to the reader when the writer makes the finite creation the necessary material body of the Infinite God. "The whole creation exists because the Spirit must have a body in which to manifest Himself." This denies the absolute independence of God, making Him dependent upon His own creation. That is, God had to (of necessity) create in order to have a place to dwell, and to improve Himself over His pre-creation condition of a disembodied Spirit. The statement is a denial of the eternal self-sufficiency of God.

The author's thoughts ought to be more carefully worded, if he does not intend unitarianism and pantheism, and should be expressed in harmony with all Scripture and the historic, Protestant, Christian faith. For the statements as indicated in the above quotations present a "God" who *cannot* be the "key to everything," but only the key to the Pandora box of errors.

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE

Book of REVELATION

by REV. H. HOEKSEMA

Lesson X (Revelation 6:1-8): The Four Horsemen (III)

1. Introductory. a. Thus far we discussed the individual horsemen and their significance. b. The question still remains: what is their mutual relation and why do they pursue their course in the earth? Especially does the question present itself: why do the last three horsemen follow the first, or, in other words: what is the relation between the cause of Christ on the one hand, and war, social and economic strife, and death on the other hand?

2. War vs. the cause of Christ in the world: a. The second horseman represents war as sent by God into the world. It follows the white horse and its rider, suggesting that somehow it must serve the latter. Hence: what relation is there according to Scripture between the cause of Christ and war? b. Scripture teaches that the wars in the world are all more or less directly related to the one great war between Christ and Antichrist. (See Dan. 7, 8). The following elements must be borne in mind: (1) Man was created to have dominion over the whole earthly world. (2) After the fall, when man became a rebel against God and servant of the devil, this urge still remains in him. He naturally strives for the realization of a world-empire. (3) At Babel we see an early attempt to realize this ambition, but God separated the human race into nations and scattered them over the earth. (4) The result is that now each nation for itself seeks world-dominion. (5) God, however, anointed His King over all things, the Christ. He is heir of all things and is destined to have dominion over all things. (6) Hence, the striving of the world to establish a world-empire assumes an antichristian character. The ideal is to establish an empire that is universal in scope and from which Christ is excluded. Hence, the wars of this world are presented in Scripture is always culminating in Antichrist. c. This antichristian world-power will, according to Scripture, ultimately be realized for a short time. During the reign of Antichrist there will be no room for the Church on earth. (Rev. 13:15, 17). Hence, he may be revealed only "in his time". (II Thess. 2:6). War is one of the chief means whereby God prevents the premature realization of the antichristian world-dominion. As long as the world is still divided against itself the "man of sin" cannot be revealed. Hence, the red horse follows the white.

3. Social conflict and the cause of Christ: a. The third horseman (on the black horse) represents the sharp contrast between the concentrated wealth of the few and the masses that live by the day. He follows the red horse and the white. The question therefore, arises: what is the relation between (1) the third horseman and the second, and (2) between the third horseman and the first? b. We may observe here that it is very evident from actual conditions in the world, that the third horseman always pursues his course through the earth: (1) Always the wealth of the earth is in the hands of comparatively few men, while the masses live by the day and consume their wages as they earn them. This is so true that as soon as the latter are unemployed they need "relief". (2) And this situation develops no matter what form of society prevails: slavery, the feudal system, capitalism. c. This social contrast is wrought by God, as we have seen. But He

works this mediately: (1) On the one hand by bestowing upon men different talents, gifts, powers and means. (2) On the other hand through the sin of covetousness in man's heart. d. The results are: (1) Internal strife, strikes, boycotts, revolutions. (2) And ofter war. While war (the red horse) is often the forerunner of depression, the economic strife (the black horse) is often the forerunner of war. e. Thus also the third horseman prevents the premature establishment of that antichristian setup that will leave no room in society for the Church. (Rev. 13:17).

3. Death and the cause of Christ: a. The third horseman is Death, physical death, not in the form of special visitations, but as it always operates in the earth. (One fourth represents the number of men that normally die). b. The effect of this last horseman is manifold. But it also prevents the premature realization of the "man of sin", that he may be revealed in his own time, because (1) It gives each generation but a short time to work. (2) It delays the time that the earth shall be filled. (3) It removes each man from the scene when he has served God's purpose, also the Alexanders, Caesars, Napoleons, Hitlers. c. Lastly, it also directly affects the Church. (1) It facilitates apostacy (Judges 2:8-10). (2) It gathers the elect into the Church triumphant.

Lesson XI (Revelation 6:9-11): The Cry of the Souls Under the Altar

1. Vs. 9: a. And when he had opened the fifth seal. It is evident that the fifth seal differs radically from the four preceding ones. It does not effect anything on the earth as did those. When it is opened something occurs in heaven, with the saints in glory. This is denied by those who would follow the church-historical method of interpretation. According to them, the realization of this seal must be found in the persecution of the church under Diocletian, or in the persecution of the Waldenses, etc. But it is evident that not these persecutions, but the prayer of those that had died for Christ's sake constitutes the contents of this seal. b. This prayer is here presented as proceeding from God's decree (the book), and being sent under the direction of Christ (who opens the book). And it stands in connection with the things that must shortly come to pass, especially with the opening of the sixth seal. (1) The glorified saints partake in the judgment of the world. (2) They reign with Christ, ch. 20:4. (3) Their prayers rise as incense before the throne of God, ch. 8:4. (4) And the answer to their prayer is judgment upon the world. ch. 6:12-17; 8:5.

2. Vs. 9: The souls under the altar: a. John beholds the "souls of them that had been slain". They were, therefore, disembodied souls. And their earthly life had been cut off violently by their enemies. b. They were martyred saints; they had died for Christ's sake. This is evident: (1) From the fact that they were seen underneath the altar. The altar is here evidently that of burntoffering. The blood of the sacrificial victims was poured out at the foot (underneath) this altar. That the souls are under the altar symbolizes, not that they sought the refuge of the blood of atonement, but that their earthly lives had been sacrificed upon the altar of God's cause in the world. (2) From the fact that it said of them that they were slain "for the word of God and for the testimony which they held". They had witnessed of the Word of God in word and walk, and they had been faithful to the testimony of Jesus which they had received. For this the world had hated them, persecuted them, killed them.

Note: 1. These saints do not represent a particular group, but the whole church of Christ, which is always presented as being in tribulation. 2. Incidentally we learn here that the saints after death are consciously in glory, and that with the saints in the world they long and pray for the "day of the Lord".

3. Vs. 10: The prayer of the saints: a. "And they cried with a loud (great, R. V.) voice. This indicates that there was a countless throng; and that their prayer is urgent. b. They address God as (1) Lord; that is "master, sovereign, ruler". The word that is used here is *despotes*. (2)

Holy and true: *holy* with reference to the contents of the prayer; He must surely avenge His elect; *true* here has the meaning of *real*. God is the only real sovereign in heaven and earth. c. And they pray for judgment and the avenging of their blood on them that dwell on the earth, i.e. on the enemies of the Lord and His cause that persecuted them. The final judgment is meant. The avenging of their blood is the result of this judgment, the righteous punishment inflicted for their having persecuted Christ and His Church. d. And notice the urgency of the prayer: "How long . . . dost thou not". It appears to the saints that the time is long. Their prayer is urgent.

Note: This prayer is not in conflict with the injunction of the Lord that we must love our enemies and pray for them. We must remember that this prayer concerns the enemies of God and His Church as such, as they shall appear in the final judgment. And it is concerned about the holiness and righteousness and sovereignty of God. They are at stake. In order that God may be justified the blood of Christ and of the saints must be avenged. See Luke 18:1-8. Netherland Confession, Art. 37.

4. Vs. 11. The answer to this prayer: a. Each of these saints receives a white robe. This is symbolic of perfect righteousness, glory and victory. They are, therefore, justified and glorified. God has judged their cause to be a righteous cause. b. And they are told: (1) "That they should rest yet for a little season." They must not be impatient, but rest satisfied with their present glory. The time is short, for the Lord will come quickly, "though He is longsuffering over His elect". (2) Their "fellowservants and their brethren, that should be killed as they were", must "also be fulfilled" (not: have fulfilled their course, as the R. V. has it). This means not only that the number of the elect is determined and must be full before the Lord can come, but especially that the measure of their suffering must be made full. There is a measure of suffering for Christ and His Church in the world determined by God. And this measure must be "fulfilled", before the measure of iniquity is full and the final judgment can take place.

Lesson XIII (Revelation 6:12-17): The Shakeup of the Physical World

1. General meaning of the sixth seal: a. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal". (1) The connection between the fifth and the sixth seals is as indicated in Matt. 24:29: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days (i.e. the final tribulation of God's people which, according to the fifth seal, must be accomplished before the day of vengeance can come) the sun shall be darkened", etc. (this we see in the vision of the sixth seal). (2) Notice that we have here a vision of the end of the physical universe: everything is shaken. This shows that succeeding visions in the book of Revelation (trumpets, vials, etc.) must be considered as running parallel to an extent with the first six seals. b. The allegorical interpretation of this seal: (1) Many interpreters, especially those that follow the church-historical method of interpretation explain this sixth seal allegorically, so that all the different elements receive a meaning other than their literal denotation: the earthquake signifies political or ecclesiastical upheaval, the stars are princes or leaders in the church, sun and moon are the law and the prophets, or their darkening indicates some great calamity, etc. Among these interpreters there is a wide difference of opinion with respect to the question as to what period of history is represented by this seal, ranging all the way from the destruction of Jerusalem to the French Revolution and the present day. (2) This interpretation must be rejected, because (a) There is no indication in the text that it must be understood as referring to anything else than the physical universe (the stars are in the firmament, not in the right hand of Christ; sun and moon are in the heavens, not on the head and under the feet of a woman, ch. 12). (b) The literal interpretation harmonizes with other parts of the Bible: Joel 2:28-32; Matt. 24: 29ff.; Mark 13:24ff.; Luke 21:25ff.

2. The signs in the physical universe;

vss. 12-14: a. On the earth: "and, lo, there was a great earthquake; (vs. 12) . . . and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (vs. 14). The signs on the earth, therefore, are: (1) The great earthquake. There have been hundreds of earthquakes, and always an earthquake is a sign of the end of the world. But this earthquake is "great"; because it affects the whole earth. (2) And the removal of every mountain and island; this is the effect of the great earthquake. Nothing remains in its place. b. And in the heavens: (1) "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair" (vs. 12). A coarse cloth, made of hair, black, and often used in mourning. Darkened, therefore, yet so that there still is some weird light, for (2) "the moon became as blood", giving a strange, sickening light (vs. 12). (3) "And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind", vs. 13. (winter-figs that do not ripen and easily fall to the ground). This does not refer to one of those showers of falling stars or meteors that may be observed some times, but to the shaking of the heavens, the destruction of the heavenly luminaries. The objection that many of these stars are larger than the earth and, therefore, could not fall to the earth forgets that we deal with a vision. (4) "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together", vs. 14. The heaven is the firmament, in which the stars are fixed in their orbs. When it is moved the stars fall.

3. The effect: universal consternation: a. Unbelievers of all stations in life, with emphasis, however, on the great and mighty (1) Kings, the rulers of this world. (2) Great men: courtiers. (3) Chief captains: men of war. (4) Rich and strong. (5) And, in general without distinction: freemen and slaves. b. All are now equally amazed and filled with terror (vss. 15, 16): (1) They seek to hide themselves. (2) They call on mountains and rocks to kill them. (3) All because of the dreadful face of "Him that sitteth on the throne" (see ch. IV), and because of "the wrath of the Lamb". c. All realize that "the great day of his wrath is come", the day of final judgment; and that none "shall be able to stand". God will overcome in judgment. They know their guilt and damnableness! (vs. 17).

Note 1.What is pictured here in one vision may very well be spread over a certain period, the signs coming gradually, and striking consternation into the hearts of the wicked.

Note 2. Believers are not in the picture. This may simply mean that they are left out of view because the day of the Lord is presented as a day of wrath only. We know that at the beginning of this period they are still on the earth, Luke 21:28. For them it means that their redemption is near.

THE REFORMATION DAY HYMNSING

- will be held — October 30, 1960
- at the NEW Southeast Prot. Ref. Church
- director, Charles H. Westra

STUART J. BYLSMA FEB.
1123 WORDEN ST., SE
CITY 7

NEWS from, for, and about our churches.

MRS. C. H. WESTRA

Candidate J. Kortering accepted the call from our congregation at Hull, Iowa.

Rev. A. Mulder declined the call from Grand Haven.

From a trio consisting of the Revs. C. Hanko, R. Harbach, and G. Lubbers, the churches of Isabel and Forbes called Rev. Hanko.

Grand Haven has called Rev. H. Hanko from a new trio consisting of the Revs. H. Hanko. G. Lubbers, and G. Van Baren.

Randolph has made a trio composed of the Revs. M. Schipper, R. Harbach, and A. Mulder.

° ° ° °

Ruth Kuiper of Loveland confessed her faith before the consistory and hopes to make public confession on October 2.

° ° ° °

One Saturday not long ago, Rev. R. Harbach spoke on "Lynden Time" on "Knowing Christ Crucified" from I Corinthians 2:2. Also one of Lynden's young people, Miss Betty Vander Meulen, read her own two minute script on "True Faith." How wonderful when our young people have the ability and willingness to so testify in the world.

° ° ° °

Miss Melva Wiersema of Southeast Church was injured in an automobile accident and according to the last report, she is still hospitalized.

° ° ° °

Future Conventioneers this month include:

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. R. Kuiper of Southwest Church.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. H. Timmerman of Southwest.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Jack Deppe of Southwest.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. M. De Vries of Oak Lawn.

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. R. Hoving of Oak Lawn.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. H. Gruszczynski of First Church.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. G. Schimmel of Hope.

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Holstege of Hudsonville.

° ° ° °

A Singspiration was held in Loveland on September 11th sponsored by their Young People, with proceeds earmarked for their Organ Fund.

° ° ° °

Classis West meets in Doon, Iowa on September 21, at which time Candidate J. Kortering will be examined prior to his installation in Hull.

° ° ° °

Oak Lawn lost one family – that of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Zandstra – to First Church, and gained one – that of Mr. and Mrs. B. Zandstra – from South Holland.

° ° ° °

Mr. R. Kooienga of Hope Church, who was seriously injured several months ago continues to show improvement. He has been able to visit at home, remaining for dinner and the afternoon. Day by day and week by week the progress may seem slow, but the Lord's grace is always sufficient.

° ° ° °

On September 13th Rev. G. Lubbers gave a lecture in Loveland on "The Unbreakable Bond of Marriage".

° ° ° °

Called Home:

Mrs. G. Pastoor of First Church at the age of 82 years.

° ° ° °

As a new society season approaches, we urge our young people not only to attend society, but to take a vital, active part; not skipping "unimportant" meetings – for God's Word is of utmost importance in our lives, isn't it?