



BEACON LIGHTS

for

**PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH**

February 1961

*The Importance
of Being Realistic*

EDWARD LANGERAK

Common Grace Revisited

DAVID ENGELSMAN

The Year in Retrospect

JAMES JONKER



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FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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the importance of being realistic

EDWARD LANGERAK

Well, if the sun is shining Thursday, the second of February, we will have six more weeks of winter. The forecaster in this case is the common groundhog, who, when he awakes from his long winter sleep, will be frightened by his own shadow and crawl back into bed. However, if the day is cloudy, you can put away your red flannels because then this modest creature, not being able to see his reflection, will bravely venture forth and winter will immediately end.

Of course, very few, if any, believe this weather prediction. But it seems that other superstitions do affect people more than they realize. Although they do not believe them, they will sometimes conform with them because of a feeling that it might possibly be safer to do so. For this reason you will seldom locate a hotel with a thirteenth floor or room. And it is almost impossible to find a ship with cabin number thirteen. Few people think nothing of a black cat crossing their path and almost everybody takes exceptional notice of a four leaf clover. Most people hate to walk under a ladder. I heard of a television program where they once set up a ladder across the sidewalk and eight of every ten people took the difficult detour through the gutter rather than walk under the ladder. If you are sailing near Japan, a superstitious practice may affect you immensely — Japanese sailors feel much better as they set out on a voyage, if they cross bows with a foreign vessel. And if a collision does result, there are many interesting ways to find drowned bodies. For instance, from France comes the idea that a body can be located by a floating loaf of bread. The Javanese go one better than that and throw a live sheep in the water, believing that it will sink by the corpse. In Norway, they just keep a live cock in the boat with them, fully expecting

it to crow as they pass over the body. If and when the remains are found, another irrational practice may take place — the Eskimos in the northern part of Greenland will usually bury a live dog with them, hoping that since a dog can find his way anywhere, it will help the deceased find his way to the happy hunting grounds.

It seems that the most prevalent superstitious practice in the United States is the business of fortunetelling. Practice in this goes way back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who had their oracles and augurs. Nowadays, persons in all walks of life are relieved of hundreds of thousands of dollars each year by fortunetellers giving advice on business, love affairs, and every other type of problem.

But why this pathetic belief in superstitions? What would make a person in his right mind accept such foolishness? Ignorance? True. Fear? Right again. But it seems that the basic reason goes deeper than this. Perhaps this is the answer. Every man has a knowledge of God, and that God is to be served. This gives all men a religious nature. They all have a deep-seated belief in the supernatural. Superstitions are the result of the perversion of this belief by the blinding and distorting force of sin upon the heart, mind, and soul. Sinful man rejects the supernatural powers that are real and resorts to imaginary powers that are non-existent except in his sin-perverted mind. Thus superstitions are the devil's pitiful substitutes for the light of the Scriptures.

Therefore we can see that the best way of eliminating superstitions in the world is the preaching of the Word of God. It is through this preaching that the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of the elect, regenerating them, and thereby casting out these

figments of the imagination and establishing his chosen in the faith that the Lord God is the creator and sustainer of all. Once a person knows and understands this, there is no place for superstitions of any kind in his life. And this is what is happening. It is a positive fact that where there are more Christians, there are fewer superstitions. Christians are realistic people.

But we must constantly be on guard. The

devil is smart. He will often try to weaken our faith by logically proving that it is nothing more than another ignorant superstition. And he is very successful. Communism, with its atheistic doctrine, is spreading rapidly. Satan is right now trying to shake the very foundation of this faith with a fallible Bible. We must be constantly fighting, fighting for our faith, our realism, yes, fighting for our very life.

Editorials . . .

COMMON GRACE REVISITED

With the passing of time, the common grace question takes on new aspects. Especially is this true as regards the attitudes of the young people. Those born within the past twenty years simply do not share with their parents the fervent feelings produced by personal involvement in the Battle of '24. For the most part, the youth have the same convictions as their parents and these convictions are deeply rooted, but the less rational characteristics such as personal bitterness and touchy tempers pass away with time. This is inevitable and desirable.

The result of this for Protestant Reformed young people is two fold. Firstly, they attempt to purge their elders of the violent passions which obscure the conflict between the Protestant and Christian Reformed Churches. In this the young people are not overly successful and in the process usually get for themselves such endearing adjectives as "liberal" or "junior heretic." Secondly, the young people turn to the Christian Reformed students, fully expecting that mutual concern will lead at least to a profitable discussion. And, as idealistic youth will, they even dare to suppose that cool, Bib-

lical reasoning will reveal beyond dispute the error of common grace so that Christian Reformed history may be changed. Here also, P. R. youth are disappointed. Gone are the days when common grace was a burning question in the minds of C. R. people. This may come as a shock to some who imagine that the sole reason for separate Protestant Reformed high schools is that Christian Reformed teachers and students line up in their zeal to subvert the P. R. students. It has been my experience that the offensive is taken by the P. R. students, at least as regards the explicit doctrine of common grace. By far the most effort at outright conversion (or subversion if you are Christian Reformed) is expended by the P. R. students against the C. R. students.

Once a discussion has begun, it soon becomes evident that the problem of the P. R. in the 1960's is not the same as that of the P. R. in the 1920's. In former times, both sides attached a great deal of importance to the acceptance or denial of common grace. That the C. R. did is plain from the fact that they evicted from fellowship those who

denied it. But today the attitude is that common grace does not matter. For this reason Christian Reformed students are not very well informed about the common grace issue. An extreme example of this ignorance took place when a college student was asked what he thought about the issue. His reply was long in coming but finally he remarked, "Common grace, oh yes, that's the reason why Hoeksema kicked out the Christian Reformed Church."

The belief that common grace is an unimportant matter, ranking with decrees on movie attendance and card playing, is the belief by which the De Wolf people intend to enter the Christian Reformed Church. This view has been fostered by C. R. authorities and is a cause of despair to the P. R. youth. To argue a cause which both parties regard as important is one thing. To argue a cause only to be told that although your arguments are good, the entire matter is trivial is another thing. Especially if there is irrefutable historical proof that your opponents should think the matter important.

There is evidence that the Christian Reformed Church is on the verge of recalling common grace from the Limbo of Trivia. What they will do with it will probably not be agreeable to the standards of the P. R. Churches but they shall have destroyed the nonsense that "common grace does not matter." I have special reference to an article written by Dennis Hoekstra in the December 1960 issue of *Stromata*, the paper of the C. R. Seminary. Hoekstra's thesis is that the development of theology is similar to the development of science in that both proceed logically and systematically from certain "basic realities." When in the course of the development one runs stuck, that is, when certain conclusions seem to conflict with the basic reality from which one started, it may be necessary to revise one's conception of the basic reality. The example in science is the switch of man from a belief in the centrality of the earth to a belief in the centrality of the sun. Hoekstra applies this to the common grace problem. Theology in the C. R. Church began with the doctrine of God and worked out until the logically consistent denial of common grace resulted. Now logical consistency is a desired characteristic in theology. Yet the Christian Reformed Church rejected Rev.

Hoeksema's position. So Hoekstra says, "The former position (namely common grace is untenable in Reformed theology — DE) is more in line with the demands for logical consistency with which we as well as Rev. Hoeksema pride ourselves. It seems, then, that if theology as a science demands logical coherence, Hoeksema's position is logically superior to that officially espoused by the Christian Reformed Church." Nor is Hoekstra enthusiastic about the method which the C. R. Church has used to defend its apparent weakness. Commenting on the fact that for forty years the C. R. Church has been accusing the P. R. Churches of being too logical, Hoekstra remarks, "We must recognize, then, that 'don't-be-too-logical' can hardly be respectable even as temporary, and certainly not as a definitive, theological answer to the common-grace problem." Hoekstra suggests that in order to reconcile the "basic reality" — the doctrine of God — with the doctrine of common grace, the C. R. Church should "return to the very center circle of our theological system to re-examine our scientific formulation of the doctrine of God?"

The conclusions I wish to draw are as follows. First, common grace makes a difference. Any doctrine which makes it necessary to revamp the Reformed conception of God, and thus the entire theology, can by no exercise of fantasy be called unimportant. If the C. R. *intelligentia* can be made to see this, as Hoekstra evidently does, fruitful discussion between our Churches can again become a reality. Secondly, common grace is the Achilles heel of the Christian Reformed Church. If, as is my opinion, Dr. James Duane is putting into application that for which Hoekstra gives the theory, the very originators of the dogma of common grace strongly oppose its wholly consistent consequence, viz., the radical change of the God-concept. I should predict that a new generation of Christian Reformed students will value intellectual honesty above "orthodox caution." Then the traditional view of the Sovereignty of God and the doctrine of common grace will no longer be allowed to hang in sanctified tension, at the loss, of course, of the traditional doctrine of God. The Achilles heel is losing its protective covering.

david engelsma

Hold Fast!

REV. R. VELDMAN

"Hold that fast which thou hast" — REVELATION 3:11b

Jesus Himself is speaking here. "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write." The glorified Savior is speaking to the apostle John on the isle of Patmos. "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." That's Jesus Himself!

Jesus is speaking here to the true church, the true people of God. Listen to what He says to this small but beautiful congregation. "I know thy works: for thou hast little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Listen again to what He says in our text, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The wicked have nothing in the way of salvation, and certainly they have no crown that can be taken away. Clearly, therefore, Jesus is speaking here to the true people of God.

It follows, therefore, that this exhortation will certainly be heeded. These words of Jesus do not imply, that it is indeed possible for this people of God to let go of what they have, principally and permanently, and still lose their crown. There is no falling away of the saints. God's church will hold fast and no man will take her crown. True, the church as we know and see her in the world, the church visible and institute, a certain congregation or denomination, our Protestant Reformed denomination, can certainly lose what it has. What was once the true church can in time become the false; what began in the light can end in total

darkness. Therefore the more, as members of God's church in the world: Hold fast that thou hast! However, the true church cannot fall away; will persevere to the end. "No man," says Jesus, "shall pluck them out of my hand." "I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Even so, there is room for this admonition, and this earnest exhortation comes to this very church and people of God, collectively and individually, "Hold that fast which thou hast!"

• • • •

What do we have, and to what must we hold fast?

Centrally, all that we have may be summed up in one blessed name: Christ Jesus.

This word of God is not referring merely to something outward: church membership, sound doctrine. Beware that you don't forsake the truth or go along with them who corrupt the doctrine! That's not enough. That alone does not give a crown of life, however important sound doctrine may be and however true that we cannot do without it. Your conception of doctrine may be ever so sound, you may be ever so Reformed and have ever so wide a knowledge of Scripture and confessions. That does not make you a Christian or give you a part in the kingdom of God. Make no mistake about that!

Jesus is speaking here of a *spiritual* (not formal) possession of *Himself*. "Hold that

fast which thou hast" means, therefore: hold fast to your Christ!

In connection with that Christ as the central benefit of God's grace, the eternal Word become flesh, the Fount of all our salvation, "that which thou hast" refers to all the benefits of salvation in Him. In Christ we have the saving knowledge of God the Father; the assurance that He has elected us unto eternal life; the assurance that He has loved us with an everlasting love; the assurance that He will dwell with us and we may dwell with Him in unending covenant fellowship. In Christ we have the knowledge of atonement, forgiveness, justification, sanctification, eternal reconciliation with God. In Christ we have the hope of eternal life; the promise of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away; heaven; glory without end; everything.

"Hold that fast which thou hast" means, therefore: hold fast to your God, your election, the love of God, the covenant of God, your atonement, forgiveness, justification, preservation, hope, promise, heaven, everything!

• • • •

Hold fast!

That presupposes, on the one hand, that there are all kinds of enemies who do all they can to rob us of what we have, to persuade or compel us to let loose. How true this is we all know by hard experience.

You know who they are: Satan himself and his hellish legions, millions and billions of wicked spirits: the whole, manifold, deadly power of the world; the carnal seed in the church.

You know their purpose: to deprive us of what we have; the Word of God itself if possible; the true conception of the Word of God; Christ and all His benefits; God and His covenant life and friendship.

You know their methods: persuasion and force. Sometimes they come as angels of light, with their cunning and deceit, their subtle philosophy and false doctrines, their promises of honor and fame, wealth and pleasure. Then again they will come as roaring lions, with mockery and scorn, prison and torture-racks, stakes and scaffolds. But always their purpose is the same: to make us let loose, cause us to fumble.

Those enemies have always been. They

were present at the time Jesus wrote these words to the tiny church of Philadelphia. Throughout history they tormented the church of Jesus Christ. They are with and round about us today, more numerous, more hateful, more dangerous than ever.

The exhortation has them in mind. Hold fast!

On the other hand, it is presupposed that in us, the people of God, there is always the tendency to let loose, to fumble. We are such stumbling Christians. Our old nature allies itself with that mortal enemy. That's the real triumvirate, that threatens our spiritual life: Satan, the world, our own flesh. Often we are inclined to waver and yield because of fear. When that lion begins to roar in his great fury and show his ugly teeth, when the enemy threatens with fire and sword, we're afraid. Then again we tend to make common cause with the foe, simply because we are one with him by nature, we love the darkness rather than the light, the world rather than God and His kingdom. And so there is the constant danger that we relent, fall asleep, fail to go all out in this battle against the forces of darkness.

Therefore, hold fast! Church of God, redeemed in Christ, young people—hold fast! Hold fast to your Christ, His atoning death, His resurrection; hold fast to your God, your election, His love, His covenant; hold fast to your salvation, your hope, the everlasting and sure promises of your God! Don't let loose! Don't fumble! Hold fast by much prayer—your only strength. Hold fast by seeking the things of God, not those of the world. Hold fast by fighting all sin, in doctrine and life.

Hold fast by clinging in faith to the whole infallible Word of God. In this life all that we have is contained for us in the Holy Scriptures, and in the Scriptures only. That does not mean, that all who have the Bible also have Christ and all His riches. It does mean, that you cannot have the latter, possess Christ and all His benefits, rejoice in them, grow in them, hold fast to them, without the Bible. Hold fast, therefore, to that Word of God. Know it, study it, personally and as societies, prayerfully and spiritually. The truth must not be on the shelf; it must live in your minds and hearts. And hold fast to the *pure* Word of

God, the true conception of that Word. Remember, all departure from the truth deprives us of the Word itself and obscures, blurs your vision of Christ, of God, of your salvation. In that case the Bible itself may be ever so pure and true, but you are not tuned in properly, your picture is not clearly focused. Every departure from the truth, therefore, results inevitably in losing that which you have. You are substituting the lie for the truth; the word of man for the Word of God. That applies especially to those great truths that have always been the bone of contention in the history of the church: human depravity, election, the death of Christ, irresistible grace, the preservation of the saints, God's sovereignty and free, unconditional salvation.

• • • •

Now, how must all this be understood?

Does our salvation after all depend on ourselves? Just a bit? A tiny, little bit? Is it so, that God prepared for us a crown of life in Jesus Christ; that this crown can still be lost if we let go; and that we can do just that if we so desire? Hence, the ultimate victory depends on man himself. The crown is God's: the holding fast is ours.

Of course not! The Christian's crown cannot be lost. God's child cannot let loose. Salvation is of the Lord! "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." That grace is irresistible. "It is God which worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philipp. 2:13. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philipp. 1:6. And what does Jesus say in this very letter to Philadelphia? "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." God works our entire salvation with divine, eternal, immutable sovereignty. All this is our absolute guarantee that no man shall pluck us out of Father's hand.

Hold fast to that too! That the Christian cannot let loose! That God preserves to the very end! That you are safe in the hands of your eternal God and His mighty Son!

However!

God deals with His people, not as stocks and blocks, but as moral, rational living creatures. He saves us in such a way, that we too are made to fight, to love, to be

faithful, to hold fast, to believe, to persevere; that our salvation may be our personal victory, the reward of our labors.

Therefore it is certainly true, that those who do not hold fast will receive no crown. There is no victory without a battle, no reward without labor, no crown without a cross, no glory without the struggle and perseverance of faith. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." Rev. 3:5. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." Rev. 3:12.

Therefore there is room for this and other admonitions. God works by the Spirit *and the Word*. We need them; are not saved without them.

However, when we heed them, and this we shall, it is not our own work, but that of God's grace in and through us.

Thus man is active indeed in the work of His salvation, but the glory is God's alone. Remember, Jesus is speaking here, not to the dead sinner, but to His regenerated sheep; not to the flesh, therefore, but to our faith. And that living faith responds, by the power of the Spirit: Hold fast I will!

Thus we know, come what may, that no man can take our crown.

Hold fast, therefore, whatever the price in blood and tears!

Remember always: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

PEACE

The sounding surf so surgingly
Pounds the sandy shore;
The wrathful waves break ceaselessly
And ragingly they roar.

The howling, whistling, whipping
wind

Blasts a salty sandy spray.
Nature has no peace nor rest
As I look up to pray.

And then I see His star-lit heavens;
The soft moon shines above.
In my heart and nature there is peace,
For He looks down in love.

jim jonker

Freedom of Speech in Our Church

Hope P. R. Y. P. Society

Many people, in our Protestant Reformed circles feel that discussion on certain matters pertaining to the church, should be held at minimum. They also think that opinions on such matters are out of place. Is this the right attitude? Does an individual have the freedom to speak his mind on any matter concerning the church? The Hope Protestant Reformed Young People's Society came to the following conclusions:

First, that Freedom of Speech, as applied in our nation, is the right of every individual to express his own opinion on any matter, with no fear of interference from the government that might deprive him of his liberty or his life. This is not fully allowed in our church circles today.

On certain church matters this freedom is granted but on others it is not. On certain matters, differing opinions are welcome, while on others opinions may not differ. There are two kinds: practical and doctrinal.

Practical questions, such as the following: Should hymns be sung in the church, should women be allowed to take part in church or national politics, what is the relation of church and state, and any other question which might come up concerning the life of the church may be freely discussed and differing opinions may be formed. Every person of our denomination has perfect freedom of speech regarding any question of this sort.

Doctrinal truths such as, Virgin Birth, the Infallibility of Scripture, the Natures of Christ, the Trinity, and others subscribed to by the church are not to be questioned. One may discuss these truths but no one has the right to propagate any views which he may have that are contrary to the doctrinal standards of the church.

The confessions, therefore, are the standard of determination. They set forth logically and systematically the true doctrines of the church and may not be questioned. These confessions are the foundation of the church. If they are questioned the whole structure of the church will be shaken; it will cause it eventually to collapse. Article thirty of the Belgic Confessions orders the church to,

... institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the church: yet they ought studiously to take care, that they do not depart from those things which Christ our only Master, hath instituted. And therefore, we reject all human inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever. Therefore we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve concord, and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God.

Therefore, the church must restrict freedom of speech on doctrinal truths.

If, however, a doctrine is seriously disputed as to its contents the consistory of the congregation, in which the dispute arose, must carefully consider this doctrine Pro and Con, and then make clear the correct interpretation thereof. If this decision is unsatisfactory to the protestants they may take it to Classis; from there they may appeal it to the Synod. If both Classis and Synod uphold the decision of that consistory, the protestants involved must submit to this decision. They may not propagate their views neither may they agitate against the doctrine in question. It is their moral obligation to the church to remain silent.

Practical matters may be questioned, but doctrinal truths must be closely guarded.

john kalsbeek jr.

LOVELAND, COLORADO

SCENE OF THE
21st ANNUAL P.R.Y.P. CONVENTION
MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND

the Year IN RETROSPECT

JIM JONKER

Perhaps the greatest disadvantage faced by the writer of this department is that of meeting a deadline for the editor, a month before publication of each issue. This is bad for at least two reasons. First, the news is often old and well-discussed before it appears in *Current Comments* and the comments tend to be not so current. Secondly, developments in the news can come so suddenly that new news pushes the old from its seemingly important place. For example, the writer waited some time before daring to treat the constantly-changing Cuban situation. When he thought he had picked a relatively stable time, he was frustrated by a U.S.-Cuban diplomatic break, which news reached his readers long before they could read of more minor Cuban-U.S. crises in *Beacon Lights*.

This time advantage makes him worry somewhat about the reaction to this article, which will do some looking into the past. If retrospection is to be made, one would argue, it should be made in January and not in February. Begging his readers' pardon, he would like to tell them that it is January (at the time of this writing) even though it may seem quite a bit later to them.

U 2

The year 1960 was marked by international crises. One of the first, and perhaps the greatest, was the collapse of the summit talks as the men at the peak were pushed down by the squat "king on the mountain." An angry Khrushchev, seizing as his propaganda weapon the spy flight of

the U 2, shattered the perpetual fond dreams of real progress toward that high-sounding aim of world peace. Eisenhower's planned trip to the Soviet Union was cancelled; Francis Powers, pilot of the U 2, received a ten-year prison sentence after a highly-publicized trial.

That man again

Khrushchev re-appeared in the news as he re-appeared in the United States. This time he did not come as an invited guest, but as a delegate from his country to the General Assembly of the United Nations. But, for a change, he found his propaganda techniques were not winning too many friends, though they were certainly influencing people. His bitter speeches and foul language and his childish, temper-tantrum antics at the U.N. shocked the world. His plans to stir up Africa and Asia were defeated as these nations defeated his proposals.

Minus Occam's razor

The rift between the U.S. and Cuba spread nearer and nearer to the breaking point as the Cuba cry of "Cuba, si; Yankee, no!" polluted the air of Havana. Castro's economic and political difficulties were increasing but he found new friends and support in Russia and Red China. One of the most touching, heart-warming photos taken last year showed Castro and Khrushchev embracing like the old father and the prod-

igal son as they made their plans to kill the fatted bald eagle.

greatest air disaster in history claimed 135 lives as two planes crashed over residential areas of New York City.

Up a lazy river

Also on the international scene, the Congo became a raging turmoil of revolution and anarchy as the Belgians left. Some semblance of order was restored by U.N. troops, but the fire is still smoldering. This whole situation had definite repercussions for it led to Khrushchev's tirades before the U.N. and to discontent and nation-wide strikes in Belgium.

Back home

The United States saw many interesting incidents within its own boundaries. In one of the closest elections in its history, John F. Kennedy defeated Richard M. Nixon for the presidency and became the first Roman Catholic to win the office. The ugly head of segregation with its mask of states' rights appeared in New Orleans in a conflict that seems destined to be more of a battle than that of Little Rock. The

We the people

1960 saw several noteworthy events in the history of the Prot. Ref. Churches. The Reformed Witness Hour Choir was reorganized and the program began to be broadcast over foreign radio stations. Two new congregations joined our fellowship of churches. The schismatics continued their frantic efforts to go back to the Christian Reformed Church sort of semi *en masse* and revealed their division and confusion. First Church finally got its organ patched up. Jay Korterling became a candidate for the ministry of the Word, and Dave Engelsma preached his first sermon.

The year 1960 was essentially no different from any other year. It saw "no new thing under the sun." But it did see progress toward the not-so-distant (?) end, as His children, not always seeing His hand in the unfolding of His counsel, yet trusted His promise: "Behold, I come quickly."

PENCILS AND CHALK

know thyself?

JESSIE DYKSTRA

Parents are subjective about their child. The child is a part of themselves; an extension of themselves into the future. This subjective viewpoint prevents parents from seeing some aspects of their child's individuality. They see what they would like others to see in themselves. It is difficult for them to try to see their child as he really is. It is natural to look ahead and envision the person they would like to have been. This is the kind of person their child will be.

None of us really believes what we believe. "We are all totally depraved." This we believe. But we often base our thoughts

about the proper upbringing of the child on the false premise that we adults are sanctified but that the child is still totally depraved. Everything the child does is motivated from his wicked heart. What we adults do, we do because we are sanctified.

In the measure that we feel that it is important to believe this ourselves, to that measure we will find it necessary that the child believe this also. He must believe that we adults make no mistakes. If mistakes are made — the child has made them.

We can't keep up this false front. Our faults show through. The child recognizes the faults and the unsuccessful attempts to

hide them. We realize that we have lost face and try to build a stronger front. We may even think that our authority is at stake if we cannot convince ourselves and the child that we have no faults.

Our authority comes from God through Christ and therefore it comes in love. Our relationship to the child is not that we are right and that he is wrong. We have a position. We are the guides. We lead be-

cause we love. God loves us and so we love God; and the child.

We all fall short. But we know it. We can only look to God to hallow our feeble efforts and to pray that we may be instruments in some small ways in the finishing of God's work in His regenerated covenant children. God will use us as a means to gather His church in the line of continued generations.

TRUTH vs. ERROR

the modernistic

INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

REV. R. C. HARBACH

2. Its Method and Result

The composition of Scripture was thus conceived of as a conglomeration of patched and repaired myths, confused traditions, strange fancies, actual mistakes, and continual (year by year, century by century) emendations appended to or inserted in the text. The implication was that the compilers, J, E, P, D and R, and their various subordinates, though separated by time and place, and having nothing in common as to theme, thought, history or life development, yet had a basic commonality in forgery. It was R's (the redactor's, the editor's) work to put all these fragments of fragments into some sort of order, making constant additions of his own, even transposing entire sections, in order to give a semblance of unity to the documents, thus attempting to weld together a harmonious whole.

There were said to be as many different authors of any one book as there were language differences and vocabulary distinctions.⁵ The expression "male and female" was said to have been penned by one writer, E, whereas a similar expression, "a male and his female," was regarded as the peculiarity of the other writer, J. Does this theory of a long dynasty of ghost writers have sufficient evidence to entrench it

firmly against the possibility of valid challenge? Do we not find many instances in the literary field where a given writer is most fertile and proficient in the use of synonyms? Is it not the purpose of synonyms to present principally the same meaning, but with a different shade of thought? It depends upon what the writer had in mind when he wrote, "a male and a female," or "a male and *his* female," or whether simply, "man and woman." Upon what authority, or for what earthly reason, are we bound to believe, as the critics claim, that no one man can be the author of two different styles of writing?

It must be admitted, however, that these literary deductions came about only after thorough and scholarly examination of the Hebrew manuscript and versions, and after systematic study of history, archaeology and contemporary writings. The facts, and all available material, have been carefully examined and scrutinized. But the trouble is that the explanations given the facts and data consist of philosophies and hypotheses. From objective phenomena we are led to learned suppositions. The drawback is the supernatural element in Scripture, and the rationalistic interpreters have always rejected it on the grounds that it is more of

a detriment than an asset to the cause of Christian truth. The Old Testament was explained as an outgrowth of the myths and folk-lore of the heathen nations surrounding Israel. Over against this, we believe that the only explanation perfectly in agreement with the facts is that the Old Testament is the revelation of God. By the revelation of God we do not mean the self-accumulated information the human mind acquires in meditative gropings for God, thus making "revelation" a product of man's intellectual achievement. But by revelation we mean the reception of truth at the disclosure, and on the authority of God. To us it is much more staggering to the human mind to believe that the compiling of the Pentateuch as we now have it came out of the labyrinthine patchwork of modernism, than to believe the simple miracle of an original composition given by God through the hand of Moses.

3. Its Inaccurate Representations

Is there any central and basic argument appealed to in support of this smitherentheory of the structure of Scripture? There is; the gist of it being that the E author states in Ex. 6:2 that the name *Jehovah* was not revealed until the time of Moses. Therefore, the passages in Genesis, where the name *Jehovah* appears, were not written by the person who recorded these Exodus words of God to Moses, for he would not put this name in the patriarchs' mouths as though they were familiar with it. He would not, this means, create an anachronism, i.e., the misplacing of historic language, and assign it to a period earlier than when it came into existence. (Further illustration of an anachronism we have in the use of cannon in Shakespeare's "King John," as cannon were not employed in England until 100 years or more after his reign). It was a different writer, J, who made his contributions to the book of Genesis at an age far later than the time of Moses.

But it cannot be that by the name *Jehovah*, God was not known until after the call of Moses, for in this very chapter (Ex. 6) Moses' mother, Jochebed, is mentioned, and her name consists of the abbreviated form of *Jehovah*: *Jo plus chedbedh* equals *Jehovah* is *glorious*. Besides, we may take Ex. 6:2 as a question (rather than a negative declaration), which was asked, "by My

name *Jehovah* was I not known to them?" The question requires the self-evident answer that He was so known. Jochebed's parents must have so known Him.⁶ Intellectually they had this knowledge, but they did not know in the fulness of religious experience the complete significance of this name *Jehovah*. That could not be until their redemption from Egypt.

Since we have so many diverse documents, written by so confusing an array of compilers, as E and three others of his school, J and three lesser J's, C (covenant code), D, P and his subordinates, with no one knows how many R's (editors), how can we believe that there is any unanimity of thought between them whatsoever? How may we be sure of the identity of the J passages, the E, etc., when the modernist scholars do not agree among themselves? De Wette, Knobel and Bleek say one thing, Stahelin another, Kuenen with still a different opinion; Ewald has his peculiar view, and Hartmann, Bohlen and Wellhausen, although agreeing with each other, differ from all the rest. For while denying that Moses was the author of Genesis, of either the J or E sections, or that he was even the compiler, R, some critics attribute the authorship to Samuel, some to Hilkiah, others to Jeremiah, still others to Ezra, others to someone after the captivity, while a few hold Genesis to be a collection of the labors of all these mentioned. How then may we even speak of a *modernistic* theory, when that has not earned the recognition and reputation of a *theory* which is only a private opinion held among scores of conflicting opinions and jumbled irrelevancies?

4. Its Attack on Old Testament History

One of the most fundamental contentions of this modernistic theory (?) is that the religion of the Old Testament, and the book of Genesis in particular, make "no claim to being in any way supernaturally furnished," and that "the early narratives of Genesis respecting the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood are based upon myths and traditions which the Israelites inherited in common with other branches of the Semitic family."⁷

It has always been naturalism's pet argument, in the attempt to be rid of the supernatural element, to affirm that the Old Testament has very little, if any, historical accuracy. Its basis is therefore not historical,

but mythological. The Creation, the Fall, the Flood are not objective, historical events, but since these accounts so closely resemble the popular legends then current among the surrounding heathen nations, they must have had their origin there and were adopted therefrom, and eventually came to be regarded as part and parcel of Israel's own religious fictions. These accounts have value in that they may stimulate your imagination as to what the history of Israel may have been like; but they are useless as a guide to historical truth. But to return to the matter of their origin: "the labours of Rawlinson, Lenormant, George Smith, Schrader, Sayce and others have shown indisputably the affinity of the Israelite with the Chaldean cosmogony."⁸

Mark, it is not, as we Reformed would say, "the affinity of the Chaldean legends to the Israelite cosmogony." The statement as it stands means, as the word "affinity" brings out, that the Israelite records have a connection through causal relation with the Chaldean, i.e., the Chaldean source is the cause and origin of the Israelite stream. But is this a correct picture? The Flood legends are, indeed, found among every

people, but these fables do not in any way gain an ascendancy over the pseudepigrapha (false-writings), to say nothing of the fact that they come no where near the high quality of the Holy Scriptures. But is it reason to argue that because there are legends of the Flood everywhere in the world showing similarities to the biblical account, that therefore the biblical account itself must be a legend and of legendary origin? One may as sensibly aver that because there are *Coca-Cola* signs in every foreign country in the world bearing resemblances to similar signs in our country, that therefore *Coca-Cola* must be of foreign origin! Furthermore, how would the Chaldeans, Greeks, Hindus, Phrygians, Chinese, Polynesians, Mexicans and Cherokee Indians all independently stumble on the same myth, if theirs was not a tradition of the same historical event?

Next month, its view of science and Scripture.

5. *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*, II, arts. "Genesis" and "Hexateuch," Scribner's, N.Y., 1900.
6. *Old and New Testament Biblical Theology*, G. Vos, p. 73. Theol. Sem. of the Re'id Epis Ch., 1934.
7. *H. B. D.*, II, Genesis, 146.
8. *ibid.*

CRITIQUE

CRISTIANITY EXAMINED

AGATHA LUBBERS

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts 11:26c

Jesus denominated himself as the one who was "the way, the truth and the life." Ever since the first century A.D. all believers who were of "this way" have been called Christians.

Since the days of early Christianity the word "Christian" or "Christianity" has taken on very broad connotations. It is not used in the limited sense that it formerly was nor does it carry with it the same terrifying results that it formerly did. Life for the person who professes to be a Christian and is of "the way" is not nearly so treacherous as it was for the professing Christian during the early days of the New Testament

Church and during the days of the heathen emperors of the Roman Empire.

We have stated that according to the Sacred Scriptures believers of all ages have been called Christians since the beginning of the preaching of "the way, the truth, and the life" in Antioch of Syria. This name "Christian" does not have a *Christian* origin. The origin of this term can hardly be ascribed to the Jews who were such violent enemies of the Christ. They belligerently and mockingly spoke of the Christians as a sect. They very indignantly denominated the Christians as "the sect of the Nazarene" or as the "Galileans."

According to best authorities the term "Christian" seems to have been first applied to the believers by the heathen population of Antioch. The application of this term to these seemingly "insane," fanatical people may have occurred as the church emerged from the synagogue and a Christianity predominantly gentile took its place among the religions of the then known world.

Today the term "Christian" or "Christianity" has a much broader use. Categories of so-called Christians are so very much more diversified. Today there are many incorrect and heretical beliefs concerning the Christ of the Scriptures whose royal name is the root word of this denominating and all-encompassing term. So many who class themselves as Christians do so only to be distinguished from Hinduists, Taoists, Buddhists, Mohammedanists, Judaists and others who deny the existence of the Christ of the Scriptures.

Such classification is very dangerous and misleading for it leaves one with the false impression that all that is called Christian is good. This, needless to say, is far from the truth. Much that is called Christian demands careful scrutiny and often calls for extended study before it can be honestly called Christian.

There are many cults that have arisen out of the bosom of evangelical, orthodox Christianity and now challenge Christianity. These cults and sects are neither orthodox nor are they Christian. One of the most pernicious and parasitic of these cults is that which supports the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and is more widely known as Jehovah's Witnesses. These followers of Russell believe neither the deity of Christ nor the temporal existence of Christ as the Son of God.

In *Christianity Today* Bishop J. A. Pike of the Episcopal Diocese of California is quoted because he is alarmed about the superficial upsurge in church membership which is seemingly supported by some vital statistics which indicate that church membership rolls are not keeping pace with population expansion.

We do not necessarily share the same concern with Bishop Pike because his concern does not fall within the realm of the Reformed heritage, but it does point up the fact that "all that glitters is not gold."

Historically, Paul had to remind Titus, too, that "all that glitters is not gold." He warned Titus that he should be on his guard for counterfeit Christians on the isle of Crete. There were those who professed to be Christians but were really pseudo-Christians.

The problem of pseudo-Christianity is not a new problem, therefore, but is a problem which is *always* contemporary with the pure preaching and teaching of the Scriptures. There are always those who are apostates from the truth whether by bold-faced profession or by deviation from the straight line of the Scriptures and the Confessions. The problem of dead Confessionalism and neo-orthodoxy certainly falls within the category of counterfeit Christianity.

The situation which we have cited is a situation which certainly poses a problem for us. We can take the attitude that what is happening in the nominal Christian church world is the inevitable thing and therefore there is nothing that can be done about such a situation. We can also assume the attitude that these deviations are really none of our concern and that our only calling is to maintain a pure church within the sphere of our denomination.

Whatever our attitude toward this situation in nominal Christianity may be we can certainly point to certain definite causes for the decline of true Christianity in the midst of much counterfeit Christianity.

The first ear-mark is indicated by a dire lack of the pure preaching of gospel in nominal Christianity. The Christ of the Scriptures is maligned or is not preached at all. Christ is presented as a pleading, begging Savior of all men or as the good example who was the greatest of all social reformers but was sadly misunderstood by the Jewish leaders of his day. Because Christ is not truly preached and "the Way" is maligned, the sacraments of the Christian Church are either not used at all or improperly understood. Along with the decline of pure preaching and improper use of sacraments is a laxity of Christian discipline. The key-power which Christ gave to his church is sadly misused or is left entirely unused.

Let us hold fast, therefore, to the faithful word as those who are taught that we may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince all controverts.

Youth Views . . .

THE PROTESTANT REFORMED HIGH SCHOOL

This a dream which is actually taking shape and becoming a very controversial subject. The question is are we ready for our own high school? This dream is to educate our children until they reach the college level with our own doctrine forming the background for this instruction. What an ideal situation this would be. As a child reaches his teen-age years he is faced with many decisions which he must make. He is to choose a career and adjust his education to prepare for his chosen career. In his spiritual life the teenager is faced with many questions concerning his faith. As he approaches maturity he determines whether he is to make confession of faith and become a confessing member of the church. All these decisions must be made by one as he is a believing child of God brought up and instructed to the best of the parents' ability, in the pure doctrine of our churches.

But from a practical viewpoint we must determine whether we are ready for our own high school. Economically, can our pocketbooks stand the strain of our own high school plus the maintenance of our grade schools? Do we have an ample teaching staff of *able* teachers? Will our subject matter be sufficient to meet college standards? This is vitally important. Our standard must be equal with the other high schools in the local area. Will our school provide enough extra curricular activities to properly balance out the life of the student? These are a few of the questions that confront us and will have to be answered by you, the readers.

mary pastoor

Instead of answering your question I would like to ask a few myself. Are the present existing high schools, Christian or otherwise, adequate? Do they educate the

student in the basis of a pure and true interpretation of Scripture? Or maybe they don't even try to educate in the light of Scripture. Are the associates that one obtains in these schools, teachers and otherwise, of the right character to mold the character and personality of your youth.

Are your people unable to bear the burden of building and maintaining a school financially? Or maybe it wouldn't be a financial burden at all. Is it impossible to get proper teachers for your own school?

Last but not least. Do you believe it unimportant that your children be instructed and brought up in the doctrine of our church, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power? Remember, you promised this in the baptism of your children.

If your answers to most of my questions are no, then my answer is yes, by all means have a Protestant Reformed High School and educate your children properly and as God commands.

al buiter

"Do you promise . . . to instruct these children . . . in the aforesaid doctrine . . . to the utmost of your power?" By answering this question in the affirmative, our parents have shown their desire to give us a Protestant Reformed Education. This desire has been partially fulfilled in our elementary schools, and now we, with our parents, are faced with the question of our own high school. Many of our parents think we are ready now, others are hesitant. With the latter I must stand. Offered in our high school must be such subjects as Bible, History, Physics, Chemistry, two or three foreign languages, an adequate Physical Education program, plus all the other courses offered by the average high school of today. Although subjects such as Shop

and Home Economics may come later, I do not think we are prepared now to offer an adequate high school curriculum to the student. Perhaps this will be possible in four or five years, but now, primarily due to our lack of qualified teachers, I cannot see the possibility.

gerald kniiper

As children of God, we should always turn to His Word for answers to our questions.

Psalm 32:8 — *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

Proverbs 1:7 — *The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge: but the fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Proverbs 16:22 — *Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly*

II Timothy 3:16 and 17 — *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, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

In Scripture the term "fool" is applied to the unbeliever. When we are sent to a public high school, we are sent to the institution of fools, whose instruction, according to the Holy Scriptures, is folly. These institutions despise true wisdom. And yet, we try to obtain wisdom through these schools.

These texts and others serve as a basis for the third part of the exhortation to the parents in our baptism form:

"Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to the years of discretion, instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?"

This question does not say "in the best available school" but rather, "to the best of your ability." This does not suggest our own grade school and complacency with just a Christian high school, but rather a striving for a high school of our own.

ruth kniiper

NEWS

FROM

FOR

&

ABOUT

OUR CHURCHES

by MRS. C. H. WESTRA

We'll start our column today with our list of Future Conventioneers:

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Mousma of First Church.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kamps of Creston.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. M. Kamps of Hudsonville.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. I. Veenstra of Hope.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. D. Engelsma of Hope (10th child).

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In these days of trying to get people to join our societies, South Holland's bulletin offers an encouraging note. Because of the growth in membership of their Choral Society the dues were able to be lowered. This society consists of members of Oak Lawn and South Holland.

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The Mothers' Club of Adams School sponsored a Holland Psalm Sing on January 15 at First Church. Also in the "Foreign Language Department": on the back of

Loveland's December 25th bulletin was printed eight stanzas of a German Christmas Carol for the audience to sing at their Christmas Program.

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Hudsonville congregation welcomed Mr. Dennis Gleason into their fellowship as a baptized member, coming to them from the Methodist Church of Muskegon.

• • •

Hope's Christmas bulletin announced that Don Langerak was home on furlough for a few days.

From Hull comes a new address for Serviceman Alvin Kooiker, who was also home on furlough over the holidays. His new address: Pvt. Alvin J. Kooiker, NG 26786146, Co. K., 1st Tng. Regt., 2nd Platoon, Fort Dix, N. J.

• • •

Called Home: Mr. B. Lubbers of Hudsonville at the age of 79.

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Hope School Circle is sponsoring a Soup and Spaghetti Supper on January 27 at Hudsonville Church.

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From First's bulletin: "Mrs. J. Schaap, who with her husband makes up the oldest couple in our congregation, celebrated her 85th birthday yesterday, Dec. 24. May the Lord bless them in the days that they will still be together, and may their hope ever grow brighter as they approach the end of their way."

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We would also like to extend our congratulations to Mr. Peter Kooistra of First Church who celebrated his 96th birthday on December 25. As far as we can determine he is the oldest individual in our denomination. May he experience God's guiding hand also in the twilight of his life.

• • •

Rev. A. Mulder of Kalamazoo lectured at South Holland on January 6 on the subject "Gog and Magog."

Hull has a lecture scheduled for January 26 by Rev. H. Hanko on the subject, "The Covenant Witness." This is being sponsored by the Reformed Action Society.

From the Program Committee of the Reformed Witness Hour comes this question — What possible connection can the Reformed Witness Hour have with Grace Kelly — the Princess of Monaco? Well, only this *remote possibility* — that she and her husband, Prince Rainier, are *potential listeners* of our radio broadcasts. We wonder if they tune in Trans World Radio, located in their tiny principality! Since last October our distinctively Reformed radio messages have emanated from their city, Monte Carlo, Monaco. It could be that they too are listening to the current radio sermons of Rev. H. Hoeksema, concerning "The Four Horsemen" as recorded in the Revelation of the Apostle John. Perhaps they are much too busy or lack interest in our broadcasts, but we hope that our young people take time to listen to the preaching of our Protestant Reformed truths over the Reformed Witness Hour each Sunday. Printed copies of these messages can be obtained by writing to: The Reformed Witness Hour, P. O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Michigan.

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Here's an interesting note from First Church's bulletin: "Rev. C. Hanko was granted a leave for two weeks to labor in the Manhattan, Montana area at the request of the Mission Committee. The request originated in an urgent appeal to the Mission Committee for someone to guide a remnant of that congregation who are strongly opposed to going into the Christian Reformed Church. The Mission Committee advised they would like to see him make the contact in view of his acquaintance with many members of his former charge."

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Mr. Roger Kooinga of Hope Church who was seriously injured in an accident a year ago continues to make improvement. He has been attending church for some time and his latest step forward is that he is able to meet and sit with the consistory. "Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me." Ps. 66:20.



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