BEACON LIGHTS for PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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NEWS FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES
Mrs. C. H. Westra
The Staff of Beacon Lights has requested us to write a brief article revealing the present status of missions in the Protestant Reformed Churches. With this evident interest on the part of our young people in the matter of missions we are truly pleased. We are quite sure it reflects the interest which most of our people have regarding this subject.

We simply refuse to concede to the charge which has always been made, and again quite recently, that the Protestant Reformed Churches have little or no interest in missions. In The Banner of January 6, 1961, the Rev. H. Baker reiterates this false charge when he writes: “Besides, the Protestant Reformed Church, as it was constituted prior to 1954, had little interest in missions.” Better it had been if he, and all who have made similar charges against us, had said: “The Protestant Reformed Churches, as they were constituted prior to 1954 and now much more since that time, have had very small facilities and resources wherewith to fulfill their mission mandate.”

It is simply not true that our churches never had mission zeal and revealed little or no interest in the cause of missions. The records of our synods will show that we have inquired even of the secretary of missions in the Christian Reformed Church for information as to the where-with-all to conduct even foreign missions. The records will show that even before we had synods our churches were bent on performing mission endeavor. The records will show that since we have had synods we have always had a mission board which has worked diligently with the means at our disposal and conform to the constitution of missions adopted by our churches which very beautifully expresses in its preamble the principle of missions which has hitherto controlled our interest and endeavor. The records will show that, when we were able, we called missionaries and sent them into the field, and that at present we have a missionary who is on the field assigned to him. The records will show that when a new field opened up, or a new method was proposed, our people responded with keen interest, with prayers and gifts, to support the work. We deny the charge that the Protestant Reformed Churches have no interest in missions.

It is true that we have never been able to do much in the field of missions. It is also true that we could do much more than we are doing if we had the facilities. And perhaps we could say that we should be doing much more than we are doing even with our present facilities. Every church experiences times of lethargy, despondency, evidences of lack of interest due to various causes. No church can rest on the laurels of her achievements and be satisfied that she has done enough. Our churches are no exception to this.

When we consider the Lord’s command to His church to evangelize all the world, it is always proper that the church inquire whether or not she is obedient to this command. If the quest of our young people who are inquiring as to the status of missions in our churches has in it the purpose to determine whether we are obedient to Christ’s command, they are asking a very proper question, and one that may have salutary effects.

What is the present status of missions in our churches?

To answer this question we could begin by reporting an inventory of our present facilities and reviewing our present activities. We have a mission board, consisting of five ministers and four laymen, men who have been chosen by synod and mandated to promote the mission endeavor of our churches conform to the constitution also
prescribed by synod for the conduct of that endeavor. This board will have met five times since the last synod before this article appears in print, and will probably meet two or three times more before the next synod. Most of the time and effort of this committee has been spent in an honest effort to determine a field of labor for our missionary, the taking on of more radio facilities for the propagation of the Gospel peculiar to our churches, and for the distribution of suitable literature of an informative and instructive nature.

We also have at present one missionary who is engaged in what is called church extension and reformation work. The Rev. George C. Lubbers has served faithfully and well in this capacity for the last five years. As fruit of the work accomplished mostly by him, three churches have been brought into our denominational fold. At present our missionary is working a new field among people of German Reformed background in Tripp-Menno, South Dakota. It is also through his direction that much literature is being distributed throughout various areas in our country.

It is also through the facilities and cooperation of the Radio Committee of our First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids that the mission committee is conducting rather extensive radio broadcasting. Besides the six radio stations which carry our messages throughout our own land, we also broadcast from a station in the Netherlands West Indies, and over the facilities of a much larger station in Europe. The cost of these endeavors, which is not a little, is pro-rated to each of our families by synod. That about sums up the present endeavor of our churches in missions.

There are several factors that should not be lost sight of when we inquire as to the present status of missions in our churches. First of all, we must recognize the fact that our numbers and therefore also our financial capabilities have been greatly decimated since the split in our churches in 1954. In close connection with this, we struggle with the obvious handicap of a shortage of ministers. It is the candid judgment of this writer that it would be folly to organize through mission endeavor more churches, giving them the opportunity to call our ministers, when we do not have enough men to supply the churches we already have. We cannot, nor can anyone else, expect us to do great things in the field of missions unless we are given the men and the facilities to do them.

Here is a wonderful opportunity for me to impress upon you young people and especially upon our young men the urgent need of laborers in Christ’s vineyard. God has given us a well established seminar where you may be trained for the Gospel ministry. May we urge you to consider prayerfully this urgent need if haply the Lord may lay it upon your heart to seek this high and holy office in His church. With this provision we may look forward to the future with greater interest and greater activity in the promotion of missions at home and abroad.

**Editorials . . .**

**ATTACHMENT PROBLEM**

As the title above implicates, we intend to devote this page to a treatment of the friendship question. Quite spontaneously this carries us into the practical area of our life: our friends, those with whom we have fellowship and are familiar. It is often said a person is known by his friends, is it true or false? Of course this is true, only a superficial exploration of existing friendships will prove the point. Rural people are inclined to mingle with rural people, urban with urban; poor people generally mix with poor people, rich with rich, great with great, and small with small. Professional people are more apt to associate with professional people, laborers with laborers and business men with business men. And we could go on!

Just what does this prove? Basically these facts would indicate that friendship requires
compatibility. A successful friendship demands fundamental likenesses; having similar interests and abilities, and surely of the same background and age. You see, humans must fit together to be together. At the same time, and with equal force, a continued friendship demands physical contact. You see, humans must be together to stay together. Therefore, conflict in interest and separation are not conducive to friendship, while, on the other hand, likeness and contact are nutritional ingredients to a flourishing and realistic friendship.

So it is that our friends are the tell-tales of what we really are, at least to a degree.

Although each of us is involved somehow or other in this matter, nonetheless it is chiefly a problem for young people. You, the young people, are busy building friendships. That is, you are selecting partners who become your companions and with whom you will temporarily or permanently share your life. But remember this: you are Christian young people and that means, you understand, that your friendships must be able to stand in the sunlight of heaven... God's sight. So your associates must be godly, and the economy of your associations must be godly. This applies to your choice of all friends, but more especially that "special one" with whom you will share through marriage your entire self. We are not trying to be old-fashioned now, but these things require prayer too! And God's Word, by all means, must be our Guide, telling us: what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?

But is this our real problem? I think not! Young people are moreover also actively engaged in securing a position or place amongst others with whom rather close contact is established. You are setting up a tent in the earth. I have in mind the occupation you choose or the trade you pursue in order to promote a physical livelihood for yourself and yours. This will bring you into the world and the Bible warns against friendship on this plane. Remember the world? sure do! It was that stiff wind that blew into our faces when we first left the home of our parents. There it had been so cozy, but outside, all was coarse: cursing and many other features of corruption were then introduced to me. It was that strong current that tugged at me when I left the calm of the Christian School. Then I saw! Even the way parents and preacher described it, well, their description fell far short. That world, although I knew it as darkness, appeared to me as light. She had so much to offer and she beckoned to be embraced. There were the lights of Broadway scarcely resistible; the tents of wickedness appealing and enticing. These could satisfy the flesh in a moment if one is interested in that sort of thing, and we all are by nature. Yes, evil is not far from everyone of us.

Young People, watch your step! As you secure a place on this globe and put to use your God-given-gifts be on your guard, for all must be done to His glory. To be a friend of Jesus is to be an enemy of the world.

The principle to follow in carrying out the above purpose is: In the world but not of the world. Yet the truly interested youth will ask: how is this principle put into practice? To be an enemy of the world, pray tell, what does it mean in my life? This is an important question. It touches the heart of a practical world-and-life view.

Two views with which we cannot agree must be rejected. First there are those who would advocate world infiltration, obviously attempting a reform in all the spheres of corruption. This is not a thought but a trend in christendom today. But over and over again the result has not been world reform but church conform. If I were to support such thinking I would then instruct you to go into the very throes of the world, establish yourself there and let your light shine. It is true, to be sure, that wherever we are we must shine as lights. With this part of the program I have no criticism, but to deliberately establish oneself in the depths of darkness is wrong. Surely we can walk through the zoo without creeping into the cage of the tiger!

Secondly there is the view of world separation. According to this position the Christian is to remove himself, yea, even withdraw himself from all contact with the world. If I were to support this reasoning, I would advise you to inhabit mountain peaks or roam on isolated islands. Appropriately, some men have labeled this action world-flight. The Holy Word calls us to world-flight, not world-flight. Paul trained
the Christians at Ephesus to be soldiers, not spacemen; he told them to put on armor, not spacesuits. These things should govern our actions.

But we teach: in the world, yet not of the world! What is our position?

In the world? Yes! Not in its ugliest parts, to be sure. You have no business in places where the ugliest of evil is exposed. But in your earthly labor you will be in the world, and then in many fields: medicine, law, politics, industry, agriculture, business, office and shop. The list is by no means exhaustive. Most of you are in training now.

Of the world? No! With the world I am not associated, not intimately tied in. To the world I do not belong; I give her no support or assistance in any form in her worldly programs and endeavors, I take no active part in any manner in her unrighteousness. No, I am of those people who profess the name of God and that in truth; counted with those who walk uprightly in an evil and perverse day, having fellowship with righteousness.

In our zeal to live as those who are not of the world, we are apt to fall into another serious error, the error of isolationism. Maybe we will devote our next space to this problem.

In conclusion: why are young people so lax and loose in this matter of attachment? Most likely because they and their parents forget we are in a continuous battle with the world. We live as spectators most of the time and forget we are soldiers. This is disastrous! Let us remember to wage the constant warfare, struggling earnestly to avoid world attachment.

It is your problem young people. It is your problem since you are so young and still of little experience: your problem, since the day in which you live is so evil. Be strong.

rev. a. mulder

I think that I have never seen in any other church paper such a condescending, unloving, "holier-than-thou" attitude toward other churches and other Christian

I respect you and your associates immensely for your interest in your church, your faith, and your theology. I am impressed by your determination to remain faithful to what you believe to be the truth. I should like to see more of these qualities among other young people. However, there are other Christians in the "holy, catholic church," there are other people who can honestly participate in the "communion of the saints." I think you would do well to respect their membership in the body of Christ even if you cannot respect their theology or their way of life.

I have written this letter in hopes of shedding abroad some small measure of Christian love. Hoping I have not offended, I am

Sincerely yours,

Karen De Vos

Dear Mrs. De Vos,

Your charges are as serious as they are vague. I wish you would send me a list of those articles which are "condescending, unloving, 'holier-than-thou'". You will not be hard pressed to find articles critical of other Churches. Criticism, however, does not, de facto, imply the attitudes - motives - which you ascribe to us. Common membership in the body of Christ demands intolerance of cancerous doctrines and pestilent morals. That is not the same as your "unloving" and "condescending," i.e., hateful and proud. You would not sit idly by while infection ravaged your hand because you respected your hand's membership. To do so on the symbolical scale is just as tragic. The entire body is infected and the "tolerated" hand lovingly rots away.

I suppose the question resolves into a debate over what is important. When three quarters of Protestantism denies the divinity of Christ, a diatribe against common grace may appear ludicrous. Whether it is calls for investigation and discussion. This is certain. When the diatribe is a long argument which becomes abusive or bitter the author had better check himself for a lack of (highly prized) love. And repent.

LETTERS . . .

Dear Mr. Editor:

Much as I respect and like you, Bob Decker, Jim Jonker, and the other members of your staff with whom I am acquainted, I simply must register my protest against much of what appears in your magazine, Beacon Lights.

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But you offer no proof, just an impression you have. One certainly cannot be accused of a holier-than-thou attitude just because he attempts to pull his neighbor out of the way of a speeding truck.

Whether I "respect" someone's theology and way of life is not essential. But a "respectable" theology and way of life is the sine qua non of "honest" participation in Christ's body. In so far as one's theology and way of life is not "respectable," he is a dishonest participant. Such a situation demands correction, in ourselves and others. And I agree with you that the Christian must do this as everything else, humbly and with love. Not, however, lukewarmly or with lack of firmness. As much as I must try to keep from being offensive, so much should I try to keep from the truth inoffensive.

Sincerely (and unoffendedly),

David Engelsma

P.S. I like you too.

TRUTH vs. ERROR

the modernistic

INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

REV. R. C. HARBACH

6. Its Program in Romanism

It is said that a new attempt is being made to revive the stale idea of the post-evilic origin of most of the Old Testament, not from the side of the destructive critics school referred to above, but from some Romanist writers. This trend to Modernism in Romanism has been thought recent because it has been supposed that Modernism originated from a Protestant background, and that Romanism held more rigidly than Protestantism to the basic principles of Christianity. But Romanism from before the Dark Ages has been the ecclesiastical grist-mill of Pelagianism and Arminianism, the two most vicious errors and deep-rooted heresies the church has ever had to contend with, the very seed and heart of Modernism. It should not then be surprising that the Romanist church has had certain philosophers have done so, or certain anti-Christian scientists who allowed themselves to depart from the field of true science for the dead-end alleys of speculation. Not the Scripture, but the confident critic is in the wrong.
within its body for the past 100 years its own rationalistic movement which avows itself to be of the critical school, and plainly adopts the term Modernism as descriptive of its character. "Concerning the origin of the Old Testament they say: - 'The children of Israel were on the same religious level as the other nations.' " Of the destructive critics school they say, "Criticism has reconstructed the whole story of the evolution of Christianity."12 Members of this movement admit that it had its origin "in biblical and historical criticism," that is, in that movement the ambition of which is "to eliminate God from all social life."

This Modernist movement within the Romanist church is no more dead than it is in the so-called Protestant world. It fosters what they call "The Program of Modernism," the preamble of which is declared thus: "Our religious attitude is ruled by the single wish to be one with the Christians and Catholics who live in harmony with the spirit of the age." What this movement considers "the spirit of the age" to be may be found very graphically and very capably described in The Catholic Encyclopedia. It is a spirit having four different aspects:

1) A spirit of complete liberation, a freedom from ecclesiastical authority: the liberation of science, which must investigate every field of knowledge without hindrance or opposition from the church; the liberation of the state, which must not be encumbered with religious authority; the liberation of the individual conscience, which must be untrammeled by hierarchical decrees and anathemas;

2) A spirit of change and progress, motivated by the resident forces of evolution in the world, which advances over anything permanent and stationary:

3) A spirit of unification among all men through the sense of brotherliness inherent in the human heart;

4) A spirit of civilization and united inspiration calculated to produce the foundations of  destiny — science and democracy.13

Dr. Newman Smythe, of New England's "new theology" school, says in The Number of Man (P. Mauro), p. 176, "The present Pope is a parenthesis. Some parentheses of history have been long drawn out: but always God's sentence goes on to its full period. The reaction of Pius X is an interruption. Modernism runs in the main line of the thought and intent of Christian civilization." The idea is that the pope can and ought to bring himself into line with contemporary progress, liberalism and modern civilization. The day will come when priests and popes will be as rationalistic and modernistic in thought and life as any of the radical forms of Modernism we have ever known in nominal Protestantism.

B. ITS TENDENCIES AND TRENDS

1. The Trend of Romanism

That which has been expressed in the previous paragraph indicates the direction of this trend. We may see things unfolding and developing in this direction very speedily before our very eyes today. Already the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, claims for his Church of England a spirit of unity with the present pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Union does not yet exist, as that depends upon the decisions of authorities; but something far deeper already does exist, and that is oneness of spirit socially, ethically, and religiously. In our country, modern liberals like this archbishop have been largely responsible for the recent election of a Roman Catholic president. We may now expect to find Romanists bolder than ever, and "Protestants" more timid than ever. Something of this boldness we see in the toy and novelty shops which sell dolls outfitted as nuns. Do not be surprised to see little priest-dolls, and little pope-dolls (perhaps wearing miniature triregum). South American markets have for years been flooded with such trivia.

Although the Modernist movement in the Church of Rome was condemned by the pope in 1861, it spread, from where it began in Italy, to France, then spreading its ravages among Romanists to Germany, England, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Belgium, Russia, Romania and America. The tone of Modernism under Pius IX was politico-liberal, and under Leo XIII and Pius X, socialistic. Today, Romanism is showing an increasing interest in the ecumenical movement, and flirts with the devotees of amalgamation of church and world. The purpose of this movement is not exclusively religious. Its aim is to secure a religious and political monopoly which will control the industrial,

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commercial and educational powers of man-kind. It will therefore willingly bear the censure of superiors, the displeasure of the people, and every disagreeable circumstance of a religious and political nature, short of outright excommunication to advance the interests of humanism, and the merger of the church with the world. The movement has its eyes set on the rule of the world-system must be put into operation. That means that there must be such a liberal outlook on the part of the church, such a repenting of its former strife (Reformations and Counter-Reformations), that it may be wedded to and made completely harmonious with the modern world. All this points to the Man of Sin. He will be the world’s greatest Modernist, and will see to it that the principles of Modernism shall fully be put into execution.

2. The Trend of Modernistic Protestantism

The modernist church labors to bring all Protestantism into line with the latest scientific, psychological, psychiatric, philosophical, and industrial developments. Not only the Anglican, but also the huge denominations of America, such as the Protestant Episcopal and the Presbyterian, have been radically modernistic for years, and are now winning over to their most alluring cause the influential of the Reformed churches. True Christian theism, no longer popular, is on the way out. The churches are too busy making a religion, or a god of democracy. The Reformed principle of the absolute authority of the sovereign God will be pushed even more to the obscure background. The trend being to individualism, there will be more sabotaging of family life, less recognition of authority in the home, and the relaxing of the demands of obedience from children and young people. Modern Protestantism has no higher authority than the autonomy of man. No wonder the Protestant denominations are losing members to the cults! Many other “members” simply drop the church, being perfectly content with a vague religious feeling and no settled beliefs. Dead churches have no way of holding their people, and the ministers find it extremely difficult not only in reaching the consciences of men, but also of so much as securing their attention. But with all this crumbling decay increasing all around, it is not Christianity, but Christendom which is spiritually defunct.

Next time, the trend of religious America.

11) Revelation and the Bible, 341.

CRITIQUE

Wise FOOLS

AGATHA LUBBERS

It is paradoxical but nevertheless true that there are those in this world who are Wise Fools. There are also those who are foolishly “wise.”

To which class do you belong?

I hope that you have classed yourself with those who are characterized by the caption of this article.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a Wise Fool? You undoubtedly answer this question with an emphatic “no!” because such an interpretation of your life has never coursed through your mind nor is this part of the daily thinking that you do concerning your life in this sin-cursed world.

You are characterized as a fool by those
who will not accept nor live according to
the principles that you hold to be true.

If you believe in a God that sustains and
upholds all things by the Word of His
power you will undoubtedly be challenged
on many sides by those who will not accept
this interpretation of the existence of all
things. There are those scoffers who will not
accept the principle that God is the measure
of all things but fabricate all sorts of ex-
cuses and seeming scientific axioms that
would dispute the existence of both a trans-
cendent and personal God who is re-
presented and exists in the Father, the Son
and the Holy Ghost.

In our somewhat sheltered Christian lives
when it is so much the "vogue" to class one-
self as a Christian we are not so often
condemned because we cling to the principles
illicitly above. It is when we attempt to
live lives of real consistency and want to
eschew all evil in whatever form it presents
itself that we are characterized as the fool-
ish in this world — and we are, according to
the measure of man.

According to the measure and standard
of men it is the most foolish thing in the
world to establish distinctive Protestant Re-
formed Christian Schools where the cov-
enant seed can be instructed. From a purely
formal educational point of view it is highly
possible that the instruction given in out
schools may in some cases be inferior to
that given in some public, tax-supported
schools. (I sincerely hope that this is not
the case.) Certainly from a financial point
of view our schools are a decided liability.
Parents who send children to schools which
demand tremendous expenditures of tuition
are certainly "fools" according to the mea-
sure of man.

The fact that our churches have taken a
stand against union membership is also most
foolish. The days are coming and will come
sooner than we dare to imagine when jobs
will be available only to those who will yoke
themselves unequally with the children of
this age.

The fool according to the measure of man
will be the one who will not be willing to
accept the mark of the beast. Only the
foolish will not be able to buy or sell in the
days of severe persecution.

* * * *

I want to point you to one of the greatest
of all fools according to the measure of man.
We read of him very early in the book of
Genesis. He did one of the most foolish
things that is imaginable: he built a huge
boat, 562 1/2 feet long, 93 1/2 feet wide, and
56 1/2 feet high. To add to his foolishness he
built this huge monstrosity on dry land far
removed from any water. The story he told
added to the foolishness of his venture so
it seemed to the people who watched him
build for 120 years. He preached that God
was going to send a great flood and that
this clumsy vessel would be the means
whereby God would save his own from the
flood waters that would rise above the face
of the earth.

Can't you see them doubled over with
laughter as they watch Noah and his three
sons putting finishing touches on the clumsy
bark in the middle of dry land. Imagine
the taunts that Noah and his sons had to
dare as sun continued to shine each day
and no evidences of a flood seemed to
appear.

Imagine too the looks of dread and con-
summation that must have fallen on the faces
of these mockers, those who are really fools
as the rain began to fall and all that Noah
had preached for 120 years began to
become a reality.

Noah who seemed to be a fool was really
wise. He was wise because God caused
him to be wise. God worked faith in his
heart so that he, according to the mea-
sure of man is foolish, is nevertheless
the wise in this world.

* * * *

This is our position in this world too.
We who seem to be so foolish, are the wise
of this world. "The fool hath said in his
heart, 'there is no God.' The wise hath
confessed the God that the fool refused to
accept.

No matter how foolish our programs may
seem to be, no matter how unwise our prin-
ciples appear to men, they are the most wise
and sensible thing in this world.

* * * *

Strive more and more to become one who
is a fool according to the measure of men
but is wise in the eyes of him who makes all
his own "wise fools." Young people don't
be ashamed of your foolishness; be happy
to be called a fool.
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Desire the Sincere Milk of the Word

REV. R. VELDMAN

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
1 Peter 2:2

Mark every word, every phrase! The language is simple; a little child can understand it. Yet, the meaning is tremendous. Here is an exhortation no child of God, old or young, can afford to neglect. "As newborn babes (just born) — desire, (long for, crave) — the sincere (honest, true, unfalsified, undiluted, unadulterated) — milk — of the word (reasonable, logical, pertaining to the word) — that ye may grow thereby (increase, develop) — unto salvation." Let's pause a moment to let every part sink deeply into your soul.

"Milk," in this word of Peter, does not refer to the Word of God as such, either as the Personal Word the Son, or as the written Word, the Scriptures. True, the passage as quoted above ("sincere milk of the word") — King James Version does leave that impression. Therefore we would prefer to follow the Holland and translate: "desire the reasonable, unadulterated milk." This is closer to the original and avoids the error of simply identifying "milk" and "Word." There is inseparable connection between the two, of course. The Word of God gives content and quality to the milk. However, they are not one and the same.

That the milk here is not simply the Word of God as such is evident from at least three things. The immediate context, chapter 1:25, speaks of "the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." There is a clear indication of what the apostle has in mind. Besides, the text plainly presupposes that all milk is not equally pure and good. There is such a thing as contaminated milk; milk that is unreasonable, adulterated, falsified, diluted, full of dangerous bacteria. Surely, this cannot be said of the Word of God as such. Finally, the Word of God as such is never the spiritual food for the church or even the individual believer. We are fed by the preaching of that Word, its presentation, this or that conception of it.

Hence, the "milk" here is the preaching, the presentation of the Word of God, the true conception of it. Therein lies the spiritual food for the church. It is altogether possible, that the pure, reasonable, unadulterated Word of God lies on the pulpit (as is the case even in thoroughly modern churches — their teachers of false doctrine preach from the same Bible we do), and that the church nevertheless receives nothing but adulterated milk. The Word, therefore, as it actually reaches the mind and heart of the church is the "milk," and this milk is pure, of course. only in as far as it is in harmony with the objective Word of God in the Scriptures.

Note, too, that "milk" in this word of Peter must not be understood as referring to a light diet in distinction from heavier and more substantial food.

We know that the term is often used in this sense. Think of 1 Corinthians 3:1, 2: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk (baby-food, that is), and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." Isn't it terrible? To be told by the Holy Spirit Himself that you are too carnal to be ad-
dressed as spiritual? To be called a "habe in Christ," a little baby with respect to Christ and His life and Word, a spiritual idiot, therefore? To have to be fed with baby-food all your life because you are not able to digest something more substantial?

Think, too, of what the Spirit says in Hebrews 5:12: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." Imagine that! Read it again! You ought to be teachers; you have the age; you've been born and instructed in the church all your lives; yet, you're still in the kindergarten! Still struggling with your simple tables, while you should be working algebra and geometry problems! Still on the bottle, while by all that is reasonable you should be taking heavier and more substantial foods! How about it, young people? You've been instructed all your lives in the sound doctrines of the Word of God. Still in the kindergarten, still on the bottle, are you?

In these places the church is being reprimanded for still needing milk.

Here believers are called "babies in Christ," because they are still infants in that wherein they should be adolescents or adults.

Here "milk" refers to a simple diet, a form of preaching adapted to babies or at best Sunday school children.

Certainly, it is no credit to us always to have to be fed with milk because we cannot stand meat. That's nothing to brag about; nothing to be proud of. Such Christians should be deeply ashamed of themselves. That situation develops where people have not had sound, covenant training; or, where people have had abundant opportunities for such training, but have neglected the years of their youth and sought the pleasures and sports of the world at the expense of the more important things; or, where people fail to study God's Word in later years; or, where men crave the senseless literature of the world rather than that which can feed the soul; or, when people are so busy with their homes and work and gardens and amusements and golf and bowing and what not, that there is neither time nor desire for the things of the kingdom of God. There men remain babes (is it a wonder?), for whom everything is too deep (is it a wonder?), and who can stand only the thinnest of diets (is it a wonder?), and have no real appreciation at all of the beauty and majest of the Word of God. I don't say that there is no difference in capacity between one Christian and another, or that the meat may not be a bit heavy for some people some times. I do say, however, that there is no reason why any Christian with normal intelligence should remain a "baby in Christ" all his or her life.

It should stand to reason, of course, that the church at large should not be deprived of solid foods for the sake of such delinquents, but the latter should use whatever means God has given to improve their health and spiritual capacity for stronger meats. They should read, study, and take a deeper interest in the truth and kingdom of God.

No, "milk" in our passage does not have that connotation.

"Milk" here refers to the preaching of the full Word of God. The apostle uses this term to continue the figure of the newborn child. As such a child craves milk we must desire the milk of the pure preaching. The milk, that preaching of the whole counsel of God, the church can stand too, if only the preacher himself knows what he is talking about, and if only the congregation is properly concerned about the glory and Word of her covenant God.

* * *

"As new born babes," says Peter, "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The reasonable, unadulterated milk!

That milk, the presentation of the Word, therefore, must be "reasonable." This is not an exact translation. Some expressions are difficult to translate, because they do not have their precise counterpart in other languages. Such is the case here. The meaning seems to be, however: desire the milk, that is in harmony with the Word, that brings you the Word, that derives its contents and quality from the Word of God only. Understood correctly, therefore, the King James Version is not far from the truth: "the sincere milk of the word."

Moreover, that milk must be unadulterated and in that sense "sincere." Especially in our day much contaminated, diluted,
poisonous milk is delivered to the door of the church. For God's and your soul's sake, be on your guard! All kinds of foreign and heretical elements are carried into the preaching, mysticism, modernism, arminianism, pelagianism, man-ism, free will, universal atonement, gracious offer of salvation to all—anything to make the preaching palatable to the corrupt minds and hearts of evil men. We must desire the unadulterated milk, the pure preaching. To that end study the Word of God! Know your doctrine! Be a good connoisseur, lest your soul be slowly poisoned by that which is not at all of God, but of man.

We all know how an infant desires milk. It cries with all its little being, body and soul, heart and lungs and throat. It cries with complete singleness of purpose. It refuses to be comforted with anything but food. Mother knows only too well, that once babe has its little heart on milk she doesn't have to walk with it, she doesn't have to rock it or sing to it or play with it or attempt to lay it in its crib. Babe wants milk, nothing else. Once it gets what it wants it will eat and eat until its little stomach is filled to capacity and the milk runs out of its mouth. Newborn babes are such little gluttons. Nor will babe be fed with just anything. If the milk is not what it should be, babe will vomit it all out again.

What a picture! Thus we must desire the sincere milk of the word.

"That ye may grow thereby," grow in knowledge and wisdom, faith and love, hope and confidence and all the blessings of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. This is possible only through the means of this milk, and naturally, the purer and richer the milk (the true conception and preaching of the Word of God) the healthier and more consistent will be our growth, the more deeply we shall be led into the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and the more we shall be confirmed in the blessed assurance of our salvation in Jesus our Savior.

CURRENT COMMENTS

The Dilemma of Democracy

JIM JONKER

A perennial problem in almost any organization is the conflict that often arises between what is held to be principally right and practically advisable. Churches, for example, face this issue when they deliberate about admitting into their fellowship members who had been divorced and remarried while still unchurched. Principally it would seem not only that confession should be made, but also that the guilty parties should leave their way of sin. On the practical level, however, it seems far-fetched to break up a happy marriage for this reason. Societies also meet this problem on a very small scale when they conveniently ignore some tight rule of their constitution when it apparently leads to a strange or absurd situation. Generally it seems that the practical side of the question holds the most weight when it appears very advantageous.

Democracy, the U.S. brand of it at any rate, also finds conflict between principle and practice. Democracy is based on certain principles held to be true and important and applicable to situations which present themselves. To some, democracy is just another way of government; to others, it is almost a religion. But between the extremes a good share of our citizens are found. Our office holders swear to uphold the Constitution and laws of our government. They claim to believe in the principles of democracy, such as the derivation of power from the governed to the governing and the unalienable right of every man to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," as at least partially expressed in the "Four Freedoms." Consistency would demand, therefore, that these principles always be held to be important, that they be fought for, and not that they ever be conveniently ignored.
Yet, we do not have to scrutinize government affairs too critically to see that our policies are often very inconsistent with our principles. The same government that at home can sing with such fervor the song of the "Four Freedoms" and every man's right to them, often changes its ditty to a wishy-washy "You're a jolly good fellow," anyway" when it deals with foreigners. The country which prides itself on its hatred of dictatorship is often willing to lend support to a dictator, if he is friendly, pro-Western, non-communist.

For example, before Castro clasped Cuba, that country was on exceedingly friendly terms with the United States. Yet, its dictator, who enjoyed the sanction of our government, ruled with an iron hand. We were enjoying Cuban trade, we were certain of some measure of suppression of Communists, and so we kept shaking Batista's hand. We raised no cry then about democracy for Cuba. We were forced to play it very cautious, however, when revolution began. Officially we had to support Batista. But we stayed out of the quarrel as much as possible, lest we should happen to pick the losing side and lose a friendly country. Ironically, the side which stirred patriotic blood with its cries of democracy, turned out to be a thorn in the side. Unfortunately, Fidel, as far as democracy was concerned, turned out to be an infidel.

This situation has parallels. The cold Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic, has been basking in the warmth of our smile while his people have been living in poverty and chains. Salazar of Portugal has been keeping the Communists out of his country so he has our support while we amusedly watch a few ardent rebels fight for principles. Our fear of Communist infiltration has been so great that we have courted Franco as well as many South American totalitarians.

In contrast, although Russia cannot be ignored, we have chosen to ignore Red China, advancing reasons of principle. Officially we do not recognize this regime and so far we have gotten along quite well with this policy. Yet it seems rather absurd to shut our eyes to the fact that, recognized or not, this country must be reckoned with, as its strength, military, economic, and political, is constantly increasing. Quite probably, it cannot be kept out of the U.N. forever. Japan is looking more favorably at its trade-seeking neighbor. And, strangely and shockingly, our northern neighbor, Canada, takes advantage of our situation as it prepares for trading on a large scale with Red China as well as with Cuba.

The U.S. has a difficult position to maintain. It is no longer self-sufficient. It needs its allies, democratic or dictatorial. Yet it cannot control even its closest friends on the international scene. It has principles vital to its life that it may not neglect. Yet it must live and with a different world.

It faces a dilemma. Must it always maintain principles, or must it work at a practical level? If it follows the former course, it suffers material disadvantage. If it pursues the latter, it loses prestige and finds itself on dangerous ground in sacrificing principle. Must it continue to talk out of both sides of its mouth? Must it be consistent, or will the end justify the means?

J F K and Co. faces this dilemma. Will they swing the horns, or will the horns continue to swing them?

We approached the subject with the four following questions:

What is segregation and integration?
Why do we have it?
Is it right?
Is there any solution?

Segregation is the separation of the three basic races; white, black, and yellow. This separation does not only include schools, but churches and all other public places.

Integration is the dwelling together of the three races as a whole.

Many people attempt to uphold segrega-

IN OUR OPINION

the segregation ISSUE

EDGERTON P.R.Y.P.S.

We, as the Young People's Society of Edgerton, discussed the subject, "What Place has Segregation and Integration in the Christian's Life?"
tion with Scripture by saying that in Genesis 9, Ham received a curse from his father Noah. Since Ham is believed to be the father of the black race, the segregation problem is their curse. In our study, however, we found that it was not Ham who was cursed, but his son Canaan. Further, through a careful study of Genesis 10, we found Canaan to be the father of the many nations in Canaan, who were later destroyed by the Israelites at the end of their exodus. Thus, the curse was fulfilled by the command of God to the Israelites to utterly destroy these nations. Then why, we might ask, has segregation come into our society? We found that segregation became a reality soon after creation at the Tower of Babel. Here, as a result of sin the languages were confused, and nations were separated. Today, the striving of the world for unity, is God's way of preserving His church. While the world fights with itself, it will not persecute the church. The mention of the wound of the beast in Revelation 13:3 refers to the confusion of languages and the separation of nations. When the wound of the beast is healed, one language will become universal, the world will unite and the anti-Christ will come to persecute the church.

Neither segregation nor integration are right or wrong. Segregation is the result of sin and integration is the result of the world attempting to unite against the Church.

In the kingdom and church of God, there is no place for segregation. Scripture points out in Galatians 3:27ff. that we are all spiritual brethren and one in Christ Jesus.

Evelyn Huizenga

HELPs FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE

Book of REVELATION

by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Lesson XX (Revelation 10:1-7) The Promise of no More Delay

This chapter is evidently another interlude: a. It is not a continuation of the sixth trumpet, even though the second woe is not announced as past until 11:14. b. Nor does it belong to the seventh trumpet vision, which is not introduced until 11:15. c. This interlude consists of two closely related parts. (1) The vision of the mighty angel and his oath. (2) The vision of John's ating of the little book that is in the angel's hand. d. The purpose of the interlude appears to be that it is preparatory to the sounding of the seventh trumpet. (1) By a message of comfort to the people of God; (2) By a special preparation of John for further prophetic work.

2. Vss. 1-3a. The mighty angel: a. "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven": (1) The standpoint of the prophet appears to be no longer in heaven as in ch. 4:1, for he beholds the angel coming down out of heaven to the earth. (2) It is "another angel" in distinction from the angels thus far appearing in the Apoc-
apocalypse, particularly from the trumpet angels. (3) This angel is seen at once as “mighty.” b. His description: (1) He is clothed with a cloud: a robe of judgment, symbolizing power and authority to judge. (2) There is a rainbow upon his head: sign of God’s covenant in its universal significance; the right to realize this covenant. (3) His face was as it were the sun: royal majesty and glory. Cf. ch. 1:16. (4) His feet were as pillars of fire: symbol of wrath and judgment. Cf. ch. 1:15. (5) He cried with the roar of a lion: symbol of royal anger and majestic power. Cf. 1:15. (6) In his hand he had a little book; see about this later on vs. 8. (7) He set his right foot upon the sea and his left foot upon the earth: symbolizing that all things are under his feet in judgment.

Note. In spite of the many objections that have been raised against this view, we must agree with those interpreters that see in this angel none other than Christ Himself. The objection that it could not be said of Christ that he would swear by God certainly is not applicable to Christ in His human nature: if He prays to God why should not be be said of Him? Nor can it be objected that Christ could not appear as “another angel”; God Himself appeared as an angel to Abraham. On the other hand, the similarity between the description of this angel and that of Christ in ch. 1 is too striking to be denied. Besides, no mere angel has such power and authority as is ascribed to this “mighty angel.” Compare also Daniel 12:7. The Lord appears here without the long priestly robe of ch. 1. He stands here as the King-Judge, Who is on the point of executing judgment.

3. Vss. 3b-4. The seven thunders a. “And when he cried, seven thunders uttered their voices”; (1) Thunders are symbols of wrath and judgment. Here they are called forth by the voice of the mighty angel to which they are a response. (2) That they are seven indicates that they have to do with the completion of the Kingdom of God and His covenant. (3) They evidently utter an intelligible message, for (a) They “utter voices”: (b) And John understands them b. Contents remain a secret: (1) John is on the point of writing down the message of the seven thunders (vs. 4). (2) However, a voice from heaven restrains him: “Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.” The contents must remain hidden.

Note. Many interpreters have made as many conjectures about the contents of the seven thunders. This is quite in violation of the text, which emphasizes that they must remain secret. The passage, therefore, means to convey the message that there are things that had better remain hid from us, and into which we should not pry curiously.

4. Vss. 5-7. The oath. “And the angel . . . lifted up his hand to heaven.” etc. a. That the angel lifted his (right) hand to heaven is symbolic of his calling upon God. b. He swore by God (1) As the eternal One: “that liveth for ever and ever.” (2) As the almighty Creator of all things: earth and sea and heaven and all things they contain. vs. 5. c. The contents of the oath: (1) Negatively: “that there should be time no longer.” This does not mean a cessation of time, but that there should be no more delay, as e.g. at the end of the sixth seal. The end is near, about to come. He will not tarry. (2) Positively: “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel!” etc. vs. 7. (a) The period of the seventh trumpet vision is meant. (b) In those days the “mystery of God” is to be finished. The mystery of God is the gospel, the promise of salvation, God’s purpose with regard to the Kingdom of heaven and its completion. (c) Could be known only through revelation. Hence: “which he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” This refers to the promise as it had been given to God’s people through the prophets of old from the beginning of the world.

Lesson XXI (Revelation 10:8-11) The Vision of the Little Book Eaten

1. This passage is the second part of the interlude begun in vs. 1: a. The first part tells of the vision of the mighty angel and his oath that there should be no more delay.

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The reference is to the voice that is also mentioned in vs. 4. Whose voice it is that speaks to John from heaven is not mentioned. Here we have another evidence that the standpoint of the prophet is on the earth, and no longer in heaven. “And said, Go and take the little book,” etc. (1) It would be quite impossible to explain this on the assumption that John (in the vision) is still in heaven. How could he actually approach the angel as he is here commanded to do, unless he were on the earth where also the angel is? (2) As to the little book that is in the angel’s hand we may note the following: (a) It is evident that this little book not the same as the book with the seven seals of ch. V:1. Much of the latter had already been revealed to John, and, therefore, there was no need of eating that at this point of the revelation John receives. Besides, there is a good deal of difference between the two. The book in the angel’s hand is described as “little,” the sealed book is not. The book mentioned here is open in the angel’s hand, the book of ch. 5:1 is sealed. The book of ch. 5:1 can be taken only by the Lamb, and by no one else; this book John is commanded to take from the angel’s hand. (b) On the other hand, it is also evident that there is a relation between the two. Both have to do with the things that must come to pass “hereafter.” See vs. 11. And the eating of this little book prepares John to prophesy. Hence, this little book must represent a part of the contents of the book with the seven seals. Nor can there be any doubt, that the part of revelation it contains includes all that must still be revealed to John. This is evident from vs. 11. It contains the prophecy from ch. 11 to the end. (3) The seer is commanded to “take the little book that is open in the hand of the angel.” Let us note here (a) That the book is open, so that John is allowed to read the contents, they are not hid from him. (b) That he is definitely ordered to go to the angel and to take the book. He is not a mere passive instrument in receiving the revelation of the Word of God. Action on his part is required. (c) And that it is the voice from heaven (of the Spirit?) that directs him to take the book.

3. Vs. 9. “And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book.” a. Notice in what manner John carries out the command to take the little book from the angel’s hand: he approaches the angel and asks for it. This denotes (1) That the prophet is ready and desirous to receive the revelation of the Word of God. (2) And the acknowledgement of the fact that he must receive that Word from Christ (the angel) Who must give it to him. b. However, the angel gives John an additional command: “take it and eat it up!” See for similar actions Jer. 15:16; Ezekiel 2:8 ff. (1) It is not sufficient for John to read the contents of the little book and thus make himself acquainted with it. (2) On the contrary, he must swallow it, digest it, and assimilate it completely. The Word of God must become part and parcel of himself. c. And the angel also informs him beforehand of the effect this little book will have on the prophet: “and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.” Notice that the bitterness in the belly is here mentioned first. Compare vs. 10. The meaning of this: (1) Not that part of the Word of God is sweet and part of it bitter, for the whole book has the twofold effect according to the text. (2) Certainly not that the Word of God is deceiving. (3) But that the prophet delights himself in the Word of God and gladly receives it. But he who fills himself with that Word and becomes a witness and doer of it, must expect bitterness according to the flesh in the world.

4. Vs. 10: “And I took the little book” etc. This verse merely tells of John’s obeying the command of the angel. Only he naturally describes the effect it has on him in the order of his experience of it: (1) Sweet to his taste. (2) Bitter in his belly.

5. Vs. 11: “And he said unto me” etc. a. Here the purpose of the whole transaction of the vision is indicated: (1) John must prophesy again. (2) And his prophecy will be of tremendous significance: concerning (not “before”) people, nations, tongues and many kings. b. For this the prophet must be prepared (by eating the book) in a special way according to the special significance of the things to be revealed.
Lesson XXII (Revelation 11:1, 2) The Measuring of the Temple

1. Vs. 1. If we may understand the second woe to be identical with the sixth trumpet, this section, up to vs. 15, belongs to the sixth trumpet. At any rate it is the first part of the prophecy concerning "many people, nations, tongues," 10:11. The text of the first two verses offers no difficulty. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod." (1) This is, of course, done in the vision. (2) Who gave John the reed is not mentioned. (3) The reed was simply a measuring stick. (4) That it was like unto a rod makes it also a symbol of authority and power. Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:26, 27. b. "And the angel stood, saying (according to the R. V. simply: "and one said"), Rise, and measure the temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein." (1) By the temple, is meant here the temple building proper, with the holy place and holy of holies, exclusive of the outer court. (2) The altar, therefore, is most probably the altar of incense that stood in the holy place. (3) Notice that the worshippers are presented as being in the temple, the holy place, which in the real temple was open only to the priests. (4) These John must measure. That this measuring is not for the purpose of ascertaining the size but to indicate and separate the proper dominion of Christ, is evident from: (a) The fact that the reed is "like unto a rod." (b) The fact that also the worshippers must be measured.

2. Vs. 2. a. "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not." (1) The court in the temple of Herod, which John must have seen in the vision, was 750 feet square. (2) This John is told not to measure, indicating that the Lord does not recognize it as properly falling under the "rod" of His kingdom, and separating it from the temple proper and its worshippers in the house of God. b. "For it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (1) Here the reason is given why the outer court is not measured: it is given or surrendered to the Gentiles. (2) At the same time a third area is brought into view: the holy city, i.e. Jerusalem. It is called "the holy city" because of its ideal, essential significance as the dwelling place, the throne, the city of God. Ps. 46:4; 48:1; Isa. 1:26; 48:2; 60:14; Neh. 11:1; Jer. 3:17; Zech. 8:4. (3) The outer court together with the whole city shall be given over to the Gentiles and trodden under foot by them, that is defiled. (4) And the period during which this is to take place is indicated as forty-two months. (a) This is, evidently, a schematic or symbolic number. (b) It is the same as 1260 days, vs. 3; ch. 12:6; it is also three and a half years, or time and times and half a time, Dan. 7:25; Rev. 12:14; it is the time of Antichrist. Dan. 7:25, Rev. 13:5. (c) In general it indicates the entire period of the new dispensation, when the Church is in the wilderness, ch. 12:6; for Antichrist is always in the world, for it is "the last hour," 1 John 2:18. (d) Yet there is a special reference to the latter days and the final realization of the anti-Christian reign. (e) As to the meaning of the number 42 is 6 (the number of Man) times 7, i.e. the attempt of mere Man to establish the kingdom, which fails as the number 6 indicates: he cannot reach 7 times 7.

Note. There is not much difference with respect to the meaning of this text as such. But the main question is: how must the text be applied? To what does the vision refer? What must especially be determined is, whether the text must be understood as referring to earthly Jerusalem and to the literal temple, or to the spiritual city of God and God's spiritual house, i.e. to the Church. There are in the main two classes of literal interpretations: 1. Those that see in the text a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year of 70 A.D. 2. Those that apply it to the temple as, according to them, it will be restored by the Jews in the latter days, and to a literal reign of Antichrist in Jerusalem. We cannot agree with any such literal interpretation, for the following reasons: (1) The text itself does not allow of such literal interpretations. The worshippers here are in the temple proper: they never were in the O.T. temple. The temple building is not destroyed, nor occupied by the Gentiles: the literal temple was completely destroyed. (2) Because in the N.T. everywhere Jerusalem and the temple unless otherwise indicated. are applied to the Church. 1 Cor. 3:16; II Cor. 6:16; Eph...
Lesson XXIII (Revelation 11:3, 4) The Two Witnesses

1. Vs. 3. a. “And I will give power unto my two witnesses” etc. (1) Notice that the vision here changes or merges into the spoken Word. (2) The word “power” does not occur in the original. The meaning is simply: “And I will give unto my two witnesses that they shall prophesy.” (3) Notice, too, that the two witnesses are here spoken of as well-known. Although they were not mentioned before, they are simply described as “my two witnesses.” Even this already suggests that they are witnesses that are always with the Church in the world. (4) From the words “my two witnesses” it is also evident that it is Christ Himself that is here speaking. His witnesses they are. A witness is one who receives and delivers testimony. Here they are witnesses of Christ. They not only belong to Him, but they bear witness of Him, and that at the time that the “holy city” and the court are trodden under the foot of the Gentiles. In the midst of an apostate, antichristian Church it is given to these witnesses to prophesy. That they are two (a) Is surely not to be taken literally (as referring to Enoch and Elijah, for instance; or to the Old Testament and New Testament). (b) But the number is derived from the fact that they are “the two olive trees.” See on vs. 4. (c) And it may suggest that they are comparatively few. Also: “in the mouth of two or three witnesses” every word shall be established. The 70 were sent out “two by two.” b. “And they shall prophesy twelve hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.” (1) The 1260 days are the same as the 42 months of vs. 2 (42 times 30). That here the period is numbered in days indicates the continuity of the prophecy of the two witnesses; every day they shall prophesy. (2) To prophesy is not to predict the future merely, but to proclaim the Word of God. (3) That these two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth denotes their mourning because of the apostate condition of the Church; also their humiliation, reproach and suffering from the world as witnesses of Christ.

Note: All the emphasis here should be given to the words: “I will give.” The Lord Himself is the only author of all prophecy. Without Him there is not the necessary anointing, calling, ability, knowledge, light and faith to prophesy. And this receives emphasis here, because the Church is trodden down by the antichristian philosophy and power. It is a time of apostacy and persecution. But Christ will cause His Word to be proclaimed to and through the Church.

2. Vs. 4. a. “These are the two olive trees and the two candle sticks.” (1) These words are evidently taken from the vision in Zech. 4. At the end of that chapter we read that the two olive trees are “the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth.” vs. 14. (2) In the vision the prophet beholds: (a) A golden candlestick with seven lamps. (b) On the top of it, i.e. immediately above it a bowl from which the oil flows through seven pipes to each lamp (see R. V.: “there are seven pipes to each of the lamps”). (c) And on each side of the bowl an olive tree from which the oil flows into the bowl, and thence into the lamps. (3) Meaning of the vision: (a) The candlestick is the Church or the kingdom of God, as a light in the world. b. The vision intends to teach in general, that the Church can be built and surely will be built and preserved in the midst of and over against the hostile world-power (the “great mountain” vs. 7) by the Spirit of the Lord, and not by the oil, without which the candlestick means nothing and the lamps cannot give their light: the grace of the Spirit. (c) However, this grace is administered to the Church by means of the two

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olive trees, that are "the anointed ones," i.e. at that time Zerubbabel, the prince, and Joshua, the high priest, but in their official capacity; hence: the officebearers. (4) Application of this vision to the two witnesses in our text: (a) Here also the two witnesses are "the two olive trees," i.e. the anointed ones, the officebearers, particularly the ministers of the Word, through whom God will bless His Church and administer the grace of the knowledge of His Word to His people. (b) Only notice, that they are also the two candlesticks, i.e. the Church (two here, not one, or seven, because they are identified with the two witnesses), indicating the close connection between them and the Church. Through the ministry Christ blesses His Church; a through the ministry the whole Church witnesses and prophesies. b. "Standing before the God of the earth. (1) God is God of the earth, i.e. of the earth and its fulness and its people. He is the Lord of all. (2) To stand before Him means that the two witnesses represent Him, speak as before His face, His Word. (3) Hence they speak with highest authority, and the God of the earth shall realize their Word.

BOOKS

Evolution and Christian Thought Today

Ever since Copernicus demonstrated that the sun and not the earth was the center of our universe, the "Sea of Faith" has, for the educated, been at ebb tide. Most scientific men can only "hear its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar. Retreating." The science that in its infancy destroyed theology's unfortunate precursors, in its lusty manhood seems intent upon demolishing theology. In Christian circles, the conflict has centered about the formation of the world. The Christian view has always been that the universe was created by God; science insists — most strongly since Darwin's The Origin of the Species — upon evolution as the explanation.

Twelve auspiciously educated scientists fully "committed to the evangelical Christian doctrine that the world and its living members are the result of the activity of God as declared in the Holy Scriptures" maintain in this book that the basic maxims of science and the teachings of Christianity are not contradictions. The areas examined are wide-ranging. Each of the twelve men probes into a specific field of science (e.g., origin of the universe, origin of life, and fossils), states the evolutionary theories drawn from that field, and proffers a harmony between the scientific facts and the teachings of Scripture. The general consensus is that the creationist often "exhibits in ... his anti-evolutionary literature an antiquated, 'moth-ball' conception of evolutionism." The contributors to Evolution and Christian Thought Today agree that the proper correlation between Scripture and natural revelation is a belief that God (contra the evolutionists) created the world by progressive or developmental means (contra the "hyperorthodox" — as discussed on p. 168).

Dr. Carl F. H. Henry sums up the situation in the last chapter. The learned (B.A., M.A., B.D., Th.D., Ph.D.), prominent theologian points out the vagueness of many, often unquestioned, evolutionary axioms and concludes with the telling remark that "the rejection of the Logos in nature, history, and conscience is but the first step to the rejection of the Logos come in the flesh Jesus Christ."

Although treating the first three chapter of Genesis more like poetry by Eliot than infallible Scripture by God, authors have produced a work which highly relevant to all Christians. Every str
dent and inquiring layman should consider this book a "must" in his education.

The Way of Salvation

The author of this book is a Reformed minister, pastor of the Seventh Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. His radio ministry, his talented pen, and his effective preaching have made him well known in Reformed church circles. His capabilities are evident in this book also.

His style of writing makes the book very pleasurable reading. His communication is personal and direct. He writes rhetorically, just as if he is preaching to an audience, an audience whom he desperately wants to move and inspire. To a large measure he is successful. His writing is very clear and easy to understand, for he includes abundant, lucid, highly-illustrative examples and analogies.

The book contains ten chapters on topics such as election, regeneration, faith, conversion, sanctification, and glorification. It treats the order of salvation (Ordo Salutis) which is found in abbreviated form in Romans 8:30.

Girod's treatment is very sound, with no doubt of proper emphasis. The conclusions of the book are firmly rooted in Scripture and the Reformed confessions, to which many references are made. Some confusion results, however, with Girod's use of the word "invitation," although he equates it with the external calling, the preaching of the word.

The book is highly recommended for all our people, particularly for our young people. It is fairly short, extremely interesting, and spiritually edifying.

j.j.

God's Son and God's World
(79 pp.) — A. A. VAN RULER — Eerdmans ($2.00) (translated by Lewis B. Smedes)

Keen Metaphors
In brief, swiftly moving chapters, Dr. van Ruler expounds and relates the "I am" claims of Jesus ("I am the bread of life," "I am the true vine") and the poetical ecstasies of the Psalmist about nature. The language is simple and the insight penetrating. That Christ is the vine and we the branches finds its basic meaning in the keen extension of the metaphor, namely, the bringing forth of fruit. Upon that fruit of faith, hope, and love, the children of God thrive, in fact, they become intoxicated.

The holy intoxication is born out of the immeasurable and all-embracing love, the love that is in Christ, the love by which we learn to praise God Himself in all the works of his hands."

Sedate Backhand
Author van Ruler contends that the spiritual truths of John's narrative result in an intensified joy, on the part of a Christian, in nature. One who has experienced and recognized the transformation worked by Christ, glories in the creation as does David in Psalm 104. Too much emphasis can be placed upon nature, however. And here van Ruler gives a sedate backhand to the Catholics' Thomism. All attempts to logically prove God from a survey of the natural world are "academic" and "artificial"; "the living God is in the world of nature, to be sure, but He is there, not in nature's way, but after His own manner." Creation is a work of art, not a logical syllogism.

Mass and Purpose
The meaning of the Son of God gives mass and purpose to life. A Christian's life is joyous, humorous, liveable because of — not in spite of — his Godliness. Despite its brevity, the book drills this theme home, opportunely and artistically. d.j.e.

Talks to Young People
C. B. Eavey — Baker Book House — 110 pp. — $1.95

... talks directed to young people for the development of their physical and spiritual life as well as their social life. It includes discussions on New Year's Day, Good Friday, and Thanksgiving Day.

Successful Youth Meetings
GRENVILLE W. PHILLIPS — Baker Book House — 76 pp. — $1.00

... semi-profitable material on programs for youth meetings. Material includes Bible quizzes and drills, and a section on poetry.
30 Programs for Young People

HOTT EVANS – Baker Book House – 108 pp. – $1.50

... provides programs for youth organizations on such topics as singing in church, death, a Christian family life, and honoring God with money.

Chapel Talks

C. B. EAVEY – Baker Book House – 116 pp. – $1.95

... 50 short, widely-ranged topics pertinent to young people such as manners, obedience, selfishness, books and reading, friends, and gossip.

Hope School had a pre-school round-up on Thursday, January 26, and on January 30 their kindergarteners' school year began.

Here's a new address for Southeast's serviceman: Homer Telitsma, M.R. 3, 525-24-13, USS Calvert (PA 32), c/o Fleet P. O., San Francisco, California.

Homer received a promotion and was transferred to another ship and is now in the vicinity of Japan.

From Hudsonville's bulletin we find that serviceman Jerry Gras is now home to stay, and Carry Gras was home late in January for a 15 day furlough.

Membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kuiper and son have been transferred from Southwest to Southeast church.

Mr. Donald F. Hauck transferred from Forbes to First Church.

Mr. and Mrs. P. Zandstra and four children transferred from First to Hope Church.

Hudsonville received the papers of Mrs. Leonard Holstege from Moline Chr. Ref. Church; Southwest received the papers of Mrs. L. Schut from Burlingame Congregational Church; Southeast received the papers of Mr. Marvin Mastbergen from 30th St. Chr. Ref. Church.

January 29 was Singspiration Night! They were held at Loveland and Southwest Churches. “Sing to the Lord, sing His praise, all ye peoples.”

The following item was sent to us by the Program Committee of the Reformed Witness Hour concerning the Radio Choir which has furnished many of the musical

BEACON LIGHTS
portions of our weekly broadcasts. The choir was reorganized and reconstituted a little more than a year ago at the request of the Radio Committee. Mr. Roland Petersen directs the choir and Jim Jonker is accompanist. At the present time the group is well balanced with eight sopranos, eight altos, five tenors and seven basses. Included in the membership of the choir are young people from the local Protestant Reformed Churches – Hudsonville, Southeast, Southwest, and First Church.

Recently the associate editor of Beacon Lights, Rev. A. Mulder, recorded a series of radio sermons for the Reformed Witness Hour. The theme of his message was—“The Powers of Praise.” Included was a sermon entitled—“The Power of Praise – By Singing.” The Reverend said in this sermon, “... Sing then, O merry man!... Zion loves to sing, she loves to sing Zion’s song. Sing much, sing loudly, for you have a place in heaven’s chorus...”

Our young people love to sing the songs of Zion. This is evident by the fact that many of them exercise this form of Christian activity by singing in their local choral societies and also by their representation in the Radio Choir of the Reformed Witness Hour.

Young People! You have a date next Sunday – and every Sunday – to listen to this choir and other musical talent – and to hear the preaching of The Word – on the Reformed Witness Hour!

Miss Alice Vander Meulen confessed her faith on February 5 in our congregation at Lynden.

Two musical treats are coming soon at Hope: The Hope Heralds plan to give a program on February 26, and the Hope Choral Society will present its Spring Concert on April 2.

South Holland Young People invited their Oak Lawn neighbors to a combined society meeting of February 12. Their Bible discussion was taken from Luke 12:13-21.

On January 18 the Mothers’ Club held a tea and apron sale at Adams St. School. Strange that even at a “tea” most of our ladies preferred coffee. I’d say that proves we’re more Dutch than English!

February 17 was the date of the Mothers’ Club Soup Supper also held at the school. About 300 people were treated to pea soup, vegetable soup, home-made pies and salads, coffee and milk.

Future Conventioneers for this month:
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. George De Vries of Southeast.
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Vanden Top of Lynden.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. R. Brons-ting of Hull.
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Westra of Hull.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. James Schipper of Southwest.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. B. Kamminga of Southwest.
A daughter being adopted by Mr. and Mrs. R. Bloem of Hope.


Called Home: Infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hoekstra (Hull), Mr. Peter Kooistra of First Church at the age of 96 years.

Hudsonville’s Mr. and Mrs. Society sponsored a Hostess Supper followed by a program on February 16. The proceeds of the evening are to be used for kitchen equipment.

Wedding Bells rang on January 19 for Miss Theresa Dykstra and William Hofman (1st); on February 3 for Miss Linnea Berglund and John Stuurma (Southeast); on February 10 for Miss Marilyn Shoemaker and Gerald Lubbers (Hudsonville).

Congratulations to Mr. J. Bolt of First Church, who resides in the Holland Home and who on February 15 celebrated his 80th birthday.
REV. G. VAN BAREN
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