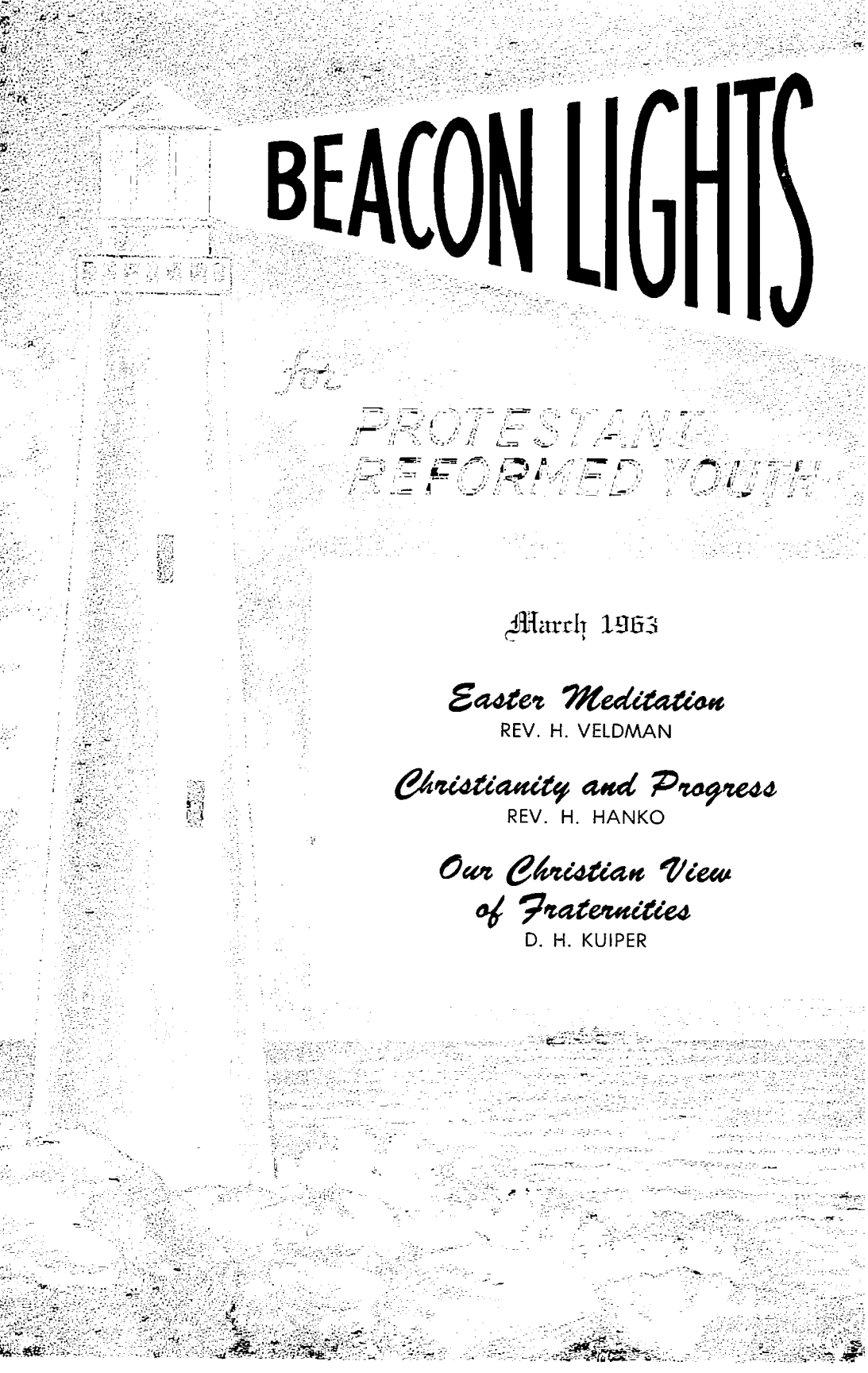


BEACON LIGHTS

for

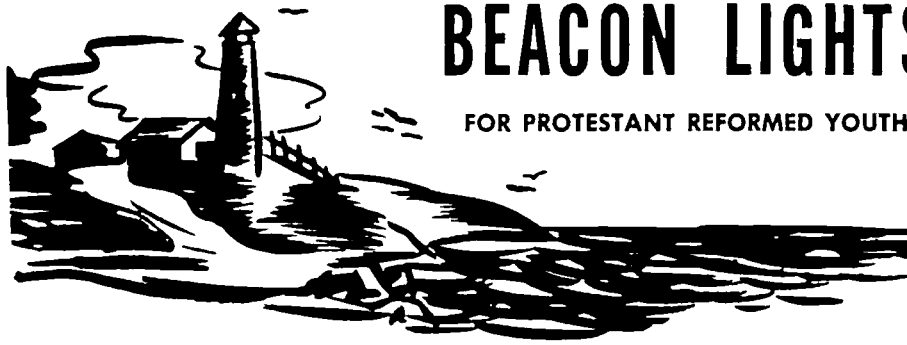
PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

March 1963

Easter Meditation
REV. H. VELDMAN

Christianity and Progress
REV. H. HANKO

Our Christian View of Fraternities
D. H. KUIPER



BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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The Weight of Glory

The church that loses her fiery hatred for errors concerning the truth of Scripture walks the way of a sickness unto death. Placidly accepting heresies with the church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:20) or tolerating evil with mild protestations as did Eli (I Sam. 3), she places herself under God's judgment of that which claims the name but lacks the power of Church. In the choosing and gathering of the Church, God's purpose is that the Church be "to the praise of the glory of his grace" (Eph. 1:6), "to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12). The reason for the existence of Israel-Church is expressed in Is. 43:21, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." The living, healthy Church understands her calling in the world in the light of God's reason for her existence and God's purpose in her formation. Beyond every human tie, every natural consideration, every earthly factor, and, marvellously, beyond the matter of her own salvation, one impulse moves the Church, one concern directs her, one longing sustains here, the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 3:21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. Amen."

Where the glory of the Lord is of secondary concern or of no concern at all, a church takes on the ghastly pallor of a dying or dead body. Absence of its very life-principle constitutes the pallor: a hollow claim yet to the name, Church, is what makes it ghastly. By powdering and painting a corpse one does not remove the color of death, one merely makes that color hideous.

The Church confesses God. That is incontestably her calling. But she does not go about repeating God, God, God for she confesses God revealed in Christ Jesus according to the Holy Scriptures, which is to say, the truth. She loves the truth because it is God's, because it is, essentially, not *it* but *He*, Jesus Christ her Saviour. For this reason love of the truth never appears in history as a sword with one edge. To love the truth is to hate the lie since the lie, not *of* God, is *against* Him. A philosopher who believes that Socrates really existed can tolerate (although less calmly than philosophers would have you suppose) a colleague's notion that Socrates is Plato's invention. The Church cannot tolerate the notion that Jesus Christ is a mythical hero-figure or that He was no more than a man or that His power of salvation stops short on this side of Divine power. On the contrary, the Church burns with holy anger and righteous indignation against this lie. That which accounts for her inability to tolerate is her passionate regard for the glory of her God.

Not much wrath burns in churches any more. Satan comes stomping where once he had to tip-toe and he stirs up nary an ember. It is out of style to hate falsehood. Be content to love the truth. And all the while they are busy filing an edge off the sword of truth. But the blade is of a piece; the edges flow together; all that's left them is a handle.

Is this the Church? This Areopagus where all spend "their time in nothing else but either to tell, or to hear some new thing?" Here, one holds forth in defense of evolution and, there, another contends for the annihilation of the soul at death and, ho, there comes a babbler talking about a resurrection.

There are two ways to destroy the truth and the Devil is adept at both: bludgeon it with the lie or smother it with nonchalance. Keep Athanasius and Arius, on the controversy of Christ's Deity, Augustine and Pelagius, on that of original sin, Luther and Erasmus, on the bondage of the will, Calvin and Pighius, on sovereign predestination, in

the "purely" intellectual sphere, in the sphere of mutual forbearance and benign co-existence, and you concede to the heretics the greatest victory possible. But the Church will never concede this for she cannot allow the clouds of falsehood to dim the brightness of her Lord. This *cannot* find its cause in God's grace. Grace spells the difference between the vacuous debating on Mar's Hill and the tenacious defending of the gospel in the Church. Not the Church itself but Christ in the Church impels her to actively, urgently, resist and reject the Father of Lies. In the history of the ending of the ages, this means for the Church a persistent battle and- her salvation.

° ° ° ° °

Two articles in the February issue of *Missionary Monthly*, a periodical "devoted to the Mission Work of the Reformed and the Christian Reformed Churches in America," illustrate the hapless and hopeless way of a church whose moving force is no more the honor of the Lord. Reviewing a book written by a fellow minister in the Reformed Church, Rev. J. De Witt passes the judgment upon the minister-author that "he denies the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ as a literal, historical fact." The point of referring to this article is not that Rev. De Witt fails to stand for the truth of the virgin birth but rather that he falls short in opposing the lie. He is "shocked, astonished and grieved" at this teaching from a man who "has been graduated from our seminary, preaches in our churches, and who now has boldly denied a cardinal tenet of our faith," but why is De Witt not angry? After the review of Boslooper's (the minister-author in question) position and a brief reiteration of the truth of the Virgin Birth, there comes no blunt, forceful, uncompromising condemnation of Boslooper and no instruction as to the necessity and manner of casting out the heretic from the Reformed Church. I John 4:3 brings the condemnation against Boslooper that De Witt would not: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist . . . " And I John 2:22, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." Antichrist, be it, then, with a small "a," has clean papers in the Reformed Church and preaches every Sunday. The question is not, primarily, Boslooper's "transgression upon ministerial vows" nor the horrendously understated fact that "This (denial of Jesus' Deity-DJE), if allowed to stand, must surely be destructive of the whole (faith of the Reformed Church-DJE)." The core of the matter is that there is no fellowship between Christ and antichrist. If antichrist remains in the church, that church is a flat mockery of the God whose name she claims. And God, jealous of His name, will not be mocked. Beyond any contradiction, to deny Jesus Christ, the Effulgence of God's glory, is to strike the child of God with holy anger and perfect hatred, strike him so that he counts all other considerations as nothing, strike him so that he fights against the liar with mouth and pen and prayer, strike him so that, in the end, he will suffer himself to be put out of the corrupt institute, stand alone, and – die.

Dr. Jerome De Jong busies himself in the same magazine with the fact that public schools teach evolution. As background, it should be remembered that the Reformed Church has overwhelmingly, perhaps, universally, rejected Christian primary and secondary schools. Dr. De Jong, a minister in the Reformed Church, complains that "the average public school teacher presents . . . that the world was created without the intervention of God." That Dr. De Jong is unhappy is commendable. It is in his reaction to this peril, however, and in his advice to the Christians involved that the objectionable minimizing of God's prerogatives occurs. He writes: "I think at this point every Christian parent and every Christian in the Parent and Teacher's Association has the responsibility to make it clear to the teacher of her child that there ought to be also taught in the public schools of our nations the fact of creation. I do not say that it must be taught as the answer to the problem, but I do say that we have a right as Christians to insist that the point of view of the Christian Church has just as much right in the schools as the point of view of secularism and of atheism or agnosticism." And he continues, "I think also that we as parents ought to insist that the Bible should be presented in our schools if in no other way as a matter of good literature. There

is no reason why children in the public schools should not read from the Bible. They read from every other book."

These quotations reflect a dismally low estimation of a Christian's calling in the world. Behind this failing lies a vision of the Almighty which has not been gotten from standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai as God descends upon it in "thunders and lightnings . . . and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud . . . in fire" so that "the whole mount quaked greatly" (Ex. 19:16-20). One awestruck by the whole of Revelation 4 would, in the light, especially, of verse 11, direct the Christian along a different way: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." It is not the calling of Christian parents to see that God gets equal time. Christians do not insist that creation be taught as an alternative to evolution. Christians do not desire that the Bible worm its way into society or school by the claim of being good literature. God created the world; evolution fails to explain the origin of the universe, but at the same time robs the living God of His rightful glory. The Bible is God's infallible Word, having no peer in any other book, and wherever the Christian takes it, he heralds it with that claim. God does not want equal time, not with evolution, not with atheism, and not with agnosticism. He wants and demands all time because all time is His. Secularism and all the rest may have as much time as they have created, that is, none.

After all this comes Dr. De Jong's flaccid footnote, "The author of this article takes the position that the Christian School is the answer to our educational dilemma. It may very well be that some of our readers do not agree with this conclusion." Over against this, compare the unequivocal and unapologetic words of Luther on the same matter of education, "I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates of hell, unless they diligently labor in explaining the holy Scriptures and engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the word of God must become corrupt." The latter expression carries the weight of glory.

D.J.E.

Easter Meditation

REV. H. VELDMAN

Of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ the apostle Peter speaks in his Pentecostal sermon which is recorded in Acts 2, in verse 32: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." I will not say anything in this Easter message about the context in which these words appear. Space forbids me to do this; besides, this article must be an Easter meditation.

Of what were the apostles and the disciples of our Lord (the 12 met in that upper room) witnesses? The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? Indeed not! Neither does Peter say this. No man was a witness of the resurrection of our Lord. The fact of the resurrection as such is nowhere expressed or described in any of the gospel narratives that relate to this event. These narratives all begin after the resurrection has occurred. And this need not suprise us. Fact is, no man could see the resurrection. The resurrection of our Lord simply does not belong to our earthly life, the things we can see and hear with our earthly eyes and ears. It belongs to the things that are heavenly. Hence, no man was a witness of Christ's resurrection. This also applies to

the soldiers. However, what the apostle does declare in this text is that they are all witnesses of the fact that God *had* raised up Jesus from the dead. For, they had all seen Him after His resurrection.

Jesus was raised up from the dead. What, my young people and friends is so wonderful about that? Was He the only one who had raised from the dead? Had not others been raised up from the dead, both in the Old and in the New Dispensation? Had not the daughter of Jairus, the young man of Nain and Lazarus been raised from the dead? And we also read of such resurrections in the Old Dispensation, as performed by the prophet Elijah and his successor, Elisha. So what, then, is so wonderful about the resurrection of Jesus? Fact is, the resurrection of our Lord is truly wonderful! O, the modernist, denying the physical resurrection of Jesus, may tell you that it really makes very little difference whether Christ has actually been raised from the dead. He will tell you that what actually and really means anything is that Christ's "spirit" lives on in the minds of the people, and that we emulate him as our example and teacher. But, this is the heart of the gospel: Christ and He crucified. And this includes His resurrection. The resurrection of our Lord is so vital and important that it constitutes the only beam of life, the sole ground of our hope and faith. Without it, we are of all men the most miserable. With it, we are the most blessed. And, fact is: Now is Christ raised and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Why is Jesus' resurrection so unspeakably wonderful? To answer this question, we will call your attention to three very vital and fundamental truths. First, what death did He die? Jesus died! That, in itself, is not so startling! Everybody dies! That Jesus died could therefore simply mean that what happens to everybody also happened to Him. And if we say no more we say exactly nothing. Jesus died a very special death. That appears from many things. We all die, is it not so, because of our sin. We are all sinners, spiritually dead and corrupt, and also guilty and condemnable. But Jesus was no sinner. Never was guilt found in His mouth. Never was He convicted of any wrong. He was perfectly holy and undefiled, like unto us in all things, sin excepted. Yet, He died. His death must have been a very special death. Imagine: He died, Who was no sinner! The fact that He was no sinner, had no guilt, must mean that He did not die therefore because of His own sin. He had no sin.

What was so wonderful about His death? What death did He die? He died *our* death. He died for our sins. He suffered for our iniquities. He paid for our guilt. And this is wonderful because it is unique. It never happened before! And it will never happen again! The amazing phenomenon of Calvary is, among other things, exactly this: for the first time in history one man died, before God, for the sins of others! Upon the the cross of Calvary, one man bled and died for all the sins of all the elect throughout all the ages!

Christ assumed full responsibility for all the sins of the elect sheep given Him of the Father. He died our death. He stood in our guilty relation to the law. Indeed, the Lamb of Calvary was not innocent. God does not execute innocent people. O, He was surely innocent in Himself, did not die for His own sin. But He was guilty, the guiltiest who ever was under Divine sentence, because the sins of all the elect were upon Him. Never did any man pay such a huge debt! And that He died means that He volunteered to die for His own, to bear, in full consciousness and in perfect obedience, the terrible wrath of God, the full weight of the Lord's indignation upon our sins. Jesus experienced upon the cross how terribly God is displeased with sin, and He praised God in that terrible manifestation of His wrath. Why was Jesus' resurrection so wonderful? Because, in the first place, He died our death upon the cross of Calvary. This is the first fundamental truth to which we would call your attention. But, we would mention three such truths.

Secondly, Who died? This, too, is very fundamental. Of course it is! Peter tells us that God raise up "this Jesus." Who is "this Jesus?" Well, He is very wonderful. His Name already suggests this. His Name is Jesus. And Jesus means: Jehovah, Saviour or: Jehovah saves. Jesus is the revelation of the living God as the God of our salvation. Jesus is He Whose Name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Jesus is the

Eternal Son of God united with our flesh and blood in the Person of the Son. He is God Who also became man, the Infinite, Who also became finite, the Eternal Who also became temporal, the Lord Who also became a servant, the Creator Who also became creature, Who, becoming a creature, man, etc., is and continues to be true and eternal God. Besides, Jesus is the Head of the elect, the Head of His Church. Indeed, a most wonderful Sufferer is the Lamb of Calvary!

And what does this mean? This means two things. On the one hand, only He *may* die for our sins. He must die for our sins and guilt. He is Jesus, the Head of the elect and of His Church. He, therefore, represents them, must assume all responsibility for their sins. Their sins rest upon Him. He must stand in their guilty relation to the law. Hence, He must die for them. And, it is for this reason that He alone may die for them. Do we understand the awful implication of this? Let us please presuppose the terrible possibility once that this Jesus should fail to pay for our sins, that He should fail in His attempt to finish the work whereunto He came! What would this mean? This, that we would remain forever in our sins and guilt. Because none would ever be permitted to take His place. It is either He or none! He alone must die for us and He alone may die for us. For this reason the possibility of our salvation and redemption rests solely upon Him. But, this is not all. On the other hand, He alone can die for our sins. He alone may die for us. He alone can die for us. Who could possibly venture forth to save us, should He fail? He is Immanuel, God with us! He is the Mighty God of Jacob! He is the Almighty One, the God of our salvation! Hence, He alone can save us! Let us, my young people and friends, look upon the cross of Calvary in this light. The Lamb of Calvary is th sole Possibility of our salvation, He with whom our salvation stands or falls, even forever, the only one who may and can die for us, and Who also did die for us. This is the second fundamental truth to which I would call your attention in this Easter message.

Finally, I must call your attention to a third fundamental truth in this article. What does it mean now that God raised up Jesus from the dead? Indeed, we would call your attention to several wonderful benefits that accrue to us because of this amazing event. However, I would single out only one of them, possible the greatest as experienced in the consciousness of the child of God. I would call your attention to the truth that the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Divine seal upon His finished work upon the cross, the Divine verification of that wonderful sixth crossword of our Saviour: It is Finished. Let us understand this. Our Lord Jesus Christ had died our death upon the cross of Calvary. He had been nailed to the cross approximately at 9 o'clock in the morning. Upon that cross He had suffered and endured all the vile taunts and ridicule of His enemies. Then, at noon, the awful darkness descends upon the face of the earth. That darkness separates Him from His enemies. It strikes fear and terror into the hearts of men and demons alike. It shuts their evil mouths. And the Man of Sorrows, separated from His hellish tormentors, is now closeted alone with His God. Now He descends into hell. Now He is face to face, in the most dreadful reality, with the unrelenting and uncompromising indignation of His God upon sin. It alone He sees! With it He struggles! The awfulness of that indignation He experiences and tastes. To the very last drop! And, having emptied the cup, He cries out, triumphantly: It Is Finished! What we can never understand, He has borne an infinite wrath of God, He, the Beloved of the Father also upon the cross of Calvary! And now God raises Him from the dead. This is God's answer to that wonderful crossword: It is Finished. Jesus' resurrection means that He has finished His work. Indeed, our Lord's resurrection is also the pledge of our final and glorious resurrection, the assurance that our vile bodies shall be made like unto His most glorious body. But, fundamentally, and unspeakably wonderful, is the truth that Christ's resurrection is God's seal upon His work upon the cross. It means that our sins are paid, all our sins, that our death has been swallowed up of life, that we are heirs, forevermore, of everlasting and immortal life and glory. All thanks unto God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord!

Cults and Sects

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

EVELYN KAMPS

The Adventist movement originated with William Miller, a converted deist, who became a Baptist minister. He became a close student of the Scriptures, especially of the prophetic portions. He became convinced that Christ's second coming was to be personal, premillenial, and that it was near at hand. The outstanding feature of his teaching was that Christ's second coming would occur in 1843 or 1844 and then also the "cleansing of the entire earth" would take place.

Much interest was aroused in Mr. Miller's message. At first, however, the movement was carried on entirely within the existing churches, with no intention or attempt to organize a separate denomination.

William Miller took for the foundation text of his theory the same verse that so many self-appointed prophets had bungled over, Daniel 8:14, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." He concluded that the symbolic "day" of Bible prophecy really represents a year. Also concluded was, that the 2,300 "days" of Daniel 8:14 started in 457 B.C., the year of the command to rebuild and restore. Miller thought that the sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14 was actually the earth, which would be cleansed with fire at the time of the second coming. He believed that Christ's second coming and this cleansing would take place some time between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844.

When by the spring of 1844, the great event failed to materialize; Miller discovered that he had miscalculated and reset the date for October 22, 1844. It is said, although flatly denied that on this day the Millerites put on their specially prepared white ascension robes and climbed to the house tops and waited for the moment to come when they would be "caught up with the Lord in the air." Property was given away, good were disposed of, and crops were left to rot in the fields. They knew that the end of the world was upon them, but time marched on and Christ did not come.

The results were pathetic. Confusion followed, many were left destitute, vast numbers lost all interest in adventism and went back to their churches. A conference was held in Albany in 1845, and a general organization of those who held to the Adventists belief was formed. This group held generally to Miller's position and theology – emphasizing the personal and premillennial character of the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead – the faithful to be raised at Christ's second coming, the rest 1,000 years later – and the renewal of the earth as the eternal abode of the redeemed.

Gradually, the Adventists became divided into the five separate groups in which we

find them today. They became divided over such questions as:

1. Does the cleansing of the sanctuary of Daniel 8 refer to a sanctuary in heaven or on earth?
2. Is there eternal punishment for the wicked or ultimate annihilation?
3. What is the nature of immortality?
4. When should the Sabbath be celebrated — on the first day or on the seventh?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest single adventist body in the United States. It traces its origin back to the split caused by the controversy over the interpretation of Daniel 8:14. They had taught that Christ was coming in 1844, to cleanse the earth, the sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14, but since Christ very plainly did not come in 1844 they had to find an explanation. They began to look for a heavenly sanctuary. In Revelation they read of a "temple of God that was opened in heaven," and in Hebrews of a heavenly "sanctuary" a "tabernacle" which the Lord pitched, and they had their explanation. Christ was not going to come out of, but was going *to enter into* the Most Holy Place in heaven to complete the second phase of his high priestly office before coming to this earth. This cleansing, they claim began on the day set by William Miller, October 22, 1844. When He is finished, He will make His second coming to the earth. How is He cleansing the Most Holy Place? He is investigating the sins of His people in order to make complete atonement for them and thus secure the pardon of God. Satan, is discovered to be the author of sin, so he will be the scapegoat to bear away the sins of God's people. It is also taught that when Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary the door of mercy was closed to all who at that time were unsaved. Says Mrs. White, "My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked but could not see it *for the time of their salvation is passed.*"[1]

The growth of this group around their leaders, Joseph Bates, James White, his wife, Ellen White, and Hiram Edson, was slow at first, owing to the general derision in which the Adventists were held and to their economic and social handicaps. By 1855 they set up their headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan, with a publishing house called the Review and Herald Publishing Association. In 1860 the name Seventh-day Adventists was officially adopted and in 1903 they moved their headquarters to its present location in Washington, D. C.

Mrs. James White, until her recent death, was the leader and prophetess of the Seventh-day Advent movement. She was an early disciple of William Miller. She was a nervous girl and at the age of seventeen claimed to have had her first vision. Afterwards, she claimed to have been repeatedly caught up into heaven, where she saw the sanctuary. These revelations she called her "Testimonies," which are now in print. She claims inspiration for them, like the inspiration which the writers of the Scripture received.

What are some of the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventists?

1. They take the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice.
2. They believe in God as revealed in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. Creation by command of God and the fall of man.
4. They hold to the Ten Commandments as the standard of righteousness.
5. Tithing is made obligatory for all members.
6. They practice adult immersion.
7. They stand for religious liberty for all men and complete separation of church and state.
8. They rigidly abstain from alcoholic beverages and tobacco.
9. One of the main differences between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and most Protestant Churches is that they teach that man is not immortal. When a man dies, not only his body, but also his soul ceases to exist. Seventh-day Adventists hold that because we can not see the soul and because it has no physical dimensions it does not exist as a being in distinction and apart from the body. This clearly is the language of rationalism and not the language of men who believe in the Bible as an infallible rule for faith and practice. The very fact that man was created in the image of God implies that man has a soul that will not die. The soul is not eternal, as God is, but has the attribute of immortality endowed by God.

10. They also believe in the doctrine of soul sleep. The souls of the dead are sleeping in the grave. They say, "The state to which we are reduced by death is one of silence, inactivity, and entire unconsciousness."[2] The Bible teaches us that neither in the case of the righteous or the unrighteous does the soul lapse into a state of unconsciousness at death.

11. Another doctrine is the annihilation of the wicked. This doctrine too is unbiblical. We read in Revelation 20:10 of punishment that is to continue "day and night forever and ever." John 3:36 mentions the wrath of God "abiding on the wicked," and Matthew 25:46, "and these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life."

12. The Seventh-day Adventist are convinced that the seventh-day of the week is to be kept holy as the Sabbath of the Lord and not the first day of the week. They conclude that the law given on Sinai was never abolished, therefore, we are today as much obligated to keep the seventh day as were the Jews in the Old dispensation. They insist on a very literal interpretation of the Ten Commandments, especially of the Fourth Commandment. Mrs. White claims to have seen the heavenly sanctuary and she says, "Two angels stood one at either end of the ark with their wings spread over the mercy seat and their faces turned toward it." Jesus raised the cover of the ark and she beheld the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. She was amazed as she saw "the Fourth Commandment in the very center of the ten precepts with a soft halo of light encircling it."[3]

In Acts 20:7, we read. "And upon the first day of the week when we were gathered to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow, and prolonged his speech till midnight." This verse is a hard one for the Seventh-day Adventist. The fact is that Paul stood up on the day when the people of God were want to worship, that being the *first day of the week.*

Paul writes in I Corinthians 16:1, 2, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every man of you lay for him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Dr. F. W. Grosheide, a New Testament scholar wrote: "the fact that Paul speaks of the first day of the week and calls that the day for the collection implies that Sunday was destined for the special service of the Lord."[4]

It is hard to believe that the Church for the past 1900 years as been guilty of lawlessness, as the SDA's claim, by observing the first day of the week as the true day of rest.

A more serious objection to the Seventh-day Adventist belief is their claim to a special revelation from God to observe the last day of the week. This revelation, they claim, came to Mrs. White by means of the third angel mentioned in Revelation 14:9-12. Francis D. Nichol, a leading Seventh-day Adventist writes, "the third angel's message is a warning against the keeping of Sunday and a call to man to keep God's true Sabbath day. The true Sabbath has two distinguishing marks 1.) The mark of time. "The Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." 2.) The purpose. The Sabbath was instituted as a memorial of a certain historical event, the creation of the world."[5]

The truth of the matter is that, there is no proof that Mrs. White was taken up into heaven, or that she did receive a specific revelation from God, and furthermore, that the entire church has been guilty of apostasy all these years by observing the first day of the week. It seems strange that these people, who are proud of their loyalty to Scripture should take the testimony of one woman, when there is no way to verify her testimony.

The Seventh-day Adventists ignore the teaching of the Apostles, disregard the plain leading of God in making certain great events to take place on the first day of the week, and they ignore the clear distinction in Scripture between the Old and New Testaments.

1. *Present Truth*, August, 1849 P. 22
2. *Fundamental Principles* p. 12
3. *Seventh-day Adventism*
4. *Commentary on First Corinthians* P. 398
5. *Reason for Our Faith* P. 209

Christianity and Progress

REV. H. HANKO

The Protestant Reformed Churches are fifty years behind the times!

Have you ever heard this charge? It comes in many forms. Our Churches are old-fashioned. Our Churches do not keep up with modern developments. Our people are not interested in progress and shield themselves from change. Our doctrine is outdated and our life and walk is too narrow and severe to be real in these days. Our denial of every form of evolutionism including the period theory is hopelessly out of step with modern scientific development. Our emphasis on the truth fits no longer these days of ecumenical movement and church merger. We are slowly drifting out of the ecclesiastical stream.

There are broader charges made against our Churches and those Churches who still stand in the line of the Protestant Reformation. It is said that an infallibly inspired Scripture and our historic Reformed confessions are no more adequate for the needs of today's world. Modern times demand a revamping of our traditional views. The problems of the day are so different and so peculiar to our times that they demand a different gospel — one that fits. The atomic age calls for drastic overhaul of the church's confession. Ecumenicity demands a re-evaluation of historic Christianity. The gospel must be made relevant. We must "go back to Dordt" to weigh in the balances of the demands of today's world the truths which our fathers incorporated in their confessions.

If we do not we shall be left behind. Only when we do shall we be able to speak to our age. Change is what we need. And especially young people are eager for change.

Is it true? Are our Churches destined to eat the dust that swirls about us raised by faster moving Churches that pass us by? Do we get caught in the wake of other denominations that speed along toward the future? Is our fight for the truth and defense of the "narrow" principles of a Godly walk a drag to progress?

Let it be established immediately that stagnation and contentment with "things as they are" is wrong. We must never assume that "we have attained," that there is nothing more for us to do, that progress is to be frowned upon, that change *per se* is to be resisted. A stagnant pool of water begins to stink. A stagnant Church is a dead Church. It is a spiritual corpse that is no more a sweet smelling savor in the nostrils of God.

But from this it does not follow that we must adopt the opinion of others and assume that their charges are correct. People are sometimes restless. They are eager for new ecclesiastical adventures and they long to strike out in new directions to new horizons. They are disturbed by the accusations that we are drifting behind. But of change for change's sake we must beware. And the change and "progress" that characterizes today's world is to be abhorred.

First of all, that the gospel is irrelevant to our modern times is sheer nonsense. That is, as long as the Truth is preached. Usually

this charge is made in order to excuse the introduction of a social gospel; a social gospel is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel is the preaching of the Word of God. God wrote that Word. He wrote it indeed several millennia ago. He wrote it in times when history was different, when men lived different kinds of lives, when there was no atomic age. But this does not alter the fact that God wrote His Word for all time. He wrote His Word to be the means of gathering and strengthening and feeding His Church until Christ comes back. That He could do this is evident from the fact that God determines all of history sovereignly and in His counsel. He determined this atomic age as well. And, because God determined all of history, God is the sovereign Lord of history. History is the execution of His will and sovereign good pleasure. And when God wrote Scripture for His Church, He knew exactly what His Church would have need of in every age, in every time, under all conditions of life until Christ comes back. As long as God's Word forms the exclusive content of preaching, the gospel will surely fit our times.

Secondly, progress means that we go on from the past. Perhaps the progress which the Church is called to make can be compared with the building of a house. In the building of a house there is progress from the foundation to the putting on of the roof and the finishing of the exterior. But if one man builds the foundation and another man erects the walls and yet another man puts on the roof, they will naturally build on each other's work. If they would not, they would be fools. If the carpenter that erected the walls would ignore the foundation and build walls elsewhere, no house would ever be built.

The same is true of the progress of the Church. Generations gone by have laid the foundation of the truth of God's Word. Our fathers of the Reformation have erected the walls. Perhaps it remains for us who live in the end of the ages to put on the roof. But we would be fools to build without a foundation than that which our fathers have laid down. The trouble is that when the clamor for change and progress reaches its loudest pitch, a quick glance will show you that most men today are not interested in building the house of the truth -- they are instead busily engaged in tearing it down. The house is destroyed by their evil hands.

The truth which our fathers discovered in Scripture, confessed with their mouths at the price of their blood, and incorporated into our confessions, is a truth which they were led to confess by the Spirit of Truth. When Christ was ready to walk that last dark mile of His cross, He promised His disciples that He would send to them and to the Church of all ages the Spirit of Truth that would lead and guide them into all truth. This promise has been most wonderfully and remarkably fulfilled. A great and glorious heritage of the truth purchased with much suffering, has been entrusted to our keeping. To ignore and despise this truth and to turn our backs upon it in search of something new is to despise the promise of Christ and to detest the fruit of the Spirit in the Church.

There is a practical consideration that immediately comes to the fore. If we expect to "progress" we must know what the Church of the past has said about God's Word and about His truth. We must study carefully and understand fully the foundation and the building that has already been erected. Else we will put on a roof that doesn't fit and that destroys the beauty and symmetry of the entire structure. A Church that wants progress must be a Church that knows her past. A church that ignores her past is a Church that speaks claptrap about progress.

Thirdly, this progress in whatever form it takes, must be fundamentally progress in the truth of the Word of God. The confession of the Church must grow. The knowledge of the truth must increase. The treasure of the doctrines of Scripture must grow richer. We do not have the last word on the truth of God's written Scriptures. They are the revelation of an infinite God Who is far beyond man's finite ability to understand Him. And, while Scripture itself is not infinite, there are always new depths to plumb, new fields to explore, new insights in doctrine to be gained, new riches to add to the treasures of the Church.

When doctrine grows richer there is possibility for progress in every other field of the Christian's endeavor. His walk in life is rooted in and based upon Scripture's doctrine. His battle of faith is fought with

the armor of the truth. His life's calling – indeed his world and life view – is a walk upon which shines the light of the everlasting gospel. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light upon my path."

Is there to be progress in our Churches in our missionary calling? Indeed, there ought to be. But this progress must be the progress of the truth of Scripture without which all our efforts are playing with tinker toys.

Is there to be "progress" in our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools? There ought to be. There is much work to be done. There is need of teachers who devote their best efforts to development of Christian and Reformed education. There is need of progress in teaching the subjects of the curriculum. But at the moment these efforts are divorced from sound and careful progress in doctrine, we can just as well close the doors of our school.

We must have progress. We must have progress in the classrooms of our schools, on the mission fields where God calls us to work; in our Christian homes where the seed of the covenant is brought up in the fear of the Lord; in all our walk and calling in life. But for that we need progress in our pulpits, in our seminary, in our societies, in our family devotions – in every place and at every time where and when the attention of God's people is turned to the Word of God.

It is interesting and important that we note at this point that historically the truth of the Word of God has always developed overagainst the lie. Satan has come with his attacks against the confession of the saints. Satan knows better than any of us that to destroy the Word of God in the hearts and lives of the saints is to destroy the saints themselves. But, led on by the Spirit of truth, the Church has withstood these attacks. And yet, withstanding them, the Church has at the same time, developed its confession. Out of the struggles of the Church to defend the truth has risen clearer understanding of the truth. Out of the turmoil and cries of the battle field of faith has come more strongly forged weapons to fight the battles of the future. Out of the fire of affliction, of trial, of persecution has come the pure gold of the confession of the Church of all ages.

So it is and must be today. Battles are conducive to arming us with stronger weapons. The attacks of the enemy aid us in progressing in sound doctrine. Resisting the heresies of the day results in more "progressive" truth. We must not be afraid of the battle. God uses it for our good. But then we must not lay down our weapons, adopt the tactics of the enemy, compromise with the wretched compromises of Satan. We must be strong. Then we will move forward.

We may well conclude with a note of warning.

Progress demands strength and courage. It has been said that the Church today is not strong enough to write confessions. Perhaps this is true. Touching us as well as the world is the cold, death-like hand of materialism and doctrinal indifference. But a progressive Church is a strong Church. Not only a strong ministry. This too is essential. But a strong Church. All the saints must love sound doctrine and be vitally and vibrantly alive to the Truth. It must be their confession, their strength, their joy, their hope, their comfort, yea, their life.

Then progress will lead us not only forward but upward as we march from strength to strength to that heavenly Jerusalem.

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Our Christian View of Fraternities

D. H. KUIPER

That *Beacon Lights* requests an article of this nature shows two things: the staff is aware of the growing number of Protestant Reformed young people attending colleges and universities, and that the apostasy of both public and private institutions is well advanced and may be expected to proliferate. The undersigned is also aware of these facts, and thus will gladly endeavor to write a few lines of explanation and warning concerning this matter.

Fraternities, as well as sororities, had their beginning in the late eighteenth century. In the following two hundred years the number of these organizations increased to 103 social orders and 183 honorary or recognitional orders. Social fraternities[1] draw upon the undergraduate student body for membership. The honoraries confine their membership to specific professions or homogeneous groups such as medicine, education, or scholarship. W will see that basically they are the same, and that they differ only in degree when held up to scrutiny that is scripturally founded.

The above statistics represent the fraternities at the national level. Each one of the above may stand for as many as 270 chapters on various college and university campuses. It is thought that much prestige is added to the fraternity if it has national affiliation. The national office busies itself with such matters as publications and constitutional decisions. It also handles most of the publicity, which of late is mostly of a very defensive nature. Even liberal groups have formed phalanx against these brotherhoods!

The method of obtaining membership in a Greek organization is worthy of mention, in that it approaches the height of the ridiculous. As Wade Thompson of Brown University writes, "It is the lamebrain organization that must douse itself in ritual to creep through their existence." He mentions as prime offenders the D.A.R. and the American Legion, along with the fraternities. (*Nation* 189:170) The callow youths who desire this, nonetheless, go through a period of rushing. Prospective pledges visit a number of "frat houses" to show themselves off. They are judged on such superficialities as looks, dress, handshake, and conversation. Later the current members of the fraternity vote for the ones who created the best impression. After being informed, the rushee becomes a pledge. He now enters upon "hell week" during which he is made to suffer mental and physical degradation, and memorize the sentiment, smoothness, and ritual of the particular fraternity. From the pledge manual of a national frater-

nity we include one of the many nauseating expressions of sentiment that brothers are taught to feel for each other: "I love you because you have done more than my creed could have done to make me good, and more than my fate could have done to make me happy." (This from a pledge book, not Elizabeth Barret Browning.) If he is conscientious, he is allowed to take the esoteric oath of which we will speak later.

Criticism advanced by modern churchmen is usually evoked because of the discrimination which the Greek organizations practice and foster. After a Chinese student was denied membership in a frat at Northwestern University the school paper remarked, "The existence, the very foundation of these houses is based on discrimination." Many bar Negroes and Jews thus profaning the very word fraternity. (Approximately fifteen per cent of the 3.6 million college students belong to fraternities.) To these charges the National Interfraternity Council responds, "Choosing of one's friends and associates is a social right which cannot be confused with civil right." (*Commonweal* 67:277) The inadequacy of this defense deserves no comment.

Suppose all fraternities stopped all discrimination. What then? Modern critics would be silenced, but how about us? Would we then be satisfied? The answer is no on two counts. First, the fraternities would still turn out the same product: gregarious, party-loving, well dressed men, held down to scholastic mediocrity and inculcated with a perverted set of morals and values. Perhaps our doubts concerning Norman Vincent Peale may be confirmed and somewhat crystallized when we consider the following statement by this very American pastor: "All that I am I owe to God and my college fraternity." (*Christian Century* 78:1229)

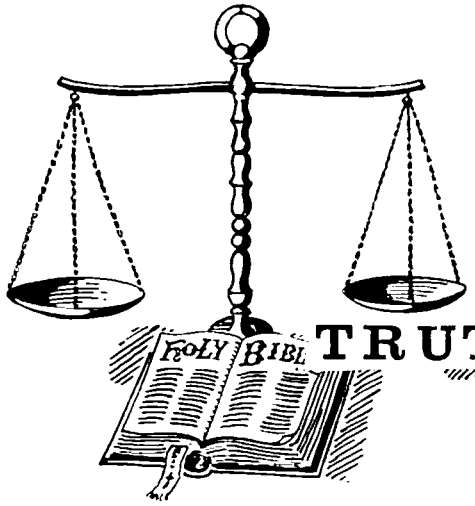
Secondly, by probing deeper we get to the heart of what these fraternities are. They are secret organizations which require an oath and an allegiance above any other group, including the Church of Christ. I suggest the reader become familiar with articles in our church literature which treat of lodges. That this is pertinent is evident when we realize that fraternities pattern their initiation, oath, constitution, and ritual after the Masons. In fact, Acacia, a well known frat. is a Masonically controlled organization. It is not permitted to admit to membership anyone who belongs to an organization "which seeks to restrain its members from affiliation with Masonic organizations." (*Catholics on Campus*, W. J. Whalen, p. 79) Clearly, Acacia is not for us. Nor are *any of the* fraternities, for they are all teenage lodges, designed to lead young people away from church life and all its blessings into an atmosphere of blasphemy.

Next, the oath deserves our attention. As Christians we must consider very seriously the taking of an oath. Swearing of oaths should be kept to a minimum and then as required by the state. Otherwise the oath has no proper use outside the church. (*Standard Bearer* 14:239) Furthermore, the oath that is required is a blind oath; you don't know what you are agreeing to or what its ramifications are. You are actually joining yourself with a false religion which knows not Christ, is pagan in its ritual, and whose overall belief is autosoteric.

Joining these groups means you take these men (women) as your brothers, to the exclusion of children of God, for you owe them your highest allegiance. And this is for all time; there is no resigning. As one constitution reads, "No member can voluntarily sever his connection with the organization." (*Nation* 189:171) No child of God who earnestly seeks the way of sanctification, who refuses to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . . " (II Cor. 6:14), who has as his goal the praise of God's Name, can knowingly join these groups.

In conclusion, fraternities and sororities have nothing to offer Protestant Reformed students. They fall far short of the professed aim to encourage excellence. That they serve as an easy step to popularity is true, but beware of vainglory. On the contrary, we as young people have much to lose by aligning ourselves with this force of darkness. Rather let us avail ourselves of the many opportunities for Bible study that come to us in the realm of the church. Here also will we find the brotherhood for *this life* and the *life to come.*

1. For the sake of convenience, and because some womens organizations use the name fraternity, fraternity will be used to denote sororities also.



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. R. C. HARBACH

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IN MATTERS INDIFFERENT

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient" (I Cor. 6:12). By "all things" Paul certainly does not mean all things absolutely, without exception. For from the preceding context we learn plainly that idolatry, coveting, druinkenness and extortion are unlawful, thoroughly condemned. In the context following we learn that fornication is not one of the lawful things. Paul is not speaking of anything which is forbidden by the Word of God, for every divine prohibition is inflexibly unlawful. Nor is Paul speaking of anything commanded by the Word of God. For he is not stating the obvious. He is not telling us that things commanded are lawful. He speaks of things neither commanded nor forbidden — so called indifferent things — not matters of specific requirement or forbiddance.

The so called indifferent things, such as eating and drinking of certain foods, are neither, in themselves, good nor bad. "Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" (I Cor. 8:8). Such a thing may be right or wrong, depending on the motive for doing it and the circumstances. The plowing of the wicked is sin; and the eating and drinking of the righteous is not without sin, as Job's concern for his children's eating and drinking shows (1:5). Therefore eating itself or what we eat is not always a matter of indifference. The eating of meat which has been offered to idols is something indifferent, but an indifferent thing can become wrong, as when by eating of such meat a weak Christian brother is offended, or is himself emboldened to eat against his conscience.

It is therefore lawful to eat meat which has been offered to an idol. The Christian has liberty to do so, if he desires, but not if doing so would offend (lead others to think he condones idolatry) or cause others to offend (trample the weak conscience of unenlightened believers). But no one has the right to pronounce it *un*lawful to eat meat which has been offered to idols. No one has the right to declare that unlawful which is not prohibited by the Word of God. It is not a sin to be circumcised, to eat meat, to have two cars, or two coats. To think so is to show a weak faith. It is to be weak in faith to impose one's opinions of right and wrong relative to so called indifferent things upon others. The weak brother insists that it is wrong under any circumstances to eat that meat offered to idols. To him it is wrong not to observe Maundy Thursday, Palm Sunday and Flag Day. He is the weak brother because his conscience is weak (I Cor. 8:12), as he

regards even a moderate use of temporal things as sinful. He lacks the liberty in Christ of the strong Christian. He does not appreciate the fact that he has liberty in the matter of things indifferent. He does not have the assurance and clear conscience of the strong in the faith. He may not only entirely abstain from meat, but he may regard it as wrong for anyone to eat meat (Rom. 14:2). He may suppose it a lack of faith for himself or anyone to have life insurance or keep a bank account. When it comes to matters not specifically commanded nor prohibited in Scripture, but matters left to the sanctified judgment and desires of each individual Christian, he is as hazy as a man walking in a fog-laden field full of fox holes. He is a Mr. Ready-to-halt. He is not yet strong enough to see that relative to material things, sin is not in things, nor in places. He does not know the full meaning of "nothing is unclean of itself" and "all things indeed are pure" (Rom. 14:14, 20). Part of his weakness is the fact that he does not recognize his weakness. It will then be difficult for anyone to get him to put away obstinate prejudices and to examine with an open mind the reasons for differences among brethren. To him is is not a matter of liberty in indifferent things what doctor you go to or what medicine you take. You gravely err in not taking his advice or following his practices in such matters. Or it may be that he regards the *strong* as weak for ever having anything to do with doctors and medicine. Such a brother is not apt to be willing to receive instruction and enlightenment in these matters of Christian liberty. Nor will he be very ready to retract former opinions and practices proven to be erroneous.

Nevertheless, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye" (Rom. 14:1). The Christian who is weak as to the faith is to be received into the communion of the saints. He may not be excluded because of his weakness. This does not mean that his reception will have the effect of making the weakness of the weak the standard for the church. That is an error into which we need never fall. A weak swimmer becomes strong by swimming with strong swimmers. The strong must welcome him among their number and not make him feel like two cents because of his weakness. To "receive" him does not mean that he be officially recognized by the consistory as a communicant member, nor that he be allowed to "join the church," for reception into the church is realized by "the Son of God who gathers to Himself by His Spirit and Word a church chosen to everlasting life." But it means to give him recognition as a brother in Christ, to pray with and for him, to bear patiently with his weaknesses, to give him spiritual instruction, to endeavor to edify him in the faith and to strengthen him in his weak points. This is particularly the duty of the strong toward the less instructed who have lesser liberty of conscience than others.

The reception of the weak is to be done "not to doubtful disputations," i.e., not to the deciding of his doubts. Don't receive a weak brother by pressing him to adopt opinions and practices which his conscience condemns. Do not try to induce him to agree to a point, or to adopt a view, when he has no enlightened conviction about it. Give him time to decide his own doubts. It is not polite Christianity for the strong to carry on a conversation among themselves in his presence on topics of which he is ignorant without kindly drawing him into the discussion and explaining briefly salient points and main issues. The weak must be led into more adequate views of the truth in Christ. But to accomplish such a pleasant task we must avoid unpleasant disputations over the points wherein he is weak. He is not to be pushed into liberty faster than he is taught by the Word and Spirit or he will stumble and injure himself, rather than grow stronger. The weak brother needs something more than arguments. He must learn to appreciate a few basic facts before he can appreciate the interpretation of the facts. But this is not likely to happen by arguing him into a conviction against his conscience! The indifferent things, the adiaphora, as they are called, are for the strong believer lawful. But the weak who do not have a more enlightened faith, and hence not a freer conscience, cannot act on this principle, and therefore should not be encouraged to do so.

On the other hand, since our criterion is not the weakness of the weak, *he* is not to be permitted to pester his stronger brethren by attempting to impose his views on them.

For many of the weak seem to think that if their fellow Christians refuse to live by *their* rules, that they are guilty of acting without love, or are causing others to stumble. It is lawful for us to run a "News From Our Churches" feature in our Reformed bimonthly even though some may feel it is out of place, it publicizes trivia, or encourages love of the lime-light. We have the right to publish lists of contributors, though some, overly scrupulous, might object to the practice. We are not bound to refrain from such usages out of deference to a so called "conscientious objector," because by them no real offence occurs. One religious sect deems is sinful to make use of the auto and other modern conveniences. Another considers it wrong for a Christian man to shave (the writer envies their custom of beard growing). Many regard it sinful to use wine in the Lord's Supper. One denomination believes that there is no baptism unless it is performed by trine immersion. The weak, then, are they who condemn those who decline to conform to their pet ideas. Where God's law commands we are bound, and allowed no liberty (except that the law itself is the perfect law of liberty). Where Scripture does not command the church has no right to command. Where God has never forbidden total abstinence is not required. If some people wish to deprive themselves of some of the things that God has given us richly to enjoy, they have that right; but they have no right to demand that others adopt their austerities. It is not lawful to hamper or attack the liberty of any Christian.

It is for every Christian to "give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, not to the church of God" (I Cor. 10:32). How difficult this – to avoid offending anyone! It would seem that we are certain to offend *some* one, for who can please everybody! But we must distinguish between our giving offence and men's taking offense. We ought to so live and minister that we give no offense. If men take offense at what is objectively inoffensive, that is no fault of ours. If I be invited to speak before an Arminian group, I know that offense probably would be taken at my discoursing on unconditional election, but must I for that reason avoid such a topic? It is not the truth, nor the speaking of the truth in love, which gives offense; it is rather that despite the truth, and the love in which it is presented, men will unwarrantably take offense at it. That we cannot help. There is no liberty to compromise.

"Receive him who is weak in the faith." This injunction requires our distinguishing between those who are weak in the faith and those who are enemies to the faith. We are to welcome to our fellowship the former and withdraw from the latter. Tea and coffee abstainers may very well be our brethren. But not so vegetarian Seventh Day Adventists. European Christians who out of custom drink wine are of the same spiritual body of Christ as we. Bacchanalians have no part nor lot in that body. Men who believe that salvation is of the Lord, by grace through faith, plus nothing of man, we must recognize and encourage. Others, who "seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else" than in the name of Jesus Christ, we must beware of and avoid. It requires that we bear with the mistakes of our brethren, their infirmities, and to take into consideration their faulty education, their partial training, their long residence in error. It requires that the strong do not make *their* views the standard of the church. Nor to dictatorily insist as certain which appears to others very doubtful. We cannot expect all men to see as we see. Nor ought we to expect new converts or less enlightened Christians to learn what is to them new truth over night, nor expect them immediately to agree to all the great detail of truth which we have been studying and loving for years. There must be neither, by overindulgence of the weak, the ousting of liberty by love, nor, by our greater strength, the oppression of the weak. We must adapt ourselves to the smaller capacities of others, consider what they are able to receive, put our doctrines in a form simple enough for them to grasp, and lead them to advance as far as they are able to go. Nor should it be difficult to receive and have fellowship with those who have been received by the Lord, and who enjoy the glory of His presence. Our purpose in such an association should be the seeking of an opportunity to testify to them the Reformed truth that "others may be gained to Christ" and become more firmly entrenched in His cause.

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE

Book of GENESIS

GENESIS 5

REV. C. HANKO

The Generations of Adam

This chapter carries the significant introductory statement: "This is the book (or record) of the generations of Adam." We have similar statements throughout Genesis. See chap. 2:4. Up to this point we were dealing with the "generations" or history of the newly created heavens and earth. Now we are dealing more specifically with the "generations" or history of the human race, the descendants of Adam. And we must take note that this is done from the aspect of the covenant seed, the descendants of Seth, out of whom the Christ would be born. Therefore mention is made of the fact that God created man in His image (see 1:26), in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness, to know and serve God in love. This image was lost, but was restored in Christ. And therefore, not at the birth of Cain, but here at the birth of Seth mention is made of the fact that God created both male and female, and blessed them, so that they may produce a seed, out of which the Christ will be born and the church will be gathered. Therefore it is also mentioned that Seth was born in the likeness of Adam, a rational, moral creature with a mind and will, capable of being restored in the likeness of the image of God, to serve God in love forever. How plainly evolution is denied!

The following chart should aid us in our study of the "generations of Adam."

Names	Age at birth of son	Total age	Year of birth after creation	Year of death after creation
Adam	130	930	1	930
Seth	105	912	130	1042
Enos	90	905	235	1140
Cainan	70	910	325	1235
Mahaleel	65	895	395	1290
Jared	162	962	460	1422
Enoch	65	365	622	(987)
Methuselah	187	969	687	1656
Lamech	182	777	874	1651
Noah	500	950	1056	2006
To the Flood	100			
Total	1656			

We immediately notice some marked differences between the account of Cain's descendants in chapter four and the account of Seth's generations in this chapter.

First, the age of each of the descendants of Cain is ignored, while this age is specifically given here. That already suggests that the life of the sons of Cain was vain, while God realized his purpose in the de-

scendants of Seth.

Secondly, there is a marked pattern in the record of the sons of Seth. Each time is mentioned that they begat a firstborn, and also other sons and daughters, and then they died. This repetition of their death clearly reminds us of the fact that also they were conceived and born in sin. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses," Rom. 5:14. Yet at the same time, all these were under the promise of the coming Christ. "They were sanctified in Christ," and therefore their children were included in the line of the covenant.

Thirdly, there is a marked difference between the lives of these sons of Seth in contrast to the sons of Cain. This is especially evident if we compare those who bore similar names. Enoch, the son of Cain, represented the carnal ambitions of his father. While the Enoch that was born in the generations of Seth is mentioned as one who "walked with God." His ambitions were fixed upon a heavenly city. The Lamech who descended from Cain proved the rapid development of sin in a world that was ripening for judgment. The Lamech that was the father of Noah lived by faith and longed for the deliverence that God would send.

But we are especially impressed by the long span of life that extended almost to a thousand years for each of the patriarchs, with the exception of Enoch. This means that Adam was still living when Lamech was born. That brings him almost to the time of Noah. It means that Seth experienced the translation of Enoch and was still living when Noah was born. Moreover, Methuselah lived and witnessed right up to the year of the flood. This has its peculiar significance for those early years before the flood.

1. It means that tradition played an important part in preserving the facts of history. Adam could give an account of paradise from his own experience to all his generations, even up to the time of Lamech. Besides, there were many who could give first hand information of past events to Noah. It was like receiving information from a father concerning the happenings in the life of a grandfather. Imagine if we could receive direct information of the life and ministry of Christ from those who had been in contact with eye-witnesses. That is not so essential any more in our day, since we have a printed record, but at that time tradition was the only way in which the record of past history was kept.

2. Moreover, this long span of life accounts for the rapid degeneration in the descendants of Cain. A long life meant a lot of time to sin and to develop in wickedness. Besides, there must have been literally millions of people on the earth at the time of the flood. No wonder that the first world was ripe for judgment in such a short time.

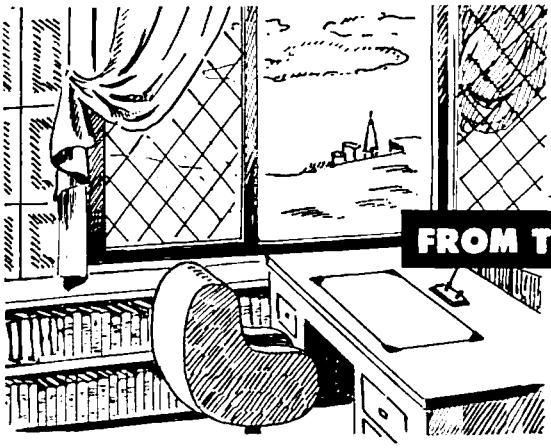
3. Finally, throughout the long life of the patriarchs God preserved His church. A long life span of the saints gave them opportunity to instruct the generations in the Word of God.

Our attention must still be called to two outstanding individuals.

Of Enoch we read that he walked *with* God. He was outstanding in his piety. He not only walked "*before* God" in obedience to His word. Nor did he merely walk "*after* God" in childlike trust. But He communed with God as a friend with a friend. And that in an evil day, the day of wicked Lamech. He was also a prophet, for we have his prophecy of God's impending judgment preserved for us in Jude 14, 15. The world hated him and sought to kill him, but God delivered him out of the midst of all his foes, taking him to heaven. Plainly the Lord shows that the wicked shall never triumph over His church, but that we are always more than conquerors through Him Who loves us. Romans 8.

Lamech speaks of the comfort that is at hand. The curse of God was heavy upon the ground before the flood. Man had but a bare existence, since no rain fell. But Lamech speaks in prophecy of deliverance. When Noah is born, he realizes that God will send comfort through this son. As also happened through the flood and the change in climate and living conditions after the flood. The new world after the flood was a picture of the new creation.

And thus this chapter closes with the remark that Noah had three sons. These three sons would break forth in three separate generations, each with their own history.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

PROVERBS 22:13: "The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets."

THE LION IN THE STREETS

There is an interesting little story which tells of a man who incessantly snapped his fingers. No matter where he went, no matter what he did, he constantly snapped his fingers. One observer, watching this strange habit, was bold enough to question the man concerning it. "My dear sir," he replied, "I snap my fingers to keep the lions away." "But," countered the first man, "there are no lions within a thousand miles of here." "You see," replied the man as he continued snapping his fingers, "it's pretty effective, isn't it?"

We read in Proverbs of another man who intended to stay safely away from lions. He remained in his house, and presumably in bed, under the pretence of protecting himself from the lion which was supposedly roaming the streets. This was the slothful man: the man who sought any excuse to remain at home; he sought excuses which would free him from the necessity of labor.

This brief proverb is one which we also could well keep in mind. Young people too will often seek all kinds of excuses in order to escape necessary labors. He also had better examine carefully those "lions" to see whether they are real or imaginary.

A real lion is a terrible animal. He is called the king of the beasts. Both man and animal would cower in terror before him. And surely man must find defence against that lion. Either he must be well equipped with arms in order to shoot him on sight, or he must be able to retire to a a safe retreat that he may hide from that lion. Only if one of these two alternatives is followed, would one be reasonable secure from the threatenings of this beast.

The "lion" in this proverb suggests an insurmountable obstacle which would prevent one from performing his duties. The man of the proverb had heard of a lion roaming the streets – therefore his conclusion was that he had better go out to perform his daily labors, but more safely could he stay home in his warm bed. He was slothful and wanted to find an excuse to stay at home. At the same time it is possible to apply the proverb to a wide variety of circumstances.

And real lions, then, would not be difficult to find. It may be that on occasion I am too sick to rise from my bed and perform the chores required of me. Or a real and terrible storm may threaten outside preventing me from doing that which otherwise must be done. I am sure that you yourself can recall many other similar and real "lions."

The trouble is that the terrible lions are often simply conjured by slothful men. A

man may see all kinds of difficulties which stand in the way of his performing his duties. And if these difficulties are true, then his subsequent actions appear to be rational too. Such was the case with the man in our text. He maintained that there was a lion roaming the streets. Now if that were true, then his action in staying within his home was wise indeed. No man would blame him then for what he did (or didn't do). But the fact of the matter was that there was no lion in the street. The lion was but a figment of this man's imagination. He simply fell upon a good excuse for his own idleness or laziness.

And you, young people, do you have any of these lions roaming about in your streets? You too are bound to use faithfully the means of grace, particularly the preaching of the Word (which includes also catechism instruction). Do you not only attend but also listen attentively to the preaching of the Word? Do you prepare faithfully and diligently for your catechism classes? Or do you discover "lions" which prevent the performance of your duties? Maybe you have too much school work or too many hours of manual labor so that there is no time to perform these other things. And which "lion" prevents you oftentimes from coming prepared to Young People's Society? How often do we not try to excuse spiritual slothfulness by pointing to all kinds of lions? Better take a peek out that window again and discover whether that was actually a lion you saw there on the streets — or a ray of yellow sunlight which you deliberately mistook for a lion.

You as young people have doubtlessly many obligations (chores) about the home too. It is often presented as something humorous how that young people will seek to escape their regular duties and tasks. And seldom will one be found who does not have a good reason for being unable to fulfill the obligations placed on him. He finds all kinds of lions which stand in the way — anything to evade the required work.

This whole article isn't meant to be a humorous presentation of the delinquencies of youth. Quite the contrary. There is a sound, Scriptural reason why we must perform faithfully the duties given us. We may never seek to escape them. We confess and believe that we are children of God, members of the body of Jesus Christ. And these can not simply do as they please. They err greatly who simply seek to escape the performance of their obligations. Youthful children of God, for instance, surely observe the fifth commandment: honoring and obeying those in authority over them. They can not simply walk in disobedience to their parents or teachers. They perform the tasks which those in authority give to them. Because the Spirit of the Christ dwells in His people, therefore they observe the Word and shun sloth in all of its many forms. They will not then try to escape learning faithfully their catechism. They will not avoid at all costs diligent study of society lessons. It is man, natural man, who is slothful. It is he who evades and avoids the Word of the Lord. But with the child of God it is not so. He is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. He is turned from darkness to light. He is led by the spirit in all holiness. Then he does not seek to find all kinds of "lions" in order to escape his work.

What must we do with all those "lions" which constantly seem to arise? Examine each one once to see whether it is real or imaginary. Do you give legitimate objections which prevent certain actions — or do you simply give excuses to avoid as much possible doing those things required of you?

There is so often seen the "lion" of lack of time. There is no time to prepare adequately for catechism; no time to prepare for society. Yet far more often than not this is simply an imaginary "lion." I have read that on an average children and teenagers watch television twenty-two hours a week. (And I surely hope that such is not the case in Protestant Reformed homes). The point is, if young people can find that many and more hours to waste in a week, then never can there arise the excuse, "I didn't have time."

Young people who have jobs often find "lions" preventing them from supporting faithfully the cause and kingdom of God financially on this earth. Their parents pay the share for their "family;" their cars require too much of their income and there is none left over; their other hobbies are so expensive that support of Kingdom causes is impossible. Imaginary lions these are and must be seen as such. Recognize these

lions for what they are – and then do not drag your feet in performing necessary tasks.

To be not slothful implies positively: walk by faith. This is not the same as carelessness. When real lions exist, we can not simply rush out despite them. But faith knows and believes the Word of God. That Word directs us in the way we must go: it points out the duties and obligations of the child of God. And by faith the child of God will walk in that way – despite many "lions." Because God directs in this way, therefore we believe that He will preserve and keep us in that way too. Walk, young people, in obedience. In the way of obedience, the child of God continues to experience the richest blessings of our covenant God. Be not slothful, but diligent.

NEWS from, for, and about our churches

LOIS E. KREGEL

Concerning our Servicemen

We have received a little news about a couple of servicemen from our Randolph Church:

Milton Alsum has recently been promoted from Pfc. to Sp/4. He is a paratrooper and has taken his 23rd jump recently. On his 22nd jump he landed for the first time on his feet – a rather tricky and dangerous thing to do. At present he is learning to fly a plane, and he hopes to receive his license soon.

Frank De Vries is stationed in Germany; a few weeks ago he had a week's leave and among other things enjoyed much skiing in the mountains there. He hopes to be home in another six months.

(Any other items of interest from or about our servicemen are most welcome).

Arthur Bult, Jr., (First) was inducted into the service recently. His address is:

Pvt. Arthur Jr. Bult, US 557-398-66
Co. F, 16th Bn., 4th Tng. Regt.,
USATC Armour, Fort Knox, Kentucky

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School News

The Reflector, South Holland School's bi-monthly publication, contained a calendar of coming events, showing Commencement Exercises to be scheduled for May 31. As a reminder that the end of the school year is approaching rapidly, the students were enjoined in an editorial to do their work "with the vigor that you have shown in the year thus far and show that you understand the injunction given in the convocation exercises, namely to do it with 'all your might.' "

The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School Society gave evidence of its activity by sponsoring a lecture by Rev. J. Heys in Doon Church on March 19.

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Membership Changes:

Doon received the membership papers of Rev. and Mrs. H. Hanko and five baptized children.

Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Griffioen transferred their membership from Southwest Church to First.

Hope Church welcomed as a member Mrs. Gerald Kuiper, who came from First.

Membership papers of Mr. Robert J. Hoven from Calvin Christian Reformed Church (Middleville Chapel) and Mrs. Robert J. Hoven from our Hudsonville Church were received by Southeast.

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JOHN ZANDSTRA JR.
R. R. 1 BOX 227-A
CHICAGO HEIGHTS, ILL.

Our Future Conventioneers
number only two this month:

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Rhine Lubbers (Hudsonville)

A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Pastoor (First)

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Trios and Calls

Southwest has made a trio consisting of th Revs. H. Veldman, J. Heys, and B. Woudenberg.

Loveland has extended a call to Rev. J. Kortering of Hull.

Hope called Rev. H. Veldman of Redlands.

Lynden also has called Rev J. Kortering.

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Congratulations
to Mrs. J. Faber (First) who celebrated her 91st birtday on March 19, and to Mr. G. Bergsma, who celebrated his 89th birthday on March 11.

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Called Home

Mr. Frank Mastenbroek (First), on March 20, at the age of 84 years.

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Wedding bells
rang for Mr. Richard C. Hoexum and Miss Elizabeth J. Schut (Hudsonville) on March 29.

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Around the Churches

Our church in Doon is experiencing the blessing of having a shepherd of its own again also in its society life: the bulletin contained the announcement of the reorganization of a young people's society, and urged all the young people to be present.

Rev. C. Hanko has been appointed to visit Jamaica in early spring for four weeks to investigate this place as a future mission field.

Southeast's Consistory appointed a Protestant Reformed Action Committee, the purpose of which is to distribute Protestant Reformed literature to people in the community.

Our church building in Randolph has undergone some remodeling in its entrance way, including the addition of two new restrooms.

Eastern Ladies League was to be held March 28 at First Church. Seminarian David Engelsma was scheduled to speak on "To What Extent Should Parents Try to Induce their Children to go into the Ministry?"

Rev. G. Van Baren (Randolph) participated in a panel for the Immanuel School Aid on March 5; the topic was, "Making our Children Spiritually Strong."

Lynden's congregation is proceeding with its plans to build a new church; the lumber has been received and is at the building site, which has been prepared for the laying of the foundation.

Randoph's bulletin contained a suggestion to write an encouraging letter to our missionary, together with his address, Rev. G. Lubbers, 4413 Phil St., Bellaire 101, Texas.

After eight years of ministering there, Lynden's pastor, Rev. Robert Harbach, bade farewell to his congregation and was installed as pastor of Kalamazoo Church on March 17.

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Coming musical events:

April 7 – Singspiration, at Southwest

April 14 – Hope Choral Society program, an Easter Catata, in Hope Church.

April 21 – Combined concert by the Radio Choir and the Small Choir of Adams St. School, in First Church.