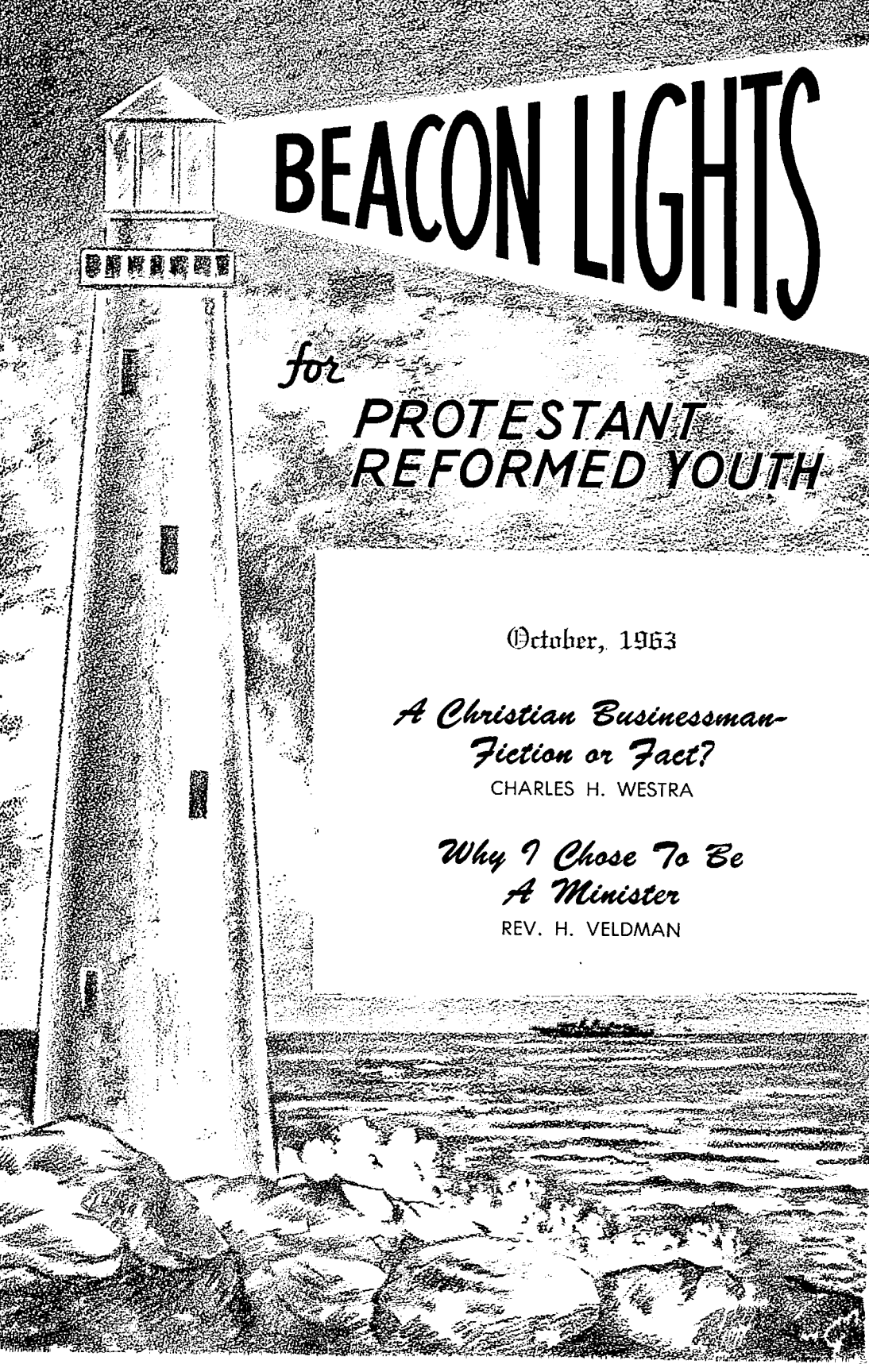
BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



October, 1963

A Christian Businessman—Fiction or Fact?

CHARLES H. WESTRA

Why I Chose To Be A Minister

REV. H. VELDMAN

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XXIII | OCTOBER, 1963 | NUMBER 7

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Harry Langerak ..... President
Calvin Reitsma ..... Vice President
Marilyn Ondersma ..... Secretary
Joyce Kuiper ..... Asst. Secretary
Jim Huizinga ..... Treasurer
Edward Langerak ..... Asst. Treasurer
Sharon Prince ..... Librarian

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Robert Decker ..... Editor-in-Chief
H. W. Kuiper ..... Associate Editor
John Kalsbeek ..... Managing Editor
Nancy Heemstra ..... Finance Manager

STAFF:
Helen Flikkema ..... Clerk
Carol Van Putten ..... Asst. Clerk
Clarice Newhof, Lois Schipper ..... Assts. to Man. Ed.
Mary Pastoor, Edward Langerak, Sharon Prince ..... Public Relations Staff
Judy Bylsma, Louise Looyenga ..... Subscription Managers

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Rev. Robert Harbach ..... Truth vs. Error
Agatha Lubbers ..... Critique
Mrs. C. Kregel ..... News Editor
Rev. H. Hanko ..... From Dort to Today
Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. G. Van Baren ..... From the Pastor's Study

All material for publication should be addressed to MR. ROBERT DECKER
1004 Temple, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan

Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to JUDY BYLSMA
904 Adams, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area please forward subscription dues to
LOUISE LOOYENGA
2604 Almont, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

All undeliverable material (Forms 3579) should be returned to Louise Looyenga, 2604 Almont, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

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

In This Issue

EDITORIAL 1
Henry Kuiper

A CHRISTIAN BUSINESSMAN — FICTION OR FACT? 3
Charles H. Westra

FROM DORT TO TODAY (3) 5
Rev. H. Hanko

OPEN FORUM 7
Ron Graeser

CRITIQUE 8
Agatha Lubbers

TRUTH vs. ERROR 10
Rev. R. C. Harbach

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY 13
Rev. G. Van Baren

WHY I CHOSE TO BE A MINISTER 15
Rev. H. Veldman

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY — Gen. 9:18 - 10:32 17
Rev. J. Kortering

NEWS 20
Lois E. Kregel

Editorials . . .

DISCERNING YOUTH IN AN AGE OF APATHY

Do you wonder why it is that we refer to you as *discerning* youth? We have in the past, and do so now because it is only the youth of the Church of Christ, out of all the youth of the world, that can discern; they only have that gift of God whereby they are able to have due regard and consideration for all that confronts them; if the evil, veiled though it may be, to be spiritually nauseated, condemn the evil, and then cast it far from them; if the good, to cherish it, uphold it and maintain it to the glory of their God and the salvation of their soul.

In this connection, though it will undoubtedly strike you as being somewhat trite, we would warn you, as that discerning youth of His Church, to be very alert to the dangers of this age. No, by the dangers here we certainly do not refer to the cataclysmic potential of the advanced "science" of this age. Nor do we refer, in this instance, to the possibility of an imminent physical reprisal by the powers of darkness because of the confessions which we make before the face of God and man. Nor do we refer to the overt blasphemy of the speech and conduct of the godless, as these things can be and are witnessed by all of us in the present day. Understand well, we do not deny that these things *are* with us round about, as we live for a time on the face of this earth. But these do not constitute the dangers whereof we speak in our warning above to you as the discerning youth of Christ's Church.

Rather we speak of the dangers that beset you almost unnoticed and concerning which we would raise almost no question or bother to consider them the second time. These result from, nonetheless, or better still, *are* the means of Satan and his hosts to seduce you from your kinship with and spiritual betrothal to the Lord Christ! This spiritual seduction, historically begun already in Eden's garden, seeks one central goal. That goal? Your ultimate spiritual estrangement from your confession of the truths of the Living God, His Christ, and your salvation through Him. The means? A vast array of the "little" departures from, "insignificant" concessions contrary to, and "minor" apathies concerning the principles and precepts of THE TRUTH. These diminutives have been shown historically to have been the most "effective" means for the powers of evil to wage violent conflict against the ones who profess to stand for the cause of truth and uprightness. And so we consider this time the dangers of apathy.

We know from a formal point of view that apathy is a "lack of feeling" or an "indifference" and then commonly this means toward a given thought, problem, or condition. In this general concept of the term, we would say that apathy connotes an attitude of "I don't know, and I really don't care enough to know." Have you heard this type of speech? Quite possibly you have, and regrettably, this sentiment may have even been spoken concerning things of utmost spiritual import and consequence.

We see at once, do we not, that apathy is diametrically opposed to discernment? And it is surely the way of least resistance. The only effort involved in taking an apathetic attitude is for one to say or show that he doesn't care! Or as apathy pertains to a given problem and one has taken a

stand arbitrarily on that problem it is this simple: "My mind is made up; please don't confuse me with the facts!" So full of ease is this course, don't you see, that it is really the course to follow for those who cannot and will not be concerned with the essence of the matter at hand. But does this hold positive attraction for the sons and daughters of Jehovah? Indeed not. Let our answer be unequivocally negative!

Discernment, on the other hand, demands thought, determination, dedication, time, effort, and strife! Above all it implies that we have knowledge, true knowledge from God as His gift, and with that knowledge we participate in the former.

That walk, antithetic to that of the worldling, comprehends your every sphere. And because you are the church that stands here tomorrow, when the fathers of today have gone on, you are the prime target of the enemy. Let the eyes of the youth of the church become impaired, so that they cannot see the "tiny" errors, and Satan smiles his horrible approval. Then, in a generation or two, that heretofore "staunch" little group will be consumed, or severely decimated at least.

Now then, what characterizes your attitudes? Do YOU concern yourself with reading and studying your *Beacon Lights* and *The Standard Bearer*? . . . those periodicals within the sphere of our churches which present expositions of the Word of God, the affairs of the "church" world, the trends in nominal Christendom. Do you read them, study them? Are you vitally concerned with attending the divine worship services, motivated by a positive longing for God and His Word? And what about your catechism? . . . do you go because you must, or do you seek to learn the confessions as we hold them to be the truth of Scripture as opposed to the heresies that are rampant and increasing in this day? Can you defend those confessions from the Word itself? Or do you go with a "teach me if you can" attitude, and smile inwardly when someone desires to know more about a certain point to render him unshakable in that confession? Do you know the *why* and the *wherefore* of the existence of our churches? Do you care? And what about the deluge of amusements which beset us, the inevitable end of which is estrangement from God? Do you take a stand? Do you "dare"? Do you practice preparation for the Sabbath early enough on Saturday, so that it can truly be regarded as preparation? Or is the Sabbath itself the day of physical preparation so that you can resume the jobs and fun that you had to lay down at the end of the week just past? And what about controversies that arise on one point or another within your spheres? Do you concern yourself with them? Or do you simply say that if it doesn't concern you personally it isn't worth the thought or effort to determine the right or the wrong? And then, too, what of the life work that is before you? How do you consider *that* question? When you consider what you *should* do in this life, do you have even a little bit of Samuel's attitude of "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"? The ministry of the Word, teaching in one of our own Protestant Reformed Christian Elementary Schools, or soon perhaps, if the encouraging reports are true from the Grand Rapids area, teaching in our own Protestant Reformed Christian High School. Do you consider these things in prayer (and that banishes apathy!) with discernment? And this list could go on and on . . .

Covenant youth, be alert to the dangers of this age! Beware of the apathy that will numb your spiritual sensitivity to the point of non-existence. Be faithful in seeking the right and in so doing, defend it; take a stand on God's Word, so that you can as zealously resist the wrong and condemn it; and then know that when *that* battle shall have been fought, you will have been fortified to stand as a pillar in the Church of Christ Jesus, as it is yet militant upon the earth, to the glory of your God! Is there aught else you desire?

H.W.K.

Editor's Note:

SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE

Get your year's subscription to *Beacon Lights* renewed for half price, by influencing a friend — either Protestant Reformed or any other denomination — to subscribe for one year to our magazine. For further details see the back cover. J. K. L. S.

A CHRISTIAN BUSINESSMAN-*fiction or fact?*

CHARLES H. WESTRA

"It's impossible to be an honest businessman." "Well, you just have to close your eyes to some things; that's business."

Two common statements — the one a categorical accusation, the other a half-hearted attempt to justify dishonesty. Both stem from the assumption that one must be dishonest to succeed in business. If the business world cringes a bit under this accusation, it can blame those of its own members who have added to this reputation by their questionable behavior and themselves, for business has not always been quick to discipline its own members.

Nor have farmers, doctors, fishermen, or lawyers, for that matter. However, to charge that dishonesty is a necessary requirement for success in business is unfounded and often the result of a most superficial acquaintance with business.

For example, I have been asked, "Is it Christian to covet your neighbor's business?" and as a Christian businessman I answer, "No, it is not Christian to covet my neighbor's business, nor his car, wife, or anything."

"Well, then," the conversation may continue, "you are in the advertising business; is it Christian to try to take his business away by underselling him or by some other means?" About then my would-be accuser might lean back smugly into the depths of his reclining chair while I grope for the words to explain politely that his second question is filled with all sorts of inferences which are not at all valid, etc. etc.

First I must agree, however, that if a businessman acts competitively for the sole purpose of taking away business (used in the sense of transactions, not the physical store, etc.), then his actions are completely non-Christian; he is acting covetously.

Not satisfied, my prodding friend continues. "Even when his motives are not covetous, but rather a Christian attempt to make an honest living, isn't every bit of business he obtains taken from a neighbor merchant?"

In a certain sense it is, just as when two children are picking berries, the berries one picks the other cannot. Are both to be accused of taking berries from the other and therefore guilty of non-Christian behavior?

Granted, all analogies limp, and nothing is proved by examples, but the parallels can be seen: neither child can be said really to own the berries until he has completed the transfer of the berry from the bush. Neither can a businessman be said really to own the business (customer loyalty and potential sales) until the transaction has been completed. So then when merchant "A" offers superior merchandise, or demands a lesser price for similar goods, and several of Merchant "B's" customers take advantage of the opportunity, Merchant "A" cannot be said to have taken away something that belonged in any sense at all to Merchant "B." Neither can Merchant "B" be said to have lost the business, since it never belonged to him. Every businessman knows, or finds out very soon, that customers are free agents, able and willing to take their business to any other competitor, with or without reason. They are not owned, bound, or obligated.

Yet it is often possible, through completely honest and legal means to reduce the income of a neighboring merchant to the extent that he is harmed and this points out one of the greatest pitfalls in being a Christian businessman — the lure of unlimited business t h r o u g h the reduction of neighbor-competitors.

It is not a simple question.

Scripture admonishes us in various passages to be diligent in our work, so as to be able to give good account of the opportunities g i v e n us. Furthermore, a slovenly workman (or businessman) certainly does not reflect well on the name "Christian." The problem is this: where does ambition end and greed begin? How hard does a merchant "push" before his diligence becomes nothing but pure greed?

There are various approaches to this problem (and it exists for the craftsmen as well as businessmen). One might apply the Golden Rule to the situation, or decide to grow competitively only so long as the business remained a means to his Christian witness, and to refrain from gaining business when this activity became an end in itself. These approaches have merit and are readily applicable.

But the Scriptural passage that I find most helpful in formulating a Christian business philosophy is found in Lev. 19:9. Here the Old Testament Hebrew farmers were admonished to plant and cultivate their entire fields, even the corners, but not to harvest the corners nor to pick up grain dropped by the reapers. The crops growing in these corners and what was dropped were to be left for the poor, the widows, and others who had no means of support, or perhaps a lesser source of income. This law taught the Jews several valuable lessons: it taught charity which reflects God's charitable attitude towards His church. It taught efficiency of operation: a farmer could harvest the vast majority of his crop in a reasonable amount of time if he omitted the corners. To gather this small fraction of his harvest would perhaps double the time consumed in harvesting. But m o s t important, this law gave the Hebrew farmers (as well as all of us) a practical guide to help us distinguish between ambition and greed.

There are corners and dropped stalks of grain in every business, and the businessman who would follow Christian principles in his business life will find them a helpful guide in maintaining the balance between ambition and greed.

Today, just as in the Old Testament, there are those with less skill in business or with reduced opportunities for growth, and it is these who complete the application to modern business of the Old Testament precept. Often they can operate in the fringes of an industry far more effectively than could larger members of the industry. For example, a semi-retired couple can often operate a neighborhood grocery store which caters to small "fill-in orders" far more efficiently than a large chain store which tries to scale down its operation to fit the same need. And the Christian businessman will not begrudge those who "glean in the corners" but will encourage them and aid them when the situation demands it.

So much for the defence of the Christian in business.

Because business and Christianity have seemed poles apart to many of our people, it may stretch the imagination of some when I suggest that the application of Christian principles to business not only can, but has led to the development of large, successful businesses. However, these principles were not always applied conscientiously by Christian businessmen in an attempt to glorify God — but the effect of them can easily be seen.

Christ promised, "Give and it shall be given unto you." In addition to its spiritual applications, the Christian businessman finds that when he applies this to his work, when he sells his product for as little as he can, reserving only a modest profit, or when the manufacturer builds as much quality as possible into his product without increasing the price, the consuming public responds m o s t generously in increased trade. These businessmen gave, and they were given unto, many fold. Whether believers or not, they illustrate the effectiveness of the application of this divine promise to business.

The application of the Golden Rule to business practices may sound both trite and naive in this super-sophisticated era of business surveys, market studies, and efficiency procedures. But while it is trite, it certainly is not naive. It is rather most basic. For what is a market survey if it isn't an attempt to determine what "others" want? And what would be the necessity of efficiency investigations if each of us gave our employer the kind of loyalty and effort we would like to have if we were in his position? And where would be the

demand for labor unions if employers practiced this same thinking? Repeatedly businessmen have adventured very successfully into fields other than their own, armed with nothing more than the determination to give to their customers the kind of product or service they themselves would appreciate.

The Christian businessman is not only possible, but successful, both as a businessman and as a witnessing Christian – and not by ignoring his Christian mandate, or in spite of it, but through it.

FROM Dort TO TODAY

the development of the reformed faith (3)

REV. H. HANKO

THE GREAT SYNOD

The question in the Netherlands was more than a speculative question of dogmatics. It was, at bottom, a question of who stood in the tradition of the great Reformer of Geneva – John Calvin. This was an important question also, for the Reformation under Calvin brought about the schism between the true Church of God and the apostate institute of Rome. And behind this question was the additional question of who stood in the tradition of the New Dispensational Church – the Church established by Christ which had kept the faith for almost 1600 years. Could the Arminians claim this distinction? Or were those who opposed the Arminians those faithful to the truth? Who were the true Calvinists?

This question has not altered appreciably in our times. We who are Protestant Reformed claim the distinction of maintaining the true Calvinistic religion. But there are many others who claim the same for themselves. And many of these do not agree with us, nor we with them.

Put into a little different form, the question is this: Does the genius of the Calvinistic Reformation come down to today through the Arminians? or does it rather come today to us through the decisions of the Synod of Dordrecht? And, Who today stand faithfully in harmony with these Canons of Dordrecht?

Arminius was dead.

That bold and crafty heretic who had smuggled into the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands the age-old error of salvation by works had departed from the church militant.

But this did not mean that his heresy had died with him. His influence had been too extensive. His doctrines had been sown in the hearts of too many men. His departure did not alter appreciably the course of Arminianism in the Netherlands.

Those who had followed him in these teachings soon organized into a party known as the "Remonstrants." This well-organized party within the Reformed Churches had considerable influence on the doctrine and faith of the Churches even though the leader was gone. This group came together in the city of Gouda in 1610 to draw up a formulation of their views.

However, the claim of these Remonstrants was that they did not intend to introduce into the Church any new doctrines. Nor did they want to leave the impression that they were critical of the Confessions; they stoutly insisted that they were deep lovers of the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. Rather they wanted the Churches to believe that these formulations which they drew up were really only certain remarks and observations which they

had to make concerning the Confessions.

Nevertheless, the fact is that this document struck at the very heart of the Reformed faith. If not refuted, it would mean the death-blow to Calvinism in the Low Countries.

We will quote this document at some future time.

° ° ° °

To refute this document, however, seemed to be impossible. It required the convocation of a Synod. And a Synod was very difficult to call in those days, because it could not be called without the permission of the government.

There were those men, staunch defenders of the Reformed faith, who had long pleaded for a Synod to settle this matter of the Arminian controversy. But their pleas were ignored. The government was controlled by a man named Oldenbarneveldt who was openly and without apology a friend of the Arminians. He refused to grant permission to convene a Synod for fear that his friends would be condemned. Rather he insisted that both varying views within the Churches be discussed in a series of conferences. But these conferences helped nothing except to give to the Remonstrants additional opportunity to make propaganda for their views while they found shelter beneath the benevolent wing of the State.

° ° ° °

It is a fundamental principle of all history that God is sovereign and Lord of all that takes place in the world. History is the work of God by means of which He causes His eternal counsel to be revealed in time.

But this truth has, among other things, one important implication. The main part of history is always the history of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is true, of course, that the world ignores this fact. They claim that they make history; that what they do is all that counts. And history books never even (as a general rule) mention the Church. But this does not alter the fact that the history of the true Church is the only important history there is. No matter how small this "7000" may be who belong to the Church (especially in comparison with the millions in the world), the Church constitutes the important part of all history. Any history book that ignores this fact is not a history book at all.

The history of wicked men therefore must serve the purpose of the Church of Christ. How easily this can be demonstrated.

Pharaoh brought Israel into slavery that deliverance might be a picture of the salvation of the Church through God's power. Caesar Augustus decreed that all the world should be taxed so that Christ could be born in Bethlehem. Pilate condemned Christ to death so that the cross might be atonement for the sins of the elect. Charles V was so busily engaged with the problems of his empire that Luther was left undisturbed by this tyrant (who favored the Roman Catholic Church) so that the Reformation was not squelched in its inception.

The same is true of the history of the Netherlands in these early years of the 17th century just prior to the great Synod of Dordrecht.

To all appearances it seemed as if the Arminian movement was to gain a complete victory in the Reformed Churches. The hands of the faithful were tied. Things were rapidly deteriorating. The cause of the Reformation in the Low Countries seemed to be lost. The government held tight check on the faithful to prevent them from condemning officially the heresy of Jacobus Arminius.

But suddenly things changed. In a lightning *coup d'etat* Prince Mauritz overthrew the existing government, clapped Oldenbarneveldt in irons, took over the reigns of government and instituted a state sympathetic to the Reformed Churches. (Oldenbarneveldt was later tried and killed for treason. Whether his death was just or not remains a question. But, strangely, I have heard men of Reformed persuasion defend him as a champion of the truth.)

Now things moved swiftly. Although no national Synod had been held for many years, quickly one was now called. Allowing only sufficient time for the provincial Synods to meet to elect delegates, the great Synod of Dordrecht was called together to consider the all-important question of this Arminian heresy.

It convened in September of 1618.

° ° ° °

Whether Mauritz was, with his whole heart, a believer in the Reformed faith it is impossible to judge. Whether his motives

in siding with the Reformed Churches over-against the Arminians were love for the truth and concern for the cause of Christ, or were only a desire for success in politics is difficult to determine. Perhaps both are true. But the fact of the matter is that God raised up this one man to rescue His Church and His truth from the threat of false doctine in these times of great peril. The cause of Christ was destined to continue.

Little has this changed in the Church. Living so closely to our own history, it is difficult to appreciate this fully. But, today as always, God uses secular history and all that happens in the world for the well-being and salvation of His Church. Whether we can see this or not is not the question. It is true. We accept it by faith.

"All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Open Forum

RON GRAESER

I heard it said recently that we are Protestant Reformed because that's what we were brought up to be and young people from other churches are members of those churches for the same reason. Therefore there's no harm in dating them. I felt bitterly opposed to that since I wasn't brought up Protestant Reformed and until a little over a year ago didn't have any inclination to even attend one of the Protestant Reformed churches.

This reasoning is the same as Freud's who looks on man as formed by his environment and is not really responsible for his actions – his environment has caused him to act as he does. All over our land this same reasoning is affecting our courts, and persons who commit major crimes are getting away with very light punishments because they weren't responsible. That is a very deceptive comfort; no matter what I do, it's not really my fault. I doubt that wicked man has found any better way to smother his conscience. But that is not true. I am responsible personally for everything I do, and so is everyone else.

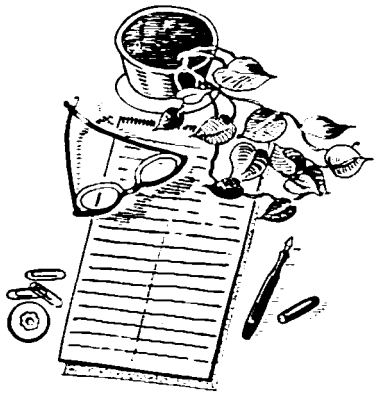
If we believe we are Protestant Reformed just because we were brought up that way, maybe we'd better check and see if we're in the right church. And if we date those from other churches, we'd better be sure they know what they believe. If they're just there because they're there, they don't care and who wants to marry a person so spiritually shallow. If they know why they attend their churches and we know why we attend the Protestant Reformed church, then how can we tolerate such a deviation from the truth in our prospective life's-partner.

After all we are dating to find a wife or husband, aren't we? Or do we go along with the world that we date for fun and there's so much fun yet to be had from life. That is the world's philosophy, you know – eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. This is the keynote to more pay with shorter working hours, houses with more and more labor saving devices, much of the entertainment on television, a higher standard of living, and in short the materialistic outlook on life. This is one of the ways man glorifies himself.

But if we date in search of a wife or husband, then we have to look first and perhaps only among those of God's elect who love and profess His Word in its purest form. After all, our mate will help us raise His future covenant children.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We thank Mr. Graeser for his worthwhile and pointed contribution. We urge others to follow his example and write. The "Open Forum" column is yours, subscriber! R.D.D.



CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

BILLY GRAHAM AND HIS MOVEMENT ANALYZED

This writer has been informed that quite recently the students of a local Christian High School supported by parents of Reformed, Christian Reformed, and Protestant Reformed homes were urged to watch Billy Graham on television. This in itself is not so serious but it makes a great deal of difference, it seems to me, why these students were urged to watch Billy Graham in his Crusade for Christ in the Great Los Angeles area. If those who urged were interested that students view the Crusade in order that they might see and hear how these Crusaders have strayed from the Gospel mandate and to observe what error they are to flee, then they are to be commended. If the intention was a propaganda stint or an endorse-Billy-Graham campaign, I suggest that our Reformed leaders of covenant youth have strayed far to left from the path blazed by the Reformation fathers.

Billy Graham is a follower of the famed Billy Sunday. Billy was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1918 and his official name is William Franklin Graham, Jr. His family were members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. This church had its origin in Scotland in 1733. The *New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia* describes this church as follows:

> This church stands for the whole body of truth held by most branches of the Presbyterian Church: for the acceptance of and adherence to the Westminster standards, for the Calvinistic system of theology, for the fundamental principles of this theology, beginning with the sovereignty of God and embracing the remaining four points logically springing therefrom unto the assured salvation of the elect, for the government of the Church by pastors and elders having authority to act for Jesus Christ, the king and head of the Church, for plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and for the sole, supreme, and infallible authority of the Bible for all rules of conduct and duty. It confines itself to the exclusive use of the inspired songs of the Bible in God's worship, the Book of Psalms having been set to music, the last being the distinctive difference between Associate Reformed Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Church South.

I do not know whether this church still exists but it is evident that the background of the Graham family is rooted in a staunch Calvinistic church.

Billy Graham sold brushes in the summer of 1935 for the Fuller Brush Company. He is reported to have sold more brushes in three months than any other salesman in North Carolina. After his graduation from high school Billy Graham played semi-professional baseball for $10.00 a game.

Following the wishes of his parents he entered Bob Jones College, now Bob Jones University. He left Bob Jones after a few months, however, intent on being a baseball player; but his parents sent him to Temple Terrace Independent Bible School in Tampa, Florida. He was ordained a Baptist minister and graduated from the Bible Institute in June of 1940. In the fall of 1940 he entered Wheaton College as a sophomore majoring in anthropology. Upon graduation from Wheaton Billy married Ruth Mc Crox Bell, daughter of Dr. L. Nelson Bell, a returned Presbyterian medical missionary, current managing editor of *Chris-*

tianity Today. (*Christianity Today* is a product of the neo-evangelical movement in the church world today. The neo-evangelicals are closely associated with the National Council of Churches.)

In 1945 after several years in a church in Western Springs, Illinois, Billy Graham was invited by Torrey Johnson to assist in the organization of Youth for Christ at Winona Lake, Indiana. In his early contacts he met Cliff Barrows who with George Beaverly Shea would become the heart and core of his "evangelistic" team.

Between 1947 and 1949 Billy Graham held two or three week revivals in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Des Moines, Iowa; Modesto, California; and other U. S. cities. In the fall of 1949 he made the headlines when the "Christ for Greater Los Angeles" committee invited him to conduct a revival in this huge metropolis. William Randolph Hearst ordered a "Puff Graham" campaign so that this chain of papers gave wide newspaper coverage to Graham. Associated Press gave wide coverage to his movement; *Time* Magazine wrote it up and compared his popularity to that of Billy Sunday. The Crusade in Los Angeles was extended to the 8th week. Graham is reported to have tried to convert Mickey Cohen. All the news media caught the sensation of this movement and blew it up into glaring headlines.

The next important move was the transformation of his company into a nationwide enterprise. In Portland, Oregon, he did three things.

1. He established a nationwide broadcast called "The Hour of Decision."
2. He formed the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.
3. He entered the motion picture business by filming the Portland Crusade.

Now in 1963 he has conducted more than 50 crusades. He has returned to Los Angeles where he conducted his first most successful crusade.

One of the most controversial crusades was the New York Crusade of 1957. It is at this time that he is reported to have capitulated most evidently to the liberal, modernistic movement in the American Church world and by virtue of this fact forsook the fundamentalist position from which he had previously operated.

In a small pamphlet entitled "*Billy Graham, A Critique,* Rev. Robert Dunzweiler, Professor of Systematic Theology of the Faith Theological Seminary, sets forth an appraisal of the Billy Graham success. I quote:

> First of all, I think we must agree that Billy Graham preaches the simple Gospel of Salvation. There may be some disagreement concerning how broadly and how distinctly he preaches certain aspects of the Word of God, but certainly I think that most would agree that he does preach the simple Gospel – that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

I take issue with the writer of the above quotation at this juncture when states very mildly that Billy Graham preaches "the simple Gospel of salvation." The writer modifies this statement by stating that "there may be some disagreement concerning how broadly and how distinctly he preaches certain aspects of the Word of God," but the question still remains, Does he preach the truth of the Word of God in all its purity, the truth of the Reformation? Does Billy Graham preach the Gospel or does he preach another Gospel which Paul boldly states is not the Gospel. In Galatians 1:8 Paul through the Holy Spirit declares:

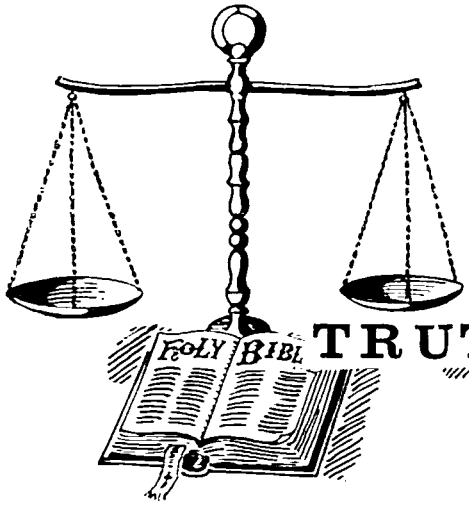
> ". . . though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Does Billy Graham preach the Gospel in its simple, undiluted, unpolluted form? Does he preach that Jesus actually and fully saves? Don't you hear him pleading that men will turn and open the doors of their hearts and let the Savior come in? Is this the Christ of the Scriptures? Is this the Gospel story?

Doesn't he say that salvation is possible for all men? Doesn't he hawk a Christ that is willing to save all men but there are always those who refuse to be saved; but this is against the wishes of the Savior?

This is the lie of Arminianism and is insipid modernism. That is why he can so easily fly into the camp of the modernist. But let's permit Billy Graham himself to speak. He said:

(Continued on page 19)



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. R. C. HARBACH

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND OFFENSES

"I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him (the weak) that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Rom. 14:14). No material thing is inherently sinful, but the consciences of some are not fully free to realize this. "There is nothing unclean of itself." Nothing neither commanded nor forbidden can be unclean. Meats having been offered to idols are not unclean. Bacon, ham, pork, rabbit and crab meat are no longer unclean, for the Messiah made all meats *kosher*. "This He said, making all meats clean" (Mark 7:19, ASV). The prohibitions of Lev. 11:4-8 have been removed by the authority of God (Acts 10: 15; I Tim. 4:4). It is the weak brother who regards some *thing* to be profane. It is not so objectively; but subjectively, in his own mistaken mind, it is. Still, the fact remains that in itself it is pure. If he should do something which is against his own conscience, if, for example, he should drink some wine, he would sin, not because he drinks wine, but because he thinks that this act is inherently sinful, and does so contrary to the dictates of his conscience. He does what he thinks is contrary to the will of God. He ought to be further instructed, and never be encouraged to do what he thinks to be contrary to God's will. When he so sins against his conscience, he sins against the First Commandment. The unenlightened believer, because of his ignorance and error, subjectively (not in reality) contaminates that good thing by his weak conscience. Unbelievers pollute their own conscience and infect everything by their profane touch (Tit. 1:15). "I know this and am persuaded" of it, says the strong believer, "by the Lord Jesus." This is not a private opinion of my own, he avers, but the revealed will of my Master.

Many do not have the freedom of conscience provided in the Christian faith and life. To them many things seem to be wrong in themselves. These Christians feel it is wrong to do these things. Their consciences are not sufficiently trained according to Scripture. But the conscience cannot be forced. It must be persuaded and convinced.

"For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love . . ." (14:15, ASV). A flamboyant exercise of Christian liberty may bring pain to a weak brother. When you do so, "you are no longer following the evidence of love" (Weymouth). Our exercise of the liberty we have in Christ is to be limited by the law of love as expressed in I Cor. 13:4, 5. Then you will not cause anyone to do with a doubtful or erring conscience what you do with a good, educated conscience. Liberty is to be enjoyed in conformity to love, not at the expense of love. Love sometimes calls for abstinence. Yet although Christian love is an essential duty, it, in turn, is not to over-ride Christian liberty. The free Chris-

tian in order to exercise love is not required to become a feather blown about at the whims of others. Love is intended to *guide* liberty, not to *smother* it. The principle of love does not require me to yield my principles, especially to a weaker Christian; it does not require me to offend my own conscience, nor to become the slave of every fanatic I meet. I need not abstain from ham permanently or from beef on Friday. For Christ has swept the Christian stage clean of all the rubbish of the traditions of men. What love enjoins is continency, moderation, the control of my desires and seeking the good of my brethren. However, I need not subscribe to their narrowness and so rob myself of the right of private judgment.

"Let not your good (i.e., your Christianity) be evil spoken of" (i.e., blasphemed), (14:16). This is not the weak brother who criticizes the liberties of the strong as doing evil, for the Christian, whether weak or strong, is not one who blasphemes anyone or anything. The reference is to inimical outsiders who look for anything and everything whereby they may slander, not your Christian liberty, for they see little in that to criticize and excoriate, but your Christian faith, the Gospel.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of (lit., *for*) men" (vv. 17, 18). The kingdom of God does not consist in our activities or outward observances, not in food and drink, whether meat with the blood or without, or whether meat inoffensive to the Jew or to a Friday-observing Romanist, it makes no difference. Much less, is the kingdom a socialist campaign to establish bureaucratic uplift movements toward better living conditions and a controlled economy. Such things have nothing to do with the kingdom of God! The kingdom, rather, consists in spiritual blessings and graces wrought in us by God. We serve Christ in the strength of these blessings, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Notice that the sphere of the kingdom is in the Holy Spirit, not in the flesh, not in the things of the flesh, nor in Jewish or Romish customs. All sorts of forms, ceremonies, days, seasons, forbidden meats, kosher meats, fish dates (or diets) are not Christian. They are Gentile, Jewish or pagan religious distinctions – not Christian, and not at all in the Holy Spirit. Notice, further, that the operations of the kingdom of God move in the service of Christ. "If any man serve Me, him will the Father honor" (John 12:26). If any man does not serve Christ he does not honor the Father, but is a dishonor to Him. A conscientious, free servant of Christ is well-pleasing to God and tested and approved *for* men (not "of men"). It is not that men approve of him, or that the world lauds Christian character, but that God approves of him for men, i.e., for the good of men.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another" (19). Peace in the church is destroyed when fanatics and extremists, who deprive themselves of these indifferent things which God has not prohibited, urge their opinions as a standard for others. Usually they demand abstinence, whereas the Word of God requires temperance, moderation. To them, "temperance" means "abstinence." This is clear from their "temperance days," "temperance lessons," and "temperance unions." Such usage is not the result of honest handling of the dictionary. That many *abuse* their privileges is no reason why I in the interest of peace should abstain from the *use* of them. It is no sin to use *knives* merely because some *knaves* with such tools have committed crimes of violence. I need not remove my wedding ring because some claim they are offended by the wearing of jewelry. Christian love does not require me to become an extremist in order to avoid offending others. Nor would I contribute to their edification if I conformed to their scruples. To do so might rather encourage them in superstition, ignorance and self-righteousness. The moderate and the temperate person is, generally, content to leave in peace those who differ from him, and to keep to himself. Christians who use wine in moderation (as many European Christians), do not go about in the attempt to get others to do the same. Yet many "total abstainers" will pester their brethren with their fads, customs, traditions and opinions, and say the most uncharitable things about those who refuse to live by their rules.

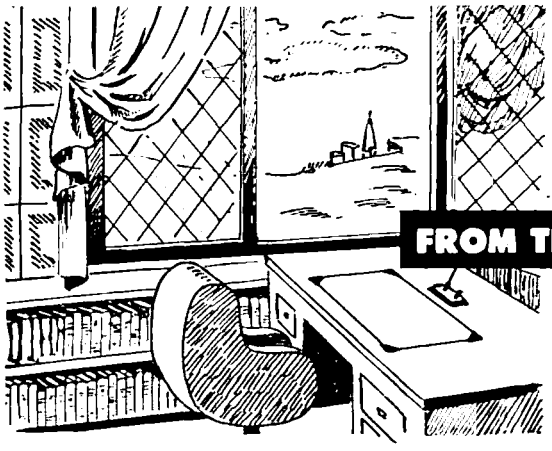
They are not exactly addicted to peace. Now, eating and drinking are for the purpose of living (not *vice versa*); still, as I have a right to enjoy living, I have a right to enjoy eating and drinking, as long as I direct my actions in the service of Christ. To keep peace with some brethren I need not limit myself to a John-the-Baptist-diet.

"For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence" (20). The term "meat" is synonymous for "exercise of Christian liberty." We are morally obligated, under certain circumstances, not to insist upon our liberty, as it is evil to do anything with offence. Now "offence" does not mean something which strikes me rather disagreeably, as an "offensive odor," or "his laughing at me offended me." Nor does it mean any *taking* offence. In my home town, Germantown, Philadelphia, there is a sect known as "Brethren in Christ." In 1723 they were called "River Brethren." These *take* offence at the other churches because they do not practice foot-washing. They have even taken offence at each other, and have split over the question whether in the foot-washing one man should both wash and dry the feet, or whether one wash and another dry! There are some Christians who see nothing wrong in an organ solo or a trumpet solo at the worship service, who, nevertheless, take offence at a flute solo. There will always be some, no matter what we do, to take offence at us. But we need not subject ourselves to the imperious laws of others.

What we *are* to avoid is the *causing* of offence. We may give offence by (1) causing others to do what their conscience condemns. We may embolden one to go beyond the dictates of his conscience, and so bring himself under a sense of condemnation. Also we may give offence by (2) doing what will cause others to get the impression that we are not sincere in our Christianity. We must reckon with their prejudices and ignorances. But this does not mean to say that we are to make another man's conscience the rule of our own. It does not mean that we may do *only* that which appears agreeable to others. For then we will do *nothing*, unless we can both do it and not do it at the same time. We must not only be careful not to give offence, but be careful about charging another with giving offence. No one may demand the exercise of church discipline merely on the ground of having been offended. Has offence been given? or merely taken? Show first from Scripture that what has offended is something prohibited by Scripture. Yet there is a sense in which we may give offence: when a Christian makes his own opinion a condition of fellowship, or proof of Christianity, then we must pay no regard to the putting of personal views on the same level with Scripture. It may be necessary to assert our Christian liberty at the expense of offending good men in order that true principles of conduct be preserved (Titus 1:13 - 15).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (21). Some indifferent things, and therefore perfectly lawful things in themselves, may carry a bad implication to the minds of some. Then before such individuals we ought to refrain from the use of such things, or from the exercise of that liberty. There may be no wrong in entering a friend's house unannounced while making a social or neighborly call. But to enter it silently and in the middle of the night might appear somewhat suspicious. A Romish cathedral or a heathen temple is not in itself an objectionable place for a Christian to visit. But lest he stumble or scandalize a weak and recent convert to the faith, let him not enter the heretical shrine at the hour of worship. For that might convey an implication and presumption to idolatry. It would be no sin whatever for a missionary to have in his home a brass image of a heathen Chinese god (into the mouth of which he may occasionally drop his waste paper); but that idol may very well be an offence and cause of stumbling to a novice, or an ex-heathen, newly converted from idolatry. "We know that an idol is nothing in the world . . . Howbeit, there is not in every man that knowledge . . . and their conscience being defiled is weak" (I Cor. 8:4, 7). A safe rule to follow is, if the matter appears evil to others, but not to ourselves, then in some cases, and under certain circumstances, we ought to abstain, in others, not.

(*To be continued*)



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REDEEMING THE TIME

REV. G. VAN BAREN

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

Ephesians 5:15 - 17

Do you, young people? Sit down for a few moments and read the entire chapter in which the verse on the top of the page is found. Think about what is written there. The apostle commands that we be followers (imitators) of God as dear children. We were of darkness, but now we are of the light. We must then in our lives imitate the Light Who is God. Spiritual virtues — love, grace, wisdom, mercy — these are seen in our entire being, for we are imitators of God. So I ask, do you redeem the time? In so doing, you reveal wisdom which must mark you as being truly an imitator of God.

Although the truth of this Word of God applies to the Christian from his infancy to his old age and in every circumstance he confronts during this lifetime, I would rather consider this text especially as it applies to you, young people. The word "time" refers not to some general time, to the minutes that tick by every hour and day; the word rather points to specific, allotted times which God gives for very definite purposes. Thus, in the life of each person, God gives certain periods or times in which He requires that this person perform according to the requirements of His Word. You have such time-periods, too.

This time must be redeemed. By nature, man uses these allotted time periods in the service of sin. As man is born of Adam, he is totally depraved, unable to do any good. Then will he not use time aright either. To redeem time, then, is to repurchase it, to use it in a way other than what our old nature would desire. That is the calling of dear children of the light. They must use time contrary to the dictates of the world, the devil, and even of their own flesh.

Let's look once at the time God has given you. God gives certain time to train children. He gives certain time for performing the work of gathering the church. He gives a time for each activity and work which He requires. You, now, are given the time of youth. It is a time for preparation for your place in the church of God. It is a time for godly, religious instruction so that you, in turn, may instruct and guide the coming generation. It is a time in which you reveal to the wild and wicked youth of our day that you are of the light and hate the works of darkness. It is a time for diligence in preparation for catechism, for society, for Sunday School. This time which you now have is very definitely limited. I know. That period of time for me has already gone. Soon it passes for you too.

Do you redeem this time, young people? Of course, this is an activity of the regenerated child of God. Natural man will not and can not redeem the time. The Holy Spirit must have turned your heart from darkness to the light. He must have implanted the life of Christ within you so that you are a new creature. Then you

must and you will redeem the time – although your flesh will still continue to oppose this.

You may not then squander this time-period of your life. This "time" may not remain idle, nor may it be used in the service of sin. Many like to use the period of youth simply for "fun," not that good clean "fun" of the Christian, but "fun" which involves it in the enjoyment of worldly entertainment in movie, television, radio; a "fun" which can dream up all kinds of evil pranks; a "fun" which does not respect the authority of home, of school, or of church. Others simply would waste their time. They consider it as a commodity which is endless. Like the widow's cruse, it seems to continue forever. So the time is wasted on all kinds of nonsense. Night after night is spent doing nothing – nothing profitable or worthwhile, that is.

You have your abilities, your possessions (limited though these may now be), and your time. As children of the light, all these must be used in the service of the light. It is a time for you to walk in proper obedience: to parents, teachers, and others in authority. It is especially a time for you to be trained – not simply in the learning required for living in the present age, but you must be trained in the principles of the Word of God. Especially is that true in catechism and societies. There you are taught and trained. To redeem the time is to make use of these means faithfully. This must prepare you for your place in the kingdom of God, especially to prepare you in holding fast to the truth and instructing others in it. Are you using wisely your time? It is time to examine yourself.

And it is so very urgent – this calling to redeem the time. The days are evil. Evil they are in the sense that the world is filled with all manner of corruption. No matter where one turns, evil is seen. And that is true today more than ever before in the world's history. The result is and will be evil days for the church. These will be days of terrible persecutions; of threats; of death – for those who hold fast to the Word of God.

These evil days are upon us right now. Open your eyes and see. We would blind ourselves to the evilness of our day. Almost everything seems acceptable to us. But look in the daily paper and see the horrible, filthy, sexy advertisements of the movies; note how these same movies now appear on television and are applauded by those who were horrified years before when a church member might be caught in a "movie." Take a glance at the book-rack in the drug store (or others too). Look at the covers, read the titles – reminds one of that great whore of Revelation, does it not? Consider too the manner of dress in our day. Deliberately it is made provocative and seductive; purposefully it is emphasized that this is "fashion." How many in the church too do not simply slide along with this argument that one can be a member of the church and still be fashionable! Need I continue? The days are evil. The time is short. This is not the time to be idle, to be careless with our time. Young people, you were born in a time of rapid change. You may take it for granted that our age is simply normal. The last days appear to be far away. But do not be deceived. Those days are upon us now. Therefore, faithfully redeem the time.

Thus you will not be fools. A fool is one who knows the basic facts but can not or will not apply these in a concrete situation. In this text, a spiritual fool is one who knows that the days are evil, but he walks deliberately along with that evil. One who does not redeem the time is a fool. Do not use the excuse that you are but a young person – that you should first enjoy yourself before settling into the routine of a Christian's walk; then you are the greatest of fools.

One who is wise understands what the will of Christ is. Christ reveals His Word to us in Scripture. That directs in the way we must walk. You must study that will of Christ. The Spirit must apply that truth to your hearts. And according to that will you must live. Then you have a "circumspect walk" too. That is a walk which is straight – one not deviating by even a hair. You must be very strict concerning your walk. You can not depart by even a little bit. Jesus called this walk the straight and narrow way which leadeth to life.

Are you r e d e e m i n g the time, young people? Truly are you? Then you are wise and not a fool.

WHY I CHOSE TO BE A MINISTER

REV. H. VELDMAN

Asked by the Staff of BEACON LIGHTS to contribute an article to the series on the subject, "Why I chose to be a minister," I gladly comply with this request. The topic is surely timely, and I wish to congratulate the Staff upon its selection. The purpose of this series of articles, I assume, is to lead our young men to a serious and prayerful consideration of this very high calling. And the Staff has informed the undersigned that the writers of these articles should incorporate into them their past and present experiences which are very rewarding to them.

Why I chose to be a minister, selected this vocation? Because it was selected for me. Oh, I do not mean to say that my parents selected this calling for me. Here we are confronted with a fundamental principle. In a very real sense of the word, our vocation, life's calling is determined by God. Too often we ignore this cardinal truth. Too often we assume that we select our life's calling and task. And too often we are prompted and motivated by the question: "What will WE have ourselves to do?" That job or position, then, appeals to us which is the most attractive materially, the most lucrative, offers us the most money, gives us the greatest opportunity for advancement in the material sense of the word. Viewing our life's calling in this light, we will hardly select the preaching or teaching profession.

It is, of course, true that we must prepare ourselves for our life's work. This speaks for itself. This preparation requires effort and study on our part. But this does not alter the truth that our life's calling is determined by the Lord. It is God Who distributes gifts and talents according to His will. And we, to prepare ourselves for our life's task, must examine ourselves and ask ourselves the question: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" We must not be motivated by the lust of the eyes and of the flesh, by the mere desire for carnal gain and advancement; we must be guided by the desire to serve the Lord according to the gifts and talents He has given us, and by the desire to serve the interests of His Church in which He has given us a name and place. The desire to study and serve our churches in the ministry of the Word, given to me by the Lord, certainly prompted me in my decision to attend our Protestant Reformed seminary and become a minister (servant) of the Word of God.

However, the Staff of BEACON LIGHTS has asked me to incorporate into my article my past and present experiences which were very rewarding to me. Upon this, I believe, the emphasis must be laid in this article. Now it seems to me, on the one hand, that it is surely not the Staff's desire that I speak of those experiences which were materially rewarding to me. I would not be able to write an article on this. The preaching of the gospel does not bestow many material rewards upon the ministers of the gospel in our Protestant Reformed Churches. And, on the other hand, must I incorporate into my article only those "rewarding" experiences that were pleasing and delightful, and exclude all other "rewarding" experiences that were difficult and unpleasant? Of course not!

It has been my privilege to serve several churches: Pella, Creston, Kalamazoo, Hamilton (Canada), Edgerton, Redlands and Hope. Many are the difficulties which are inseparably connected with the labors of a minister of the Word. I need not discuss all these difficulties as I have experienced them. The time we spent in Hamilton, for example, can hardly be called very pleasant. One great difficulty always centers in the truth that all is not Israel that is called

Israel. The reaction to the preaching of the gospel and all the labors connected with it is always twofold. Israel is a twofold people: carnal and spiritual Israel. It is wonderful when the children of the congregation embrace the instruction given them and, when come to years of discretion, confess their Lord publicly in the midst of the church of God. But it is also very sad when other children of the congregation, receiving the same instruction, reject the Word of God and prefer the pleasures of sin for a season. This, of course, is and must be the saddest and most difficult aspect of the work of a minister of the Word of God. This applies not only to the "goats" and the "chaff," whereof the Scriptures speak, but also to the sheep and lambs of God's pasture. Imperfection cleaves to all the people of God as they sojourn in the midst of the world. This, we understand, involves the Church of God in the very distasteful task of exercising the key of Christian discipline. Many are the headaches and heartaches that result from this arduous and most difficult task.

A preacher of the Word must also be prepared to share the griefs and sorrows of his flock. I refer to sickness and death. For one reason or another, it has pleased the Lord to spare the undersigned in this respect to a large extent. For example, in eighteen years of labor in the congregations of Kalamazoo, Edgerton and Redlands, we conducted only three funerals. This, I am sure, is an exception. Funerals are difficult, some more, others less. The minister must be ready to go from one extreme to another. He must be ready to officiate at a wedding in the evening after having conducted a funeral in the afternoon. And he must be able to take a part in both, in a very real sense of the word, weeping with those who mourn and rejoicing with those who rejoice.

Permit me to add one more thought as far as our difficulties are concerned. I now refer to our Prot. Ref. Churches. We are small according to the standard of this world. It would be folly for anyone to deny or ignore this fact. We are surely of no account in the midst of the world, also in the midst of the church-world. We are branded as sectarian, are denied the right of existence before God, are simply ignored as a Church of Jesus Christ our Lord. And this is due to the general unpopularity of the gospel we proclaim. The gospel we proclaim is anything but pleasing to the flesh. This has also been the experience of the undersigned.

Have our labors as a minister of the Word in our Protestant Reformed Churches been rewarding to us? Indeed! First of all, to preach the Word of God because the Lord has called us unto that task is rewarding in itself. It gives one the assurance that he is walking in the way of the will of the Lord. One can never derive any lasting pleasure from pursuing a certain vocation merely from the motive of personal and material gain. The Lord will and does comfort those who walk in the way of His will and precepts, also as far as the ministry of the Word is concerned.

Secondly, it is a very gratifying and beneficial experience to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord in the instructing and comforting of His people. To share their griefs and sorrows, to witness the wonderful truth as revealed by others that the grace of God is always sufficient, enriches one's own spiritual life. And how wonderful it is to be used by the Lord to comfort His own by His Word and Spirit!

Finally, we have one more observation. I mentioned the fact of the smallness of our churches, and that we must not deny or ignore this fact. But it is my experience and conviction that we must not end here. We are small. Indeed! But we are also strong! We are poor. But, we are also rich! We are of no account in the midst of the world. But we do preach and teach the wonderful and unadulterated gospel of our God! And I want to emphasize this. Indeed, the gospel we proclaim is unpopular, but only to the natural man. Where is the Word of God preached and taught as in our churches? It is wonderful to be privileged by God to stand in this Cause of the eternal Son of God. Our task is clear. Our calling we understand. And, as far as our future is concerned, the secret or hidden things belong to the Lord, our God, the things of God's counsel even as they involve us, personally, and as churches, as they lie in the future and have as yet not been revealed to us. We need not concern ourselves with them. They belong to the Lord, Jehovah,

the Unchangeably Faithful One, Who is also our God, the Almighty One, able to provide for us and give us all we need. This is my deepest conviction. May the Lord give us men, young men, dedicated to the preaching of His Word, and realize that the coming of our Lord upon the clouds of heaven draws nigh. The smallness of our churches, particularly in the light of the nearness of that coming, need not discourage us. Let us remain faithful unto the calling whereunto the Lord has called us.

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE Book of GENESIS

Gen. 9:18 – 10:32

REV. J. KORTERING

God Preserves His Covenant Seed

It would be a wrong conclusion to maintain that God purged the world of sin when He bathed the earth in the flood. To be sure He saved His church by purging the earth of her immediate enemy. Sin, however, was not dead. The very significance of the story that immediately follows the account of the flood is this: God maintains and realizes His covenant in spite of the weakness of His covenant people. Sin did not perish in the flood; it rode within the ark. God's covenant is surely realized only because we read in the midst of the story of sin and cursings, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem" (vs. 26 of Chap. 9).

The story of Noah's drunkenness and resultant prophetic statement to his three sons is familiar to us. Noah planted a vineyard and with the fruit of the vine became intoxicated. This for the "Preacher of Righteousness" was a gross transgression. We cannot excuse Noah with ignorance concerning the potential danger of too much wine. He must have known that excess could lead to insensible immorality. The distinct impact that is produced by a high alcohol content in the blood is known to us. Exactly for this reason we as young people must keep ourselves from being contaminated by it. It would be very beneficial to discuss whether "temperance" is not the proper answer to this problem today. One may have a very strict moral code, but with too much alcohol the sensibility of sexual purity is immediately perverted. So too with Noah. We must remember the reason that Ham mocked his father was the fact his *father* was acting in a way unbecoming to a child of God.

Noah fell into sin and Ham delighted in that sin. Such is the true picture of the events. Ham gave vent to his debased human nature. He was not aroused to assist his father who had sinned as were Shem and Japheth, but instead made sport of his father, even to the extent that he must have enthusiastically informed his brothers as one is inclined to do when there is some real morsel of savory gossip. Ham too had a nature like ours. This was of his weak moments.

Noah realized what Ham had done. How that was possible is often debated. How could a drunken man know what happened when he was inebriated? Two possibilities present themselves: either God revealed it to Noah directly afterward, or the event occurred while Noah was yet sensible enough to recall things that had happened. The latter seems the more tenable, since more than likely the wine was not so potent to really deaden the senses, and besides that, if one is drunk, it is possible that he recalls things that happened even though at the moment he had no power of moral restraint to prevent it. This causes the "real nice fellow" to be filled with remorse and rededication when sober and to be a "sodden fool" when drunk. Upon recalling the state

of affairs, Noah delivered three "prophetic" statements concerning his sons.

"Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Why Canaan? The answer cannot be the simple fact that Canaan was the youngest of Ham's sons. Rather, Canaan must have had a spiritual disposition characterized by the weakness of his father. He may have participated in the sin and thus was disposed to the object of Noah's curse. Ham sinned, but the curse was upon his generations represented by his son Canaan. This same idea is conveyed in the second commandment, "visiting iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me."

The servitude was on the generations as a whole, not on every individual. There were descendants of Canaan incorporated into the O. T. covenant, e. g. Isa. 19:18-22 and in the N. T. with Christ in Matt. 15:22. This servitude was both to Shem and Japheth and must not be construed as meaning a physical bondage forever (as Negroes in America, and thus a justification of slavery), but was principally a spiritual truth, viz. that the powers of darkness in Ham's generations would serve the cause of Christ. This assumed the form of much physical bondage during O. T. times. We must take note of the fundamental principle of history, that the seed of the serpent must in reality serve the seed of the woman.

In contrast, Noah pronounced the central blessing of the covenant to Shem and his generations, "Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem." Especially bearing in mind that out of Shem "*The* Seed of the Woman" was to come forth, we can understand why he referred to God by the name Jehovah. This is His covenant name that spells out His almighty unchangeable faithfulness to His people. He is that God uniquely to Shem, because out of his generations He would come forth.

Finally, the prophetic insight of Noah even reaches to the N. T. times, when Japheth would dwell in the tents of Shem. The figure of a tent indicates co-habitation and sharing of one's particular blessing. The special blessing of Shem was the promise of the Messiah. Out of Shem Christ would come forth. His generations would live in the blessed hope of His coming. From his loins would come forth Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel, Judah, David and finally Christ. However, when Christ would come, many branches of Shem would be cut off and in their place would be engrafted the seed of Japheth (the Gentiles). In this they "both would be one" and "they would be fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." Eph. 2:14 and 19. Thus Japheth would be enlarged in his place in the midst of the generations of the covenant.

Having observed these important keys that unlock the mystery of history, the sacred narrative mentions the death of Noah and presents a bird's eye view of the three sons in their generations and their particular place in the midst of the earth. Chapter 10 describes for us the *fact* that the generations came forth and that each settled in its own place, while chapter 11 tells how this came to pass.

The place where the generations scattered is well known. Japheth was the father of the Caucasian race who settled in what later became known as Europe. Gomer e. g. settled in Brittany, Magog became the Scythians, Madai – Medes, Javah – Greece, Tiras – Thracia. Together they form the Germanic tribes and even the Armenians. Each one had his own land, family and tongue as determined by Babel.

The children of Ham were the Negroid race, settling in Africa, Ethiopia, Egypt, Lybia, and Canaan. It is apparent that Nimrod was a man of great skill, comparable to Lamech and his three sons, included in the "wise and prudent" of this world. He is called the "mighty hunter" which must refer to his ability to capture wild animals. Some think this refers to his killing people, but it would seem contradictory to his prominence if this were true. The fact that there is appended to this description "before the Lord" does not add a spiritual quality to the man, but must be understood as a general reference to deity, as in our day e. g. "God is my witness" or "Heaven knows," even though this does not mean that a person who uses these phrases is a child of God. This man built his first mighty empire with Babel as its center. This was called the Babylonian Empire. It gives evidence of his skill and influence on the people. Here four major cities were joined in a confederate stronghold with the Tower

of Babel as its unifying center. After the intervention of God at Babel, he built Nineveh, about 400 miles to the north. Here he constructed a composite of four cities. He certainly did not lose courage even after Babel. What persistence is evidenced in the "sons of men" – the same stamina that marks the efforts for armament control and nuclear test bans today. They will certainly overcome the effects of sin without Christ!

Finally we notice the children of Seth settled in Asia. Here they were in a position to become the cradle of the nations. The father of the Mongolians dwelt in Assyria, Syria, eventually in Canaan. Peleg was connected with Abraham's generations, out of which Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldees.

In conclusion let us notice that the fact Seth settled in Asia was directly attributed to God's providential direction. It was through him and his generations, the Jews, that, while they should inhabit the land of Canaan and thus exact the curse upon the generations of Ham, God would bring forth the Christ. Later Japheth would dwell with him. We conclude that the plan of history already laid down in this early chapter of Genesis was the westward movement of the church, from Canaan, to Asia, to Europe, to America. In the midst of all history stands the Church, the children of God, that were and are surely brought into the covenant friendship with God. God mightily preserves His covenant people, not only through the flood, but also throughout all history. Not only does He deliver them from the sword of the enemy, but preserves them through their own weaknesses and sins.

I walked a mile with Pleasure.
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me.

ROBERT B. HAMILTON

CRITIQUE

(Continued from page 9)

> I intend to go anywhere, sponsored by anybody, to preach the Gospel of Christ, if there are no strings attached to my message.

Or he can say:

> The old terms fundamentalism and liberalism are now *passé*.

Is this the language of the defender of the faith, one who walks in the steps of the Reformers?

God is our refuge and our strength,
A Helper ever near us;
We will not fear though earth be moved,
For God is nigh to cheer us.
Although the mountains quake And earth's foundations shake,
Though angry billows roar
And break against the shore,
Our mighty God will hear us.

God's city is forever blest
With living waters welling;
Since God is there she stands unmoved
'Mid tumult round her swelling;
God speaks and all is peace,
From war the nations cease;
The Lord of hosts is nigh, Our fathers' God Most High
Is our eternal dwelling.

Behold what God has done on earth;
His wrath brings desolation,
His grace, commanding wars to cease,
Brings peace to every nation;
Be still, for He is Lord,
By all the earth adored;
The Lord of hosts is nigh, Our fathers' God Most High
Is our strong habitation.

MARTIN LUTHER

NEWS from, for, and about our churches

LOIS E. KREGEL

Contribution from the Radio Committee:

"The year was 1941. The date – Sunday, Oct. 12. The place – Radio Station WLAV, Grand Rapids, Michigan. It was on this date that the Reformed Witness Hour sent out over the air its first radio broadcast. The Protestant Reformed Churches have been privileged since that date to broadcast more than 1100 Distinctively Reformed radio programs! Every Sunday for over 22 years the wonderful truth that God is God, Who saves His people, not dependent upon the will, or conditioned by an act of man, has been proclaimed throughout our country and abroad by the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. We urge the young people of our churches to listen each Lord's Day for 29 minutes and 30 seconds to these programs concerning the truth of God's Word as we maintain it, both in the preaching of the Word of God and the singing of the songs of Zion."

Events – Past and Future

Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society of First Church planned to sponsor a program on Oct. 22 in First Church, featuring Rev. Hanko with slides and recordings of his trip to Jamaica.

Eastern Ladies' League Meeting was scheduled for Oct. 24 at Southeast Church; Rev. H. Veldman was the speaker, and his topic, "A Sign of the Second Coming of Christ."

Singspirations were held in Randolph Church and in Hudsonville Church in October, organized by the Young People's Societies of those Churches.

Rev. H. Veldman spoke at the Oct. 3 meeting of Adams St. School Mothers' Club, on the subject, "Our Children."

Western Ladies' League met Oct. 3 in Doon. Rev. B. Woudenberg spoke on "The Influence of a Christian Home on the Spiritual Character of our Children." Rev. J. Kortering conducted the question hour.

Mr. and Mrs. League was to meet Oct. 25 in First Church, with Rev. H. Veldman as the speaker.

"Shakerism" was the subject of discussion at a recent meeting of Randolph's Adult Bible Class.

Rev. H. Hanko officiated at the ordination of Mr. David Engelsma in Loveland on Oct. 2.

Adams Athletic Club planned a pancake supper at the school Oct. 26.

From Randolph's Bulletin:

It is a common thing in London, when a house is uninhabited and shut up, for boys to write in chalk on the window-shutters and door "Empty." When a person professes godliness, and does not bring forth good works in his practice, we too may write the word "Empty" on all the profession he makes. – Toplady

Our Servicemen:

From Randolph we learn that Ron Huizenga was to leave for service on Oct. 14; we hope to have his address later. Henry De Vries is soon to begin a tour of duty in Korea. Frank De Vries has returned from Germany and has been discharged.

Leon Kamps and Louis Schut, both of our Hudsonville church, left for the service on Oct. 2.

The following address is that of a member of Hope Church:

Fp4 Duane Mensch
RA 16729317
Aqs Co., U. S. A. Sepaf
A.P.O. 168, P.M., New York, N. Y.

Trios and Calls:

Rev. B. Woudenberg has declined the call from Lynden.

Redlands has made the following new trio: Revs. G. Vanden Berg, J. Heys, and G. Lanting.

New arrivals:

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hanko (First)

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. James De vries (Randolph)

A daughter born to Rev. and Mrs. G. Van Baren (Randolph)

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Harold Van Maanen (Hull)

Twin daughters born to Mr. and Mrs. Perlin Schut (Hudsonville)

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Jay Holstege (Hudsonville)

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Vander Vennen (Southeast)

Wedding Bells

rang for Kenneth G. Timmer and Sandra Timmer (First) on October 11 in First Church.

Called Home

Mr. J. Sietstra, a member of Hull Prot. Ref. Church; Mrs. H. Hoeksema (First) at the age of 76 years.

Membership changes

Miss Hulda Kuiper transferred to Oak Lawn from South Holland; Southeast welcomed Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Heemstra and four children, from First; Mr. and Mrs. J. Van Dyke and two children came to Hope from Redlands.

To be filled in by present Beacon Lights subscriber only

Send to: JOHN KALSBEEK Jr., 4132 Hall St., S. W., Grand Rapids, Mich.

Name .....
(Please Print)

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zipcode .....

By introducing this new subscriber to Beacon Lights I understand that the next time I renew my subscription, I will receive it for half the original cost for one year.

To be filled in by **NEW** Beacon Lights subscriber only

Please send a copy of Beacon Lights to:

Name .....
(Please Print)

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zipcode .....

Check One

One year $3.00 ☐

Two years $6.00 ☐

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