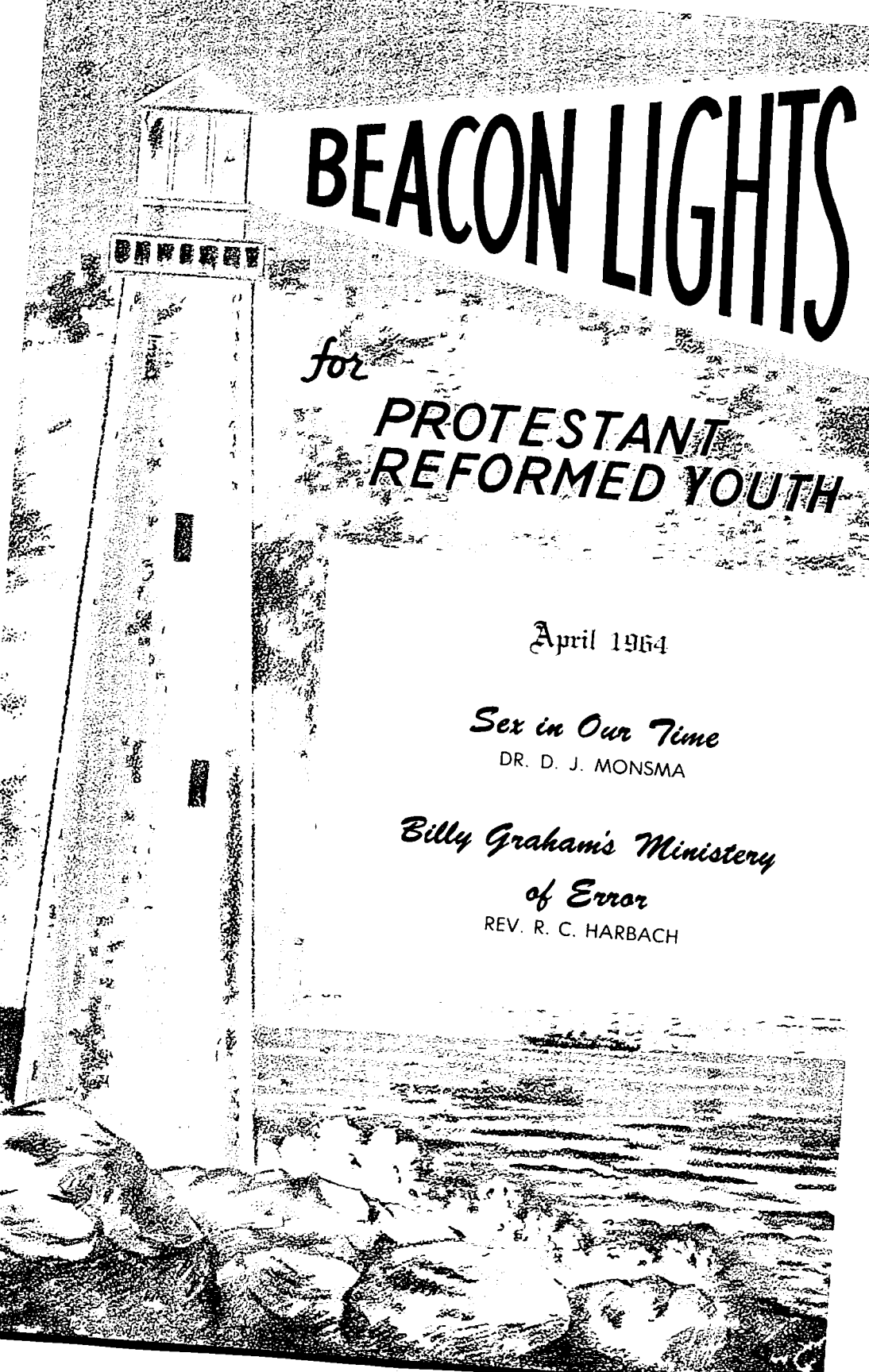

# BEACON LIGHTS

for

## PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

April 1964

**Sex in Our Time**
DR. D. J. MONSMA

**Billy Graham's Ministery of Error**
REV. R. C. HARBACH

# BEACON LIGHTS

## FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XXIV APRIL, 1964 NUMBER 3

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# *Editorial . . .*

## YOUR PERSONAL LIBRARY

The sole purpose of this editorial is to offer to you, Protestant Reformed youth, a suggestion for consideration. The suggestion is intimately associated with the fact that you, as the youth of the Church of Christ, are naturally a learning youth and, by His grace, are constantly in quest of increasing your understanding of that which He has revealed unto us in His Word. That, in itself, is a beautiful thought.

We believe that it would be beneficial for you to consider establishing, for your personal *use,* a private library of a type that would *aid* you in your study activities in the spheres of your home and your church. Eliminated, therefore, from the discussion are all other types of books. We speak solely now of STUDY books; tools, if you please, with which you may more quickly or more accurately come to a clearer understanding of the Truth. We hope that the results of this suggestion: (1) may assist you in your understanding of that Truth, as you from week to week make preparation for your part in the spiritual activities that are yours to enjoy, and (2) may stimulate a positive reaction on your part to the end that even in your day to day walk there may be these tools available to you, with which you will more intelligently be able to seek out answers to questions and problems that arise.

Now we realize, of course, that presently you are living at home and therefore you may already have available for your use some of this type of books, which your parents own and which they are happy to let you use. Then it would appear somewhat nonsensical for you to go out and obtain them for yourself. This is, in a sense, true. However, we must realize that when we do "leave the nest" it is done in a twinkling. Generally speaking, anyway, it is not a gradual process. And we feel that it is a desired thing to make close associations, with this type of books, which are lasting, provided that we can be led to select them aright. Then we will be happy to be able to take with us these tools, which, in a very trite manner of speaking, may be considered as "old friends". And those books which have through experience proven to be beneficial tools in the study of God's Word certainly may be thought of as such.

As to what titles should be considered for *your* library, we will make just a few comments. First, we assume that, *as a book to be obtained,* the Bible itself need not enter into this discussion. Do not be alarmed at this, for we mean thereby that it is assumed that we all cherish it dearly and so already *have* one; thus we need only to add to the library those things (books) that we feel will be of benefit to us in the study of THAT WORD, which *is* and *must remain* central in the entire library, not only, but also in the studies in which we engage. We might say on this point, that there are Bibles and there are Bibles. There are those with or without concordances, maps, encyclopedia, diagrams, etc., each with greater or lesser desirability. You will decide, if you are to purchase a new Bible, just which type it will be for you.

Then should you desire to begin gradually, in the direction which we suggest, with what should you start? We feel that this will be determined *by you,* in your own peculiar circumstances, your manner of study, the type of discussion that you hold in your particular society. We further hope that this will be done upon the advice of and consultation with your parents and your pastor. They may suggest a Bible concordance, or a Bible dictionary, or a reputable commentary on the book which you are presently discussing (if there is a "good" commentary available on it). This set of aids would be a cherished possession, *as you use it* and as you are able to add to it over the years. And the fact there it *is there* is in itself a great help. Aren't we all inclined to make use of such things much more readily if we have them there immediately at our disposal?

Consider these things, too, in light of the fact that they will continue to be of service to you as you grow older and you become members of the adult societies of your church. This brings us to an interesting matter. Commonly in the after-recess hour in many of the societies one of the Three Forms are discussed. Let us say that the Heidelberg Catechism is being studied and that all of the members in turn are called upon to introduce the various Lord's Days. Please understand me well. I am not selling books. In fact, I am not really sure that these are available in their entirety, but there are members in situations as described above who have the complete exposition of that confession, written by our own Rev. H. Hoeksema. They have these in their homes to assist them to adequately prepare for their own turn for introducing the lesson and also to follow in the entire series of the discussions. Is this getting a bit too idealistic? Even to the point of impracticality? Yes, it is, unless you have experienced and realized that the benefits of the society life of the church are in a large measure directly proportional to the time and the effort which you yourself are able and willing to spend in preparation.

Concerning the cost, we will only say that you will also determine what you should spend on this library at any given time. It need not, in fact, it perhaps should not be done in any other way than a gradual manner, always attempting to fill the need as it arises. Likely, then, if you see the need for a certain addition, the finances (they really aren't so great) will be there, too.

Think it over. If you feel that it would be of benefit *to you*, what will you do? In closing, there is one thought that I want to make very clear. Remember that any *other* books which you may desire to obtain, though helpful, *are yet only aids*. Your studies must always *begin* with the Word. Your studies must always *end* with the Word, too. Remember that IT is always the final and only authority, in the last analysis. These other books are but servants to your study.

No worthy commentator has ever earned a greater status for his commentary than that. Reading the opinions of man may assist us, i.e., of Godly men who have been given to see, in a special way, the Truth. But comparing Scripture with Scripture (though other books can and may assist us to that end) is the only way to arrive at the Truth.

H.W.K.

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# Young Peoples Spring Banquet

## May 12th. — 6:30 P.M.

## First
## Protestant Reformed Church

# SEX IN OUR TIME

DR. D. J. MONSMA

*The staff of* BEACON LIGHTS *felt that the magazine ought to reflect on the moral decay and exploitation of sex which is so rampant today. Dr. Monsma has ably complied with our request. His article should prove helpful to all of us, but especially to our young people to whom these things are so alluring.*
R.D.D. ed.

If you followed your initial impulse, this is the first article that you are reading in this April issue of *Beacon Lights*. This fact calls attention to the universal curiosity we have about the subject of sex. Its appeal is used to good advantage by authors, painters, advertisers, radio producers, sportsmen, television producers, manufacturers and a whole list of others . . . all which profoundly influence our lives.

By way of knowing what we are considering, it is important to give a definition of sex. I am sure that an original attempt on the part of each reader would result in an equal number of definitions. The first, very obvious definition which Webster gives is, "One of the two divisions of organisms formed on the distinction of being male or female; Males or females collectively." Thus, there is a male and a female of each species of created life. He gives a second definition which is more descriptive, "The sum of the peculiarities of structure and function that distinguish a male from a female organism." Webster broadens the field of consideration by his third definition, "The sphere of behavior dominated by the relations between male and female. By extension, the whole sphere of behavior related even indirectly to the sexual functions and embracing all affectionate and pleasure-seeking conduct." Behavior of the two sexes with all its ramifications comes closer to what is implied by the word sex. A fourth definition reiterates this with, "The phenomena of sexual instincts and their manifestations." This latter opens for consideration the whole area of sexual deviations portrayed in thought, conversation, literature and crime. We could attempt to define sex as That gift of God to his creatures which enables the complimentary union of the male and female of each species so that they may generate their own kind. This implies a chemical and physical attraction between them, and, in the case of man, a psychological, emotional and spiritual attraction.

As we would expect, throughout history in the minds of sinful men, it is the misuse of this gift of God which is most prominent. This fact alone tends to explain the reluctance of God's people to discuss the subject of sex. Rather, we find ourselves referring to it in general terms of sin or sin against the seventh commandment. The thesis of this short article is, "We are being over-exposed to sex today". Sexual sins have been a problem since the fall of Adam, but we know that our exposure to them is becoming more intense as the world of sin develops. Even early in Genesis, we read that the sons of God were attracted to the daughters of men. In Genesis 19 we are told of the sin of the men of Sodom and the sins of Lot's daughters with their father. When, throughout the early history of the children of Israel, we see the numerous cautions against a great variety of sexual sins, we are prompted to come to the conclusion that these sinful acts have not changed or developed since the law was given. However, the incidence and variety of the temptations to commit these sins are fresh, new and more numerous with each succeeding

generation. The uncounted inventions of the last century alone have made it much easier for us to become acquainted with the sinful aspects of sex. Consider only the mass printing of books, magazines and newspapers, radio, modern music, movies, automobiles and television. Every age had its debauchery, crime and filthy literature. Each succeeding age seemed worse to those who expressed concern over these problems. It is difficult, however, to find reliable statistics which specifically delineate the progress of immorality in relation to the spirit of the age.

Therefore, I sought out the opinions of others who have written on this subject. According to research by the P.T.A. Magazine reported in their April, 1962 issue, 73% of the respondents to a questionnaire felt that children receive their sex information, sex values and subsequent conduct from home influences. If this is true, each parent bears tremendous responsibility in this regard which must be exercised carefully. The love and respect which children note between their father and mother will foster similar attitudes in the children. Homes where sex is honored as a gift of God which has an accepted place in our lives, will generate attitudes in the children which will help them to distinguish its proper use from its depraved deviations.

The responses to the above questionnaire showed a great concern by parents for the external influences on their children's ideas of sex and life. Most frequently mentioned was the tremendous effect of television in the home and disgust over the immoral themes of so many movie and television offerings. Many parents admitted laxness of supervision over the types of popular songs their children listened to and sang. It seems that one group of songs plays up the attraction of love whereas another group speaks only of the thwarting aspects of love . . . both in misleading ways, to say the least. Although most parents believe their home influences to be beneficial, almost all agreed that the influence of the majority of television programs and advertising was detrimental. Children wonder, for instance . . . does a woman always kiss a man passionately at their first meeting? Do married people always date outside marriage? The implication of most programs on the subject is that you must be glamorous, romantic and sexy in a sensuous way in order to be a successful person before or after marriage.

Unless we have faith in God and believe that our lives have meaningful purpose, we become as the ungodly who finds no fulfillment in love before or after marriage. Thus sex becomes merely an escape whose aftermath is disillusionment and bitterness. The depraved nature of much that is called sex is a direct result of the attempt of the natural man to live without God.

We may conclude then, that children get their basic ideas of love and marriage from living with their parents and observing the way of life their family represents. Ideally then, Protestant Reformed homes where Godly love and respect are taught and practiced between mother, father and children, will help mould proper attitudes based upon scriptural principles of godliness and morality.

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# Open Forum

Dear Mr. Editor:

The month was February and ordinarily would have boded snow, ice, and coldness. But this day verged on the balmy; a chilly wind whistled, yet aloft in its arms it presaged spring.

As I gazed entranced out the kitchen window, I could see the knoll rising bare and bleak on the fringe of our sandy property. Only wispy weeds and frayed milkpods swayed lonesomely in the gusts. And on the west edge of this site of land stretched a row of mongrel trees standing naked and desolate in the intruding sun, wrapping its stripped arms 'round itself to hide its shamefulness. Yet from this bleak expanse would blossom buildings and activity. For this site of land had been purchased to accommo-

date our own future high school. A twinge of hope glanced through me as I mused on the benefits that would be accrued to my children attending our own high school.

The mailman's powder blue Rambler mutilated my muse, and as I turned from the window to fetch the morning tidings, a gaunt black crow flapped forlornly 'cross the shadowed sky.

I returned to the house with the *Beacon Lights*, and looking past the grimy dishes so ironically stacked neatly, I decided to read the *Beacon Lights*. Noble? Perhaps. More likely though — lazy.

I turned to the editorial, and a wave of bewilderment swept over me. No, it couldn't be! Yes, it is! An article on, "The Need for Protestant Reformed High Schools".

Eagerly I began reading, content to continue my rambling thoughts of the morning. But how quickly my eagerness turned to irrateness. And by the time I had completed my perusal of the article, I was compelled to write.

I refer to the editorial by Mr. Kuiper in the February issue of *Beacon Lights*. Perhaps I should first give Mr. Kuiper the benefit of all my doubts, and say that maybe Mr. Kuiper overstated himself; perhaps even a capital letter was negligently omitted. But if not, then I take particular objection to the following:

1. Mr. Kuiper states, ". . . parents in the Grand Rapids area have dared to express this [a Protestant Reformed high school] as their desire of soul, . . ." Is Mr. Kuiper attempting to say that there are people in churches outside the Grand Rapids area who do *not dare* to express this desire? I merely inform Mr. Kuiper that the two schools in the Grand Rapids area are each over ten years old and have their grade systems fairly well established. I'm sure that six or seven years ago such an introduced venture would have been thought to be very presumptuous.

2. Mr. Kuiper states, ". . . thus god, but not GOD." Let me note here that I was under the impression that god, meant idol; therefore, no God. Either God is God (with a capital G) or He is not God. Mr. Kuiper actually says then that the people who believe that God gives grace to all do not really believe in God at all. I refuse to stand behind such bold affirmations.

3. Mr. Kuiper states, ". . . confessionally they deny Him . . . how can they know Him?" The ambiguity of this statement is misleading in the context in which it is used. Does Mr. Kuiper mean that confessionally they dilute the truth by inserting something which man must do and which Scripture repeatedly teaches he cannot do? But Mr. Kuiper does not write that. He says that confessionally they *deny* Him! Carrying out Mr. Kuiper's logic, anyone who denies Christ is not one of His. Therefore, people who voluntarily place themselves under this confession are by that token not known of Him. By this statement then, Mr. Kuiper implies (even though he says he is not speaking head for head) that the Christian Reformed Church as an institute is the false church. This, neither, can I endorse.

4. Then Mr. Kuiper speaks of the giving of our young people to the "enemy", and strengthening them in the "cause of that enemy". Is Mr. Kuiper still haranguing about the Christian Reformed Church? I assume so. Therefore, I only note that I consider the enemy to be those that hate Jesus Christ. And I would not be so bold as to tag that meaning on this denomination.

5. Mr. Kuiper concludes that the "reigning" of a "king and queen" in a high school is comparable to idolatry and blasphemy. Tut, tut, undoubtedly it's not academic. Assuredly, it's silly. But, blasphemy?

The only parallel in church history with which I can compare Mr. Kuiper's editorial is the case of the Marcourt placards written in 1534 by Antoine Marcourt. These placards outlined by this strong proponent of Calvin and his cause, were aimed at the abuses of the papal mass. However, their style was so abusive and their attack so biting, that Calvin himself was later to write:

> On the occasion of the placards, fury flared up so greatly against the faithful that our cause was made odious.[1]

Mary Beth Lubbers

[1]Cadier, Jean, *The Man God Mastered*, p. 60.

To the Editor-in-chief of *Beacon Lights*

Dear Sir:

In regard to the *Beacon Lights* of Feb. 1964 in the editorial written by Mr. H. Kuiper, entitled: "The Need for Protestant Reformed High Schools", I have many questions. I would like to ask Mr. Kuiper a few questions in regard to some of the statements made in his article.

I would like to ask Brother Kuiper first of all: what proof do you have for the statements you made in the editorial, that the group that maintains the Christian High Schools, in which there are many things we cannot condone, *does not know Christ?*

Secondly, what proof do you have that *they deny Him confessionally?* Mark you, your statement is not that in some respects they deny Christ by their confessions, but *confessionally they deny Him.* That statement means that in all their confessions they deny Him. Remember, Mr. Kuiper, that you are instructing the youth of God's Church in your *Beacon Lights* article. You must prove to them and also to me that this group has no confessions but the one that denies Christ. And that they are, therefore, worse than the Roman Catholic Church that still confesses some of the cardinal truths of Scripture: as the virgin birth, the divinity of Christ, the triune existence of God. Can you prove to our young people that this group confesses the anti-Christ, and denies the virgin birth and divinity of Christ? Do they deny the power of the cross? Do they deny the truth of free justification through the grace of God in Christ Jesus? Do they deny the power of His resurrection? Remember, Mr. H. Kuiper, that you wrote in your article that *they do not know Him, the Christ.*

And if that be true, why is it that our Churches accept the baptism performed in this group? And how can our Churches accept their confessions if they confessionally deny Him? And tell me, when our ministers pray also for other churches that are in the world, do they in their prayers exclude the Christian Reformed Church? And why then does our Synod still call them brethren if they do not know Christ?

And, Mr. Kuiper, why do you not write that we cannot condone anything in their schools? Do you not by your own statement, "of many", rather than "all", deny your charge that they do not know Christ confessionally?

Did you know (read Rev., chaps. 1-4) that churches who do hold to some heretical teachings are by Christ Himself confessed as knowing Him? And that Christ through John blessed them, Rev. 1:4-5a: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia, Grace be unto you, and peace, from him who is and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne and from Jesus Christ." This blessing is given to the Church throughout all the ages. Thus this blessing also includes the Christian Reformed Church of today, does it not? If so, Mr. Kuiper, then they know Him, and Christ knows them, then they know Him confessionally also.

Think it over and let me hear from you in the *Beacon Lights.* And by all means prove to the youth you are instructing that this group has no *confession but the one that denies Christ.*

Thys Feenstra
Redlands, California

## Reply to Mr. Thys Feenstra

Dear Mr. Feenstra,

Greetings in the Lord, brother. The editor forwarded to me for answer your letter concerning my editorial, *"The Need for Protestant Reformed High Schools"*, as it appeared in the February, 1964 issue of *Beacon Lights.* Your letter, in addition to setting forth various questions concerning a few of my statements in the editorial, evidences your clear understanding that the youth of the Church of Christ is being instructed *continually* and that we do well to remember that fact always; in this case, specifically, as they are readers of our periodical, the *Beacon Lights.* Therefore we are of one mind on *that* matter. I am happy for that, for it will undoubtedly serve (1) to underscore and emphasize, unmistakably, the main thrust of the whole editorial concerning which your questions arise, and (2) to help us to continue in that realization as these matters of your questions are discussed in the reading of our youth.

For the sake of the reader, brother Feenstra, let me at the outset agree with you in your identification of the "group" which maintains the existing "Christian" high schools and concerning whose confessions we

write, namely, the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church.

Concerning my words "confessionally they deny Him" you say that such means "in ALL their confessions they deny Him" (capitals mine, HWK). And by the way, since you appear to be warning me concerning what I wrote for our Protestant Reformed youth, and because you insist that proof be given for these things which I wrote, I take it for granted, brother Feenstra, that you *do not believe that this group confessionally denies Christ.* Thus I have given my stand on the matter, and you by your letter have evidenced yours. Now we know where we are.

In the abstract, brother, your difficulty is not with me, but with the structure of the English language. You notice that I do not say that all specific portions of their confessions, e.g., any one of the Three Forms of Unity, constitute *in themselves* a denial of the Christ. Of course not! Not *per se.* To do so would be to repudiate those things which we ourselves, as Protestant Reformed, cherish and have cherished and maintained through the years, *and through heresy and apostasy, too!* Further, you should understand that the adverb "confessionally" here means that I am not speaking about the *views* or *notions,* perhaps, of one or a group of individuals in their camp that have been expressed which most certainly deny the Christ of Scripture's God. One finds a lot of that too, of course, but such is not what is meant by the term used.

"Confessionally" here means that the group referred to has, *officially as an institute,* expressed in and as its *credo,* i.e. its confessions, doctrines which are contrary to the Word of God. And we do not need more proof for THAT, do we? And you do not believe, do you, that one or a group can tamper with the Word in some seemingly insignificant manner and not thereby affect THE CHRIST Himself, Who IS that Word? Thus it means that in or by their confessions, which are a single entire entity, they deny Him and it does not mean, does not say, nor even connote, that therefore each constituent part of that confession is, *per se,* a denial of Christ.

In that connection, I trust that you do not have to receive proof from me that the heresies adopted by the Christian Reformed in 1924 are indeed confessions which they have officially adopted and also *officially maintain* yet today. If so, especially for the very youthful readers who have an interest in this particular aspect of the matter and have not studied it before, consult, among other references (1) Rev. H. Hoeksema: *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America,* specifically those chapters which treat of the insistence of their classis and synod with respect to compliance and agreement with the Three Points, and (2) Prof. H. C. Hoeksema: *The Three Points Still Binding!,* "The Standard Bearer" Vol. XXXVIII, No. 18, pp. 414-415. Just a brief perusal of these two sources alone (and there are more!) will substantiate the statement that the heretical Three Points are an integral and inseparable part of their confession. The skeptical reader from the Christian Reformed camp need not accept the views of the two aforementioned authors, but may desire instead to glean the identical material essentially from the *Acts* of his own church, as it applies to this matter.

Presently I will return to your statement that my editorial states that in *all* their confessions they deny Christ. At this point, however, I will reflect on a few of the questions that bear directly on the question. Most of them you may take and submit for discussion in your Men's Society, etc., in view of the truth of my statements. Certainly it would prove to be edifying, but understandably it is impossible that they would all be covered in this answer to your main objection. And, too, in another sense, they *are all directly answered* in my concluding remarks.

Concerning our ministers praying for "other churches that are in the world", I can only say that I have never heard of that before, in just that way. I *have* heard that they pray for that whole CHURCH MILITANT as it exists over the length and breadth of the earth. With the latter, I agree; with the former, I do not agree. Unless you mean that the only possible prayer that should be and is uttered for "mother church" is that, if it please God, she be given grace to repent from the apostasy of her heretical paths. That there is a vast difference between the two is obvious.

Concerning the Roman Catholic Church, I would be extremely careful as to what esteem I give her, even that she confesses some of the cardinal truth of Scriptures.

And by the way, brother Feenstra, who said that the Christian Reformed Church was worse, but YOU? I certainly did not; rather, I affirm that they *both*, be it then in varying degrees perhaps, have given way to the lie, and that they *both* confessionally deny the Christ. But that distinction is yours, not mine.

Concerning your question as to why I did not write that we cannot condone *anything* in these schools, it ought to be evident that there may be nothing wrong, perhaps, with some of the courses which they decide to place in their curricula, that is, the scope of the subject matter of a given course in history, for example. My objection to complacently sending my child to their school is that they have (primarily) employed teachers that are in total agreement with the heresies of 1924 (and the inevitable attendant decay) and if possible I desire that my child be instructed by one who confesses the *truth of the Word*, and not man's distortion of it!

Concerning the reference to the churches in Asia, although Christ obviously had his elect in each place, and to that end *as yet* had the candlestick there, I am convinced that God through Christ *did not bless the efforts* of that church *that were based on those heresies.* So then He does not confess that a heretical confession knows Him, but rather confesses that His elect that are still in that sphere still may know Him . . . and they are called to come out!

No, brother Feenstra, I do not believe that the Lord blesses the Christian Reformed Church AS INSTITUTE any more! Use it? Yes, I believe that the candlestick may still be there for the sake of his lingering saints there, but the candlestick's witness is opposed to the witness of the confessions of the institute. I am convinced that God does not bless an institute that fosters God-dishonoring heresies.

Now concerning your interpretation that my statement means that in *all* their confessions they deny Him, I have said that grammatically this is not true, but now affirm that spiritually such is most certainly true. I affirm that though they allege to hold to the Three Forms of Unity (we do not call her the "false church", do we?), they, nonetheless, by their official addenda to these forms deny the Sovereign God of the Scriptures, they deny and do not proclaim the good tidings of Scripture's Christ, but rather a miserable synthetic "gospel". Thus when they apply *their* confession's concepts of God and His Christ to the Three Forms, they simply do not have the same Three Forms that we have, brother. With those addenda, they have thoroughly corrupted what it had pleased God to give as a heritage to our fathers, and their generations. And when they *maintain those heretical doctrines within their bosoms,* they AS INSTITUTE DENY THE CHRIST IN ALL THEIR CONFESSIONS AND THUS CANNOT KNOW HIM!

Mark you well, mention is made in the editorial that this is not a condemnation head for head, nor of individuals or groups of individuals within that camp. The editorial attacks, as you understood very well in your letter, the CONFESSION of the INSTITUTE. And it proceeded from the truth that as institute they had gone wayward, not only, but that in the process of time (and forty years has been ample time to demonstrate the truth of this affirmation) these doctrines have become increasingly so corrupt, that when its members walk according to that confession, it is virtually impossible to delineate between it and the world!

I repeat, I think it is high time that we have begun to move in the direction of our own high schools; I am thankful for it, because it is impossible for those who uphold heresies, ecclesiastically, to teach our children the TRUTH in school; and I have the assurance in my soul that we will experience His choicest blessings on our labors, as we labor in His strength, stedfastly and unashamedly defending our heritage against all its adversaries. I trust from the lack of comment on *these points* that you are in agreement with me.

I hope that this has explained to you my stand and the reasons for having written it for our youth as well.

Fraternally in the Lord,

H. W. Kuiper

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*A man's free-will cannot cure him even of the toothache, or of a sore finger; and yet he madly thinks it is in its power to cure his soul.*

TOPLADY

Standard Bearer

# FROM Dort TO TODAY

## the development of the reformed faith (9)

REV. HERMAN HANKO

### A TIME OF DECLINE (1619-1834)

The reader will recall that we were discussing the causes of the spiritual decline in the Churches of the Netherlands in the period between the Synod of Dordrecht and the Schism of 1834.

We had come to a discussion of the role that the State played in this decline.

The Netherlands Churches were not free from government interference as the Churches of America are today. The Reformed Church in Netherlands was rather a "State Church". The secular government had considerable to say in the affairs of the Church.

At the time of the Synod of Dordrecht and in the years following this Synod the State had a voice in the following matters. (It ought to be noticed that this voice which the State had in ecclesiastical matters was not always the same. A lot depended upon who was in power; how strong any given congregation, or classis, or synod was; how important the State considered a matter in which to interfere. Thus, at one time in this period the State exercised greater influence than at other times.)

1) The State had the right to approve all candidates for the ministry (or disapprove of) before they could be ordained into office.

2) The State had the right to approve of all ministers that were eligible for a call; and a minister could not accept a call elsewhere and move to a new location without the State's approval, or, at least, without notifying the State.

3) The State had the right to appoint two members who were not officebearers in the Church to attend all Consistory Meetings. These appointees had advisory vote and spoke for the government. The same was true of broader ecclesiastical assemblies. Always there were representatives of the State present. This was even true at Dordrecht in 1618.

4) No provincial (particular) or National Synods could meet without first securing approval from the State.

5) The financial support of the Churches, the salaries of ministers and the support of the schools came in whole or in part from the State. The financial support of the students studying for the ministry also came from the State.

6) No minister could be suspended and deposed from office without the State being notified; and, during certain periods, it seems as if the State could even overrule the decision of an ecclesiastical assembly.

But even with all this authority that the State wielded, it still was not satisfied. There were constant attempts made to increase it. In fact it is possible that this resentment on the part of the State towards what it considered its limited authority in the Church led the State to refuse to call a National Synod. For one of the astounding facts of this period is that for over two hundred years there was no National Synod. From the Synod of Dordt in 1618-1619 until shortly after the schism of 1834, the State would permit no National Synod to convene.

The result was that there was a constant tug of war between Church and State; the State trying its best to increase its authority,

and the Church trying its best to resist these tentacles of state control.

There was brief respite from this struggle in the latter part of the 1700s and in the early part of the 1800s when the Churches almost succeeded in gaining a complete separation between itself and the State. But when the Netherlands turned from a federation into a monarchy around 1810, the State once again secured its jurisdiction over the Church and brought the Church into closer union with the State than ever before.

In fact, the State all but took away from the Church the authority of its broader ecclesiastical assemblies by reorganizing the entire Church in a way that was totally different from the principles of the Church Order adopted at Dordrecht. The Churches were told that their ministers could gather in classical and synodical sessions not to discuss and decide upon ecclesiastical matters, but to "cultivate a fraternal spirit" amongst themselves. The classes that resisted this intrusion were disciplined; their decisions ignored; and the State ran roughshod over all that the Church stood for.

It is not difficult to imagine what a tremendous effect this had upon the development of the Churches during this period. A few of the more obvious results we can mention.

1) For one thing, at certain times in this period, a measure of religious tolerance was forced upon the land, so that the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans and even the Arminians were given the right of existence. Even though the Reformed Churches remained the "State Church" and received special privileges, these other groups were tolerated and allowed to engage in propaganda for their views. Although all these groups (and especially the Arminians) had been condemned by the Church not only, but also by the State, they were once again given a free hand in the country. And, because they were not the "State Church" they enjoyed a measure of freedom that was denied the Reformed Churches which had always to contend with a State poking into their affairs.

In fact, the State (towards the end of this period) even made several attempts to persuade the Reformed Churches to combine with the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans and the Arminians into one large denomination. The State pushed this matter strongly.

2) Secondly, the fact that the State had to approve of the meetings of Particular and National Synods gave the State some measure of control over these bodies. In fact, as we already noticed, the State refused to call a National Synod for over 200 years. The result was that any unified action on the part of the whole Church was next to impossible. If the Churches as a whole wanted to act concertedly in such matters as discipline, missions, settlement of doctrinal disputes, the only way they could do this was through correspondence between the classes or the particular Synods. This was tedious, time-consuming and led to all kinds of misunderstandings between the various ecclesiastical gatherings. Oftentimes it was impossible to get anything resembling unanimity of opinion or even a majority vote on fundamental questions when all the particular Synods had to meet separately and only had contact with each other by way of correspondence. This is not difficult to see. It is like a Consistory trying to conduct all the affairs and business of a congregation without ever meeting together and only writing letters to each other.

3) Thirdly, the result of all this was that doctrinal questions went unresolved, ministers who taught heresy often went undisciplined, matters concerning the missionary calling of the Church and the theological schools went unattended. It was not long before the epitaph could be read over the Reformed Churches: "And there was no king in Israel; and every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

4) Finally, although the State never succeeded in actually taking away from the Church her key power especially as it applied to the suspension and deposition of unfaithful ministers, even here the State had considerable influence. If a minister was disciplined in one congregation, (and there was plenty occasion for it with every heresy running rampant) the State could see to it that he was given a position in another congregation where the people were more willing to tolerate his views. And if he could be given no position elsewhere, the State would often pay his salary until he died and make it possible for him to propagate his views in other ways. There were even times when the State overruled the deposition of ministers by their Consistories

*(Continued on page 16)*

# CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

## FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION

(continued)

Space did not permit an evaluation of the materials quoted in the March issue of the *Beacon Lights* concerning the general question of Federal Aid to Education, Yes or No. A few general observations were made concerning the question near the beginning and at the end of the article. In this article we shall briefly analyze a few of the salient arguments of Professor De Koster and of Dr. Edman as they each defend opposite points of view with respect to aid for education from the federal government.

Professor De Koster argues the point that tax exemption and tax support are principally the same. He uses this argument to prove the fact that essentially the Christian is receiving aid from the federal government in an indirect way. This to him seems to prove that because it is permissible to receive aid in this way, it is likewise correct to receive aid in the form of direct payment from the government to educational institutions. The continuation of Christian education is made possible this way, he argues, because Christian schools will eventually be priced out of education. This is essentially the argument of Dr. Snapper who is also a member of the Calvin College faculty.

By definition it would seem that tax exemption and tax support are fundamentally different. Tax support implies an outright payment of federal funds while tax exemption involves a legal process which frees one from paying certain taxes because of other mitigating circumstances. A tax exemption is a privilege accorded to any man with a legitimate claim while support from taxes must be paid upon other considerations. It would seem therefore that the payment of funds collected through the taxation of the populace would imply certain controls as to how these funds shall be used if they are to be paid directly to an educational institution. Now Mr. De Koster may say that there are no limiting clauses and use as support for his argumentation the generous support given housing projects, given students and faculty members but the hard fact remains that such limitation seems truly likely when considered in the light of the recent Supreme Court decisions respecting religious instruction and when considered in the perspective of the Wickard vs. Filburn decision of the Supreme Court in 1942 which states: "it is hardly a lack of due process for government to regulate that which it subsidizes." Stringent restrictions are placed on the use of funds paid to schools for the subsidation of the milk and school lunch programs. It would, therefore, seem most likely that such restrictions would ultimately, if not immediately, be placed upon the use of funds allocated for direct instructional and educational purposes. Respecting tax exemption let it be stated that there is no provision for exemptions because of tuition paid to a private school. Many attempts have been made to circumvent this restriction and many attempts have been made to effect legislation that would permit such exemption but until now they have not been successful.

Loans to students and grants to faculty members hardly fall in the same category as direct federal support to institutions for

curricular or instructional improvement. Most of these grants to faculty members are made through organizations which are most concerned with instruction in the sciences. The National Science Foundation has made stipends available to school personnel on the elementary and secondary level who are key personnel or are actively involved in the instruction of students in the areas of science and mathematics but these stipends in no way directly involve the institution which employs such personnel who are participating in these National Science Foundation programs. For the agency or institution which is sponsoring such a program and receives support from the government for the conduct of these programs there are other considerations.

"Payment for work well done" seems to be the weakest consideration that could be elicited to support a program emphasizing federal aid to education. It would hardly seem possible to hear one argue the necessity of federal aid to education on the grounds that Christian educational institutions do much for the American society. This criticism seems doubly justified when the question of federal aid is discussed by one who has his theological roots in a Calvinistic tradition and is a faculty member of a Reformed college. Implicit in my argument is the further assumption that the American state is not Christian. It should not be argued that because the American state is not Communistic that therefore it is Christian. Because there is a place, a God-ordained place, for the Christian and for the Reformed man in this democratic society does not imply that the work done by the Reformed educator is deserving of federal aid. The status quo of Christian education is not of such a nature that it deserves government aid along with other educational ventures into which the federal government presumes to stick its socialistic neck.

It is undoubtedly evident from my preceding remarks, that I am in more accord with the argument of Dr. Edman than I am with the argument of Professor De Koster. Theologically, Dr. Edman and I may have violent disagreements but on this score we can come to some unanimity of opinion.

"Money is not the answer to quality" is one of the resounding arguments of Dr. Edman. With this I can heartily agree. It should not be overlooked, however, that money, and enough of it, is of paramount importance in the carrying out of the school's instructional program. A staff of devoted teachers, interested in professional growth, is a real necessity and for them money to promote this professional growth is a necessity; but honor and status in the eyes of the world and a certain keeping up with the "Harvard boys" is hardly the calling of the Reformed educator.

Dr. Edman further argues that federal aid will lead to ultimate standardization. The strength of an institution is its distinctiveness. Each institution in the Christian community has a calling to develop the truth of God's Word and any infringement of this opportunity through the allocation of federal funds would be a deprecation and denial of the basis for instruction and a denial of one's faith.

Inevitable control of education by the civil state is one of the by-products of such a federal aid program. This, Dr. Edman also argues, and supports this argumentation by referring to the report: "The Effects of Federal Programs on Higher Education: a Study of Thirty-six Universities and Colleges."

> "The danger of federal control should not be dismissed as a myth designed simply to serve the interests of local and sectional forces. It is and will remain a continuing danger to the independence of academic institutions which must be guarded against more vigilantly as the role of federal government in higher education grows."

Implicit in the entire movement by educators for federal funds could be a certain movement away from the original responsibility for education. This responsibility did not rest with the state or the educator but with the parent. The consideration of covenant education as a responsibility of the parent has become passé in the thinking of many an individual and these will evidently sell the birthright for the proverbial mess of pottage.

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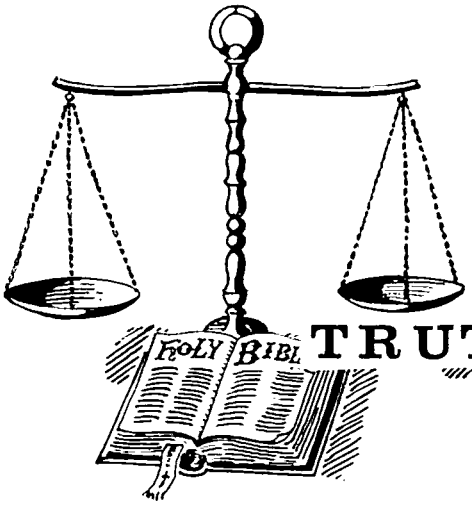
*A man with God is always in the majority.*
JOHN KNOX




# TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBERT G. HARBACH

## BILLY GRAHAM'S MINISTRY OF ERROR

It is the contention of the Fundamentalists that Billy Graham preaches the Gospel. "I think we must agree that Billy Graham preaches the simple Gospel of salvation."[1] However, although it is admitted that "he preaches the true Gospel," yet he does not identify and denounce "those who preach a false gospel," so that he "fails to get across the fact that the gospel which he preaches is the *only* true gospel."[2] In these words this writer regards Graham as a preacher of the gospel, but as one practicing unscriptural methods. Others agree with this critique, expressing that his *method* is not to be condoned "simply because the gospel is proclaimed and saving fruits accrue therefrom." These words appear in a pamphlet where Graham is not specifically mentioned, but where the reference more than likely includes him.[3] Further testimony along this line we find in this: "The statement is usually made that 'Billy preaches the Gospel.' And it is admitted that he can and does preach the Gospel, for he certainly knows what the Gospel is." But Fundamentalists "wonder whether he believes it himself" since he employs "liberalistic methods."[4] Then again, we read, "Let it be clearly understood that Dr. Graham in his campaigns preaches the Gospel. So far as I know his preaching does not partake of modernism . . ."[5] Once again: "People continually say that Billy preaches the Gospel. As I have stated, it is plain that he does not preach the whole Gospel — or anywhere near the whole Gospel."[6] Graham has not yet abandoned the gospel, but it is felt that he has "abandoned, completely abandoned the distinctive, glorious, intolerant *position* of the everlasting Gospel . . ."[7] (ital., RCH), whatever that is supposed to mean! How is it possible to abandon the *position* of the gospel, yet not abandon the *gospel?* The position of the gospel is a firm, eternal stand on the truth of God's Word. Then, if *that* is the position of the gospel, doesn't a man abandoning that position abandon his stand on the Word of God? And if he does that, doesn't he abandon the gospel? Another eminent critic of Graham confirms this, saying, "God's people are waking up to the fact that Billy Graham has abandoned the historic Protestant position."[8] His evangelism "is not the evangelism of the New Testament."[9] Some will go further, not only lamenting the fact that Graham cooperates with modernists, but it is implied that he is for doing so no true believer. "True believers will never join hands with the modernists of the twentieth century to do the work of God or to confuse the church of Jesus Christ."[10] Now when you sum up these appraisals, you will probably come up with something like this: 1. Billy preaches the gospel. 2. Billy is no believer. 3. Therefore, Billy is a Balaam.

The latter, you remember, was a false prophet who was compromised by the ene-

mies of Israel, but who nevertheless, as far as the record goes, preached nothing but the truth. Man is not sufficient of himself to even think anything of himself (2 Cor. 3:5), nor has he any power of himself to speak anything. The preparation of his heart and the answer of his tongue is from God's sovereign providential control and direction (Num. 22:38; Prov. 16:1). Then, it is possible that in the sovereignty of God, a false prophet preach the truth. Judas was such a false prophet (Mk. 3:14, 19; 6:7, 12, 30). So were Caiaphas (Jn. 11:49-52) and Saul (I Sam. 10:10). But there are other false prophets who are not Balaams, but Baalites. They speak nothing but lies. (I Kings 22:6, 23). In the providential execution of God's counsel Judas preached the gospel. In the providential control of God, Zedekiah of Chenaanah, an equally false prophet, did not. The false prophets were deceivers and deceived, and as such were ordained in the counsel of God and moved at His sovereign disposal to do His will (Job 12:16). Furthermore, it was the Lord who put a lying spirit in their mouths and so deceived them and their dupes in order to reveal the destructive, punitive power of His wrath (Ezek. 14:9). The will of God is the cause of it all (Lam. 3:37). But if it be asked, How shall we distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet?, Scripture has the answer. Read Deut. 13:1-5 and Matt. 7: 15-20. The false prophet, even when he speaks the truth, aims to turn you away from the Lord. He leads away from the narrow gate. We are, however, more concerned with the question, How may we know whether the gospel is being preached by a false prophet? Time will tell. Perhaps the company he keeps will be an indicator. Balaam had too close an association with the big-wigs of Moab. Judas eventually changed sides and stood with the enemies of Jesus (Jn. 18:5). Caiaphas always was allied with the enemy. Time will tell!

It is of interest to read that a prophet states, "I am convinced that there is a great hunger of mind and thirst of soul on the part of the average man for peace with God."[11] Now "the average man," "the man in the street," is that modern Pelagian who does not deny the existence of God, but presumes to live without God. He is the natural man, and such a man receives nothing of the things of God, he *does* not understand them (Rom. 3:11), nor *can* he understand them (I Cor. 2:14). Hunger and thirst for anything spiritual is the mark, not of the average (natural) man, but of the child of God (Mt. 5:6). The mere man in the street, the unregenerate, is wicked. He does not hunger for peace with God. Indeed, "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21; 48:22). Of him the Lord asks, "What hast *thou* to do with peace?" (II K. 9:19). Desire for peace with God is the mark of a Christian, not of the unconverted. "To be *spiritually* minded is peace" (Ro. 8:6), but they have only a carnal mind, which is *not* subject to the law of God, nor can be. "The way of peace have they not known" (3:17), nor have they ever sought it (3:11).

Then the prophet claims, "I have tried to avoid those controversial subjects that have so often divided great segments of the Christian church from each other." Then he adds, "but, on the other hand, I have not bargained, parleyed or compromised my concept of the Christian faith."[12] This stand will not measure up to that of another, truly great prophet of unimpeachable integrity, Dr. J. Gresham Machen, who said, "The type of religion which . . . shrinks from controversial matters will never stand amid the shocks of life . . . The really important things are things about which men will fight."[13] To boast, "I have not compromised my concept of the Christian faith" is to say nothing. For it is not the same as saying, I have not compromised the Christian faith. The Christian faith and a man's concept of that faith, are by no means necessarily identical. We may agree with Graham that he has not compromised *his* concept of the faith. But he does not claim that he has not compromised the Christian faith. Of late, he would have quite a time sustaining such a claim. The whole world is asking, With whom has he *not* compromised?

Now there is clear evidence that Graham compromises and corrupts the gospel, and does so with his own concept and philosophy. For example, he says man has a "depraved and sinful nature" (p. 20), but is not *totally* depraved, since man can "turn to Him and accept the blessings of safety and peace . . ." (22). Graham informs us that he is eternally indebted to his mother for teaching him the Westminster catechism. But certainly he has departed from the truth

embraced there, namely, that man suffers "the corruption of his *whole* nature" and is "*utterly* indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and *wholly* inclined to all evil, and that continually."[14] This is the pure, uncompromised uncorrupted truth. The same cannot be said for the concepts of Graham.

What is his concept of such a fundamental as faith? He conceives of faith as originating with man, as depending upon man to produce it, exercise it and maintain it. Man comes to faith because he *chooses* faith (p. 123). He assumes that man has faith; it is something inherent in the natural man, but he does not know where to put it. To "the man in the street" he says, "all your life you have been . . . waiting for someone to explain God to you before you can put your faith in Him . . ." (p. 34). Do men, or some lost men, wait all their lives to have God explained to them? as though that were the one great longing of their lives? Scripture is abundantly plain on who really wait for God. The *natural* man soon forgets His works and *waits not* for His counsel (Ps. 106:13)! But it is insisted that the natural man has "that intellectual faith, that historical faith," and that if he will only put it in the right object, Christ, and with that kind of faith desire His salvation, then "upon the authority of God's Word you become a child of God" (p. 148). The greatest thing you "can do to please God is to believe Him" (p. 127). This is something you, the man in the street, the natural, unregenerate man, have the ability to do. "We do not know Christ through the five physical senses, but we know Him through the sixth sense that *God has given every man* – which is *the ability to believe*" (ital., RCH, p. 146). Faith, then, to Graham, is a native something, latent in man, and not, as Scripture has it, an exotic something, which he cannot have, "except it be given him from heaven" (Jn. 3:27). Man must also be basically good-hearted, for if he only had someone to explain God to him, he would put this "build-it-yourself" faith in God! But Scripture reminds, "*All* men have *not* faith" (II Thess. 3:2). Men do not have the power at all to believe, except it be given them from above (cf. Jn. 19:11 with Phil. 1:29). It is plain from Paul's word to the Philippians and to the Thessalonians that God does not give this grace to *all* men. "For unto *you* (according to the context: *you* "in Christ," in *you* whom He has *begun* a good work), unto *you* it is *given* to believe on Him. Yes, faith is a GIFT of God, not a gift like the stalks of grain left behind in Boaz's field, which one must *pick* and *choose* for himself, but a gift like the manna, sovereignly and freely bestowed from heaven, not upon all, but upon whomsoever He will (Rom. 9:18).

It is evident that Graham thinks of faith first in the *ordo salutis*. He puts man, and an act of man first in the scheme of salvation. "If we actually believe, then we will live" (p. 146), that is, "at that precise moment the Holy Spirit performs the miracle of the new birth" (p. 108). This is the erroneous teaching that faith precedes regeneration, whereas Scripture teaches that as many as believe (present tense) *were* born (past, passive) of God, i.e., sometime prior to their believing on and receiving of Christ (Jn. 1:12, 13). So being born again, born from above, born of the Spirit must be prior to, because necessary to, believing (3:3, 5, 6, 12). Further, he that believes (pres.) *has* passed (pf.) out of death into life (5:24). What Jesus said there is not that he who believes *thus* passes into life, that one must believe to get to life, but that the believing is the effect of having passed out of death into life. The spiritually dead *do not* believe (5:38), *will* not believe (Lk. 22:67), and *cannot* believe (Jn. 12:39). Therefore, the dead must be made alive, and be born again *of* (*out of*, signifying *origin*) incorruptible seed, *by* (*through*, signifying *mode*) the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever (I Pet. 1:23). What is meant here is not that faith and the ingrafted Word are first before the new birth, but that the new birth is first before either. It is the new creature which believes (II Cor. 5:17), and not the natural man in order to become a new creature. Faith comes out of *grace*, not out of nature (Acts 18:27).

When, then, we have a divine word like "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," we do not have a helpless invitation, but a word with effectual power, like "Let there be light!" or "Lazarus, come forth!" When God speaks this word in the heart (not merely in the ears) the *result intended* follows and another elect sinner believes to the saving of the soul (Ac. 16:

31: Heb. 10:39). This is solid Scripture. Grahamism is poison.

[1]Rev. Robt. Dunzweiler in "Billy Graham -- A Critique," Faith Theol. Sem., P.O. Box 7174, Elkins Park, Phila. 17, Pa., 10c, (p. 15).
[2]ibid., p. 37.
[3]"Cooperation in Evangelism," by John Murray, Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa., (p. 24).
[4]"A Ministry of Disobedience," Christian Beacon Press, Collingwood, N. J., 35c, (p. 20).
[5]ibid., pp. 29, 37.
[6]ibid., p. 68.
[7]ibid., p. 38.
[8]ibid., C. McIntire, (p. 53).
[9]ibid., p. 54.
[10]ibid., p. 40.
[11]"Peace with God," by Billy Graham, Doubleday, Garden City, N. Y., 1953.
[12]ibid., (preface).
[13]"Christianity and Liberalism," J. Gresham Machen, Macmillan, 1923, p. 1, 2.
[14]Westminster L.C., A. 25, S.C., A. 18.

*(Continued from page 10)*

even when such depositions had been approved by the Classis; and the State tried to force congregations to retain their ministers. All this made the discipline of false teachers intolerably difficult. And it was a means to encourage heresy to run rampant in the Churches.

The result was that by the time the schism came in 1834, the Church had become little more than a rubber stamp of the State.

*"Use what talent you possess. Many a woods would be silent if no birds sang except those that sing best."*

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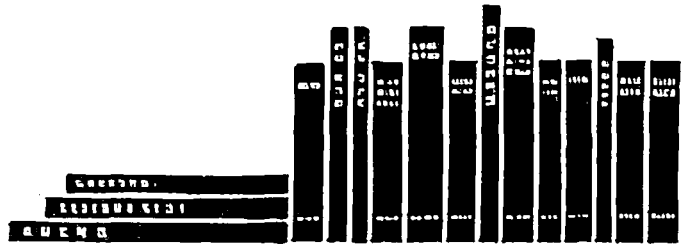
# BOOKS



## Behind the Wall

**ROBERT E. A. LEE, published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, $3.50 (169 pages). Reviewed by Mrs. Robert Decker**

The author, drawing upon his personal observations and experiences in Berlin, has created a novel depicting the life and problems of two young Germans. Werner Hirn, a publicist for a film company in Hamburg, Germany spends a months vacation in West Berlin. Out of curiosity he ventures behind the Berlin Wall to see the life of East Berliners. Here he meets Lise Lehman, an active Communist Party member, and becomes strongly attached to her. He realizes that her political and religious beliefs are diametrically opposed to his own. She has been trained in Communist doctrines her entire life. She lives in a fearful world of Party pledges and disciplines. This is a world in which one serves the Party in all things, a world in which one looses his own identity for the sake of the Communist Party. Werner Hirn cannot forget Lise or the evils of her Party. He risks his own life to attempt to deliver her out of this fearful world behind the wall. But is Lise ready to transfer to another world after she has known only the Communist world? Is she willing to give up serving the Communist Party and serve Werner's God?

Behind the deep soul struggles of these two young people is seen the subtle persecution, the psychological harassment suffered by an East German pastor and his congregation; the total allegiance of true Party members to the Communist Party and it's leaders; and the hardships suffered by those who do not want to surrender themselves to the standards of the Party.

Indeed, this book gives a vivid picture of the dismal life behind the Berlin Wall; a picture that makes the reader more thankful to our God for the freedom we enjoy here in America.

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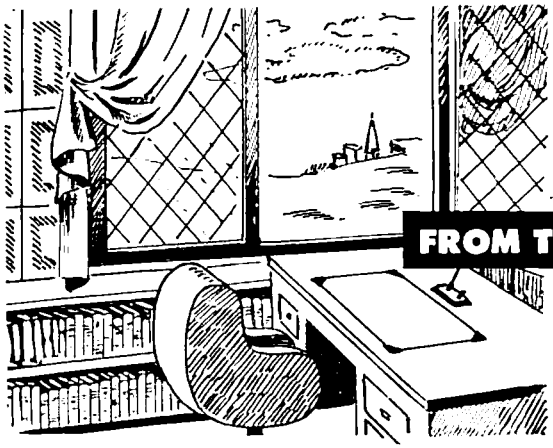
*A sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows keener with constant use.*



# FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

## YOUTHFUL STEWARDS OF GOD IN CHRIST

No so long ago a father learned that his beloved son had some pencils in his draw which did not belong to him. Upon questioning the youthful lad he was saddened to learn that these had been taken by him from the large super-market store. Now the amount stolen was very minimal. Inventory would hardly have indicated that there was something missing. But in the conscience of this lad there was something written — indelibly. He had played the part of a thief! In this case the father took the child back to the store, notwithstanding his crying and anguish, and had him hand the pencils to the manager of the store. The little lad apologized with tears and shame!

Now, do not condemn this father! He did not spare the rod; he corrected his son while there was hope and did not heed his crying. Prov. 19:18. There was another boy whose father did not correct him, nor did he instruct him in the great truth that God's people are redeemed from sin, also from the sin of stealing! This father evidently forgot the rod. But he had money to send him to college to obtain an education, to be versed in the humanities. But the fear of the LORD which is the beginning of wisdom was not taught him, and he was not instructed in the commandments of the Lord, as these are not an old commandment, but a new commandment because of the New Testament in Christ's blood! This boy was indeed educated as far as the world goes, but he had not been disciplined to shun the unfruitful works of darkness! He did not steal pencils merely; he stole more dear things such as electric razors, transistor radios, and the like. He did this in a small city with four to eight Reformed Church-towers pointing toward heaven and God. But church-towers fail where the first principles of the Word are not taught as the way of gratitude, the way of those who have been redeemed from sin and who must walk in the second part of the Covenant of grace!

It is ever a timely subject to preach on the eighth commandment of the Decalogue "Thou shalt not steal"! On a recent church bulletin we wrote the following observation, which we here pass on for what it is worth to you:

"Really we have an important and timely subject in this sermon. We will be talking about that bad word: *stealing*. It refers to what is done in *stealth* because those doing it sin, and, therefore, cannot do so openly. Then, too, they might be caught at it. And they nearly always are! May I ask you a few questions? I mean will you seriously try to find the answer in the *B-I-B-L-E*? These questions are:

a. Why do men steal? Is the reason outside of a man or inside of him? Do external conditions make a thief, or do a man's desire make him one. Don't confuse

occasion and cause!! Matt. 15:19.

b. Does the *B-I-B-L-E* teach that "cleptomania" is a sickness; that it is a sickness like a child having measles? Or is it perverted desires coming forth from a sinful, and depraved heart and from an evil and corrupt will in bondage, which does not desire to do the will of God? No, do not give the answer of modern psychologists and psychiatrists. These cannot and may not speak in the *forum* of God. Nor may they speak in the pulpit of the true prophets who speak the Word of God. The Bible teaches that Judas Iscariot was a thief; he was not "sick" but he was downright sinful. John 12:6. Thieves do not enter the Kingdom of heaven – unless converted to God! Then, they are no longer thieves, but honest men, stewards of God in Christ Jesus. Only such are honest men, truly sincere before the face of God, wholly separated from evil. I Cor. 6:10; I Peter 4:15.

c. Why is stealing rooted in covetousness? Covetousness is essentially idolatry. It is worshipping the god-Mammon, is it not? Where is your treasure? Matt. 6:19-24; Col. 3:5. Did it ever occur to you that *your* "free-enterprise" might be camouflaged idolatry?

d. Do we steal from God? His time, His honor, His glory? But do we get away with the loot?

e. Is "Communism" the same as love of Christ in our hearts which has learned to give to those who have need? Or is it still nothing but organized "greed" of fallen man? Stealing on a national and international scale?!"

When the great apostle Paul has admonished the church at Ephesus to walk as they have learned Christ, to put off the old man and to put on the new man, which is created after God in true righteousness, holiness and truth, he then begins to give a few particulars from the law of God. Among other exhortations he writes the following words, which we may well memorize and let them sink deep into our hearts. These words read,

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" Eph. 4:28.

Since we are Christians and you are Christian youth, born again in Christ, your new name is not that of thieves; it is that you are *stewards* in Christ Jesus. May I ask you to take your Bible (what nonsense to ask this question!!) and notice the following:

In the first place, that the Scriptures are rather replete with notices concerning the idea of stewardship both respecting this stewardship among men and as there is a stewardship which is ours toward God. Thus in Gen. 43:19 a steward is a "man who is set over" the affairs of another. In Gen. 44:4 such a steward is called one who is "over a house", while Abraham calls the old Eliezar a steward, that is, a "son of acquisition", while Solomon's princes over his affairs are denominated stewards, since they too have been set over the king's affairs in his house and extended kingdom. In the New Testament Scriptures a steward is called one "to whom a thing is committed" (Matt. 20:8; Luke 8:3) and also a steward is one who is a "house manager" for another (Luke 16:2-4). And Paul speaks of the ministers of Christ as being stewards of the mysteries of God.

In the second place, notice that there are four elements which are noteworthy, and ought to be carefully observed in our life. The first of these realities is, that no steward is ever a steward by his own private self-appointment. A man is appointed steward by another. Thus it is ever among men. Thus it was with Joseph in the house of Potiphar, and with Eliezar in the house of Abraham. And, again, thus it was with the steward in the parable of Christ in Luke 16:1 f. f. And, we may add, that thus it was with the stewardship of Adam in the first Paradise, prior to the Fall! God said to him "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the face of the earth." Gen. 1:28. The second element in all stewardship is, that it is required and sought in a steward to be found faithful. I Cor. 4:2. The third element is, that a steward must never act the part of owner, but must give account of his stewardship, and work solely for the interest from whom he has received his stewardship. And, lastly, let it be observed, that if a steward is unfaithful he can be removed

from his stewardship. It is taken from him and given to another who *is* worthy.

In the third place, we should notice that natural man no longer is a steward, but is a thief. The whole world lies in darkness. Man was driven from the earthly Paradise of God. He was removed from his stewardship. That Adam remained steward is only because now he is steward in hope in Christ. He subdues all things under him. He fulfills the so-called "Common Mandate" and in Him we see that it is a very special Mandate which was given to Adam as image-bearer, and which now we have again as image-bearers of God in Christ, as sons of the living God.

See your calling, young people! You are stewards of God, having been brought forth by the word of truth. Now you are some first-fruits of the creation of God. James 1:18. Although this is not limited to your life in the church-institute it also includes such callings as ministers, elders, deacons, teachers, fathers, mothers.

Pray that you be as faithful in this your office and calling here as are the angels in heaven in theirs!

*"Sin may be clasped so close that we can not see its face."*

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## HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE Book of GENESIS

**Genesis 22-23**

REV. G. LUBBERS

*ABRAHAM'S FAITH GIVEN THE ULTIMATE TEST.* Gen. 22:1-19

1. *The Command of God That Abraham Sacrifice Isaac*
   a. The command *as such*. Vs. 2
      1—It was a command! Obedience was the order of the day; the obedience of faith. The God of glory spoke. Acts 7:2
      2—At the same time it was God Almighty, the sovereign God, with whom nothing is impossible except do evil. Before Him Abraham was to walk with a sincere heart. Gen. 17:1; Exodus 6:2, 3.
   b. The *difficulty* of this command.
      1—He was an only son by the free-woman, Sarah. Gal. 4:26
      2—He was a son; a natural born son, flesh and blood ties! The Lord says: sacrifice to men this son "whom thou lovest".
   c. The *impossibility* of this command.
      1—He is the son of promise. Gen. 21:12
      2—Would appear entire contrary to God's own design of salvation as indicated in God's former dealing with Abraham up till this point. For "in Isaac shall the Seed be called". Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7; Hebrews 11:18
2. *The Faith of Abraham Tried.* Gen. 22:1-3
   a. Such was the *design* of God. See Gen. 22:1
      1—He put Abraham's *faith* to the test. He "tempted" him, tested him by making the way of obedience exceedingly difficult.
         a—The term "tempt" is the translation of the Hebrew verb *"nasah,"* in the verb form which indicates intensive action: to try, to prove anyone. The K.J.V. translates this verb some twenty (20) times: *to prove;* some twelve (12) times: *to tempt* and one (1) time: *to try.* We find some illustrative instances of *to tempt* in Ex. 17:2, 7; Num. 14:22; Deut. 6:16; Ps. 78:18, 41, 56. In the N.T. see Matt. 4:7; Luke 10:25; I Cor. 10:9.
         b—No doubt the translation *to prove* is a better one. Why? See Ex. 15:25; 16:4; 20:20; Deut. 8:2, 16; 13:3; 33:8; Judg.

2:22; Ps. 26:2. In the N.T. see II Cor. 8:8, 22. In the latter passage the thought is akin to *trial.* I Peter 1:7. It means that the approved character, the genuineness of Abraham's faith must *be manifested!*

2—This *design* is ever present and intended in all the trials of God's children in their afflictions, their difficult way of faith and obedience. See Rom. 5:3-5; Rom. 8:28; Hebrews 12:4-13; James 1:2-4; I Peter 1:6, 7; Rev. 6:9-11.

b. Abraham's faith rises to its *perfection* and *fulness.* See James 2:22. His faith is made perfect.

1—Notice the following facts:

a—The three days journey. Time to reflect, to be tempted by Satan to unbelief.

b—The question of Isaac concerning the absence of a sacrificial lamb. Vs. 7

c—Abraham has all that is necessary for the sacrifice, and must deliberately do this.

2—Abraham brings a *burnt-offering.* There is a difference between a *burnt*-offering and a *peace-* and *sin*-offering.

a—A sin-offering and a trespass offering were compulsory, and are *propitiatory* in nature.

b—A burnt-offering was *voluntary,* and expressed homage, *self-dedication* and *thanksgiving.*

c—Hence, Abraham's faith must be purely an act of obedience, new obedience of one who is justified by faith and who is inwardly renewed by God's Spirit. It must be a living faith revealing itself in works of thankfulness.

3—Abraham, in his mind, *actually sacrifices* his son, Isaac. Hebrews 11:19b.

a—Borne out by the account of Moses here in Gen. 22:10-12. This was no mere pretense. The deed was accomplished as far as Abraham was concerned. Abraham did not in his deepest heart or very act "withhold" his only son from God.

b—Abraham did some "accounting". He *reasoned* believingly. He placed the horrible reality of a dead son over against the omnipotent God, and he came out on the credit side of the ledger. God is *able* to raise from the dead. Hebrews 11:19. God *Almighty* had given this son from the dead once. Rom. 4: 18-21. He is still Almighty; nothing is impossible with Him. In Isaac the Seed shall be called. The way in Christ is *dying to live;* he that loseth his life shall find it. John 10:1-19. Isaac will then needs be brought forth from the dead the second time. God shall lose none, but raise them up in the last day!

c—And thus Abraham's faith was tried—and fully revealed in all its *potentiality* in this sacrifice, a thankoffering! He is tried; his faith is not found wanting. It is a gift of God, this faith. It is *perfected!* For the idea of perfection see: Luke 13:32; John 17:23; II Cor. 12:9; Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 11:40; 12:23; I John 4: 17, 18.

d—It is expressedly stated in James 2:22 that Abraham's faith "wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. Is this teaching of faith and works repugnant to the teaching of Paul in Rom. 4:1-7 where he quotes Gen. 15:6?

3. *The Faith of Abraham Proto-Type of the Faith of All Believers.*

a. Principally it is a picture of a "friend of God", and a picture of the love of God which He manifested in the sending of His Son to die for our sins on the Cross!

1—For the term "friend of God" see Isaiah 41:8; II Chron. 20:7 and James 2:23. Notice its far-reaching implications.

2—The love-life of God, energizing this faith (Gal. 5:6) is clearly and unmistakably set forth in this sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham!

b. And to such an "heir" is the promise. Here we see from "faith unto faith,"

(Rom. 1:17) for he, who possesses, shall receive more. Hence:

1—God speaks *twice* to Abraham

a—To stay his hand at the sacrifice Gen. 22:10 ff.

b—To swear by Himself to make the promise sure to all the heirs by two immutable things. Gen. 22:15-18; Heb. 6:20. What were these two immutable things?

2—And this promise stands in Christ, in whom all God's promises are yea and Amen to the glory of God the Father. II Cor. 1:20. In Isaac shall indeed the Seed be *called!*

*HOPEFUL PERSPECTIVES FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE PROMISE IN ISAAC IS CALLED TO ABRAHAM'S ATTENTION.* Gen. 22:20-24

1. *Abraham's Concern Is Here Suggested As Presupposed for Isaac's Future.* Vs. 20

a. For the record of the family-tree of Terah read Gen. 11:27-32. Notice that Terah had three sons: Haran, Nahor and Abram. Notice further that Milcah was a daughter of Haran and became the wife of Nahor. The entire clan or family moved from Ur of the Chaldees to Mesopotamia. See Gen. 11:31. Be sure to confer your Bible map. Read also Stephen's address. Acts 7:2, 3.

b. For a proper evaluation of Abraham's concern *review* such passages as Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 13:14-18; Gen. 15:1-21; Gen. 17:1-7; Gen. 18:9-15; Gen. 21:1-12. All these passages speak of the sundry and diverse promises of God to Abraham!

c. This had all been brought to a focus-point in the sacrificing of Isaac. Gen. 22:20-24.

2. *The Family-Tree Here Given.*

a. Remember that about 100 years had elapsed since Abraham had been in Haran en route from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan, the land of Promise. Much had happened.

b. The line in question here is: Nahor (Milcah) Kemuel, Bethuel and then Rebekah—Isaac's future wife.

3. *The Relationship to the "Holy Line."*

a. It is not given here in the Bible to satisfy mere human curiosity concerning Abraham's relatives, an excerpt from a personal message delivered to one of Abraham's servants, and passed on as general information!

b. It is *sacred record* of how Rebekah became a mother in Israel, and how presently she will come to dwell in Sarah's tent, where believing mother's are saved in child-bearing, placing their confidence upon the "Seed" to come.

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# NEWS ·· from, for, and about our churches

LOIS E. KREGEL

## Radio News

It is indeed good news regarding the radio ministry of our Protestant Reformed Churches that we report this month. The Radio Committee of our Reformed Witness Hour has informed us that two new "stations" have been added to the list of the outlets broadcasting our distinctively Reformed radio program each Lord's Day. Although these new stations have no official call letters, no professional engineers, no elaborate equipment with which to broadcast these programs, still the listeners who hear the programs over these two "stations" enjoy and are extremely grateful for the privilege of hearing the truth of God's Word each week. The tapes are "aired" by means of two battery operated transistor recorders, which were donated to the members of the churches in Jamaica by a member of First

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

**Make it a date and attend the**
**24th ANNUAL CONVENTION**
**to be held at HOPE CHURCH**
**AUGUST 25, 26, and 27**

Church and by a family from the congregation in Hudsonville. The Revs. Elliott and Frame, pastors of two of the churches in Jamaica, report that the programs come through loud and clear, and that their congregations enjoy the true preaching of the Word as emphasized on all our programs; they also enjoy singing along with the Radio Choir the Psalms so dearly cherished by our Protestant Reformed Churches.

### Trios and Calls

Our congregation at Lynden has extended a call to Rev. J. Heys.

Rev. G. Lubbers has accepted the call to Southwest.

First Church has extended a call to Rev. B. Woudenberg to be Missionary.

### Wedding Bells

rang on March 13 for Robert Van Dyke and Henrietta Mae Kuiper (Hope).

### Called Home

Mrs. C. Van Putten (First) at the age of 60 years.

### New Infant Members

A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Kuiper (South Holland)

A daughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Jim De Boer (Hull)

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Kooiker (Hull)

A son, born to Mr. and Mrs. G. Schimmel (Hope)

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

### Congratulations

to Mr. and Mrs. Jake Vanden Top (Doon) who celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on March 10.

### Membership Changes

Mr. John Velthouse transferred his membership to Southeast from First Church.

### In General

The Committee for Publication of Protestant Reformed Literature is conducting a drive in all our churches for the six thousand dollars needed to begin its first project, the printing of Rev. H. Hoeksema's Dogmatics.

Many of the Young People's Societies are currently discussing "Youth and Holiness" in preparation for the convention with that theme which is to take place this summer in Hope Church.

Special music was provided by Arnold Dykstra and the Hope Quartet at the Easter Singspiration in First Church on March 29. Mr. C. Jonker led the singing and did much to make the songs more meaningful by a brief comment and scripture reference before each one.

Doon's Young People's Society sponsored an Easter Singspiration on March 29 in Doon Church.

"Protestant Reformed Education, the Calling" was the subject of Rev. David Engelsma's lecture in Doon on March 17. The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School Society sponsored this lecture, and the churches of Hull, Doon, and Edgerton were invited.

Rev. H. Veldman was to lecture in South Holland on April 6 on "Church Mergers, a Sign of the Times."

Historic note: Classis West met in Edgerton during the week of March 15 — the first meeting of Classis held in our own church building there since it was taken away in 1953.

Barbara Zandstra made confession of faith in South Holland Church on March 29.

Eastern Ladies' League is to meet on April 23 in Hope Church.

Coming events at Hope School include a Choir Festival, sponsored by the Mothers Circle on May 8; commencement on June 5; and a school picnic on June 3.

Rev. C. Hanko has been asked by the Men's Society of Oaklawn Church to lecture there on April 30.