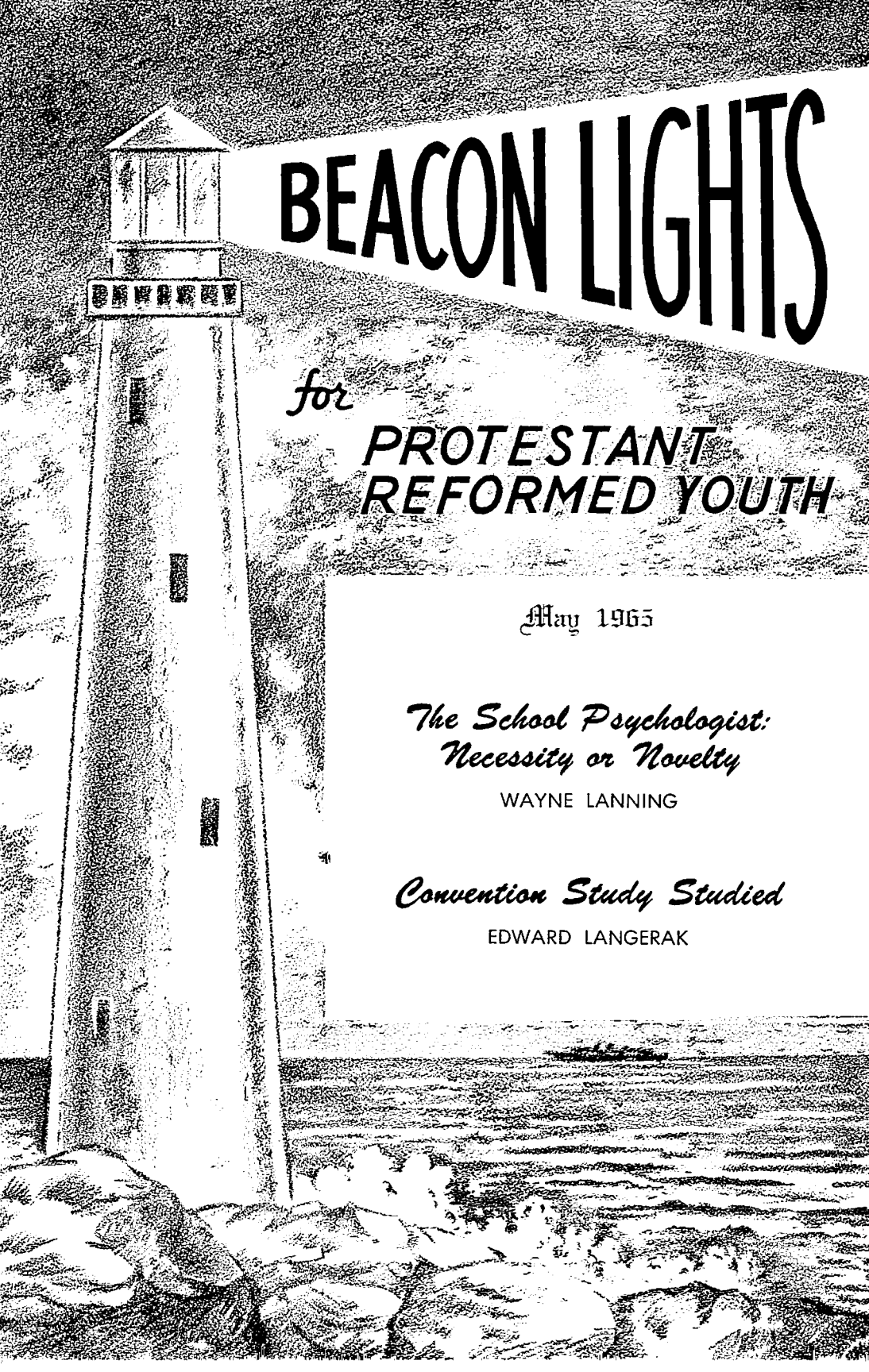


BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

May 1965

The School Psychologist: Necessity or Novelty

WAYNE LANNING

Convention Study Studied

EDWARD LANGERAK

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XXV MAY 1965 NUMBER 3

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Ed Langerak ..... President
John Kalsbeek ..... Vice President
Lois Schipper ..... Secretary
Jim Huizinga ..... Treasurer
Clare Kuiper ..... Asst. Treasurer
Ruth Kuiper ..... Librarian

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

STAFF:
Ruth Kuiper ..... Clerk
Carol VanPutten ..... Asst. Clerk
Lois Schipper ..... Asst. to Man. Ed.

Ed Langerak, Mary Pastoor, Tim Pipe, Sharon Prince ..... Public Relations Staff

Patricia Kamps, Louise Looyenga ..... Subscription Managers

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Rev. Robert Harbach ..... Truth vs. Error
Agatha Lubbers, Hilda Grace Meelker ..... Critique
Karlene Oomkes ..... 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 PAT KAMPS
2386 O'Brien Rd., S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

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
THAT "ONE MAN DENOMINATION" CHARGE
Henry W. Kuiper

FEATURE 2
THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST: NECESSITY OR NOVELTY
Wayne Lanning

CRITIQUE 4
PEACE ON EARTH?
Hilda Grace Meelker

CONVENTION STUDY STUDIED 6
Edward Langerak

TRUTH VS. ERROR 11
5. THOUGHTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION
Rev. Robert C. Harbach

FROM DORT TO TODAY 14
THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
Rev. Herman Hanko

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY 16
SPRING-TIME
Rev. G. Lubbers

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY 18
GENESIS 37-38
Rev. G. Lubbers

NEWS — FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES 20
Karlene Oomkes

Editorial

THAT "ONE-MAN DENOMINATION" CHARGE

We have heard the above charge hurled against the Protestant Reformed Churches in America so often that perhaps we ought to take a second look at it. We have no right, of course, to disregard all that is said contrary to our convictions without providing basic refutation to the allegations that are lodged against us. This, however, is a far cry from affirming that the charges which are so often heaped upon the Church of God are themselves worthy of an answer. Such are often encountered when those that oppose you in any given variance discover that it is virtually impossible to do so upon a sound basis, and therefore resort instead to waging an attack on your person or on a view which they at once identify as being yours, but erroneously so. Obviously, in such a case we might consider that the charge warrants no answer, because of the evident ill-motivation. As a general rule, however, it is well to "consider and refute", and in all instances where possible, as we affirmed in our March editorial according to I Peter 3:15, "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

We notice that the charge here is not against any doctrine. That is rather important. Its specific doctrines characterize the church denomination. They are its distinguishing banners. That is why it is so fundamentally important for you as youth to *know* Protestant Reformed doctrine; the point being that if you are to confess the doctrine, it is obviously pivotal that you know and understand that which you confess. That for two important reasons: 1) Your confession virtually ceases to be a confession in the instance in which you are ignorant of its contents, that is, as far as its being a living confession is concerned, and 2) You are called upon in life to defend that confession which you believe and affirm that the Lord has committed unto you, and it goes without saying that we cannot defend those things of which he has little or no knowledge. In that connection, is it your desire and purpose to study and learn our doctrines so that you may become firm and unshakable in them in the days of tribulation that lie ahead? But the fact is that here, that is, contained in the above charge is no attack on the doctrine. Not directly that is.

What have we then? Do we see the evidence, in this charge, of a pained and unrelenting conscience that will allow no forgetting of a banished band, who under a leadership provided by God continues stedfastly in the line of the Calvin Reformation, as thoroughly substantiated doctrines, because they are supported by the infallible Word of God itself? You know. That tiny, narrow-minded church that was given an Ophoff and a Hoeksema for its leadership, among others. We profess that these men were given and equipped by God Himself for the work which He had set before them within the sphere of the Protestant Reformed church. Such is certainly evident, also, in that which they were given to perform in that sphere. Is the charge brought forth, then, because of their inability to single out a doctrinal flaw according to the Word, by suggesting that we all blindly follow the "say so" of one man?

We ought to have an answer to that questionable charge. And it ought to be a good one. We *have* an answer, Protestant Reformed youth! And it is a good one. Our characterization of our answer in that way is not the epitome of conceit. Rather, it is a humble confession. The reason for that is: God Himself gave us the answer.

A one-man church? Indeed! We will give different content to the charge as it is according to truth . . . and then let the charge stand! It is a fact that our doctrines embrace that one Man among men, as He is revealed unto us in the Scriptures, the Son of the Living God. In those doctrines is nurtured an unqualified assent to whatever He declares. That one Man is the Christ, Who, having come to do the will of His Father and accomplished it *all,* is now exalted at the right hand of God. He is that Son of God who came to gather all the sheep that Father gave Him, and effectually

He gathers them. everyone! That is who He is. He is not the beggar of varying hues, who is so loudly heralded by so many other churches today. He is not the "loves all–hates none" man who is palmed off as being the Son of God. He is not the helpless "almighty" that is frustrated by the freewill of mighty carnal man. He is rather the efficacious one. The one in whose hands the keys of the Kingdom eternally rest.

THAT Man has the pre-eminence!

No, we are not super-Reformed. Neither are we hyper-Calvinists. Rather, we believe that the concept of the Sovereignty of God is an attribute which permeates His entire being, so that His justice shines forth as He, without consulting the puny minds of men, sends the Savior Who also bears the sword!

THAT Man we love. He is the very Son of God who redeems the elect Church. And alone by the grace of God do we have the assurance that we are and forever shall remain living members of that glorious body.

That is our answer to such a charge.

H.W.K.

FEATURE

THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST: NECESSITY OR NOVELTY

by WAYNE LANNING

The following article is a condensation of a speech given to the Mother's Circle for Protestant Reformed Secondary Education, a few months ago. I have been asked to write this as another in a series of the speeches being printed by the "Beacon Lights". The general topic of the speech dealt with the role of a school psychologist or counselor in the elementary and secondary schools of today and what role he could play in our Christian schools.

A discussion of psychology must of necessity begin with the distinction between psychiatry and psychology, or with the difference between a psychiatrist and a psychologist. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who has specialized. In the same way that a podiatrist is a medical doctor who has specialized in the treatment of feet or a pediatrician, a doctor specializing in treatment of children, so the psychiatrist is a medical doctor who has specialized in the treatment of mental problems. They have very little formal training and acquire their abilities "on the job". They are trained in classical analysis during the three years that they are serving their internship. Classical analysis was, as you may or may not know, initially set forth by Sigmund Freud. The psychiatrist was the one to give psychology its bad name due to the claims and assumptions they made for their "theory". They have explanations for all behavior which tended to frighten people because they had the unfounded feeling that the psychiatrist was able to "see into their soul". I guess everyone realizes how wretched they really are and become extremely threatened by the prospect of someone seeing through and behind their facade. In any case, psychiatry was and still is the object of many vicious jokes and stories. This results in a loss of the realization that they do have a value in addition to their shortcomings. The primary value is the prescription writing. Because they are licensed medical doctors they have the power to prescribe drugs which can often clear up symptoms immediately. Enough of the psychiatrist.

The psychologist is quite different from the psychiatrist. He attempts to look at the student more objectively than the psychiatrist. Any opinions or conclusions that he may form are based on objectively standardized and scored tests. In the same way that an arithmetic teacher knows that the student does not know arithmetic when on his test he says that 2 + 2 is 5, a psychologist can know *why* that child will never be able to learn arithmetic. On the basis of tests that were constructed in the same way

as the arithmetic test he is able to draw valid conclusions about the students.

The above refers to a particular type of psychologist. There are many different types of psychologists including consulting, clinical, experimental and counseling. Here we are concerned with the latter because it is the counseling psychologist that most frequently is found in the school situation. The school psychologist is a very special type of person in the school situation. He is a professional educator specializing in psychology just as the principal is a professional educator specializing in administration or the teacher a professional specializing in teaching. He is specifically concerned with the educational process of the students. When something blocks or hinders that process he is trained to assist in its restoration.

This brings us to the question of what a psychologist does specifically. As mentioned above, he gives many tests. With any individual student he may give ability tests, which tell simply what a student is interested in, intelligence tests, which will give the range of a person's potential, and personality tests. I feel compelled to elaborate more on the last one than the others because of the eyebrows it raises. A personality test reveals to the trained tester how a person acts and reacts in a controlled situation and from the results can project how he will act and react in a general situation. If a child is very passive and gives up easily when faced with a task in a controlled situation then one can draw reasonably accurate conclusions that he reacts to his school tasks in the same way. If this was cleared up he would be better able to fulfill the function of school attendance, namely, learning.

Now that the counselor has given these tests and has the results, what does he do with them? Tests are never given for the sake of results alone. They must be used to serve some useful purpose. On the basis of these results the psychologist counsels. Counseling can be divided into three basic types. First is vocational counseling. This is done to help the student get his goals and his abilities to coincide. Many students, especially in junior and senior high, have very unrealistic ideas of what they would like to do in life. It is not necessary to make specific choices but general fields or areas can and should be decided. This type of counseling can prevent people from attempting the impossible. Too often students' goals and their abilities are too far apart to ever meet.

Academic counseling is closely connected with vocational counseling. This involves the scheduling of courses and perhaps the extra curricular activities. If a person has limited abilities he should be taking only four subjects instead of five or six. With fewer subjects he will learn more than if he just skimmed a large number.

The third type of counseling may be termed personal-social counseling. This only means that there are certain personal problems that affect the student's ability to function up to his capacity at school, and that when these personal problems are cleared up so are his academic problems. As long as the parents hire the teachers to educate their children they must also give them the power to alleviate anything that stands in the way of that education. This does not mean that the psychologist is delving into the inner recesses of the person's mind or soul. He is only concerned with the immediate cause of the breakdown of educational functioning and in repairing the break as rapidly as possible.

The final question to be considered is rather obvious. It involves the advantages to be gained from having a psychologist in our Christian schools. The most obvious advantage is that local norms could be developed that would provide an objective standard of achievement for students at any particular grade level in all of the schools. The s t u d e n t s in the Christian schools are not "average" but above average and should therefore be expected to function and perform at a better than average level. Just what the new "average" for our students is, is not known because there has never been a centrally organized testing program established.

The other advantages are less general but just as important. If a psychologist can aid in improving the educational process of the student surely the advantage of that is self evident. Truly Christian education for our students obviously means that we must do everything in our power to see that each student is enabled to work up to his potential and capacity. A Christian School Psychologist can certainly play an important part in that work.

CRITIQUE

by HILDA GRACE MEELKER

PEACE ON EARTH?

"If the atom bomb should fall tomorrow on the world, it will be because you quarreled with your neighbor today."

The foregoing quotation was made by the Reverend Father Dominique Georges Pire, a Belgian priest, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1958, and who has since founded The Heart Open to the World, a nondenominational organization dedicated to teaching young people of all nations how to live together in peace.

The article in which Pire's quotation is found is in the January 1965 issue of one of our nations leading magazines. Along with Pire, the author of the article approached four other of the world's, so called, most distinguished and knowledgeable spokesmen for peace – all winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, which honors those who, according to the broad specifications for the award, "have done the most or best to promote brotherhood among nations . . ."

They are Sir Norman Angell, author and journalist, who received the prize in 1933; Lord John Boyd Orr, internationally known nutritionist and agricultural scientist who was the first head of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, the prize winner in 1949; the Reverend Pire; Philip Noel-Baker, educator and former high official of the British Government, who was the winner of the prize in 1959; and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the latest recipient of the prize.

The Nobel Peace Prize winners were asked several questions on the subject of peace. Paraphrased in brief below, are some of their answers.

On what do you pin your hopes for world peace?

Father Pire:

There is a hope for peace in the future because there is the existence of certain qualities that I have encountered all over the world. One of these qualities is goodness. Despite the fact that we live in a harsh world, I dare to affirm that man is fundamentally good. And all men have wishes which are in common. One of these wishes is their 'yearning for peace. Peace will not come until after tomorrow. But we must struggle for peace today.

Angell:

Peace can be achieved only when rival political doctrines are marked by toleration. We are beginning to realize that we cannot survive a third world war. Nations must learn to live at peace with one another and then and only then can we hope for peace.

Orr:

My hopes for peace are based mainly on three things. First is the rapidly increasing number of those in international organizations working for world unity and peace. Secondly there is the growth of international trade which shows that agreements can be reached among nations. My third basis for hope lies in the rapid increase of tourism. People are finding that foreigners, who are bad, really are instead people like themselves with the same wishes and fears.

Noel-Baker:

What makes me most optimistic is the preamble to the test ban treaty and the speeches of the late President Kennedy and former Premier Khrushchev made about it.

Dr. King:

The greatest hope for world peace today may well be the realization on the part of people all over the world and the leaders of the nations of the world that war is futile. In short, there must be a peaceful coexistence or there will be coannihilation.

What evidence is there to show that religion has ever been or in the future could be effective in promoting peace and good will among men?

Dr. King:

All the great religions of the world have always sought to promote peace and good will among men. In their ethical systems love is always the center. The central message has always been peace and good will among men. But sad it is, that too many adherents of a particular faith have only creeds for religion and follow not this pattern for a walk of life.

If brotherhood is to become a reality, religion must somehow get into the thick of the battle and influence the minds of men and women to be true to their ethical insights. But I am sure that if the religions of the world are to bring about peace they must rise to the level of not fighting among themselves. There is a need for individual religions to realize that God has revealed Himself through all religions and that there is some truth in all. And no religion should permit itself to be so arrogant that it fails to see that God has not left Himself without a witness, even though it may be in another religion.

Noel-Baker:

The influence of the late Pope John, of Pope Paul, and of the Protestant leaders shows how important it is in bringing nations to accept the ideas and policies on which peace depends.

And further comments:

Angell:

There can be no permanent peace, no security against nuclear annihilation, save by the creation of a workable world government.

Boyd Orr:

If governments, instead of collaborating for war, would begin to collaborate in developing the vast potential wealth of the earth, mankind would enter a wonderful new age of economic prosperity and of peace and friendship between nations.

And finally again Father Pire:

If the atom bomb should fall tomorrow on the world, it will be because you quarreled with your neighbor today.

These above quotations are bold, brazen, wicked statements you say? As Protestant Reformed Young People I am sure we all agree to that fact. We cannot look, work, or pray for peace here on earth you say? Surely we agree with that. The desire and prayer for earthly peace is not in harmony with the will of God. We know that the purpose of God is to bring about His kingdom in the way of wars and rumors of war. For thus saith the Lord to His people in Matt. 24:4-8: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of war: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places. All these things are the beginning of sorrows."

It is evident that all these things must come to pass before the coming of the Lord in Glory. When we, therefore, desire that God's kingdom should come then we must needs pray for wars and rumors of wars to come to pass, because we know that Christ's Kingdom is coming only through this way.

Certainly there is no difficulty in seeing the folly of praying or desiring peace from war and destruction. From little on we have heard from the pulpit, from catechism, in the school, and in the home that a child of God does not pray and cannot pray for earthly peace.

But is this the end? Do we just say these five Nobel Peace Prize winners are wrong because they do not understand that you cannot pray for earthly peace?

No! There is more wrong than the mere incapability to pray for peace on earth. The fundamental evil of these men's theories is that no one can pray for peace without having peace in his own heart. There is only one kind of peace and that is the peace

which only the child of God has in his heart. It is the peace which only the elect sinner has and which only can be given by God through His Son Jesus Christ.

In Matt. 5:9 we read, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Moses received commandment of God to speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, "On this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His Face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His Countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Numbers 6:23-26. And so throughout the ages, and unto us too, God blesses His people and only His people.

And why then are not men like King, Baker, Angell, Orr, and Pire peacemakers, although they profess to be? Simply because they seek peace without the Cross of Christ. God said: There is no peace, saith the Lord to the wicked.

But wicked man continues to build its foundations for peace. It continues to call its peace conferences through religious organizations, political organizations, and brotherhood organizations, or whatever it may be. But all their works are vain and futile. In Judges 6:24 we read, "God is peace." All peace finds its source in God. There is peace and harmony in God Himself as the Covenant God lives in harmony as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Through the sin of Adam, man lost his peaceful life in Paradise, and the world has continued in sin through the ages culminating now in the last days in manifestations of war and unrest.

But the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, our Lord, came to earth. We were dead in sin, destruction, enmity, strife, war, but Christ through the cross annihilated all the war in His children by His blood on the cross.

Now we too as Christ's children can strive for peace. Oh, we do no act as reformers or good workers. We suddenly don't preach from street corners or call revival meetings to proclaim that we wish to reform the world.

But we now are peacemakers because we continually fight against the old man of sin which is in us. We do not let our hearts be troubled nor are we afraid. Christ is for us, who can be against us? Our hearts are at peace because we know we are God's children.

We know then that there is a people of peace. And so too we can hope for a land of peace: the new Jerusalem. It is the city of peace. The city which God has prepared as His throne in the heavens is the place where God dwells. Herein lies our hope for peace. Christ is even now coming on the clouds of heaven to take us home to be with Him, where we will live to glorify God forever in that eternal land of peace.

Convention Study Studied *

by EDWARD LANGERAK

It has now been several months since the Study Committee appointed by the Federation Board has made their report. This report of possible convention improvements was sent to each society with the request that it be discussed and that reactions to it be sent to the Board. It was also published in *Beacon Lights* (February, 1965) with the request that it be commented upon in Open Forum. Editor Decker also included a set of questions which should have been answered while analyzing the report. The response in Open Forum has not been overwhelming. However, the response given by the individual societies has been excellent and very gratifying to the Board. As the report stated, any ameliorative measures must come from the societies themselves and the response given indicates that the societies themselves are very interested in the matters brought up by it. All thirteen

*It goes without saying that the motive for writing this article has nothing specifically to do with the planning of this year's convention, much of which has already been done. The article intends to deal with future conventions in general.

member societies sent in their reactions; some of them were brief, others were more detailed, all of them were candid and expressed an earnest desire to make the conventions as worthwhile as possible.

It is my intention in this article to give you an idea of how the societies felt about the report, to briefly comment upon several points, and to conclude with the resulting decision of the Board. In order to have some kind of format, I will try to present the implicit and explicit answers of the societies to the five questions suggested by Editor Decker in his preface to the report. In general, I will not give the names of the societies when referring to their letters, since it is what was said that we are interested in, not who said it.

The first question, then, was: "Do you agree that there is a problem? Is the problem correctly stated by the committee?"

You will remember that the committee felt that the quality of our conventions was waning. It stated the problem as one of too much emphasis on the purely social aspect of the conventions and a decreasing interest in the more edifying aspect. Almost all the societies agreed that some kind of problem existed and most of them felt that it could be stated as a lop-sided interest, if not emphasis, on what should be only a part of the convention. Belief as to the seriousness of the problem varied among the societies, but most recognized one and were ready to discuss it. The significance of this recognition should not be lost. It means that the young people feel that the quality of the conventions can and should be improved. It means that, for the most part, they will support reasonable efforts to improve them. It means that a host society need not have an excessive apprehension of modifying traditional convention procedures in an effort to improve them. In short, it means that the young people will probably be receptive to attempts to increase the quality of the conventions.

The second question that our editor posed had to do with the objectives stated by the committee — are they proper and sufficient? Most of the letters from the societies fitted themselves into the threefold distinction given by the committee. This indicates a lack of disagreement, if not positive agreement, with the distinction proposed by the committee. However, several societies offered trenchant criticism. It was pointed out that there is really only one objective at our conventions, and that is the glorification of our covenant God. The three objectives stated by the committee, they said, were only means to the main one. Now, this is true and the committee should have made it clearer that they were stating objectives for the carrying out of the purpose of the convention, which, in turn, is a means for the carrying out of the purpose of young people's lives, which purpose, of course, is the glorification of our God.

It was further maintained that the committee's objectives were all objective and that there should also be a subjective objective pertaining to the aim of the conventioneer himself. Our Oaklawn Society offered such an objective:

> All participants in the convention, delegates and visitors, should seek through active participation in all the functions of the convention, to promote the conventions' objective and thus bring out its greatest potential.

The spirit in which this criticism is given must be appreciated. It is concerned with the observation that finally only what the individual conventioners do will determine the nature and quality of the convention. It is they who must support whatever objectives are finally decided upon, and only their support and participation will produce a successful convention. The committee stressed this point and Oaklawn Society also put it very well:

> . . . we believe that no set of objectives, no stating and restating of rules will result in the desired improvements for the simple reason that spiritual activities cannot be legislated. Basically any improvement will have to come from the member societies and will have to begin in the societies themselves. And this again reflects back to the home. As children we must be taught the significance of the spiritual in our lives; and as young people we must evidence an interest in the spiritual and without this there will not be an improvement but a deterioration.

Before I leave this matter of the three objectives stated by the committee, I must confess my fear upon rereading our report,

that a certain confusion might arise from our distinctions. When the committee distinguished three objectives for the conventions, we did not intend to *separate* the conventions into three *parts,* rather we intended to *distinguish* three *aspects.* These three aspects are mixed together throughout the entire convention – the planned activities can all be both social and edifying, and the business meeting especially so. It is true, however, that certain activities put more emphasis on the social aspect and other activities emphasize the edification aspect. The business meetings have important aspects of their own. It was the contention of the committee that a developing emphasis on certain aspects of the convention along with a de-emphasis of other aspects was impairing their quality. And the three objectives, which, as some societies reminded us, are traditionally accepted by the young people, were intended as a reaffirmation of the relative importance of the social, edifying, and business aspects of the conventions. This was done in the hope that resultant discussion and decisions would lead host societies to try and all young people to support new and old ways of achieving these objectives. And the wide-spread agreement as to both the presence of a problem and to the general intent of the objectives indicates that such a hope could be realized. Let us proceed to the next three questions which deal with how the societies feel the objectives should be implemented.

The committee stated that all conventioneers should engage seriously and meaningfully in the business activities. General agreement to this objective did not prevent a few problems from being aired.

Several societies remarked that sometimes the business meetings become long and drawn-out. The voting procedure was cited as being inefficient. Moreover, it was observed that if more discussion was to take place, a certain amount of rescheduling would be needed to allow for it. A second difficulty was mentioned in regard to nominations. Since all the delegates are not always acquainted with the nominees, intelligent voting is sometimes difficult.

These difficulties are always possible and efforts must continually be made to have well-run, meaningful business meetings. But a third matter in connection with the business meetings gives evidence of confusion and possible division. This is the matter of attendance. Most of the societies felt that all conventioneers, delegates and visitors, should attend and participate in the business meetings. One society recommended that roll call of all conventioneers be taken at the meetings; but other societies felt that this should not be a compulsory thing or the very purpose of the meeting will be lost. However, a more serious difference of opinion arose when two societies claimed that visitors not only need not come, they really had no right to participate anyhow. The argument, as given by one of the societies, is that since we have a representative democracy in which the delegates are given a mandate by the rest of the society, they are the only ones who have the duty and the privilege of active participation in the business procedures. This feeling, I fear can be found in a significant number of people and probably contributes greatly to the generally poor attendance at the Thursday morning and afternoon activities. But this feeling is historically unfounded, it harms the conventions, and, from a practical point of view, is less than adequate. It is historically unfounded because the delegate system was set up simply to give fair voting power to each society, it had no intention of limiting participation in the business meeting to the delegates. The business meetings of the earlier conventions were considered to be extremely important parts of the convention and everyone attended and actively participated in them. In fact, business and social and edifying activities were closely intertwined since everyone engaged in all of them. So historically, the visitor has played an important part in the business meetings. But this attitude is also harmful to the conventions. If the visitors do not attend the business meetings, then during the business meetings they will probably drift around on their own. This would violate the social and spiritual goals of the convention. The only alternative would be for the host society to set up some separate worthwhile activity for them. But it is hard to imagine a more worthwhile activity than engaging in discussion of the issues which face the Federation, in other words, participating in the business meetings. Finally, this attitude

would use a method which is less than adequate for carrying on the activities of the Federation fairly. Let us use one example. This year each society is requested to come with a nomination for a Bible book to study during the coming years. So, hopefully, each society will have their delegates nominate a book. Thus, the delegates will directly represent the will of their societies. But it is surely evidence that more than one book will be nominated and that if the meeting is ever going to close, some delegates will have to change their minds. Here they no longer directly represent the will of the societies and if any member of their societies has strong ideas as to how the delegates should vote, his ideas will not be articulated unless he can enter the discussion. But he may, and, in fact, is encouraged to participate and thus, with discussion as free as possible, a more intelligent decision can be reached. For these three reasons, I feel that it would be best for the minority to agree with the majority on this point and encourage all conventioneers to attend and participate in the business meetings.

The committee, in their second objective, suggested that more edifying activities such as debates, discussions, reports, etc., entailing the active involvement of the conventioneers, should be an important part of the convention. Only one society directly disagreed with this intent, reminding us that "After all, it isn't a Bible School for three days." Another six societies gave their complete approval to the objective and the remaining six wholeheartedly agreed with the intent of the objective but expressed certain problems that they felt should be considered. First of all, there was some fear that too much activity might be crammed into the convention period, making it a frustrating experience instead of an edifying one. A number of societies suggested that the convention should be lengthened to make room for such activities. One suggested that the convention be held over a long weekend enabling us to use Sunday as an appropriate day for discussions and readings. It was also thought that some of these activities, if they were well supervised, could replace one of the speeches. Although agreeing in general with the objective, one society mentioned that these activities should not be too long, should not "extol the theological wisdom of one member over another," and should not cause the convention to be compared to a seminary or catechism class, or even a young people's society." Finally, it was feared by one society that an overemphasis of these activities could frighten away those who do not feel qualified.

These suggestions and cautions must be considered by the host societies. Especially the suggestions as to changing the length and time of the convention might be carefully considered. And the possible apprehensions of the young people must always be reckoned with when planning a convention. But the main point to reflect upon is that almost all of the societies did feel that changes toward more edifying activities such as were mentioned should be started. Many gave topics which they felt should be discussed. A partial list includes: (1) What is the difference between reading a book, or attending a movie of the same title? (2) Should Christian young men enlist in the army? (3) A Protestant Reformed High School (4) Dating problems (5) Should we have confession classes? (6) How to improve future conventions (7) A Christian attitude toward the Negroes (8) To what extent should Christians participate in politics? (9) Our mission labors — the participation of young people in them.

In his final question, Editor Decker asked, "What part does the 'social objective' play in our conventions?" There was not an overabundance of discussion on this point; evidently, most societies felt that this aspect of the convention was coming off quite well. A western society observed that "it is very important that we make friends and acquaintances with those of our own denomination. The East has this advantage most of the time; however, many of us in the West seldom receive this opportunity." In general, the societies felt the host should plan activities so "as to cause us to seek the friendship and welfare of one another." As was earlier mentioned, the social aspect of the convention should be promoted in all its activities, especially in those which we discussed in the second objective. In addition, the societies showed a desire for such activities as the outing, ballgames, pancake breakfast, etc.

This article, of course, gives only a brief

and incomplete survey of the societies' reactions to the study committee report. The society letters themselves are a fruitful source for gaining a general impression of how the societies feel about the conventions. In addition to what has been written, the board could detect a general agreement with the position that, while stating objectives is a helpful means for discussion, the real push for improvements in the conventions must come from the individual young people and societies themselves, and must proceed by way of the planning for each convention by the host society in conjunction with the Board. There was great desire to make the conventions as edifying and enjoyable as possible, but there was little desire for an imposing of new rules and methods by the Board. The Board found itself in full agreement with this attitude that it must not dictate convention policy, but that conventions must be planned by the host societies who must plan according to the mature desires, judgments, and needs of the young people. In this operation, the Board serves as a guide and spokesman elected by the young people to serve their best interests.

Bearing in mind everything that has been touched upon in this article, the Board decided to propose that the following resolution be adopted at the convention:

> We, the Delegate Board, hereby express our desire that the host societies of the conventions explore new means and elaborate on old ones to bring the conventions up to their full social and spiritual potential. We suggest such means as changes in traditional scheduling, debates, discussions, speeches by young people, and any other means the host society and the executive board deem advisable.
>
> Grounds:
>
> 1. The t e n d e n c y that traditional scheduling procedures become inflexible is present and should be avoided.
>
> 2. The tendency that conventions lose their high spiritual and social goals is present and should be avoided.
>
> a. The amount of debates, discussions, and other direct involvement by young people has decreased in the past few years.
>
> b. Since these are highly social in character, the social goals have also decreased.
>
> 3. The problem is one that can only be dealt with by the host society and especially by the conventioneers themselves.
>
> a. This resolution might help free natural tendencies by host societies to be strictly traditional in scheduling.
>
> b. This resolution might help focus the attention of conventioneers upon the problem and thus help facilitate improvements.

Of course, under certain unfortunate circumstances, this resolution might be absolutely worthless. On the other hand, as ground three indicates, it might help create an atmosphere in which the young people, future host societies, and Board will work together to carry on that continual improvement w h i c h every living tradition needs.

How vast the benefits divine,
Which we in Christ possess!
We're saved from guilt and ev-'ry sin,
And called to holiness.

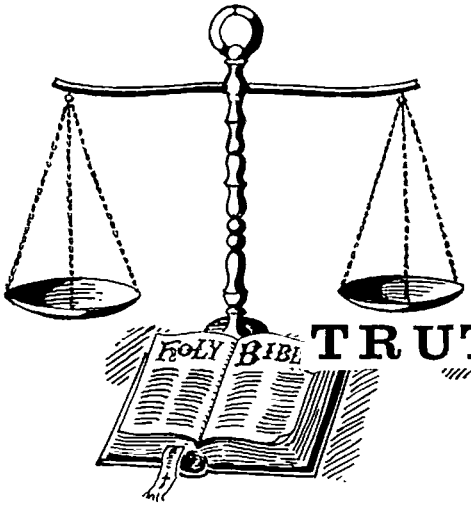
'Tis not for works which we have done,
Or shall hereafter do;
But He, of His electing love,
Salvation doth bestow.

The glory, Lord, from first to last,
Is due to Thee alone;
Aught to ourselves we dare not take,
Or rob Thee of Thy crown.

Our glorious Surety undertook
Redemption's wondrous plan;
And grace was given us in Him,
Before the world began.

Safe in the arms of sov'reign love
We ever shall remain;
Nor shall the rage of earth of hell
Make Thy dear councils vain.

Not one of all the chosen race
But shall to heav'n attain,
Partake on earth the purpose grace,
And then with Jesus reign. *A. M. Toplady*



TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

5. THOUGHTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

4. Its Scripture Proof

Not only for the sake of the young reader, but also for some of our readers who never had the benefit of instruction in this doctrine, we must give proof that it is entirely scriptural. Copies of this series no doubt come into the hands of some who know very little about this truth. What they have heard of it has been in the way of misrepresentation and perversion. When they question their pastor about it, he instantly affirms that he believes it, mumbles something about "foreknowledge" or "foresight" of man's "accepting" Christ, then immediately changes the subject. It will be well, then, to show just how biblical this truth is. It must be shown that predestination is not the theological figment of Calvin, of the Westminster divines, nor of the Dutchmen of Dort. It is the plain revelation of Scripture truth.

To anyone with only a mediocre acquaintance with the Bible, it is certain that God has an elect people. The terms "predestination," "elect" and "election" occur prominently in outstanding passages of Scripture. But what these passages and terms mean can be known only when the Lord reveals the meaning of the Spirit, and may be determined only by the receptive, humble and contrite heart. Now when the Lord does reveal this truth before the eye of any man, it is not only foolishness but rebellion to refuse it or to oppose it. The Christian who believes that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice ought to have no difficulty in bowing to the sceptre of Holy Writ at this point.

Aside from the question why God chose any, or unto what He chose them, it certainly is plain that God had an elect nation in Israel of the Old Testament. "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, Israel for His peculiar treasure" (Ps. 135:4). "Thou, Israel, art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend . . . I have chosen thee and not cast thee away" (Isa. 41:8, 9). Then within the nation of Israel God made a distinction between carnal Israel and spiritual Israel. Like a kernel within the shell, there was an election within an election. There was a particular people within the nation. "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Rom. 9:6-8). "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal: even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Israel (the mere political nation) hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election (the true Israel of God) hath obtained it" (Rom. 11:4-7). The nation itself was chosen to be a kind of trellis to the vine, while

the vine was chosen to be the plant which the heavenly Father has planted, and which shall never be rooted up.

God has an elect people, as is plain from the fact that "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened . . . that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect . . . and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds" (Mt. 24:22, 24, 31). "Shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him?" (Lk. 18:7). "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33). Then there is mention of "the purpose of God according to election" (9:11), and "the faith of God's elect" (Ti. 1:1). If this is not sufficient Scripture evidence, take your concordance and note the fact that "elected" or its various forms, and "chosen" and its various forms appear on the divine record well over one hundred times. Surely, then, there is a divine election, God has an elect people, and the truth is deeply imbedded in Scripture.

In election the choice is God's and since His is a sovereignly free will, His choice is a selection, a singling out, a picking out, and God has singled out from the mass of His creatures a people He has determined shall be His eternal possession. We hope to have more to say later of this divine choice of a people from the mass of God's creatures. But by the way, that selection we do not view as a picking out a portion from *Adam's* race, at least not out from a portion of Adam's *fallen* race. For the scriptural picture of predestination has a stronger frame than that of infralapsarianism.

The Arminian must by virtue of his humanistic philosophy hold to the element of chance. Perchance a given sinner will believe in Christ. But there is also the chance, a much greater chance, that he will not. But God, in His decree of election, leaves nothing to chance. The completion of the body of Christ is not left to the fickleness of the sinner, the caprice of man, nor to any contingent event. The fixing of destiny does not depend as modern evangelists present it, on the will of man, but on the will of God.

The highest exemplification of election we have in Christ. The next highest is in the angelic host. Election includes that heavenly company. There are "elect angels" (1 Tim. 5:21). The implication is that there are also reprobate angels. There can be no elect angels without reprobate angels. The elect angels are confirmed in holiness, and so are called "the holy angels." They are holy because they were chosen, and not chosen because they were holy. The "angels that sinned," on the other hand, were "cast down to hell" and "delivered in chains of darkness" (II Pet. 2:4). But God's purpose of election was not to glorify Himself as the elect head of the angels, although He is that, but to be glorified in a race of elect men. Again, in this connection, C. H. Spurgeon is well worth reading. He says, "Now this is a wonder of wonders, when we come to consider that the heaven, even the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's. If God must have a chosen race, why did He not select one from the majestic order of angels? Why was not Gabriel fixed upon? Why was he not so constituted that from his loins there might spring a mighty race of angels, and why were not those chosen of God from before the foundation of the world? What could there be in *man*, a creature lower than the angels, that God should select him rather than the angelic spirits? Why were not the cherubim and seraphim given to Christ? Why did He not assume the nature of angels, and take *them* into union with Himself? An angelic body might be more in keeping with the person of Deity, than a body of weak and suffering flesh and blood. There was something congruous if He had said unto the angels, 'Ye shall be My sons.' But no! though all these were His own, He passes them by and stoops to man."

It might be argued that the reason why God had primary preference in mankind as over against the angels was because man fell, so affording God greater cause to glorify His mercy. But the angels also fell, one third of them, yet had no gospel preached to them, no Saviour sent them, being reprobate. Man would be God's peculiar treasure above all creatures. Why? What will they who hate the truth of God's absolute sovereignty and who belittle the doctrine of unconditional election say to this? They constantly prate about God being no respecter of persons and showing no partiality. Then why did He show partiality between elect men and reprobate men? be-

tween race and race (Amos 3:2)? between elect angels and fallen angels? and why did He favor fallen men as He never did fallen angels? Man cannot answer these questions. The best he can do is to take God's own word in explanation. For one, He gives no account of any of His matters (Job 33:13). He, rather, does whatsoever He will with His own things (Mt. 20:15; Pro. 16:4). We can resolve the question no better than with, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Predestination is often said to be one of those secret things which belong to the Lord our God (Dt. 29:29). It is, indeed, a divine secret, which comes from the inscrutable will of God in eternity. But it does not always remain entirely secret. For in time, in the process of progressive revelation, God revealed His secret, eternal counsel. From the beginning, God made it known that predestination is "double," that there is an elect line and a reprobate line, in Gen. 3:15. Here He made it plain that the atonement is limited, that it never was, even from the beginning of time, the purpose of God to love all men or to save all men. The covenant is particular, proceeding in the line of the continued generations of the seed of the woman, to the consistent rejection of the seed of the serpent. God's elective love is plainly particular, and not universal.

God chose Abel, which is evident from the fact that he was a man of faith (Heb. 11), and the fact that only those ordained to eternal life believe (Ac. 13:48). God rejected Cain, as is plain from the fact that he was of that Wicked One (1 Jn. 3:12). Since Abel was murdered by the serpent's breed, the covenant line was cut off, and the antithesis was destroyed. So the devil would have it. But God continued the line of election in Seth, and not in Cain, then in Enoch of Seth, and not in Enoch of Cain. Yet Seth's generations became so corrupted that God with the flood swept them all off the face of the earth. Still God maintained His covenant and His electing love in choice of Noah. After the flood He distinguished between the children of Noah. Shem is chosen, but Canaan is cursed. From the sons of Shem, Asshur, Elim and Eber, the latter was chosen, so that not the Assyrians nor the Persians, but the Hebrews were a chosen race! Of the Hebrews, the Lord did choose Abraham (Neh. 9:7) in sovereign mercy. Out of the vast extent of the city of Ur, God "called him alone" (Isa. 51:1, 2). Yet there was nothing in Abraham that made him any better than his fellow heathen neighbors. For Abraham with them was of a corrupt origin (Josh. 24:2). The outstanding virtue which we know made Abraham an eminent man of God was the result, not the cause of his election.

So the Scripture places strong and constant emphasis on the truth of election. In the N.T., God's people are called "believers" twice, "Christians" only three times, but "elect" fourteen times, and "saints" sixty-two times. Where there is no specific term denoting election, then there is one which necessarily and inescapably implies it. *Redemption* presupposes eternal election, as it implies a previous possession. Christ purchased those who were God's from all eternity. *Regeneration* implies a previous spiritual sonship which became lost in Adam's fall. The Holy Spirit renews those who are the seed of the woman. *Reconciliation* implies not only previous estrangement, but a relation of fellowship and friendship existing previous to the estrangement. These terms simply cannot be understood apart from the doctrine of election. And if the non-Reformed reader does not find this body of biblical proof sufficient, it would be useless to furnish him with more.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Young twigs are easily bent and made to grow another way, old trees most difficulty. So persons in youth are more easily turned than others. Again, a young plant is much more easily plucked up by the roots than after it hath long stood and is rooted deep in the ground. So it is more easy to forsake sin in the beginning than after a long continuance in it.

Jonathan Edwards

FROM Dort TO TODAY

A History of the Reformed Faith
The Christian Reformed Church

(19)

by REV. HERMAN HANKO

The Christian Reformed Church, as is always true of the Church of God on earth, was beset with doctrinal controversies. That this is always true need not surprise us, for the devil knows very well that to rob the Church of her heritage of the truth is to destroy the Church. In this attempt he never grows weary.

There are three of these doctrinal controversies which particularly are important, two of which shall occupy us in this article. The third is the controversy concerning common grace which led to the establishment of our own Protestant Reformed Churches.

The first controversy was concerning premillennialism.

The history is briefly this.

Shortly after World War I, a certain Rev. H. Bultema wrote a book entitled *Maranatha* in which he defended the well-known view of the dispensationalists. This view denies the unity of the Church in the Old and New Dispensations and teaches instead that a distinction must be made between God's dealings with the Jews and with the Gentiles. The Jews and Gentiles are never united into one Church, but the Jews are treated separately and differently from the Church composed of the Gentiles. The Jews always remain God's special covenant people. Christ is the *King* of the Jews, but not of the Church, the Gentiles. Of the Church, this theory teaches, Christ is only the *Head*.

Although there was some question on the Synod as to whether Bultema taught all the premillennial views, nevertheless, to make a distinction between the Jews and Gentiles in this fashion is to open the door for all premillennial views: a thousand year reign of Christ with the Jews in Palestine, a rapture, etc.

These views were discussed and condemned by the Synod in 1918 and 1920. A committee was appointed to urge the First Church of Muskegon, of which Bultema was the pastor, to take action against their minister. This the consistory refused to do, even when Bultema refused to retract his views; and the result was that the congregation was put outside the denomination and Bultema was removed from office.

This particular doctrinal controversy does not concern us too much. It is a question how much premillennialism lingers on in the Christian Reformed Church even today. But the fact is that this error was not of a kind to have any effect upon our own denomination.

There is only one point worth our notice in this connection.

That point is that Bultema was condemned on the grounds that his views were contrary to the Confessions; that he had failed to present his objections to the Confessions in the proper way, i.e., by way of protest to Consistory, Classis and Synod; that therefore he had violated his promise which he made when he signed the Formula of Subscription, and had made himself worthy of deposition. The relevant part of the Formula of Subscription reads: "And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrine (i.e., the doctrine of the Confessions, H.H.)

should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis and Synod, that the same may be there examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the consistory, classis and synod, under penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very fact, suspended from our office."

The Synod clearly saw that Bultema's views were in violation of the Confessions, and certainly followed correct procedure.

But the point that is worth noticing is that this strong and correct position of the Christian Reformed Church has been forgotten ever since that day. If only the Christian Reformed Church would maintain this same position today how different things would be in that denomination.

Today there are ministers, professors in the seminary and missionaries who, in public writings openly criticize the Confessions.

One example of this will suffice. In the March issue of the *Reformed Journal*, Rev. Harry R. Boer is writing on the subject "The Doctrine of Reprobation and the Preaching of the Gospel." In this article Rev. Boer as much as says that he does not believe the truth concerning reprobation. But this need not concern us here except to notice that this truth is nevertheless historically Reformed. What is important as far as our discussion is concerned, is the fact that he is discussing the doctrine of reprobation as taught in the Canons of Dort. He finds that the view of reprobation expounded in the Canons is ambiguous, vague, uncertain and contradictory when considered in the light of other teachings of the same Canons, particularly the teaching concerning the preaching of the gospel. He concludes in fact, that this treatment of reprobation is so ambiguous that he finds it impossible to teach or to preach this truth.

Anyone reading his article and knowing the teachings of the Canons will be able to see clearly that he is forcing interpretations on the Canons that are not there; that he is creating contradictions where none exist; and that he fails utterly in proving his contention. But even this is not my point. What concerns me is the fact that he openly criticizes our Confessions, publicly expresses disagreement with them, seemingly embraces the view of the Arminians expressly condemned in the Canons; and does all this without going the church political way of protest through Consistory, Classis and Synod. He breaks his promise that he made when he signed the Formula of Subscription. And absolutely nothing is done about it. The Formula of Subscription clearly states that he should be, by the very fact of his opposition to the Confessions, deposed from office. But Boer continues to teach and to preach.

The Christian Reformed Church has walked a long way since 1920.

The second doctrinal controversy involved a professor in the seminary.

Dr. Janssen, professor of the Old Testament, was teaching views which aroused suspicions as to his orthodoxy among some members of the Board of Trustees. We need not follow the history of the case; we pause only to notice that his views were condemned by the Synod in 1922 and Dr. Janssen was relieved of his position in the seminary.

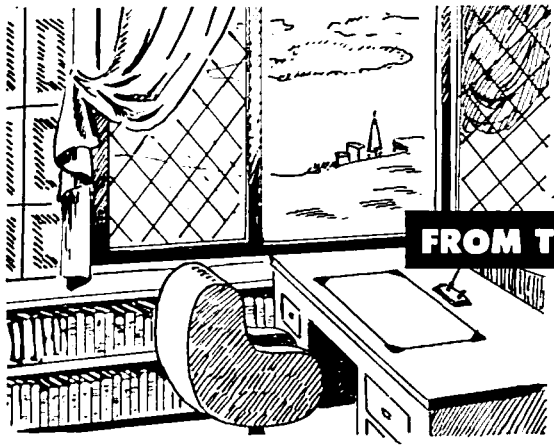
What does interest us are the views for which he was put out. Prof. Janssen questioned the infallibility and therefore also the authority of Scripture. As a result of this position, he also cast doubt on some of the miracles, suggesting that they could perhaps be explained by natural causes, and he brought into doubt the literal interpretation of the first three chapters of Genesis.

Although these views were condemned, they were evidently more deeply rooted in the Church than was first realized, for in 1924 the Synod had more than a dozen protests directed against it which supported the views of Janssen, or at least, expressed dissatisfaction with Synod's decisions.

The point is now that it is obvious that the Christian Reformed Church is no longer willing to condemn these same views which are currently being taught. Recently the doctrine of infallibility came under attack and was discussed on the Synod. Besides, in Calvin College, in the Christian High Schools and Grade Schools the same errors are being openly taught for which Janssen was put out. Once again the literal meaning of the first three chapters of Genesis is being questioned; miracles are being explained through natural causes; the author-

ity of Scripture is being undermined, and teachers are claiming to find errors in God's Word. But today nothing is done about it. The strength to withstand false doctrine is gone in the Christian Reformed Church.

In his book "The Christian Reformed Tradition" Rev. D. H. Kromminga writes by way of summary concerning these doctrinal disputes: "What strikes one in these heresy trials is the fact that every one found a settlement in a relatively short time without seriously disrupting the Church." (p. 147) While this may, from a certain point of view, be true, these same evils are seriously disrupting the Church today in that they are no longer condemned.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

SPRING-TIME

"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell..."
Solomon's Song 2:11-13

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted! Thus spoke the Preacher who had gotten more wisdom than all who had been before him in Jerusalem, and who set in order many Proverbs. . . .

Did not God, who created the universe and all the things contained therein, make lights in the firmament of the heaven? Were they not to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the day from the night? And were they not to be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years? And in His remembrance of His mercy to Noah, smelling the sweet savor from the altar, did God not ordain and promise that while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease?

Truly among the seasons of the year there is none so ardently looked for as the springtime. What a sigh of relief when we finally say to each other: lo, the winter is past! It seems that all of God's animate creatures wait with uplifted head for the passing of winter's icy blasts, and for the arrival of the balmy winds, blowing from the southland. With the arrival of the warmer south winds and clashing with the northern cold, even nature has its convulsions in tornado and storm. The hardy robin, the harbinger of spring, is ever a welcome sight to old and young. With the arrival of this redbreast we know that the time of the singing of birds is come, and that the voice of the turtle is in the land. . . .

There is an incomparable freshness in the season of spring; all is in virgin green. And all the plant-world of grass and flowers, reeds and rushes pulsates with life, and bursts forth in the new life of leaf, buds, and flowers with nectar for the bees to garner. On yon mountain-side, close to the melting snows we see the hardy mountain flowers bloom, and far below near rushing stream and meandering brook is the purple violet and the lily, more fair than Solomon's clothing. And across plains and desert land we see the blossomed cactus and the lowly dandelion. Each has its garment from God And of them it is written: they toil not, neither do they spin.

If God so clothe the grass of the field and the lily, o, ye, of little faith. . . .

The early rains have come and gone. The dark and lowering sky is seen in the west. The thunder rumbled in the distant night, and the entire sky was all aglow in myriads of degrees of lightning; clouds and mountain-top meet in the sheen of light, and under the dark clouds can be seen the white rain as dispensed from them on hill and plain. Day breaks upon the earth, and through the rain can be seen the bow of God arched upon the cloud. And once more the sun shines upon teeming verdure.

Yes, the rain is over and gone!

One hears the singing of the birds, singing never so sweetly.

Truly there is a time for everything under the sun. . . .

Here the eye, the ear and the nostrils of man can feast. The vine and the grape give a good smell. There is even a smell of earth which satisfies the heart of man. And man goeth forth to his labors till the evening. The plowman slowly homeward wends his way. . . ."

And all these things happen in parable!

For spring-time is the time of youths dreaming. It is the time of planning. It is seed-time to be followed by harvest. It is the time too of youth's preparation for life. It is really a picture, for the Christian, of all our present life we now see the sower go forth and sow, as did our Lord teach in the well-known parable. It is all so brief and is preparation for the eternal harvest.

Yes, the fig tree putteth forth green figs ere its leaves appear; when its branch is yet tender, saith Jesus, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. All of God's works in spring-time speak of things to come in summer and fall.

And all things cry: the Bride-groom cometh!

And the church responds in faith and hope: Arise my love, my fair one and come away.

All things cry loudly: maranatha, Jesus comes. Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. For us who believe such is the speech of every sunrise and sunset, of every cooing of the turtle in the land, of the song of the nightingale, the flower of the dogwood and the sweet scent of the lilac, the beautiful rose of Sharon. For Christ is the Lilly of the valley, the bright and morning-star. Surely, all things are subjected to vanity; spring-time is so brief. The grass withers, the flower fadeth . . . But we look for the eternal youth of eternal life in Christ. And all things look with earnest expectation for the redemption of the children of God, and for the glory to be revealed in the saints.

Then shall the righteous say: As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. . . .

He feedeth among the lilies.

The winter is past, and spring-time has come . . . everlastingly!

That of so vast and innumerable a multitude of blossoms that appear on a tree, so few come to ripe fruit, and that so few of so vast a multitude of seeds as are yearly produced, so few come to be a plant, and that there is so great a waste of the seed of both plants and animals, but one in a great multitude ever bringing forth anything, seem to me lively types how few are saved out of the mass of mankind, and particularly how few are sincere of professing Christians, that never wither away but endure to the end, and how of the many that are called few are chosen. *Jonathan Edwards*

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE Book of GENESIS

by REV. G. LUBBERS

JACOB GOES TO EGYPT

The history of Jacob now centers for a time about Joseph, chapters 37-41 Genesis 37: The lone warrior. Genesis 49:23.

1. *Joseph is bitterly hated by his brothers.* Various reasons are given.
   a. Joseph brought the evil report of his brothers to his father. Was he with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, because already the sons of Leah were opposed to him? We can only guess. Was it proper for him to "tell tales"? But, on the other hand, was it proper to share in their sins by keeping them hidden?
   b. Jacob loved Joseph more than the other children. The reason given is that "he was a son of his old age." But there was actually not much difference in the ages of the sons. Benjamin was still younger. Did Jacob have in mind to give Joseph the birthright blessing, so that he would be the head (king) of the family after Jacob died? From all that follows this seems to be the case.
   c. Jacob seems to have freed Joseph from further manual labor. Even gave him a long tunic, as symbol of authority. Not just one, but caused him to wear a special garb always. Was Jacob showing his intention of giving Joseph the entire birthright blessing?
   d. But the main reason for their hatred was the dreams that God gave to Joseph. These dreams spoke of some future event. See Gen. 42:6. Yet Jacob interpretes them as if they will give Joseph a position of authority in the family. The second dream confuses him, since it can never mean that Joseph will have the birthright blessing. Jacob seems to question whether this dream was from the Lord. The brothers ascribe both dreams to a proud imagination.

2. *Their hatred surges into boiling rage and jealousy.*
   a. The brothers feel slighted. Their mother's honor and name is at stake. Why is Joseph better than they, or his mother than theirs?
   b. Even though this is justified, their carnal reaction was very wrong. They do not leave the outcome to God, Who has the future well planned. Instead of trusting, they take matters in their own hands, so that Joseph must suffer for righteousness' sake.

   c. Joseph is sold into Egypt. 12-36.
      (1) We are given a detailed account of the chain of events that lead to this sinful act.
         (a) His father sends him to visit his brothers in Shechem, which is about fifty miles north of where Jacob is sojourning. Shechem was Jacob's former possession. See Gen. 33:15, John 4:5.
         (b) His brothers recognize him by his walk and especially by his cloak. They refer to him as master of dreams. Was Simeon probably the ringleader? See Gen. 42:24.
         (c) The brothers want to kill him, but Reuben feels a half-hearted responsibility toward him as eldest son. Are his mixed feelings justified? What should he have done?
         (d) In the meantime, Judah suggests that they sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites. Was he

repentant later? Is this probably why he takes the lead in pleading to return to Egypt? Chap. 43:3, 8; 44: 14, 18.

(e) Joseph is sold to descendants of their father Abraham for the price of a boy-slave. Lev. 27:5, Ex. 21:32. He passes near his home on the way to Egypt.

(2) The brothers add to their sin by deceiving their father. What a hypocrisy in trying to comfort Jacob when their knew the facts!

(a) The covenant family had sunk into a state of deep spiritual depravity. The brothers nurse a guilty conscience.

(b) And Joseph is sold into Egypt as a slave, but has the assurance of a good conscience before God.

Questions: How does Joseph later explain these happenings? Gen. 50:20 How does this harmonize with Lord's Day 10?

C. *Jacob's covenant with Laban.* — verses 45-55.

1. What is the meaning of Jegarsahadutha (Chaldean) and Galeed (Hebrew)? Both mean the same.

2. What is the meaning of Mizpah? Why this name?

3. What kind of covenant did they make? — see verses 49-50, also verse 52.

4. Notice what we read in verse 53.
   a. It appears that Laban distinguishes between the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor. To him they may be different gods, in harmony with his polytheism.
   b. Jacob speaks of the fear of his father Isaac. We must capitalize "fear." The Fear of Isaac is the God Who was worshipped in holy awe by Isaac.

5. Hereupon the covenant is concluded, and Laban departs in the morning. Was his departure a relief for Jacob? In this covenant they gave each other nothing; they only declared not to interfere with one another. Is this not all that God's people ask in the midst of the world? They seek to live their own life. Persecution against the Church is not caused by the Church but by the world.

Genesis 38. This chapter serves as an interlude in the history of Joseph.

1. *It points out how deeply Judah had fallen into spiritual lethargy.*

   a. The events of this chapter take place twenty years after Joseph was sold into Egypt.
      (1) At the age of twenty, and evidently without consulting Jacob, Judah married a Canaanite. He seems to have broken from his family completely, and lives alone in the southern part of Canaan.
      (2) He has three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. He chooses a wife for Er while this son is still only about seventeen years of age. But God killed Er because of his wickedness. The second son refuses to produce children for his elder brother. See Deut. 25:5ff., Matth. 22:24. Selfishness, hatred, greed for his father's possessions — all or any one of these might have been the reason. His wicked corruption of the holy marriage state becomes the reason that God kills him also. His sin of self-pollution still carries his name.
      (3) Therefore Judah, probably to protect his third son from a similar death, delays in giving this son to Tamar.

   b. All this is especially significant because Judah was the one chosen of God to receive the part of the birthright blessing that would make him head of the family. Out of Judah Christ was to be born.
      (1) What would have happened to the covenant line if it depended upon Judah?

(2) What is God showing us in this unfaithfulness of Judah?

2. *Tamar takes advantage of Judah's sinful practices to produce a covenant seed. Even though she is a Canaanite she seems to understand the promise to Abraham. Or else her motive was entirely selfish.* But see verse 26.
   a. Her action nevertheless is very wicked, since the end never justifies the means. She was not a prostitute by common practice. She wants a son by Judah, no matter how. And she wants his seal and staff for future evidence.
   b. And yet Judah is reminded of his sin in not giving his third son to Tamar, and thus neglecting to raise children in the covenant family.
   c. In condemning Tamar he finds that he has condemned himself even more. But henceforth, because of her action she is unfit to be his wife or the wife of his son. Both actually deserve to die under God's righteous judgment.

NEWS from, for, and about our churches

KARLENE OOMKES

Radio News:

The Program Committee of our Reformed Witness Hour informs us that they have many tape recordings which are now available to any of our readers who desire them. The material recorded on the tapes is varied. Sermons by Rev. H. Hocksema on Lord's Day 1 through 52 of the Heidelberg Catechism, sermons by several of our Protestant Reformed ministers, selections by our Radio Choir and other fine musical talent featured on our Distinctively Reformed radio broadcasts can be obtained. Although the Young People of our congregations probably cannot appreciate and enjoy listening to a "Dutch" sermon, perhaps a few of our "Senior Citizens" will be interested to know that even a limited number of sermons rendered in the "Hollandsche taal" are also available. A sermon by the late Rev. G. M. Ophoff, on the text on Colossians 3:1-4, no doubt will prove to be most enjoyable by all of our people. For further information regarding subject material and the modest cost of these tapes write to:

The Reformed Witness Hour
1947 Alto Ave. S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Calls:

First Church has extended a call to Rev. H. Hanko of Doon for pastor and Rev. David J. Engelsma of Loveland for missionary of our churches.

Concerning our Servicemen:

Don Hoksbergen (Hull) returned home during the last week of March having fulfilled his term of six months in the service.

While stationed at Camp Pendelton, Aaron Schwarz (Loveland) has had the privilege of attending the services in Redlands, California.

Robert Ekema (Redlands) left April 6 to begin a two-year period of duty in the Armed Forces.

Chuck Kalsbeek (Hope), Chuck Bult and Dale Reitsma were expected to return home for a two week period about the middle of April; after this furlough, they will go to Texas.

Future Conventioners:

A daughter, Susan, born to Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Van Baren (South Holland).

A daughter, Brenda Lee, born to Mr. and Mrs. John C. Haak (South Holland).

A son, Henry Lee, born to Mr. and Mrs. Everett Buiter (South Holland).

A son, Scott Alan, born to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Miedema (Hudsonville).

A son, Robert Dale, born to Mr. and Mrs. William Buiter (Oaklawn).

A son, Daniel Peter, born to Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Decker (First).

A daughter, Darlene Joyce, born to Mr. and Mrs. James Pastoor (Southeast).

A daughter, Katherine Wynne, born to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Feenstra (Redlands).

A daughter, Laura Mae, adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Doezema (First).

A son, Duane Lee, born to Mr. and Mrs. L. Bruinsma (South Holland).

A daughter, Karla Ruth, born to Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Kuiper (Oaklawn).

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. A. Buiter (South Holland).

Confession of Faith:

was recently made by the following young people:

From Oaklawn: Mr. M. Alsum.

From First: David Bol, Ruthellen Bol, Lawrence DeMeester, Thomas Emaus, Patricia Kamps, Mary Kregel, Barbara Reitsma, Sheryl Velting and Terry Velting.

From South Holland: John and Egbert Holleman.

Congratulations to

Mr. and Mrs. Art Bleyenberg (Edgerton) who celebrated their sixty-seventh wedding anniversary on February 18.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schut (Hudsonville) who celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on February 25.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vogel (Hull) who celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary March 19.

Judy Alsum and Don Abel (Randolph) who were united in marriage on March 26.

Membership Transfers:

Redlands congregation welcomed into their midst Mr. John Kuipers and Mr. and Mrs. H. Vander Veen.

Lawrence De Meester was received by First Church coming from the Netherlands Reformed Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth A. Rietema and five baptized children transferred from First to Southeast; Bill Huber transferred from Loveland to Hope; and Edgerton welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kuiper and one baptized child.

Called home

Mr. John Zandstra Sr. (South Holland) who passed away on March 6.

Society News:

According to reports, the South Holland Young Peoples' Society is busily preparing for the Young Peoples' Convention in August.

On February 21, the Junior Young Peoples' Society was host to the Senior Young Peoples' of First Church. The Senior Society presented the after recess program centering on the theme: "Hearing the Preaching of the Word."

On March 7, Hope Young Peoples' Society traveled to First and Southeast was host to Hudsonville Young Peoples' Society.

Southeast Men's Society was the host to Southwest on March 7. Mr. Offringa of Southwest, presented a paper on "Refuting Mormonism in the Light of Scripture" for the after recess program.

On February 15, the Men's Society of South Holland invited the "Senior" members of their congregation to meet with them. After recess, they heard the tape prepared by the Mission Committee of our churches which features singing of the Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica.

Items of General Interest:

The formal dedication of Holland Protestant Reformed Church took place on February 18, with Rev. Lanting, the present pastor, and Revs. Kortering and Schipper, former members of the congregation as speakers. Since the dedication, many activities have taken place in their new church. The Hope Heralds presented a sacred concert on February 25. The proceeds were for the furnishing of the church annex. The Sunday School Teachers' Mass Meeting was held there on March 26. Rev. Lanting addressed the group. Classis East met in Hol-

MR & MRS JOHN ZANDSTRA JR.
492 GLENWOOD-LANSING RD.
GLENWOOD, ILLINOIS 60425

land on April 7; and Mr. Robert Decker addressed the Officebearers' Conference on April 6 in Holland also. He spoke on the subject: "What Constitutes the Neglect of the Means of Grace?"

The Senior Young People's Society recently thanked all those who contributed toward the Jamaican clothing drive and also informed the congregation that the remaining funds were used to send the Jamaican churches one hundred Psalters.

The members of South Holland congregation are invited to hear the tapes of the Reformed Witness Hour each Sunday afternoon, at 3:15.

Randolph's congregation celebrated the Annual Prayer Day Service one day later due to the fact that Rev. Van Baren was in Lynden and would not return home until March 10.

The Hope Heralds, a male chorus of Hope church, presented a concert in their church on the Sunday evening of February 23.

The Sunday School of Redlands sponsored a hymnsing for their congregation on February 14.

While on church visitation in Loveland, Rev. J. A. Heys also lectured for the members of that congregation on February 9, on the topic: "God's Sovereignty and His Decree of Sin."

In January, Mr. Gerald Kuiper addressed the P.T.A. of the Edgerton Free Christian School on the subject of discipline.

Rev. Heynen of Pine Rest Christian Hospital was the guest speaker at the March meeting of the Adams St. Mothers Club. He presented a very interesting talk on coping with situations in the home in connection with the rearing of Christian young people.

Hull Church recently conducted a drive to repay the loan for their new furnace.

Loveland's congregation has begun construction on their new edifice. Mr. R. Ezinga, a member of the congregation was hired to work on the building. In addition, each man of the congregation is donating fifty hours of labor toward the completion of their new church.

The Priscilla Society of First Church sponsored a Coffee and Baked Goods Sale on March 10 for the benefit of the Foundation for Handicapped Children. A total of $401.00 was collected for this worthy cause.

The Northwest Society of Protestant Reformed Education sponsored a lecture on March 16, the eve of the Classis West meeting in Hull Church. Rev. H. Hanko was the speaker.

Mr. Lam Lubbers, a teacher at Hope Protestant Reformed School addressed the Protestant Reformed Ladies Secondary School Circle on the theme: "Patterns in History" at their March meeting.

On March 29, the male members of Redlands congregation were called to a special meeting in the interest and possibility of organizing a Protestant Reformed School Society.

The Loveland School Board scheduled a parent-teacher meeting in February, so that a closer relationship might be attained between the home and school in the interest of covenant instruction.

The Adams St. Mothers Club meeting of April featured a program given by the school children commemorating the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ, our Savior.

The Western Ladies League Meeting was held on Friday, April 2, in Hull Church. The theme for the day was "Angels and the Saints". Rev. B. Woudenberg addressed the women in the morning and an interesting program had been planned for the rest of the day.

South Holland's congregation has decided to begin construction on their new church during this coming summer. It was also decided that the auditorium would have a seating capacity of four hundred.

On April 9, the Ladies Circle of Oaklawn Protestant Reformed School invited Christine Faber and Karlene Oomkes to show their pictures of Europe to the members of their congregation.

Mr. Richard Moore addressed the Hope P.T.A. at their April meeting on the topic: "Students' Attitude Towards Authority."