BEACON LIGHTS
for
PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

June-July 1965

Editor Robert Decker Resigns
New Editor Darrel Huiskem

The Classics - Good or Bad
AGATHA LUBBERS
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Why I Accepted the Editorship of BEACON LIGHTS

Although I considered myself unprepared to perform the duties of an editor, I felt compelled to accept this position because God called me through the Federation Board. When God calls, he calls with one purpose in mind: the propagation of the glorious Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus, he called me to help in the propagation of the “good news” through the publication and distribution of this God-centered periodical. Now that I have explained why I accepted this position, I want to relate to you some of the experiences I have already had while editor of Beacon Lights.

The first Monday in April I attended my first Beacon Lights staff meeting at which Robert Decker, the former editor, presided. I was truly impressed with both the efficiency and the spiritual strength of this group of Protestant Reformed young people.

Since that time I have met with individual staff members to resolve some minor mechanical details that had occurred during the change in editors. Finally, on June 3, I presided over the first staff meeting, and as individuals and as a group I found them most helpful, educative, and, above all, spiritually uplifting. I want to thank them all for helping me, and I am looking forward to working with them in the future.

The staff has helped me much, but Robert Decker has helped me the most. I want to thank him also for the instruction he has given me thus far. Even after he is settled in his own congregation, I hope we can call on him for editorial advice and maybe an article or two if he has the time. From the brief contact I have had with the staff and former editor, I can safely say that no one need worry about the future of our churches when God has supplied us with spiritual leaders like these young people. I do not say this boastfully, for no one can glory save in the Lord, then it is He that glories. But I must hastily add that I should hope that we young people will maintain the truth of the Word of God. God has singled us out to spread His glorious Gospel in all its purity—an awesome responsibility is ours!

Darrel Huiskens

"Tis not that I did choose Thee,
For, Lord, that could not be;
This heart would still refuse Thee,
But Thou hast chosen me.
Thou from the sin that stained me,
Hast cleansed and set me free,
Of old Thou hast ordained me,
That I should live to Thee.

"Twas sov'reign mercy called me.
And taught my op'ning mind;
The world had else enthralled me,
To heav'nly glories blind;
My heart owns none before Thee,
For Thy rich grace I thirst;
This knowing, if I love Thee,
Thou must have loved me first.

Josiah Conder
Literature Classified

Literature has been classified in various ways by literary students. General classifications are classicism, puritanism, neo-classicism, romanticism, and realism. To the student of literature these classifications have meaning and have assumed broader and more inclusive meanings because of his intimate knowledge of the many works that would be grouped under each general classification.

In general it can be stated with a certain measure of exactitude that classicism as understood today is a literature which attempts to explain all things as they are, or as they appear to be, to the one interpreting the things which he perceives with his senses and his understanding. Through the ages from Plato, who lived before Christ, and Aristotle down to Dr. Johnson who lived during the early 1500's A.D. the classical mind had viewed literature as an imitation of life or reality. It was a literature which was a representation of how each man saw the actions of men. The object was further to picture men not only as they really were but also as they ideally should be. This was an attempt on the part of man to come to truth by his reason.

"Pure reason," which has no concord with faith, was avoided by the Puritan writers and resulted in a literature which revolted against the past and was an attempt to apply the truths of Scripture to life. Some of those who wrote in this manner were John Bunyan, John Milton, William Bradford, John Winthrop, and Cotton Mather. All of these men, including the Americans, had received a classical education and were thus familiar with the forms for proper expression.

Neo-classicism was a return to the classicism of the past. Men in America who were repulsed by the writings of the Puritans were such men as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. The latter composed his own New Testament but left out all passages which refer to Christ as the Son of God. Included in this lot were men such as Thomas Paine, an apostle of the European enlightenment movement, and William Eley Channing, the leader of Unitarianism in America. In Europe the period of the so-called Enlightenment was descending. Voltaire and the Encyclopedists in Europe were revolting against the established forms of government and were making known their disagreements in their writings. These productions should finally stir the people to the point that the pot would boil over and result in the French Revolution and eventual overthrow of all monarchy in Europe.

The Romanticist changed the concept of literature into expressionism. Romanticists place faith in feeling and imagination. The romantic expression might be an expression of the state of society, or of a national spirit, but characteristically it was assumed to be an expression of self, of the writer's own personality and experience in the world, as he knew it or chose to make it. Literature became largely confessional—personal, autobiographic, lyrical. The romanticist knew that human life was not like he portrayed it but then with a shrug of the shoulder and wink in his eye said, "Don't you wish it were?"

William Dean Howells, American author, could not agree with the romanticist. What mattered to him was common sense, fidelity to the ordinary run of facts, calm and reasoned behavior.

In the Rise of Silas Lapham speaking through Mr. Sewell, the minister, he says: "... and the self sacrifice painted in most novels... is nothing but psychical (soul) suicide, and is as wholly immoral as the spectacle of a man falling upon his sword."

Since 1870 literary productions have
tended to be realistic. Faith has been placed in science. Realism is not new in the sense that this is the first time that reality is to be portrayed. All men tried to portray reality as they saw it or wished it would be. Homer and Aeschylus, and the Puritans represented in their literature what they thought was reality but this is not what is meant by "realism" as a literary form. The realistic movement was a turning away from the methods and the standpoint of the romantic writers of the 19th century. It was a movement toward the conception of reality which concurred with actual experience—this area of life: modern science was exploring.

Out of the literature of the realistic writer has grown the naturalistic and pornographic prose that has become so prevalent today. Some of the sensationalism of a religious and secular nature can also be classified with the pornography and naturalism as poor literature but we will refer to this more at length in a later part of this speech.

One of the first such writers was Stephen Crane. His naturalism is tame, however, by modern standards. Smut which falls in the class of this modern trash is neither classic nor is it literature. It does not meet the standards for literature in either form or content.

The early naturalist, however, chose to ignore the pleasant things of the American scene and began to write about the lurid, not to be mentioned things of life, but things that today constantly fill the average evening newspaper. When the first naturalists began to write in a detached unsympathetic way, the America's were not quite ready to accept as good literature that which today is designated as classical.

**The Task of the School and the Development of the Classical Curriculum**

The school has a task and that task is defined for the teacher. He instructs covenant youth. These covenant youth come to the school—a school which is an extension of the Christian home. The school is, however, an institution which has a position which of necessity is born out of the social situation in which we live. Much that must be taught in the school is there because of the complex society in which the child of God finds himself today. Our schools have a calling, however, to be distinctive—but they also have a distinct place in the life of the covenant seed. The school is distinct from the church. Just as the school is not called to give direct training in Christian doctrine so the church does not address itself directly to the task of training children to read and to master the other disciplines necessary for an individual to know in the midst of the world. Basically this is the task that the parent has delegated to the school. In the past a parent might have delegated this task to a master craftsman when he hired out his son as an apprentice, but today the task is the school's.

In contemporary America the state has assumed this responsibility and has taken from the parent his God-given responsibility. This movement toward mass education was an early attempt to give children an education which conformed with the philosophy of the secular state. The classics would be the medium for such training. These classics were the basic tools in the curriculum. This curriculum had gradually developed since the early days of the Puritan school in which the colony of Massachusetts passed the "Old Deluder Satan Law" of 1647 which stipulated that towns should establish schools so that children might learn to read so that they could read their Bibles. No longer, however, do schools teach children in the secular state principles of reading so that they may read the Scriptures. All citizens are to receive an education today so that they may be liberalized to know that every man is created equal and that all have equal rights before God. This is even the basic task in the American system's choice of literature.

Our battle today is much the same as it was in the 17th century. The more conservative intellectual leaders of the colonies developed the religious aspects of life in their literary works. They were in a real sense children of the Protestant Reformation in Europe but they were also proponents of the classical humanism of the Renaissance of the 14th and 15th centuries. In these centuries the study of the classics in the original Greek, Hebrew, and Latin had become important. This was necessary, too, if the Reformer was to be able to battle in
the religious controversies of the 16th century. Martin Luther would have been no match for Erasmus had he not been schooled in the classics. Calvin would never have written the scholarly Institutes of the Christian Religion nor would he have been respected had he not been an early student of Latin and Greek. His first treatise was on the Latin Seneca's De Clementia. This Seneca was a brother of the Gallio spoken of in Acts 18:12. Calvin, who was a student of jurisprudence at one time, was interested in the treatise of Seneca and argued against Seneca.

(to be continued)

"THE ANSWER"

John 11:25-26 "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. . . ."

"The Answer" . . . "The Answer" . . . "The Answer". The sign kept flashing its message to the passerby. We wound our way slowly down that narrow cemetery road to stop at the open grave to place the remains of a dear one. And all the while the sign opposite the cemetery kept flashing its ironic message: "The Answer . . . The Answer." How many mothers and fathers had taken the remains of little children to this place—and had confronted that same sign? How many lonely wives or husbands had seen that same sign through tears of grief? And what was that "answer" for those grief-stricken mourners? A partially tipped champagne glass on the same sign was the visible evidence of the meaning of the message. Here, across the street from the cemetery, one could find the "answer" to his sorrow and grief.

So does man present his answers to every difficulty. Ah, but for all of his "answers," he has nevertheless found none. His computers have solved many of his problems. Man grows in his understanding of the composition of this universe. The sum of his knowledge increases with amazing speed. But THE answer he has not found. He presents suggestions. He develops philosophies. He has his theories. But he has no real answer.

There is a very real problem which all men confront: the reason for his existence. Why does all existence end in physical death? Why is his life-span so very, very brief? What has man gained, or what has he added, by living on this earth? What must he say about suffering and pain? How can he explain war and pestilence? How can he account for the fact of death? Throughout the ages the same problem confronts man, a problem for which he can find no
Let m;~tis ton~orro~v of that little is not difficult to dent and pain "answer" of this thinks upon answer the tavern any the minister to the bast to walk earlier. The grief and but brother that only heart, with prohibition. What an answer! Jesus explains this glorious truth to Martha — and us. He IS this for us: the resurrection and life. He does not OFFER it to Martha or us if we will kindly accept it of Him. He does not beg or plead that we take this life of Him before it is too late. That would be Arminianism. That presentation is becoming all too popular in our day. But that could hardly be the answer of comfort and assurance which we daily need.

Jesus IS resurrection and life for us. These are already accomplished. He took upon Himself the guilt of our sin. Willingly He went that way of the cross in order that there He might bear the full vials of the wrath of God for our sin. He actually did bear that wrath to its bitter end. Atone-ment had been made; satisfaction was complete. That was also the testimony of His resurrection again on the third day. He was raised again because of our justification (Rom. 4:25).

Thus is He our resurrection and life. He is our resurrection from spiritual death. Through the work of His Spirit Who re-generates us, we are brought to newness of life. This life we already enjoy on this earth. It is fellowship and communion with God. It is that covenant relationship whereby all the blessings of our God are freely and richly bestowed upon us. That is given to those for whom Christ died.

Death, then, no longer has its sting. Now it becomes for me an entrance into eternal glory. Grievous it might seem to those who remain behind; yet children of God can rejoice through their tears. How can they fail also to rejoice, knowing that another has entered into the “joy of his Lord?” And all adversity serves as means to prepare us for that place in glory which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. All things now work together for our good. Though we were dead, yet shall we live.

This can be the only possible true answer for the Christian. It is real, not merely something which hides for a moment the anxieties of our time. This is an answer
not of man's devising. No man could ever have arrived at the conclusion that resurrection and life would be accomplished through the cross of God's Son in our flesh. Here is the revelation of the almighty, sovereign God: the ANSWER that He has provided that we might be called by His Name.

This is what we believe. Through the working of the Spirit of the Son, we are regenerated, converted, and thus confess our union to Him—the resurrection and life. Then we are not tempted to try out the many and varied “answers” of this world. We know all of them to be false; we know that these can not give comfort and assurance. We continue to hold to that one truth through every way which lies before us. This is the answer of grace which never deceives.

FROM _DORT TO TODAY_  
_The Development of the Reformed Faith_  
_Common Grace_  
_(20)_  

by REV. HERMAN HANKO

Having discussed in the last issue of _Beacon Lights_ some of the doctrinal controversies which troubled the Christian Reformed Church in the first two decades of the 20th Century, we turn now to that controversy which interests us more particularly, i.e., the controversy concerning common grace.

We have a couple of remarks to make at the very outset.

In the first place we do not intend to enter into the history of this controversy as such. The reasons for this are: 1) A detailed treatment of the history would take too many issues of the _Beacon Lights_; and yet an abbreviated history would be difficult to make. 2) The whole history is treated extensively in the book “The Protestant Reformed Churches in America,” a book which most of our readers have in their possession. We do want to take the opportunity though to urge our young people, especially, to read this book (if they have not already done so) in order that they may become thoroughly acquainted with the history of the origin of our own denomination. That a knowledge of this history is important cannot be denied, for it is a history of the Churches of which you and I are members; and our traditions are precious to us.

In the second place, the entire controversy which brought about our Protestant Reformed Churches swirled about important church political questions as well as doctrinal questions. In fact, these church political questions really were the immediate occasion for the beginning of our own denomination. Much of the time of the Consistories, Classes and Synod involved in this controversy was spent in deciding church political matters. But also these questions we intend to leave out of our present discussion. There are several reasons for this: 1) Also these church political questions can be learned from “The Protestant Reformed Churches in America” where they are all discussed in detail. 2) Also the kind of discussion these issues warrant would involve too many separate articles in _Beacon Lights_. 3) The main purpose of this entire
series of articles is to show that our own Prot. Ref. Churches stand in the doctrinal tradition of the Calvin Reformation and the history of the Reformed Churches through the Synod of Dortrecht and up until today. We shall lose sight of this main purpose if we enter into a detailed discussion of these church political questions.

It ought to be mentioned in passing however, that the chief political issue, and certainly the church political issue that was the immediate occasion for the beginning of our own denomination, was the issue of whether a Classis or a Synod may suspend and depose officebearers from a local congregation. Especially Classis Grand Rapids East (and later Classis Grand Rapids West) too the position that such power was indeed provided for these assemblies by the Church Order. Classis Grand Rapids East suspended and deposed Rev. Hoeksema from office as well as the entire Consistory of Eastern Ave. Chr. Reformed Church, Classis Grand Rapids West deposed Rev. H. Danhof and the Consistory of the First Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, and Rev. G. M. Ophoff and the Consistory of the Hope Christian Reformed Church in Riverbend.

Yet this was very wrong, for suspension and deposition from office is an exercise of the key power within the Church of Christ. And Christ has not committed this key power to a Classis or a Synod, but only to a Consistory of a local congregation. These broader ecclesiastical assemblies acted entirely outside their Christ-given jurisdiction. But this error was only the chief of many church political mistakes which the Christian Reformed Church made on both the classical and the synodical level at the time our own Churches were begun.

In the third place (and still by way of introduction) we shall quote in this article, the entire decision of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of 1924 with respect to common grace. That is, we shall not only quote the “three points”, but the whole decision as it was finally adopted by that Synod; for there are several interesting and important features about it that we shall have to take into account in our discussion. The quotation follows taken from “The Protestant Reformed Churches in America” pp. 85ff.

“1. Regarding the first point, touching the favorable attitude of God toward mankind in general and not only toward the elect, synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confession it is established, that besides the saving grace of God shown only to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. This is evident from the Scriptural passages that were quoted and from the Canons of Dort, II, 5 and III, IV, 8, 9, where the general offer of the gospel is set forth; while it is also evident from the citations made from Reformed writers belonging to the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our fathers from of old maintained this view.

“2. Regarding the second point touching the restraint of sin in the life of the individual man and of society in general, synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confession there is such a restraint of sin. This is evident from the Scripture passages that were quoted and from the Netherlands Confession Art. 13 and 36, which teach that God by a general operation of His Spirit, without renewing the heart, restrains the unbridled manifestation of sin, so that life in human society remains possible; while the citations from Reformed authors of the most flourishing period of Reformed theology prove, moreover, that our fathers from of old maintained this view.

“3. Regarding the third point, touching the performance of so-called civic righteousness by the unregenerate, synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confession, the unregenerate, though incapable of doing any spiritual good (Canons of Dort, III, IV, 3) are able to perform such civic good. This is evident from the Scripture passages that were quoted and from the Canons of Dort, III, IV, 4, and from the Netherlands Confession, Art. 36, which teach that God without renewing the heart, exercises such an influence upon man that he is enabled to do civic good; while it is, moreover, evident from the citations made from Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our fathers from of old maintained this view.

“Synod expresses that several statements in the writings of the Reverends II. Danhof and H. Hoeksema cannot very well be har-
monized with what Scripture and the Confession teach us regarding the above mentioned three points. Synod also judges that the pastors referred to, in their writings use some strong expressions, from which it is evident that in their presentation of the truth they do not sufficiently adhere to the way in which our confessions express themselves, especially Point 1 of the Utrecht Conclusions.

"On the other hand, synod declares that these ministers in their writings, according to their own repeated declarations, do not intend or purpose anything else than to teach and maintain our Reformed doctrine, the doctrine of Scripture and the Confessions; and it cannot be denied that they are Reformed in respect to the fundamental truths as they are formulated in the Confessions even though it be with an inclination to one-sidedness.

"With a view to the deviating sentiments of the Reverends H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema regarding the above mentioned three points, and with a view to the controversy that arose in our Church regarding the doctrine of Common or General Grace, synod admonishes the two brethren to abide in their teaching and writing by the standpoint of our Confession regarding the three points that were discussed, and at the same time she admonishes the brethren and the Churches in general to refrain from all onesidedness in the presentation of the truth, and to express themselves carefully and with sobriety and modesty.

"On the other hand, in as far as the pastors H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema in their writings warn against worldly-mindedness, synod judges that there is, indeed, reason for such warning with a view to a possible misuse of the doctrine of Common Grace, and, therefore, synod considers it its calling to send the following TESTIMONY to the churches.

"Now synod expressed itself on three points that were at stake in the denial of Common Grace and thereby condemned the entire disregard for this doctrine, she feels constrained at the same time to warn our Churches and especially our leaders earnestly against all onesided emphasis on and misuse of the doctrine of Common Grace. It cannot be denied that there exists a real danger in this respect. When Doctor Kuyper wrote his monumental work on this subject he revealed that he was not unconscious of the danger that some would be seduced by it to lose themselves in the world. And even now history shows that this danger is more than imaginary. And also Doctor Bavinck reminded us of this danger in his Dognatics.

"When we consider the direction in which the spirit of the time develops round about us, it cannot be denied that our present danger lies more in the direction of worldly-mindedness than of false seclusion. Liberal theology of the present time really obliterates the distinction between the Church and the world. It is more and more emphasized by many that the great significance of the Church lies in her influence upon social life. The consciousness of a spiritual-ethical antithesis becomes increasingly vague in the minds of many to make room for an indefinite notion of a general brotherhood. The preaching of the Word concerns itself largely with the periphery of life and does not penetrate into its spiritual centre. The doctrine of particular grace in Christ is more and more pushed to the background. There is a strong tendency to bring theology into harmony with a science that stands in the service of infidelity. Through the agency of the press and various inventions and discoveries, which as such are, undoubtedly, to be regarded as good gifts of God, the sinful world is to a great extent carried into our Christian homes.

"Because of all these and similar influences, exerted upon us from every side, it is peremptorily necessary that the Church keep watch over the fundamentals; and that, though she also maintains the above mentioned three points, she vindicates the spiritual-ethical antithesis tooth and nail. May she never permit her preaching to degenerate into mere social treatises or literary productions. Let her be vigilant that Christ and He crucified and risen always remain the heart of the preaching. Constantly she must maintain the principle that the people of God are a peculiar people, living from their proper root, the root of faith. With holy zeal she must constantly send forth the call to our people, especially to our youth: 'And be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that we may prove
what is that good and acceptable will and perfect will of God.’ With the blessing of the Lord this will keep our churches from worldly mindedness, that extinguishes the flame of spiritual ardor and deprives the Church of her power and beauty. (Note: for some unknown reason this “Testimony” was never sent to the Churches.)

“In connection with the overtures that would urge Synod to express itself on the doctrine of common grace as such, or to appoint a committee to study the matter, synod decides as follows:

“a. At the present to formulate no statement relative to the standpoint of the Church regarding the doctrine of general or common grace in every detail and all its implications. Such a statement would presuppose that this doctrine had already been thoroughly considered and developed in all its details, which certainly is least of all the case. Preparatory study, necessary to this purpose, is almost entirely wanting as yet. Consequently, there is in the Reformed Churches as yet no consensus of opinion at all in this case.

“b. Neither to appoint a committee to devote itself to the study of this matter, in order to reach the formulation of a dogma concerning this matter, which eventually may be received as part of the Confession.

“(1) Because dogmas are not made but are born out of the conflict of opinions, and, therefore, it is desirable that the establishment of a certain dogma be preceded by a lengthy exchange of opinions. Participation in such a discussion must be as general as possible and must not be limited to a single group of churches:

“(2) Because a certain truth must live clearly in the consciousness of the Church in general, or in the consciousness of a particular group of churches, before the Church is able to profess such a truth in her Confessions. It cannot be said, that this indispensable condition exists at the present or will exist after two or four years.

“c. But to urge the leaders of our people, both ministers and professors, to make further study of the doctrine of Common Grace; that they give themselves account carefully of the problems that present themselves in connection with this matter, in sermons, lectures and publications. It is very desirable that not a single individual or a small number of persons accomplish this task, but that many take part in it. Grounds:

“(1) This will be most naturally conducive to a fruitful discussion of the question of Common Grace, and such an exchange of thoughts is the indispensable condition for the development of the truth.

“(2) It will be instrumental to concentrate the attention of our people upon this doctrine, will serve to elucidate their conception of it and to cause them to feel its significance, so that they become increasingly conscious of this part of the contents of their faith.

“(3) It will, undoubtedly, in the course of a few years, lead to a consensus of opinion in this matter, and thus it will gradually prepare the way in our Churches for a united confession concerning Common Grace.”

Thy will be done on earth, O Lord,  
As where in heav'n Thou art adored!  
Patience in time of grief bestow;  
Obedience true in weal and woe;  
Our sinful heart and will control  
That thwart Thy will within the soul.

Give us this day our daily bread,  
Let us be duly clothed and fed;  
Forgive our sins, that they no more  
May sore displease Thee as before,  
As we forgive their trespasses  
Who unto us, have done amiss.

Into temptation lead us not,  
And when the foe doth war and plot,  
Deliv'rance from all evil give,  
For yet in evil days we live;  
Redeem us from eternal death,  
E'en when we yield our dying breath.

Amen! Amen! So let it be!  
Strengthen our faith and trust in Thee,  
That we may doubt not, but believe,  
That what we ask we shall receive;  
Thus in Thy Name and at Thy word  
We say Amen; now hear us, Lord!

Martin Luther
5. THOUGHTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

5. ITS EXEMPLIFICATION

Election and reprobation are plainly evident throughout the Old Testament. In the case of Abraham, who is the father of all them that believe, before God called him out of Ur, he was of an idolatrous stock which worshiped false gods. There in that heathen environment "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham," but not to the other citizens of that city. The Lord reminds us, "I called him alone, and blessed him."

Then there is the case of Jacob. He and his brother Esau were born of the same father and mother, twins. They stand as the classic example of election and reprobation in the words, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth: it was said unto her, 'The elder shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated'" (Rom. 9:11-13). Why did the Lord choose Jacob in preference to Esau? He was not particularly winsome, whereas Esau was of a much more attractive personality. Jacob proved himself deceitful and could lie a string of lies five times in nauseating succession. Yet God came to him when he had nothing, deserved nothing but condemnation, only to promise him everything and to protect him everywhere he went.

Consider next the case of the nation of Israel. God chose that nation. He set His love and favor on it to the exclusion of all other nations. He provided the passover lamb for that one single nation. There was no lamb of God for the other nations. To the Israelites God declared, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2), i.e., I have, from the beginning of the ages, known you with a knowledge of love—you, only you, have I so loved. But all the other, heathen nations I would that they should walk in their own ways. They shall be My battle axes, My weapons of war, that with them I may break in pieces and destroy the kingdoms of this world. Why did the Lord choose Israel, and not the other powers? The Chaldeans boasted the advantage of antiquity. The Egyptians were experts in the whole range of worldly wisdom. The Canaanites had the fulness of number. But what had Israel? What, apart from Jehovah, was the excellency of Israel? Would we think to choose a nation hard-hearted, stiff-necked, carnal, unappreciative and rebellious? Was it because Israel had one milligram of goodness? Was it because Israel had one atom of "common grace"? Or was it not rather that God chose Israel in absolute sovereignty? Is it not rather that
God never works from the point of view of what is in the creature, but from what is found in Himself, in His own will.

Then in the New Testament, why did the Lord choose angels to deliver the message of the birth of His Son? Why not have kings or emperors make the glorious announcement? Why did He choose poor shepherds to first receive the news? Why not the representatives of government, or the ecclesiastical leaders in Jerusalem? If angels must bring the glad tidings, why not have them do so in the temple? This is what we would think, but our thoughts are not God’s thoughts.

The Lord Himself, at the beginning of His ministry in Nazareth preached His first sermon on the truth of election and reprobation. “But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian” (Lk. 4:25-27). Moses and Paul preached the same predestination: “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. Wherefore He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth.” But the people, unwilling to tolerate this great truth, “when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city” (vv. 28, 29). Take note of the fact that not the people off the streets manifested this hatred of the truth and its unique Proclaimer, but “all they in the synagogue!” In this connection, remember that the servant is not greater than His Lord. What conceivably would Christ’s attitude to such a response be? Certainly this: “Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, ‘I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for it seemed good in Thy sight.’ What should be our attitude to the preaching of this truth? This: “In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

In the early history of the church, we have the oldest of the evangelical confessions, the Waldensian, which says of election, “God save from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith or holiness He foresees in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ Jesus, His Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of His own free will and justice” (from “The Doctrines of Grace,” G. S. Bishop). Our own Canons of Dort say, “This election was not founded on foreseen faith, the obedience of faith, or any other good quality or disposition in man as the prerequisite, cause or condition” of election (I, 9). The latter was written especially in opposition to the philosophy of Arminius. The former was written against a creeping Arminianism, if you will pardon an anachronism, before Arminius was born.

The humanist we call an Arminian has always said, “God chooses people because He foresees their good, their choice of good, their faith and good works.” But in the whole human race, who has this good? “There is none good, no not one.” Then if there is none good, where are the good works God is supposed to see? If by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified, neither can any works be the basis of election. Then the reason God chooses people is because He chose to choose them. He chose them because it was His will to choose them. He did not choose them on the basis of their foreseen faith (there is no such “faith”). He chose them on the basis of His own eternal grace. “Not according to our works (not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth), but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us before the world began.” God does not elect men on the ground of faith. For faith is a gift of God. But that does not mean that God bestows faith on those He foresees would take it. What God foresees, if He foresees anything, is that man will not take it; that he must be given grace so that he will want to take it. Election is not on the basis of something seen in man, but on something in God—grace.

Arminian radio preachers, every so often, will aver that there is an election taught in

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Scripture, but then they immediately proceed to tear it to shreds. They are never without their parroting of favorite texts to appear the great Bible students they would have men believe. Often they quote the words, “him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” Why is it that they repeat and repeat this misquote? Why do they not quote the first part of the text, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me”? Why is it that we never hear them repeat, much less, preach on such texts as, “No man come unto Me except the Father . . . draw him,” or “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit,” or “I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen” or Christ’s words from His high priestly prayer, “I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me”?

That unconditional election is certainly the truth of Scripture is apparent from the intense hatred Satan has against it. He attacks the truth, not error. The people of Nazareth were enraged against this truth. Many of Jesus’ disciples refused to walk further with Him because He preached this truth in His Bread of Life discourse. Romanism, seed-bed of Pelagianism and Arminianism, opposed this truth in England, France and the Netherlands with murder and massacre. Today Rome still opposes this truth under the guise of an angel of light, as the leading unifier of the world church. Modern churchmen despise it under the pretence of zeal for God’s honor, ridiculing the truth as that which makes God a cruel monster.

In the recent confessional perversions being perpetrated in the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the doctrine of predestination is the first marked for extinction. Intimidation is employed against this truth. It is said that though scriptural, it is too easy to misunderstand, therefore is more dangerous than edifying, and so unwise to preach it. With increasing creedal changes, the least semblance of this doctrine will finally be expunged from the modern Presbyterian churches. That is a practical reality already. For most Presbyterians have been sailing under a false flag. I.e., their true colors are and have been deep-dyed Arminianism. Is this not true of many who hear the name Reformed? Most such people, if they could only bring themselves to be honest, would leave the Presbyterian and Reformed churches to take up with the Unitarians. If they had one grain of honesty, they would not pose as advocates of “good Calvinism.” It is not their intention for a moment to have any kind of Calvinism. Their purpose is to brainwash their dupes with humanism.

As the presbyterial form of government in the Presbyterian and Reformed churches is dying out, and democracy, socialism and communism are fast increasing in popularity everywhere, while representative authority is more and more despised, it is no surprise that the authority of Scripture is denied. Following this thought, it is no surprise that predestination should find its worse foes in its own household. The writer was born, baptised and raised in what was then the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Before he was born, the denomination drew up and adopted a document of very study character called “A Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith, 1902.” Since the church was founded on the wonderful, truly Reformed Westminster Standards, what was the purpose of this brief declaration? It sounded rather suspicious, but nevertheless, it was prepared in order to express the Reformed Faith “in unto technical terms,” suggesting that the Westminster Confession is beyond even above average intelligence. It was also to be understood that the Brief Statement was only for “giving information” and “not with a view of its becoming a substitute or an alternative of our Confession of Faith.” In this document we read, “God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men . . . He has provided a way of eternal life for all mankind” (Art. VI). This is not “giving information,” but injecting the corruption of “universal redemption.” If this is not substituting another creed for the Westminster, it is a compromise of that Confession. It is an Amyraldian drawbridge between Calvinism and Arminianism. At another place election is said to be “unto holiness, service and salvation.” It is added that “those who come to years of discretion can receive this salvation only through faith and repent...
ance" (Art. VII), which implies that faith and repentance are outside of salvation, are conditions unto it and are the ground of election, not the results of it. Faith, however, has its origin in the preordination of God. For He not only requires "faith in Him that they may be saved," but also promises "to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe" (W.C., VII. 3). Further, the Brief Statement says, "the kingdom of God is to be made manifest" in the brotherhood of man (Art. XIII). But the W.C. states that the kingdom of God is to be made manifest in a brotherhood of the redeemed, which "consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God" (XXV, 2). The drawbridge of 1902 was found too heavy for the orthodox, the conservatives to draw up and keep up. Then the liberals, as they intended, let it down with a crash. So the Westminster doctrine was given up to the enemy. In all too few places is its unadulterated form retained and defended. (To be continued, D.V.)

PROPOSED AGENDA FOR THE P.R.Y.P. CONVENTION

(1) The Federation Board proposes that each delegation give its society's choice of Bible book to study for the 1966-67 society season, and also give the grounds for this choice.

(2) The Federation Board proposes that assessments for the 1965-66 society season be set at $10 per member, $6 of which shall help defray convention expenses, $2 of which shall be appropriated to the Scholarship Fund, and $2 of which shall be given to *Beacon Lights*.

(3) The following officers must be elected for a two-year term:
   a. Vice-President
   b. Treasurer
   c. Assistant Secretary
   d. Advisor

(4) The Federation Board recommends that the Holland Young People's Society be accepted as a member in the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

(5) The Federation Board proposes that the following resolution be adopted:
   "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 tendency 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 those 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 conventioners upon the problem and thus help facilitate improvements.

(6) The Federation Board proposes that three (3) members be approved for positions on the Scholarship Fund Committee.

(7) The Federation Board proposes the following changes in the constitution of the Scholarship Fund:

a. To Article 5 — Officers — add “and treasurer” to “president and secretary”. Also add section 3 under “Duties” which shall read as follows: “[the duties of the treasurer shall be]”:

a. to receive and disperse all monies of the Scholarship Fund.

b. to keep accurate account of all monies and to make a detailed annual financial report by June 1 at the committee meeting and in Beacon Lights.

grounds:

1. To help make the Scholarship Fund Committee more efficient.

2. To eliminate the problem of a lack of co-ordination between the Scholarship Fund and the Federation Board.

b. In Article 6 section 2 “the committee shall determine as much as possible the reality and extent of the applicants’ needs” be substituted for “The committee shall interview all applicants for the Scholarship Fund either personally or by letter so as to determine the reality and extent of the applicants’ needs.”

Grounds:

1. Between May 1 and July there is not enough time to interview either personally or by letter all applicants.

2. This greatly simplifies the processing of applications.

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**Federation Board Report**

It is time once again for your Federation Board to give its annual report concerning its activities.

Among our early activities was the composing of a visitation schedule, which purposed to bring together more often in Christian fellowship the young people of our various churches. We were happy to be able to add the Holland Society to the schedule this year.

A Reformation Mass Meeting was held October 27, 1964 in Southwest Church, Rev. Heys spoke on “Eccumenical Attitudes Toward the Reformation”. After refreshments, Miss Karlene Oomkes and Miss Christine Faber showed their slides of Europe.

One of the larger efforts of the board has been in connection with the Study Committee on Goals of Conventions. The report of this committee was printed in Beacon Lights and sent to each society. We are thankful for the response and enthusiasm which was evident in the letters received from the societies.

The board has also been active in the operation of Beacon Lights. This year has involved several new appointments: Darrel Huiskens — Editor, replacing Robert Decker; Don Jonker — Finance Manager, replacing Nancy Heemstra; Hilda Grace Meslker — alternate writer for “Critique”; Tim Pipe — Public Relations Staff; Ruth Kuiper — Clerk, replacing Helen Flikkeena. Also, for fundraising and promotion, a public relations committee for the Scholarship Fund has been appointed consisting of John Kalsbeek, Carol Van Potten and Randy Meyer. It is our hope and strongest desire that this magazine may continue to satisfy our spiritual
thirst, giving positive instruction in our glorious truth.

The annual Spring Banquet was held May 11 at First Church. A large audience enjoyed the speaker, Rev. G. Vos, as he spoke on "Our Ailing Conventions". He described the disease, diagnosed the cause and prescribed the cure for the ailment. Our thanks to an excellent committee who planned this edifying and entirely worthwhile evening.

The 1965 Prot. Ref'd Young People's Convention will be held in South Holland, Illinois on August 24, 25, 26. The board has been working with the host society on convention details. We have a bus committee at work which will publish information concerning transportation from Grand Rapids to Illinois. Also in connection with the coming convention, the board has drawn up and sent out an agenda.

We are grateful to God who has guided us in our offices this past year. Our prayer is that He may continue to bless us all. We anticipate seeing you all at the 1965 convention.

The Federation Board
Ruth Kuiper, Librarian

Our Editor Has Resigned

Due to his recent graduation from our Protestant Reformed Seminary, his announced candidacy for the ministry, and with no real idea as to where the future might bring him, Robert Decker made known his intention of resigning as editor-in-chief of Beacon Lights. Although his resignation had been anticipated and came as no surprise to the staff—he gave us fair warning early in the year—we are sorry that he must leave us so soon. We, as the staff of Beacon Lights, might feel our individual regrets at his going but collectively we rejoice with him as he has successfully terminated his many years of formal education and study.

The staff wishes at this time to congratulate him on his graduation from the seminary, and our prayer is that the Lord will bless him and his family in all of his labors and endeavors which lie ahead as a minister of the Word of God. We are losing an editor, but, on the other hand, we have gained another much needed pastor.

We are grateful for the opportunity that we have had to work with Bob and cannot but recall the many difficulties and problems which we have together faced. On occasion these problems seemed insurmountable and beyond solution but with God's guidance, Bob's leadership, prayer, and hard work most of them disappeared almost as though they were but a fatuation of the imagination. His job—as almost all editors will agree—was very often a thankless job bringing but few rewards; but, nonetheless, a number of noteworthy accomplishments were achieved while he was our editor. First of all, largely through his efforts, Beacon Lights is now mailed every month on time. Secondly, Beacon Lights, during his tenure in office, maintained a high degree of proficiency and competence. And, thirdly, the editorials which he penned were instructive, appropriate, clear, concise and to the point. Bob gave much of his time to Beacon Lights when in reality he had very little to spare for anything other than his studies. The staff will surely miss him as editor.

Our new editor, Mr. Darrel Huiskan, is presently learning the strings connected to directing Beacon Lights and our hope is that he will soon have them fully under control.

The Beacon Lights Staff
John Kalsbeek, Managing Editor

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Fifteen
from, for, and about our churches
KARLENE OOMKES

Wedding Bells
Wedding Bells rang for Judy Vlietstra and Andy Brummel (Edgerton) on March 31; for Nancy Heemstra and David Oudersma (First) on April 23; for Evelyn Huizenga and Nathan Tamminga (Randolph) on May 1; and for Ellen Groenendael and Ken Teitsma (Southeast) on May 14.

Membership Changes:
Edgerton welcomed Mrs. Jeanette Bleyenberg from the Reformed Church in Steen, Minnesota and Mrs. Judy Brummel from the Reformed Church in Edgerton; Mr. and Mrs. J. Jabaay and family transferred from Edgerton to Redlands; South Holland welcomed Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Regnerus from Oaklawn; Kalamazoo welcomed Mrs. Harold Triezenberg from Cutleville Christian Reformed Church; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bleyenberg and two baptized children transferred from Edgerton to Doon; Hope received the membership papers of Jim Langerak from Highland Hills Christian Reformed Church; and Randolph welcomed Mrs. Sue De Vries from the First Reformed Church of Randolph.

Concerning our Servicemen:
Adrian Lenting (South Holland) was home on a two-week furlough during April and May; Ken Haak (Oaklawn) who was home on a twelve day furlough during the latter part of May was called back early with a possible overseas assignment awaiting him.

We have received the address of Robert Ekema (Redlands). It is as follows:
Robert Ekema US 56384072
Co. A 2nd. Bn. 1st BDE, 3rd Plt. Fort Polk, Louisiana 71459

New Arrivals
A daughter, Pamela Marie, born to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kuiper (Edgerton). A son, Kevin James, born to Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Bylsma (First).
A son, Charles Cornelis, born to Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Doezema (First).
A daughter, Dawn Renae, born to Mr. and Mrs. Larry Lubben (Hudsonville). A daughter, Barbara Jo, born to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Schipper (Hudsonville).
A daughter, Leah Renee, born to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bleyenberg (Edgerton). A son, William John, born to Mr. and Mrs. William Bleyenberg (Edgerton).
A son, David Mark, born to Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Regnerus (Oaklawn).
A son, Loren Dean, born to Mr. and Mrs. Egbert Gritters (Hull).
A daughter, Rebecca, born to Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kamps (Hudsonville).
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kamps (Hudsonville).

Items of General Interest
Hope's congregation met in their new edifice for the first time on May 16. The dedication was held June 9. Rev. Heys was to be the main speaker; Rev. H. Hanko and Rev. D. Engelsma also participated in the program. The congregation also received two hundred new Psalters from an anonymous donor.
The resurrection of our Lord was celebrated by special programs in several of our congregations. The children of Redlands presented a program for the members of that congregation after the morning service; the Radio Choir presented a program that same evening sponsored by the Protestant Reformed High School Circle; and on April 25, the Choral Societies of Hope and South Holland Churches rendered a program.

On April 19, Student R. Moore addressed the Men’s League in Holland on the subject of “Speaking in Tongues”.

The Ladies’ League met in Holland on April 22. Student R. Decker addressed the group on the topic: “What Constitutes the Neglect of the Means of Grace”. 

On April 29, Rev. Van Baren addressed Oaklawn’s congregation on the theme, “The New Generation of 1924 – A Blueprint for Its Failure”. The following evening he gave the same speech for the Mr. and Mrs. League Meeting which was held at First Church. On May 6, he lectured for his own congregation on the theme, “Limited Atonement”, the Third in a series on the Five Points of Calvinism.

The Young People in the Grand Rapids area gathered at First Church on May 11 for the Annual Young People’s Banquet. Rev. G. Vos was the speaker for the evening.

Randolph’s Young People’s Society rendered a special program for their congregation on April 21. Featured on that evening was the “Beacon Lights” film.

On May 9, the Hope Heralds rendered a sacred concert in Southeast Church sponsored by the Mr. and Mrs. Society of that church.

Rev. H. Veldman lectured May 20, in Holland on the topic: “The Heritage of the Seed of the Covenant”. The proceeds for the evening were to be used for the cost of transporting the children of that congregation to and from Hope School.

Spring House Cleaning was also carried on in some of our churches. The members of South Holland and Oaklawn’s congregations gathered for that purpose during the month of May and Doon’s cleaning was done in June.

Mr. John Buiter addressed the Protestant Reformed High School Circle at their May meeting in First Church on the subject: “Math and Science in the Christian School Curriculum.”

Confession of Faith was recently made by Lenore Engelsma, Sharon Kilep, Carol Bomers, Judith Huizenga and Jim Langner of Hope Church.

At the close of another school year, many of our schools featured “End-of-the-Year Programs and Graduation Exercises.” Rev. Engelsma addressed the students and graduates of his congregation on May 28, on the topic “Who Are You”; Rev. H. Veldman addressed the graduates of Hope School on June 4 on the subject: “Continuing in the Things You Have Learned;” Oaklawn held their program on June 3; and Rev. Schipper addressed the graduates of Adams St. on June 11 on the subject: “Trust in the Lord.”

Another highlight was the graduation of Student R. Decker from our Theological School on June 8 at First Church. The program featured musical numbers by the Hope Heralds and Mr. Arnold Dykstra, and speeches by Student Decker and Professor H. C. Hoeksema.

**Congratulations to**

Mrs. E. Van Eenenaam (First) who celebrated her 81st birthday on April 27; and to Mr. Cornelius Woodwijk (Hudsonville) who celebrated his 92nd birthday on May 10.

**Roses grow upon briars, which is to signify that all temporal sweets are mixed with bitter. But what seems more especially to be meant by it is that pure happiness, the crown of glory, is to be come at in no other way than by bearing Christ’s cross. By a life of mortification, self-denial, and labor, and bearing all things for Christ. The rose, that is chief of all flowers, is the last thing that comes out. The briary, prickly bush grows before that; the end and crown of all is the beautiful and fragrant rose.**

*Jonathan Edwards*
ATTENTION YOUNG PEOPLE!

The twenty-fifth anniversary convention of our Young People's Societies will be held, the Lord willing, August 24, 25, 26 at South Holland.

Looking back upon twenty-five years of blessing and looking forward to a further blessing from our covenant God we chose the theme:

PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

Plan to come for edification in the truth and Christian fellowship to the birth place of the conventions of our Federation, South Holland, Illinois.