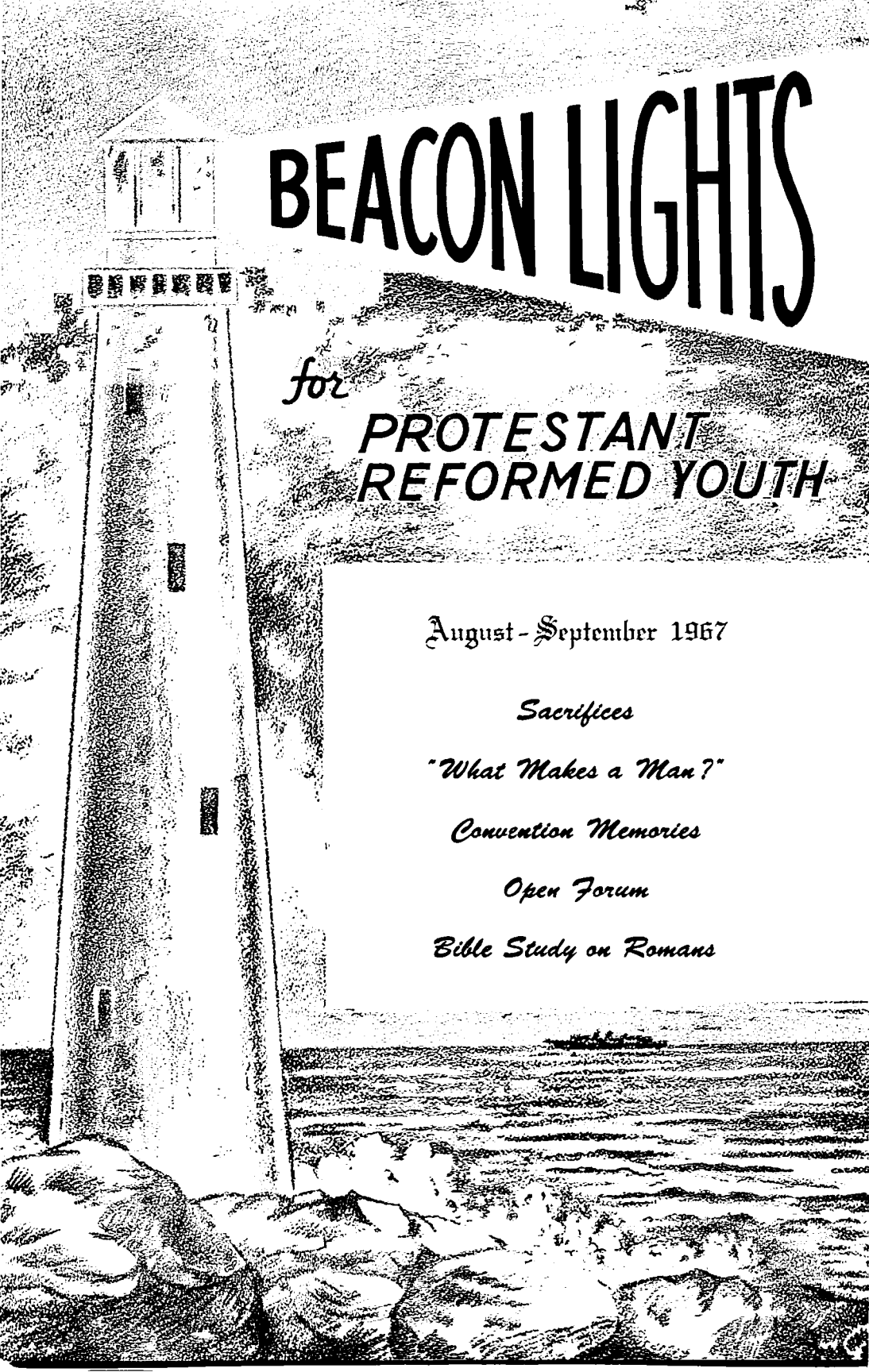

BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

August - September 1967

Sacrifices

"What Makes a Man?"

Convention Memories

Open Forum

Bible Study on Romans

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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Editorial

SACRIFICES

The idea of the sacrifice is basic to all religions. The explanation for this lies in the fact that all men are religious and, therefore, they sacrifice out of the necessity of their nature. For the sake of definition we point out that the word sacrifice indicates that which is available for common use is set apart for the worship and glorification of some deity. The word offering looks at this object from the viewpoint of its being presented by the subject of the honored deity. In proof of the fact that all men sacrifice we point out that even the ungodly reprobate comes before the Lord as his father Cain with his arms laden with all manner of the fruit of his toil, his grains and monies. This is how he attempts to placate the wrath of the Holy God and so to obtain favor.

But, in contrast to the previous, there is the sacrifice of the faithful believer of God. And Scripture reveals to us not only the proper way of approach to God, but it also reveals the names of many who have so sacrificed. For example, we read of Abel who by faith brought his bloody sacrifice and of the miracle of grace, "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering" (Gen. 4:4b). This is the beginning of the Scriptural revelation concerning the practice of the church in history with regard to its worship. Later we read in great detail of how Israel, after it had become the official people of God in the world, was to worship God with all the tabernacle ritual and ceremony.

Nevertheless, through a passage such as Psalm 51:17 we see that this ceremony and ritual was not merely external for "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." This speaks to us of the subjective reformation which the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of believers. And this is necessary before the believer can have communion with Jehovah.

Yet it is just this truth which, if comprehended, gives evidence of the antithesis among men. For not all men have such a broken spirit and this produces a ferocious warfare in the world. The world stands over against the church as Cain stood against Abel. Yet again there is another cleavage which produces an even more bitter battle and that is the war for truth in the midst of the historical manifestation of the church. This warfare within the church is manifested in the offerings which she brings before the Lord. The prophet Malachi rebukes those who of Israel offer polluted bread and animals which are blind, lame and sick. (Therefore being useless for profit.) The Lord indicated the terrible folly of Israel by pointing out the fact that even a human governor would not receive such a worthless "sacrifice." And the divine condemnation against this policy is "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand" (Mal. 1:10b).

Now in the New Dispensation we understand that Jesus Christ is the end and epitomy of all bloody sacrifices. He is THE sacrifice of God and therefore He alone placated the wrath of God against His people. Yet within the church historical there are many who would enter the Holy place through another door than that which God has put there. These are those who have not learned to look outside themselves for their entire salvation, and we may add they abound on every side.

In contradiction to such we who are regenerated by the Spirit of Christ have learned to cry "Father." Through our Lord Jesus Christ we now seek to give a pure offering of praise and thus we seek to obey the admonition "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

That, O young people, is our calling and the calling of the whole church in the present time, for it is necessary that the people of God walk in a way of spiritual warfare against evil and of resistance of the flesh. This is especially true today as it is

so easy to labor for the ungodly mammon and the pleasures which such implies and so to sacrifice some of that – if the cost is not to great. And again it is true in a special sense because it has become so difficult to account all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is because of this, O young people, that grace is necessary for us to say truthfully "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (I Cor. 4:13b). This is our heritage as heirs of the kingdom of heaven. This is our heritage as children of the Reformation. This is our heritage as members of the Protestant Reformed churches.

But you will say this is true only in principle and further we see so little of that as the youth of the church pursue all the vanities of the flesh, the carnal things, and the things that perish! Yet we do not despair or lose hope, no, for, on the contrary, this causes the saints to boast increasingly in the power of God and of His faithfulness to His covenant "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6). Therefore, resting on such a firm foundation we look for the day of final fulfillment when in the new heavens and earth we shall stand in the Presence of God as the perfected church of Christ offering undefiled praise. This, O young people, we seek to do by the sovereign grace of our God.

A.C.N.

FEATURES

"WHAT MAKES A MAN?"

A Reason Why We Should Have Our Own Protestant Reformed High School

VERNON GRAESER

"WHAT MAKES A MAN?" This was the title of an essay turned in by one of our Protestant Reformed Youth in one of the existing Christian high schools our young people attend. The student received an "A" for his grade with the following comments at the end of the essay written by the teacher. Excellent! Good logical reasoning. The opening paragraph, *"Does one go to bed a particular night as a boy and wake up as a man? Or is the making of a man a process of evolving maturity? The latter of course is the case."*

Certainly we all know that one does not become a man over night, and I also feel that becoming a man is a process of physical, mental and spiritual growth. I feel that the word "evolving" could easily have been left out, evidently that word is in common use, but this is a minor criticism which one can overlook as long as one does not tie it in with creation or mean that in ages to come man will evolve into a perfect creature. Aside from all this the big question is – "What does the instructor mean by a man?" I say instructor, and not student because the teacher approves of this essay which means that she agrees with it and we can assume that the student's definition of a man runs parallel with hers. Keep in mind this is a Christian teacher. The teacher in a Christian School should be thinking of the new man in Christ Jesus in contrast to the old man in Adam. "How Does One Become A Christian Man?" should be the title of the essay or the student should at least be encouraged to bend all his energies to that goal.

Paragraph No. 2 – *"The two key words associated with a man are mental maturity and responsibility. Legally one becomes a man on his 21st birthday and in some cases on his eighteenth; but in reality not until he can face life independently and without uncertainty."*

This the teacher approves since she graded the paper "A" Excellent. Let us see what her idea of an ideal man is and what goals students should set for themselves. An ideal man she approves as one being

(1) Mentally mature.
(2) Responsible (able to fulfill his obligations) to what? – society or God?
(3) Can face life independently (who on this globe is independent?)
(4) Can face life without uncertainty.

Let us analize this –

(1) Mentally mature – who is to set the

standard for mental maturity. Each mind is unique, no two minds are alike. I dare say there are no two persons in the whole world who think exactly alike. This one is born with a poor mind, another with an average mind or excellent mind while some are mental giants. When do you call a person mentally mature, how do you deal with intangibles? What may be considered mental maturity for Mr. Smith the average American cannot be considered mental maturity for a Thomas Edison or an Einstein. How silly to even try to judge when a mind has reached its maturity when you do not know its capabilities. God's gifts of mental capability vary.

(2) He is responsible. What in the world does this mean? The dictionary says, "Fit to be trusted with the carrying out of a duty or charge, or answerable to the law. To be held accountable." In God's sight we are all responsible (answerable or accountable to God for our sins) but the student says nothing about this. The teacher admits that a man should be fit to be trusted with a duty or charge but the student says nothing about his duty to God or his responsibility for his sin, and the teacher passes this by with the remark – "Excellent, good logical reasoning."

(3) A man can face life independently. This almost makes me laugh. From the time of our birth when mother changes our dirty diapers, to the moment our friends lower us into the grave we are never independent. We are inter-dependent. I depend on the farmer for my food, the bricklayer for my house, the doctor and pharmacist for my medicine, the automotive industry for my car. I could go on for hours telling you how dependent I am. Placed alone on a deserted island for a year and at the end of that time I would probably be dead. I can never in my life time reach a point where I can face life independently. I need the love of my wife, my children, my friends and most of all my God! I am dependent on them for this. Many who have not experienced this love have blown their brains out! Oh – how dependent we are on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for redemption and forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with our God! How could the teacher let all this pass by? Independence breeds pride, dependence begets humility. Would you foster the spirit of pride or that of humility in your son or your daughter?

(4) A man can face life without uncertainty. If there is one thing in this world that is certain it is uncertainty regarding most of life. The certain things are death and taxes. The rest is uncertain. As children of God we can be certain of our salvation, certain of the love of God, certain of our love for the church, certain of the fellowship of the saints, and all that goes with salvation, i.e., spiritual insight, development of wisdom and so forth, but the student says nothing about this and neither does the teacher. We can be certain about the New Jerusalem whose builder and maker is God which shall be eternal in the heavens and which we shall one day inhabit, but on this certainty we get nothing but silence. Now I could go on and on. The essay is a short one but to analyze its total spiritual blindness and worldliness would take hours. I will quote the closing two paragraphs, make a few remarks and then close.

"Statistics show how many 'men' are around today; look at the crime rate, the illegitamite birth rate, the rise in broken homes and don't forget the casuality lists from years of war.

"Something had better be done fast. 'Man' had better learn his lesson or maybe someday 'man' will destroy himself."

Make no mistake the teacher is concerned about this world exclusively. Place this English Essay in any public high school and they would go along with it 100%. You can't even get a faint smell of Christianity from its contents. This is a portrait of an ideal man of the world. He should be independent, proud, able to fulfill his obligations to society, master of his fate, he can face life without uncertainty. He can change things if he only wants to. Notice the last paragraph – "Something had better be done fast." Six, Six, Six is his number, man without God, without the Sabbath, without rest and incomplete outside God. Why this article?

Would you believe it, there are some who say the existing Christian High Schools are doing the job all-right. Our children should learn to stand on their own two feet. They do not realize that our children receive mostly an emotional attach-

ment to God in the primary grades while in the secondary grades their emotion attachment to God is supplemented by an intellectual understanding of God and their calling to walk as young men and young women of God in the midst of an ungodly world. Only when this training is completed at graduation at the age of 17-18 or 19 years, will they be strong enough to stand on their own two feet. To place them at the age of 15 in an apostate Christian school, where the school has joined hands with the world and then say, "Go ahead, stand on your own two feet is to produce a warped confused Christian, one who is confused as to what are the fine points of being a Christian. This will negate to a certain degree all the preceeding training of the past 9 years. Just think, 9 years of hard devoted, sound scriptural training. At the age of fifteen boys and girls begin to think, before this they let the parents do the thinking, but at 15 boys and girls will think for themselves. A pattern of thinking is being set up which will solidify at the age of 18 or 19 into a permanent pattern. To turn your son or daughter over into the hands of teachers who teach a religious system of errors and co-operation with the world is most unfortunate. We are forced to do this at the present time and a gracious and loving God certainly takes this into account, but what will be your answer to God when you have it in your power to correct this evil and you do nothing – and even worse than that when you oppose the remedy? By the time you read this our drive for our own high school will have begun. We all ready have a good start, let's finish the job. Dig deep, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

CONVENTION MEMORIES

by JUDY LUBBERS

There were the "Welcome" flags on display along Main Street. There was the small group discussion that concerned itself with the topic "Smoking." There were the winding trails through Newton Hills State Park. There was the night of the banquet, and there was the ever-present black and white sign on which was printed "Soli Deo Gloria." These are only a few of the many scenes, incidents, and activities which will always be among the memories of the twenty-seventh annual Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Convention.

In the afternoon of August 15, about seventy-five excited young people from the Grand Rapids area left their homes and headed for South Holland. Upon arriving, we were met by the South Holland young people and at 5:00 calmed down enough to eat supper in the church basement. From here we left by bus for the train depot in Chicago. By 7:00 we and our luggage had managed to board the train and began the slow long ride to Hull. Our chaperone diligently counted and recounted noses to make certain that none were left behind. And for the next thirteen hours there was almost no sleep but only ride, ride, ride between thirty-five stops. When one weary conventioneer was asked at 2:00 in the morning "What are your reactions to the convention thus far?," he could only reply "When, when do we get there?" One other half-sleeping person remarked "I think tonight is the longest night in the world." At one time all were rudely awakened by cries of "We're crossing the Mississippi!" At 5:00 we stopped for a snack in Dodge City and at 8:00 we stumbled and tumbled off the train into Le Mars, about twenty-five miles from Hull. We were finally off the train but it made little difference by this time because for most the world continued to sway and move for the next several hours. From Le Mars we were herded to the Hull church for lodging and registration. At this time we received our first impressions of Hull. Mainly the city seemed composed of cornfields, soybeans, pig smell, Brummels and Hoekstras. The rest of the day was free and most of us settled down to catch up on lost sleep. Some, however, took this opportunity to put on display their talent for horseback riding. Things were going well until one exceptionally fine rider missed a turn, broadjumped a ditch and then almost caught himself up in Mrs. Van Maanen's clothes lines. But we survived,

sore bottoms and all. That night many of us toured the big town of Hull and some even discovered where the neighboring metropolis of Doon was located. Meanwhile at the church, registration was held for those conventioneers who arrived later. Friday morning most of us managed to drag our weary bones to the 9:00 business meeting. Almost never before has business been taken care of so quickly and efficiently to the relief of many. Several routine decisions were made and new officers were elected. They were, Vice-President: Randy Meyer, Vice-Secretary: Sue Swart, Treasurer: Tim Heemstra, and advisor: Rev. Kortering. At noon lunch was served and at 1:00 about fifty faithful reassembled in the church auditorium for a Bible quiz. We were quizzed on quotations, parables, and were asked questions. One of us even had the audacity to give Ben Franklin credit for one of Solomon's proverbs. That evening Rev. Vanden Berg addressed us at the Mass Meeting on The Idea of "Soli Deo Gloria." He pointed out the fact that all things must be to God's glory, only to God's glory and nothing may detract from it. Afterwards we were served refreshments, played games, and became acquainted. All were asked to observe a 12:30 curfew for the convention but some of us didn't always make it. "After all," one complained, "how can you be home by 12:30 when you have to go halfway across the state to bring someone home." Strangers noted that it was easy to get lost, since in Iowa things have progressed to the point where street names are outdated and all directions are given in a "two miles north and three miles east from Perkins Corner" fashion.

Six o'clock Saturday morning about half of the crowd met at church and began the day by touring two farms. After this the greased pig contest was held. The poor pig ran for his life but when big Tim Heemstra came bearing down, he just didn't have a chance. The girls then had the opportunity to participate in an ungreased chicken contest. After this we were free until dinner and most of us went swimming, one wearing blue jeans and sneakers. After dinner we journeyed to Newton Hills State Park in South Dakota. We spent the afternoon hiking, playing volleyball, football, and softball. After a delicious broasted chicken supper Mr. Dale Kuiper spoke to us on The Basis of "Soli Deo Gloria." He emphasized the necessity of a strong faith because if our lives are going to be lived to God's glory, then we must be able to resist the continual temptations of the devil.

Sunday also found us with a busy schedule. Church services were held at 9:30 and at 1:30. That evening at 7:30 a singspiration was held at the Community Hall. This too was centered around God's glory.

Monday at 8:00 was the pancake breakfast at Rock Valley Park. Because there was no business meeting, we were free to roam until about 11:00 at which time discussion groups were held. Again about fifty faithful attended and voiced their opinions on the assigned topics. Dinner was then served and afterwards a debate was held on "Juvenile Delinquency" and its relationship to parents' responsibility. At 2:00 the East-West ball game was held with victory going to the East this year. At 5:45 everyone posed prettily for the convention picture. At first it appeared as though everyone might not be able to fit on, but we all sat tight and things went well. The banquet was held at the Holland House near Sioux Center. The theme was "Launched in Service, Anchored in God." After the meal, Rev. Decker addressed us on The Expression of "Soli Deo Gloria." He again reminded us of the opposition we meet when we strive to live to God's glory and challenged us to express "Soli Deo Gloria" in our entire lives, in all that we do. After a brief intermission we watched the film "The Five Major Religions of the World." The new officers were then introduced and it was announced that the twenty-eighth annual convention would be held at the First Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In conclusion we sang "God Be With You Till We Meet Again" and thus the 1967 convention came to its end.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Federation Board of the Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies and the Staff of Beacon Lights wish to express their thanks and appreciation to Georgia Hendricks for the time and effort she has ciligently put forth as News Editor of the Beacon Lights.

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

Launched in Service – Anchored in God

RON VAN OVERLOOP

"Crack." The tinkle of glass and the splash of liquid could be heard over the heads of the silent, exquisitely dressed crowd, all the way to the back row of the newly-constructed bleachers. In front of the bleachers, on a small, slightly raised platform stood a beautiful young girl with the top half of a champagne bottle tightly gripped in her upraised right hand. Slowly, but surely the huge object which the girl had struck with the bottle started to move back, away from the girl and the crowd behind her. At the first sign of movement a stiff, polite, and awkward applause broke out from the elite crowd. The massive object continued to move back slowly, as if on rollers, until finally, when it was farther back it could be identified as a very large passenger liner. The liner was a beautiful thing to behold with her smooth, sleek lines and with the very elaborate decorations and many beautiful ornaments on her decks.

In this manner the huge liner, built by an elite group of New York stock brokers for their personal use, was christened "Tisin" as it slid into the Atlantic Ocean away from its birthplace in a shipyard located in Massachusetts. Inside, the ship was very elaborately designed with many jewels and mirrors with which the wealthy were able to show off their many riches. A week after her christening the "Tisin" left on her maiden cruise, a six month voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. This cruise was to be very, very carefree, on which the crew and the huge liner would literally be subject to the will of the elite passengers. The liner, for six months was to go anywhere in the Atlantic Ocean that the passengers willed, just so that at the end of the half year it would arrive in England.

At the beginning of the cruise the crew was very awkward and clumsy and their work was poorly done because they had had at the most only three months sea duty. The reason a crew of such nature was on a ship like this was because of the youthfulness, for the owners of the liner wanted only the new and young on their ship, and didn't want the beauty of their wonderful ship marred by older sailors even though they were experienced. Because of continued practice at the end of about three and one-half months, the young crew was working smoothly together, so smoothly, in fact, that they seemed as one man.

A little over five months later, and about eleven miles north of where the elaborate christening of "Tisin" had occurred, in another, but much smaller shipyard, a small cargo ship, without any christening, slid quietly into the Atlantic Ocean. She was named the "Chrivir" and was ordered to sail as quickly as possible to England to deliver some valuable cargo there. The "Chrivir" had a beauty all her own, for unlike that of the "Tisin," her beauty was her innocence, clarity, and simplicity. She was not covered up with any decorations and impeding ornaments. The crew of the "Chrivir" was also young and inexperienced, but with one exception. Before the "Chrivir" left port on her maiden cruise to England with her valuable cargo, the captain had a pilot come aboard. This pilot was a man who was very experienced in crossing the Atlantic and knew about all the hazards and dangers of the weather and currents encountered on such a mission. Already two weeks after the "Chrivir" had set out, the crew, under the strict direction and close observation of the pilot, began to work just as smoothly as if they, too, were one man. Besides directing the work of the sailors, the pilot set a straight and narrow course across the Atlantic for the "Chivir" to follow, on the shortest and fastest path.

By the time the "Chrivir" set out on her mission, the "Tisin" was well on her carefree way, hopping in an indifferent manner from island to island across the Atlantic steadily drawing closer to her destination in England. Much high living and wickedness was occurring on board the "Tisin," for the passengers did whatever appealed to their fancy. As the end of the six months drew to a close, the elite group of passengers aboard the "Tisin" felt sad and sorrowful.

Meanwhile, following the direct course

set by her pilot, the "Chrivir" was also drawing near to her destination at about the same time, but her crew was looking forward with anticipation to their docking, so that they could be relieved of their valuable cargo.

On the dawn of the last full day of sailing left for both ships, the barometers began to fall and the wind and waves began to rise. The pilot aboard the "Chrivir," who had endured many a storm, saw the signs and knew from experience that the ship and crew would have to endure a bad storm before they would be able to make port. He immediately ordered the crew to batten down the hatches, secure the holds, and take any other precautions necessary for weathering the coming storm.

On the "Tisin" the captain also noticed the barometer falling and the Ocean getting rougher but he was not alarmed and thought that they would easily be able to make port before the storm would reach its peak. The captain then promptly forgot about the coming storm and went back to the passengers to enjoy, to the fullest, the last day of their high living.

Back on the "Chrivir" the speed of the advancing storm surprised even the experienced pilot, so he ordered the sailors to speed up their duties. It was because of that order that the crew finished up just as the rain started to come down really hard. With the rain came a very strong wind and rough seas. Rapidly the waves became larger and larger until they were just as high as the "Chrivir" was herself. The cargo ship would rise to the crest of a wave, hesitate for a moment, then fall rapidly to the trough below, only to rise to a new height, hesitate, and fall again to a sickening depth. Amid all the waves, the pilot was barely able to keep the "Chrivir" upright, let alone keep her on course. The battering of the seas was almost unbearable for the hull of the "Chrivir," and the sailors thought that they were surely going to sink.

Meanwhile, on the "Tisin," the storm caught the captain completely unawares. When he realized just how bad the storm really was, he left the passengers with their wine, women, and song. In order to reach the pilot house, the captain had to fight the many beautiful decorations of the ship which now became hinderances to him, as well as the tremendous rocking of the liner. When the captain finally did reach the pilot house, he received word that the battering was too much for the hull of the "Tisin" and she was beginning to leak in many places. The captain now became fully aware of the grave danger so he immediately ordered the pumps manned and he had the radioman send out S.O.S. signals.

When the captain of the "Chrivir" heard from his radioman that a ship in his vicinity was in need of aid, he ordered the course of the ship changed so that the "Chrivir" would be able to help the stricken liner. The pilot, however, quickly restrained the captain, nullified the order to change course, and then rapidly, but calmly, explained to the captain the dangers involved if they would go to the aid of the "Tisin." He told the captain that the probability for the "Chrivir" to make port now was very slim, for he did not know how long the hull would be able to take such a battering, and that if they did go to the aid of the "Tisin" they would undoubtedly lose their ship, the valuable cargo, and the lives of their crew. The captain then realized it would be better to stay on course rather than risk the dangers involved.

° ° ° ° °

The storm was over and the day was drawing to a close in an English seaport. Many people lined the docks of this seaport, anxiously and excitingly awaiting the arrival of the huge American passenger liner they had heard and read so much about. The sun was setting and the whole western sky was a bright red in contrast to the deep blur of the ocean water; when, suddenly, someone in the eager crowd shouted, "I see it. Look there, just below the sun. It's just a speck on the horizon." In a tense, excited silence the people watched the ship

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please send all the contributions, letters, and articles to the new editor of *Beacon Lights.*

MR. ARIE NOBEL
3724 Leonard, N. W.
Walker City, Mich. 49504

slowly increase in size from just a speck until, just when they thought that they would be able to distinguish the whole ship on the horizon, the sun sank lower until the ship stood directly between the crowd on the dock and the setting sun. Now all they were able to see was just a spot in the sun, becoming larger and larger as the sun continued to hinder the people from distinguishing any part of the ship. Then, suddenly, the sun was gone, for it had sunk below the horizon and the anticipating crowd could now see the ship. "That isn't the "Tisin," that's just an ole' cargo ship."

° ° ° ° °

Launched in service, Anchored in God. Just as the luxurious and sensually-satisfying passenger liner was carefree and lived very highly, so is the world around us. We, as Christian youth, must sail our ship of life through this ocean of sin around us as the "Chrivir." We must be launched in one mission, following a straight and narrow course set for us by our pilot in heaven. Just as an anchor clings to the earth, so must we also cling to our God and the course He has set for us in His Word. We must not take a zigzaggy course through life with no apparent goal, except for what we desire our destination to be, for then our destination will be unattainable. We, as Protestant Reformed youth, have the valuable cargo of our own particular faith to carry straight through this world of sin to the portals of heaven. We must not risk endangering our lives and our faith when we are tempted to join and aid the world in their high living and sensuality. Like the "Chrivir" we must have CHRIstian VIRtues and must not sin the TItnaic SINs of the "Tisin." Christ does not promise smooth sailing but he does promise a safe docking, and for this safe docking we can only say, "Soli Deo Gloria."

OPEN FORUM

Dear Mark,

As I was reading in the last issue of Beacon Lights, I came across an article written by you. I believe the title was "A New Topic"; I have a few comments to make on this, so here follows what I have to say.

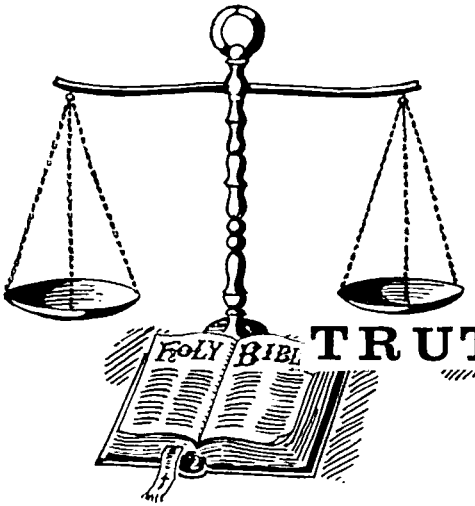
It is true that the Bible speaks of wars and rumors of wars. But it must be that way, because Scripture also says that there is no peace. I believe that this fighting that is going on is a sign of the times, a sign that someday the world will come to an end. And, too, as time goes on, we will witness other signs that foreshadow the coming of Christ. We who live in the Grand Rapids area have also seen and heard of riots which have caused much damage to buildings and property; this, too, is a sign that the Lord is coming some day. And these riots are not just in the Grand Rapids area, but have also taken place in several other U.S. cities as well.

My opinion is that we as Protestant Reformed people must not support that war in Vietnam. I say this because there are too many problems in our own country to do something about, rather than being in Vietnam. I have also heard that this is why there are so many riots going on today.

Also I feel that we as Protestant Reformed people should not have any say so about it, because we should give our full support to the preaching of the word. We must not enter the politics of whether to support it or not. We know of too many other churches who get into this matter, but we must be different from these churches and not tie ourselves in with these worldly affairs. We must go to the Lord in prayer and seek from him what is right and wrong, and only then does the Lord give us strength to remain faithful to his name. Then we can be fully interested only in the Word and sacraments, rather than worldly affairs such as the Vietnam trouble.

In our churches also we have many families who had their sons go into that country to fight, but even they weren't there because they wanted to be, but only because that's where the government has put them. We don't have anything to say about that either, because God has called them there for a time.

Sincerely,
ROGER KAMPHUIS



TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

ASSURANCE: Hindered Yet Secured

We have given some consideration to the saying many think quite Scriptural, "You are saved by believing you are saved." But the statement is not true, much less one having anything to do with assurance. For assurance is based on truth with evidence of the same. We are more concerned with those who fear that such evidence is unattainable while still in the flesh and daily encountering indwelling sin. They do not regard themselves entitled to assurance. But may we not know assuredly with whom God dwells? Scripture answers, "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isa. 57:15). In fact, the Lord assures, "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (66:2). Such is entitled to Christian assurance. One may say, that excludes me, for I find so much of pride in my heart. But where, really, do you make your boast? in yourself, or in the Lord? The latter? Then the promise through Isaiah is yours. Who really "believe in Christ"? They who hear these sayings of Mine and do them (Matt. 7:24). Who are truly born of God? They who do righteousness, love the brethren, and do so in deed and in truth (I John 3:7, 14, 18). Who actually finds salvation? The one to whom the Lord shows it. To whom does He show it? "To him that ordereth his conversation (conduct) aright, will I show the salvation of God" (Ps. 50:23).

There are some who for every reason seem to be entitled to assurance, yet lack it. In some cases, this may be due to poor physical health. Medical science tells us in connection with psychosomatic symptoms that a troubled state of mind often adversely affects the body. The converse is also true. A dull and sluggish physical condition indicates that the system needs toning up and sometimes also effects a somewhat impaired mental health. This is no "tired blood" joke. When the muscles and internal organs become flabby, flacid, stagnant and clogged, the result may be a frequent state of despondency or depression. Some Christians, feeling it necessary to ask themselves, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?", may well find their whole outlook to change with the use of a good, mild cathartic, a stimulating routine of physical exercise, diminution of the smoking habit, getting out more into the open air, plus a reduced calorie diet. By this we do not mean that the taking of a physical culture course will recover, or enable one to attain to, assurance. For material means do not in themselves produce good spiritual conditions. (Think of Joseph in Potiphar's house.) Still, a physical hindrance when removed may prove of positive advantage to the spiritual welfare. A mouth full of bad teeth may be the cause for poison coursing through the system, bringing generally poor health and gloomy outlook. One may wrongly assume

that one's case is a lack of assurance, when it is actually the physical disability to enjoy the things of God. A chronic malfunction may interfere with profitable Bible reading or the comfort of prayer. By this we do not mean, either, that no one experiences Christian joy while he suffers materially and physically. Think of Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail! But it may very well be that some children of God are missing true spiritual enjoyment through failure to maintain the rudiments of health.

Others never enjoy the grace of assurance because brought up under a faulty ministry, the influence of which they have never shaken off. They were fed by one-sided preaching. What they know about the Heidelberg Catechism is all in the first part of Man's Misery. They get very little of the second part, of Man's Deliverance, and never live in the third part of Thanksgiving. If they had the benefit of any theological teaching, it was mostly in anthropology, or it was all anthropocentric. They had little of the main comfort of the Christian Faith, the absolute sovereignty of God. Or they sat under a ministry consisting predominantly in self-examination. We have considered the place and necessity of this. But some are always introspective. We can, indeed, do nothing but agree with their disgust over the disappointing lives of mere professing Christians. They detest boasting, hence withdraw from Mr. Carnal Confidence. They will not go where only pablum and spiritual meringue are served. But they do not claim as theirs the grace of assurance, lest they fall into presumption or pride. They are the ones who believe the knowledge of depravity to exclusion of almost any other spiritual reality, and gloomy fears to be the best evidence of spiritual life and true humility.

Of the two extremes, the one of boundless, unruffled certainty, and the last just viewed, the pining, pensive, self-distrusting outlook, we prefer the latter. The smug, self-complacement individual, never troubled with doubts, has a walk which does not come up to his boastful professions. Lighthearted because lightheaded, he is never grieved over his lack of conformity to Christ. The place for the Christian to be is not in the house of Mr. Carnal Confidence or that of Mr. False Peace, nor in the Slough of Despond or Doubting Castle. He is both "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (II Cor. 6:10). He may have to cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" But he can also say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom. 7:24f). Still there is something of joy in that awareness of wretchedness, for it amounts to a yearning after holiness; an experience unknown to the natural man.

Assurance escapes some because of the onslaughts of the devil. Satan being as an angel of light sometimes appeals to the holiness of God and the exceeding sinfulness of sin in order to discourage and drive to despair. He will call attention to the prevalency of your sin, the inexcusableness of your unbelief, your spiritual coldness, and the many ways in which you fall short of the glory of God with sins of omission and sins of commission. He will suggest that your Christian conduct is worthless; it is no righteousness; that your outward profession and inward corruptions so cancel out as to make you a hypocrite; that justice demands you to be put down as such. To listen to such satanic suggestions is to lose sight of the fact that the mark of the Christian is not sinless perfection, but grief over sin, and desire for spiritual growth. Satan can point to a shudderingly black catalog of sins he claims are mine. He does lie and misrepresent, to be sure, yet I can admit the black list, for he is not omniscient; he doesn't know all about me, so does not know all my sin. The list is longer and blacker than he makes it. The devil need not point out that a certain lust of the flesh is inconsistent with the new heart in me, for I know that well already. For in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing, and the miracle of the new birth neither removes the flesh nor improves it.

Naturally, the most prevalent obstacle to

WE ARE SORRY . . . . .

Snapshots of the 1967 P.R.Y.P.S. Convention were not in the hands of the editor at the time of publication, therefore, they will not appear in this issue.

THE EDITOR

assurance is the toleration of sin in the life. Deliberate deviation from the monorail of God's Word, continuing a practice without the approval of the Spirit, leaves one far from assurance, and from the comfort of the Scriptures. The cherishing of any sin will so weaken spiritual sight that inwrought grace will not be more than microscopically visible. Sin persisted in dulls the heart so that continued knowledge of misery ceases, and the true personal condition cannot be known. It also makes it impossible to enjoy the comforting presence of God. For He withdraws from the one who withdraws from Him. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). David illustrates the point here. His notorious sin, unrepented of for months, has on it this commentary, "When I kept silence, my bones became old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." But David was granted repentance, so that he confessed, "I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:3-5). David went farther in turning from his sin. "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (51:9-12).

Every truth must be guarded against extremes. This one has two extremes bordering it. There is that of fatalistic indifference which assumes that I can do nothing to help myself (cf. Phil. 4:13). Then there is the opposite extreme of Arminian egotism, that I can accept Christ, or reject the evil and choose the good, whenever I wish. The Christian should know what he can and cannot do. He cannot create peace of conscience in his soul, nor apply the Balm of Gilead to a wounded heart. He can grieve the Spirit and lose the joy of his salvation. He cannot of his own strength draw near to God, but of himself he can stray from Him. He cannot in himself live to the glory of God, but he can live to the glory of man. In his own strength he cannot walk according to the Spirit, but he can walk according to the flesh. He cannot make himself fruitful, but he can spiritually lose so much weight that he become light, frothy and incur leanness of soul. He cannot by himself grow in grace. The command, "Grow in grace" implies not that by taking thought we can add any fraction of measure to our stature, but that by the use of the means (of grace), attended with God's blessing, we further our spiritual nurture.

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON Paul's Epistle to the ROMANS

ROMANS 1

by REV. H. VELDMAN

I. Verses 1-7 — Introduction or Salutation.

A. Origin of the church at Rome.

1. The view of Roman Catholicism.
   a. Is there any connection between Rome's view of this church at Rome and its view of the apostle Peter?
   b. How does Rome view Peter's relation to this church at Rome?
2. This view of Roman Catholicism impossible.
   a. Is there any mention of Peter in this entire epistle?
   b. Is there any mention of Peter in the Christian greetings in Romans 16?
   c. Is there any mention of Peter in any of Paul's epistles which he wrote in Rome?
   d. Fact is, there is nothing to indicate that Peter had ever been in Rome.

3. How to be explained.
   a. Fact is, Scripture nowhere gives us any definite information.
   b. Can you conceive of any possibilities? How about Acts 2:8-11?

B. Paul's calling – verses 1-4.
1. Verse 1.
   a. Describe Paul's life until he became an apostle.
   b. What is a servant? Why does Paul call himself a "servant of Jesus Christ"?
   c. Describe his calling unto the apostleship – Acts 9:1-25; Gal. 1:11-18.
2. Paul (verse 1) was "separated unto the gospel of God."
   a. In these words we have the central theme of this entire epistle.
   b. Notice what we read of this "gospel of God" in these verses.
      1) First, it is the gospel of God. This expression can mean that God is either the object of this gospel or its subject. Or, it can mean both. Why is God its Object? Can God ever speak of anything besides Himself? Why? But God is surely also the Subject of the gospel. This gospel proceeds from Him. He willed it, eternally. He realized it in Christ. He works it in our hearts, now in principle and presently forever.
      2) Secondly, what is meant in verse 2? Give examples of this. Why are these Old Testament Scriptures called "holy"? Consequently, did Paul preach anything new? Could the enemies of the apostle ever rightly accuse him of preaching another, new, strange gospel? Incidentally, "holy" means fundamentally to be dedicated to God.
      3) Notice what we read in verse 3. Verse 3 should be connected, not with verse 2 but with the gospel of verse 1. This gospel concerns God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. What do these names signify? Why do we read: "according to the flesh"? What does it mean that Christ was "made of the seed of David"? What does it mean that He "was made"? Could this also to His being the Son of God? Trace His lineage.
      4) Notice what we read in verse 4. To be "declared" means to be revealed as such to our consciousness. The "Spirit of holiness" we understand to refer to God Who is called "Spirit" as in John 4:24 and Heb. 9:14. According to the flesh, the human nature, Christ is of the seed of David. But as the Son of God He was revealed to us, according to the power of the everlasting Spirit, by His resurrection from the dead. Surely, His resurrection from the dead reveals the power of the everlasting God.
3. Hence, Paul's gospel is complete.
   a. What is the meaning of the word, gospel?
   b. Notice the following. It is the gospel of God. God is its Subject and Origin. God sent His Son into our flesh and blood. God raised Him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the very heart and seal of the gospel, of this glad news. Why? What is the connection between this resurrection and the sixth crossword?

C. Verses 5-6.
1. Paul received from Christ grace and the apostleship.
   a. Notice that Christ gave these gifts. Christ not only earned everything for us, but He also bestows them upon us.
   b. We understand "grace and apostleship" in the sense that the former denotes in general the riches we have in Christ, whereas the latter designate one of those gifts of grace. Name other gifts of grace.
2. Paul received this grace and apostleship "for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His Name."
   a. Faith must be understood objectively, as the contents of what we believe.

We often use this word in this sense. We speak, for example, of the articles of our faith.

b. Obedience to this faith means that this faith is obeyed.

c. Paul is called to be an apostle in order that, through his preaching and by God's Spirit, this obedience to the truth may be realized among many nations. Was not Paul the apostle to the Gentiles?

d. And this takes place "for His Name," in behalf of the name of Christ. Christ's name must be revealed in all its power and grace, and glorified.

3. In verse 6 we read that also the believers at Rome had been called by Jesus Christ. Christ called them, irresistibly, through His Word and by His Spirit, into this faith of the gospel.

D. Verse 7.

1. To whom this apostolic greeting is addressed.
   a. To everybody in the city of Rome?
   b. What is the meaning of "beloved of God"? Subjective or objective? To love God or to be loved of God?
   c. What does it mean "to be called to be saints"?
2. The greeting as such.
   a. What is the character of these apostolic greetings? Are they merely the personal wishes of a man?
   b. What is this grace? Is grace merely unmerited favour? Or, does it denote the fulness of our salvation?
   c. Peace is a gift of grace. What is peace? Why does the apostle single it out? Why is it important to have peace with God and with all things? Do we particularly need peace, in the midst of our own sin and also as in the midst of the world?
3. From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father here is God Triune. Hence, we should read: from God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Verses 8-17.

A. In general.

1. These verses belong together, form a sort of introduction to the chief thought of the entire epistle.
2. This chief thought was already before Paul's consciousness when he wrote the verses 1-7, when he spoke of the resurrection of Jesus Christ whereby He was powerfully declared to be the Son of God.
3. But this chief thought he expresses specifically in the verses 16-17.
4. And in the verses 8-17 he leads us, step by step, to this central thought.

B. Specifically – notice, now, how the apostle does this (see II, A. 4).

1. First, a word of appreciation in verse 8.
   a. Here he opens his heart before them. He expresses his great interest in their spiritual welfare. At the same time, he indicates that he does not write to them because it was necessary for him to point them to evils in their midst.
   b. What does it mean to give thanks? Why was their faith spoken of throughout the whole world? Did they suffer for the sake of the gospel? Was their suffering a proof of the power of that gospel? And the apostle adds: "for you all." Would this indicate that this church was still sound?
2. Secondly, how fervently he carries this church in his heart! – verse 9. What is the implication of the expression: "for God is my witness." Is this an oath? What is an oath? – see Lord's Day 37.

3. Paul's great desire to come also to Rome – verses 10-15.
   a. Oftentimes Paul had desired to come to Rome, but had been prevented – verse 13. Prevented by whom? How, we are not told.
   b. Why Paul wanted to come to Rome also – verses 11-13. What does Paul mean in verse 11? What is this spiritual gift? Can he impart it? How? Why does he wish to impart to them some spiritual gift? What does he mean in verse 12? What is this mutual faith? How would this mutual faith comfort them together? Does it comfort a child of God to discover his faith to be also in others? What does Paul mean toward the end of verse 13?
4. Paul's consciousness of his responsibility and high calling – verse 14.
   a. What does he mean when he declares himself a debtor?
   b. To whom is he a debtor? What is the distinction between the Greeks and the Barbarians? Does the last part of verse 14 throw light on this? Are the Greeks the wise and the Barbarians the unwise?

C. Now Paul comes to the central theme of the epistle – verses 15-17.
1. He is ready to preach also in Rome – verse 15.
2. Why is he ready? – verse 16.
   a. His failure to appear in Rome is not due to any fear or hesitancy on his part to preach the gospel also in Rome.
   b. He is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. What does it mean to be ashamed? Of your father or mother or brother or sister in general? Of the gospel? Would it mean that whereof you are ashamed does not measure to what you believe it should be? What is the gospel reputed to be according to the Scriptures? What does it proclaim?
   c. Why is he not ashamed? First, because that gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Why is this gospel called the gospel of Christ? How is Christ related to this gospel? What is the meaning of the word, "gospel"? What is the meaning of this power? Why is it called the "power of God"? And why is it a power "unto salvation"? The word, "unto" means that this gospel is adapted unto salvation.
   d. Notice, too, the universality and particular character of this gospel. This is the second reason why the apostle is not ashamed of it. It is not limited to any nation. Why, then, should he fear to preach it also in Rome? But, it is also particular, because it is "to every one that believeth." Is faith a condition for salvation? What would it mean that faith were a condition for salvation? But, would then this gospel be the "power of God unto salvation"? And, why is the Jew first? Was he first in the Old Testament? Was he first in the apostolic labors as set forth for us in the Book of Acts?
3. Verse 17 confirms verse 16.
   a. What is the meaning of this righteousness? What is the righteousness of God as a Divine attribute? What is this righteousness of God as bestowed upon men? Are these two related?
   b. What is the meaning of the righteousness of God? Can man ever render himself righteous before God? This is God's righteousness, of God alone. What does this mean? When did God conceive of it? How did He realize it in time, in Christ? How does He bestow it upon us?
   c. This righteousness of God revealed "from (out) faith to faith." This revelation is spiritual here. It is revealed only in the sphere of faith. Only the believer received this wonderful righteousness of God. It can be experienced only in the sphere of faith. The unbeliever knows nothing of it. For the just, the righteous shall live only be faith. Outside of that faith is death. And death cannot receive or see it. Living out of faith the just one receives this revelation of God's righteousness with great joy.

III. Verses 18-23.

A. Connection between these verses and the preceding suggested by "for" which introduces these verses. This connection must always be sought in the first clause of verse 16.

1. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Why not?
2. First, and positively, because that gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.
3. Secondly, and negatively, because of the hopeless condition of the world, as set forth in this chapter, beginning in verse 18. Could the world save itself, why preach this gospel? But, that world is hopelessly lost in sin. Only the gospel of Christ can save. Why should the apostle be ashamed of it? Only, in chapter 1 Paul describes the hopelessness of the heathen world, whereas in chapter 2:1—3:20 he applies this utter hopelessness to the Jews or the church world. This means that at the end of Rom. 3:20 the whole world, Gentile and Jew, lies under Divine condemnation.

B. Verse 18 — in this verse the apostle sets forth the hopeless misery of men, because of the wrath of God.

1. What is the wrath of God? What distinguishes it from our wrath? Is our wrath constant? Is it holy?
2. When is this wrath of God revealed? Does the apostle here refer to a specific moment or event in history? Or does he refer to something that goes on throughout all history? Why? Is man's wickedness to be confined to a single period or certain periods, so that only then the wrath of God is revealed down from heaven?
3. What is the meaning of "ungodliness" and "unrighteousness"? What is "ungodliness"? It is the opposite of the "fear of God." It is the spiritual denial of God, Who alone is the living God. No fear of God, no faith, no worship, no confessing of God, etc. "Unrighteousness" is the actual manifestation of this ungodliness in all their walk (thoughts, words, eye and ear and mouth, with body and soul, mind and will, and therefore with all the means at their disposal). Unrighteousness is actual transgression of the law of God.
4. In the rest of this verse the apostle gives a further explanation of this wickedness. We read literally: who hold the truth under in unrighteousness. Wilfully man, knowing about the truth, suppresses it, tramples it under foot. Explain.

C. Verses 19-23 — in these verses Paul explains verse 18.

1. In verse 19 we read of the revelation of God.
   a. We should read: "Because that which is known of God." We must not read: "that which may be known of God." It is a fact that God is known.
   b. It is "manifest in them." Not merely "among them," but "in them." In their consciousness. That which is objectively known of God, through the revelation, is plain and is evident in them.
2. Of this truth the apostle gives a further explanation in verse 20.
   a. What are the "invisible things of Him"? Are they not mentioned later in this verse, such as God's eternal power and Godhead?
   b. God Himself is invisible. Only God can see God. No man can see God and live. If we are to know Him, He must reveal Himself, appear in the sphere of that which He made, and in such a way that that creature can discern Him in the forms of His revelation. What is Revelation? That God speaks to us, in our language, concerning Himself. Apply this to the original creation, also to Christ. Is not Christ the living God, Who took upon Himself our flesh and blood, and then speaks to us in our language concerning the living God?

c. These invisible things of God, His Divine attributes, are clearly seen from the creation of the world. Ever since God made the world, there never was a period in which the invisible things of God were not known by man and understood by him by means of the things that are made. The apostle speaks of God's eternal power and Godhead. We understand "eternal" to modify both: power and Godhead. How does the creature reveal the Creator? Is not the Creator above the creature, distinguished from it? Is not the Creator of time Himself above and distinguished from time, and therefore eternal? Hence, man's sin is never ignorance. Did sin destroy man's ability to understand the invisible things of God by the things that are made? To be sure, sin deprived man of many of his excellent gifts. But, did sin deprive man of his ability to reason and think?

d. Notice the very last part of verse 20. We must read: "In order that they may be without excuse." This expression does not merely denote result. God, then, did not intend this, but it was the result, a result which was not the purpose of the Lord. But the expression denotes purpose as well as result. Hence, is God's general revelation "Common Grace"? Did God reveal Himself in order that all men should love Him? Is this also the purpose of the revelation of God in Christ? However, this part of the text emphatically denies this.

3. In verses 21-23 the apostle gives a further explanation of the last part of verse 20.

a. Fact is, that they are without excuse implies that men reveal an attitude of enmity and indifference over against the revelation of God.

b. Notice what we read in verse 21. When did the heathen know God? Must this be explained organically? Did Cain know about God? Esau? What does it mean that they knew Him. They glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful. What does this mean? Was it man's calling to glorify God and to acknowledge Him as the Only Good? They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. They had their own imaginations, developed their own conception of God. And God made them vain, completely subject to vanity. And their foolish heart was darkened. Is this "foolishness" merely ignorance? Is "folly" merely ignorance? Their heart was foolish, wicked. And God made it dark, covered it with darkness. This was the operation of the wrath of God. As we will presently see, God delivered them up to unbelievable folly.

c. This deeper and further development in sin came to manifestation, as we read it in verses 22-23. This was the fruit of their own imaginations, contemplations, the ripening fruit of the thoughts of their heart. They professed themselves to be wise! They imagined themselves to have all the answers, to solve all problems! Apply this to our world of today, our "Great Society," etc. They know everything. But they become fools. What is true wisdom? Wisdom means to seek the greatest end through the best means. Professing themselves to be wise, they hated God! How can anyone really be wise and hate God?! How can anyone solve any problem without God and or His Christ? Fools they were, and God made them fools.

d. God actually led them, through their sin, to do unbelievably foolish things. We read of this in verse 23. Would Cain ever have thought that frogs and snakes, etc., are gods? Is it not apparent that sin is unspeakable folly when the sinner finally bows down before birds and creeping things? This is how God shows Himself to be the alone living God, when the sinner does such unbelievably foolish things. How the Common Grace theory lauds heathendom, extols their art and culture, etc.! How different, however, is Scripture's description of this heathendom in this first chapter of Romans!

IV. Verses 24-25

A. In general.

1. In these verses and unto the end of this chapter the apostle describes the spiritual corruption of the heathen world as the result of the punishing righteousness of God and the revelation of the wrath of God down from heaven.
2. Verse 24 expresses that the reason and ground for what the apostle is about to say must be sought in the verses 18-23.

B. Verse 24.

1. Notice: God gave them up – this expression denotes a judicial act of God, the only and supreme Judge of all the earth.
   a. The expression does not merely mean: to let go, forsake, leave one to one's lot. This is generally the pelagian conception. God, then, restrained the sinner, did all within His power to hold him back, check him in his sinning. Explain this. See also the Three Points of 1924. This view is impossible. Where do we read in the entire context of such a restraint of God? Verse 18 speaks of the revelation of God's wrath down from heaven upon all the unrighteousness of man. Hence, no restraint. It is exactly because of this wrath of God that the wicked cannot simply remain with their foolishness but must develop in sin, the sin of verse 23. After all, a person's ethical life is determined by the god he serves (if my god be a frog, I must be below that frog; if my god be an animal, I must do things unheard of among the animals). Besides, the word, "gave them up," denotes a positive thought, a judicial act – see Matt. 10:21; Mark 13:12; Acts 2:23; Matt. 17:22, 24:9, etc.
   b. Hence, this expression denotes a judicial operation of God, the Judge of all the earth.
2. Notice that whereunto God gave them up.
   a. We read: through, or in the lusts of their own hearts. Hence, these evil passions were their own lusts. God never forces a man to sin. He always sins wilfully.
   b. Nevertheless, God gave them up, in these lusts, unto uncleanness. We have here a sovereignly righteous operation of God. God works in and through these lusts to plunge the sinner into unbelievable folly, to show that whoever forsakes God reaps nothing but folly and misery.
   c. And this uncleanness is further described by Paul in the last part of verse 24. They dishonour their own bodies between themselves. How true this is of the sinner! And, God works this!

C. Verse 25.

1. We can surely sense the holy indignation and righteous anger of the apostle as he writes these words.
2. They changed the truth of God into a lie. And notice that the apostle concludes this verse with the solemn Amen.
3. God is blessed for ever. He alone is glorious and worthy of all adoration.
4. And they have changed the truth of God into a lie. This does not mean that the truth itself is changed into a lie. This is impossible. The truth will always stand. But it does mean that they have exchanged the lie for the truth. They had the truth. God had revealed Himself unto them. But they held it under in unrighteousness, substituted for it the lie.
5. Fact is, they served the creature rather than the Creator – see verse 23.
6. But God is blessed for ever. He is not only now the alone blessed God. But He will be blessed forever. And all eternity will speak forever of the folly of sin.

(To be continued in next month's issue)

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NEWS from, for, and about our churches

by MARY KREGEL

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Gerald Kuiper (Hope) led the Pre-Convention Singspiration August 13, at Hope Church. The response to this singspiration was heartening, as Hope Church could hardly accommodate all the enthusiastic singers. It was a fitting send off for our Young People.

Attendance at the 1967 Convention was excellent. Twice as many Young People as in previous years had attended a "Western" Convention were at Hull to concentrate on the theme, "Soli Deo Gloria." One hundred seventy-five people heard speeches by Revs. G. Vanden Berg and R. Decker, and Candidate D. Kuiper.

The next Singspiration is scheduled for September 24 at Hudsonville Church.

CALLS:

Rev. C. Hanko declined the call from South Holland; Rev. G. Vanden Berg declined the call from Hull; and Candidate D. Kuiper accepted the call from Randolph.

SERVICEMEN:

Both Neal Buiter (Oak Lawn) and Mike Engelsma (Hope) are now serving in Vietnam. Their addresses are:

Pfc. Cornelius Buiter
US 54814592
225th AVN Co.
APO San Francisco, Calif. 96316

Pfc. Michael Engelsma
US 54957097
HHC 14th ICC
APO San Francisco, Calif. 96307

Ron De Vries (First) is in basic training. His address is:

Pvt. R. D. De Vries
US 54969469
Co. A 9th Br.
3rd Trg. Bdg.
USATC Amor
Ft. Knox, Ky. 40121, 4th Plt.

BIRTHS:

A daughter, Kimberly Lou, to Mr. and Mrs. Len Somers. (S.E.)

A daughter, Kathy Joy, to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Vander Vennen. (S.E.)

A daughter, Joan Carolyn, to Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Doezema. (First)

A son, Richard Dale, to Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Reitsma. (Redlands)

MARRIAGES:

Rodney Miersma and Sharon Van Dyke on September 1.

James Huizenga and Barbara Reitsma on June 16.

Terry Velting and Katie Vander Pan on June 2.

Leon Kamps and June Williams on June 30.

Clarence Kuiper and Janice Lotterman on September 8.

MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. and Mrs. William Buiter and family have transferred from Oak Lawn to Loveland.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hanko and family have transferred from First to Doon.

Mrs. James Huizenga has transferred from First to Hope.

Miss Hilda Meelker has transferred from First to Redlands.

First Church has received the membership papers of Miss Carole Hathaway from Oakdale Park Reformed Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Irvan Velthouse have transferred from First to Hope.

Mr. Len Somers made profession of faith August 20.

DEATHS:

Mr. Edward Van Eenenaam joined our Lord on August 11 at the age of 83.