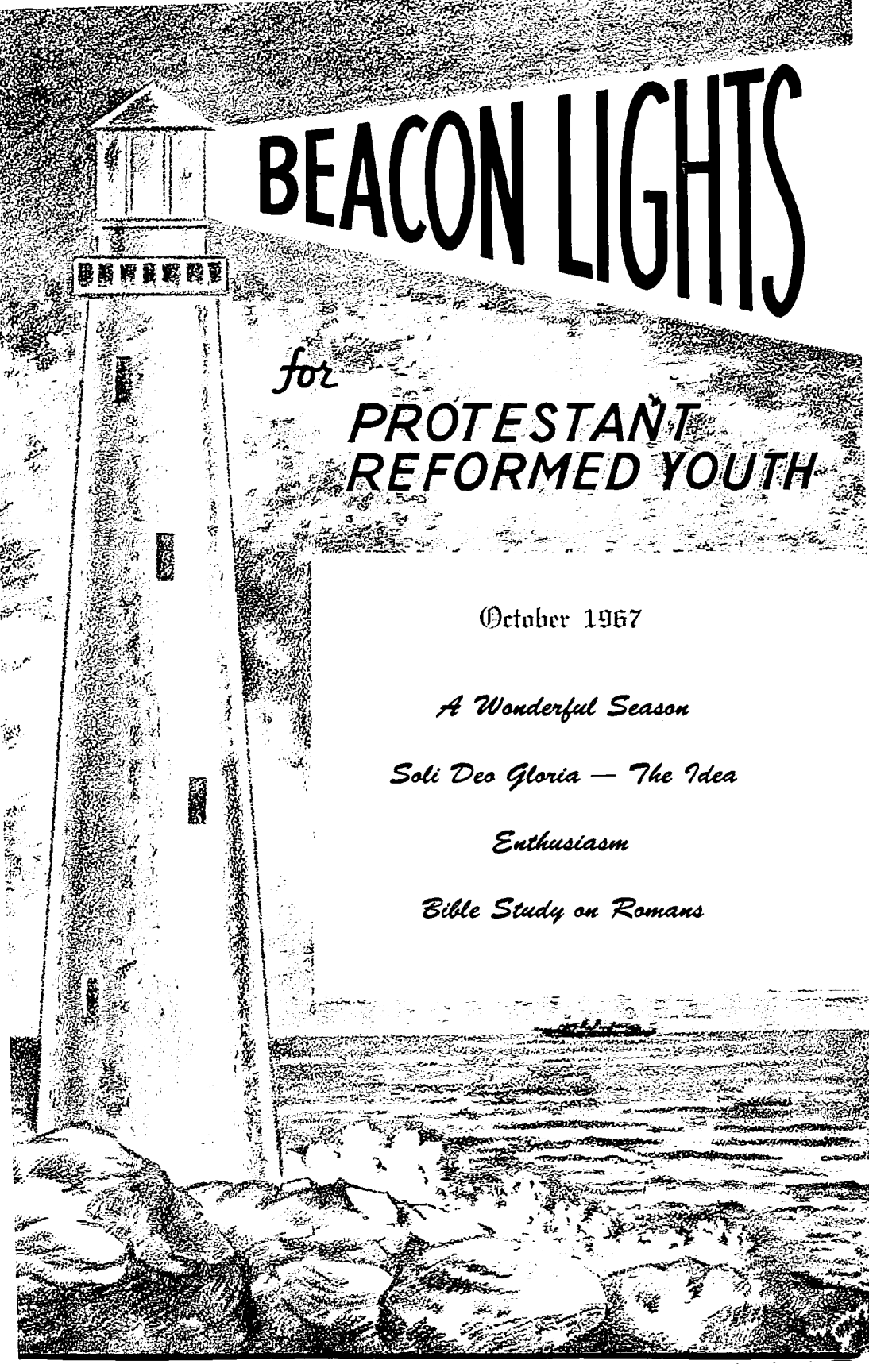
BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



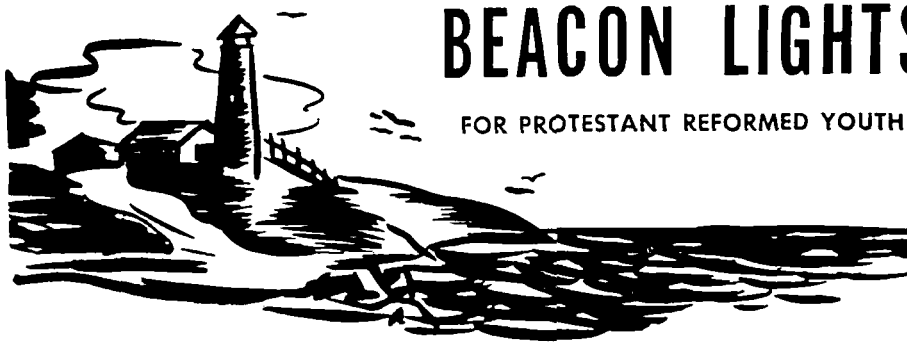
October 1967

A Wonderful Season

Soli Deo Gloria — The Idea

Enthusiasm

Bible Study on Romans



BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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Editorial

A WONDERFUL SEASON

It is a wonderful season! Fall is here and once more we have begun our studies. We have begun our school work receiving our instruction in grade schools, in high schools, or in colleges. Also, the most important part of instruction has resumed. Catechism classes have started. This season of study is wonderful for God's covenant youth. It is wonderful because in this season the covenant youth grows in knowledge.

The knowledge, that I speak of, is not the "knowledge" of the world. Natural man is busy in the field of education, too. However, he gains no true knowledge. He has only the vain philosophy of his own making. And this is no knowledge at all. Natural man's motive for study is self-centered. He desires to study in order to improve this world as a place to live. He strives to learn, so that, he can occupy a place of honor and distinction in the midst of his fellow man. The question he tries to answer is; what can I conquer next? Scripture presents the true picture of natural man's learning. In Romans 1:22-25, we read: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. The season of study is a damning season for the natural man. They are given up to the lusts of their hearts.

How does the covenant youth's study differ from the world's study? First, creation and history is much more than a story of what man has done and discovered. History is the revelation of God. To study history is to see God more clearly and to understand His counsel more fully. All of our studies in school concern some aspect of God's creation or creatures. Therefore, the covenant youth studies God's creation and creatures and their history, in order to know God. Through all of our instruction we come to know God as our God in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, as covenant youth, our motive for study differs from the world's self-centered motive. Our studies lead to the knowledge of the One we love. Thus, our motive is the love of God instead of the love of man. There is an example of this motive that has been used before. It is the example of a girl's search for knowledge concerning her boy friend. If a girl loves a boy she wants to know, as much as possible, about him. If one asked her why she wants this knowledge, she will answer, I want to know him because I love him. She needs no other motive. This girl's love is but a weak picture of that great love we have for God. We love God, that is why we say this is a wonderful season.

Covenant youth, if the love of God fills our hearts, we want to know Him. Some of the messages of God are found in trees, some are found in animals, and some are found in the sea or sky. God's message to us is found in the history of the world. Jehovah reveals Himself to us in all things about us. This we study in our schools. And this study must be grounded in the Scriptures, for God's revelation is principally there. In the Bible, God makes Himself known through His Word. God's Word tells us of His Promise and of how He gathers His people. As covenant youth we hear this word in our catechism classes. There we receive the official, authoritative instruction of the church in the truth. In catechism we learn to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. This is our basic and most important study.

It is a wonderful season! Who else but God's covenant youth in the Protestant Reformed Churches have the opportunity to know God as we do? God graciously gives us this opportunity to know Him. And we read that the knowledge of God and His Son is life eternal (John 17:3). Therefore, with thankful hearts pray for grace to be dilligent in all of your studies, in which, you are blessed!

R.G.M.

SOLI DEO GLORIA — *The Idea*

This speech was given by Rev. G. Vanden Berg at the Mass Meeting of Aug. 18, 1967, of the Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention held in Hull, Iowa.

Delegates, visitors and friends:

I am very grateful to you, for more than one reason, for the privilege and opportunity of addressing you at your twenty-seventh annual convention. In the first place, I say this because of what you are. You are the youth of the church and as such are a rather distinctive audience. I am not just speaking tonight for a group of young people but I am aware that I speak to you as those who represent Christ's cause and upon whom presently, therefore, will rest the burdens and responsibilities of His Church as it exists in the present world.

In light of this my gratitude is greatly increased by the fact that you have chosen as the theme of your convention: "Soli Deo Gloria." Whoever is responsible for the selection of this theme is to be commended but we must remember that it is not the theme of the host society or the Federation Board. It is your theme! I am going to presuppose tonight that your presence at this convention is indicative of the fact that you personally subscribe to this theme. It is and must be the theme of the life of each covenant youth and certainly your purpose in this convention must be to serve this theme. If it is not, it were better that you were not here; better that you go home because in the measure you do not promote the idea of your convention theme in all of your activities, you will be contributing to the failure of this convention. Our convention can be said to be successful only insofar as each of us expresses and manifests the glory of our God.

The beauty of this most appropriate theme lies in its thoroughly Biblical character. All of the Word of God, from Genesis through Revelation, is permeated with the idea "Soli Deo Gloria." Upon the event of the incarnation of God's Son, the angel from heaven proclaimed it: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, good-will toward men" (Luke 2:14). All the works of God in creation and providence and redemption have their ultimate purpose in His glory. "The Lord has made all things for Himself . . ." (Prov. 16:4). Soli Deo Gloria! No wonder then that the apostle Paul, after expounding the truth of God to the church of Rome, breaks forth with these words: "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory forever. Amen."

Soli Deo Gloria is the heartbeat of the church. It is said that this was the motto of the life of the great Reformer, John Calvin, and it certainly is expressive of Reformation life and doctrine. Each word in this thoroughly Scriptural idea is worthy of and ought to receive special emphasis. The key word is GOD. God is all! All glory is HIS. I recall some twenty-six years ago when our churches, under the sponsorship of the Young Men's Society of the First Church, began radio broadcasting, that in the very first radio address the late Rev. H. Hoeksema selected as his theme: "GOD IS GOD." He stressed the truth that God is ALL. There is none beside Him. None can be compared to Him. No one else has any honor or glory. To none other may it be ascribed. GOD, and He alone, is ALL.

Let it suffice to say that as far as the term "Gloria" is concerned, we must understand that we are speaking of something that is absolute and in no sense partial. We come back to this presently but remember that when we ascribe glory to God, that glory is inclusive of all glory that ever was, is now and ever shall be. And this same basic idea is further emphasized in the word "Soli" which may not be overlooked.

This theme is taken from the text of I Peter 5:11. It is part of the closing doxology but it is not the first and only time Peter mentioned it in his letter. It is found also in chapter 4:11 where the saints are enjoined to use their spiritual gifts "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion forever and ever." Tonight I will briefly direct your attention to the Idea of this doxology. And I will consider with you three things: (1) Its Meaning, (2) Its Object and (3) Its Significance.

I. Its Idea:

We are concerned tonight with the glory of God. Let us, at the very outset, make clear that in dealing with this subject we are not treating some physical or material substance that we can touch, taste, see or hear with our natural senses. What is more, the glory of God may never be construed as something that we are supposed to form or create and bring to God as though something that we in some way add to Him makes Him glorious. This can never be. Anything that we do or anything that we bring can only detract from His glory and so we must completely discard this notion in order that we may see His glory as it really is and He reveals it.

The glory of God then is that which belongs to the very essence or being of God Himself. HE IS from all eternity unto all eternity the unchangable and all glorious God. It is not that He ought to be or that He sometime shall be made glorious but rather the truth is that nothing can ever detract from, alter or destroy the glory of God because glory is synonomous with God Himself. He IS glory! He is All-Glorious! All glory is His alone!

Now we also know that Scripture speaks of glory in the plural as well as in the singular and that it also attributes glory to various creatures. It speaks, for example, of the glory of the sun, of the moon, the stars, of man who is made in God's image and crowned with glory and honor, but we must remember that also this glory is not the creatures but the Creator's! There is no glory anywhere apart from God. The glory of the Almighty God is reflected in the sun, moon and stars as "the heavens declare His glory and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Likewise with all God's creatures, including man, and all of it remains God's alone and apart from Him there is no glory at all. It is exactly the folly of man that he strives to establish a "glorious" society and to "glorify" himself in that society without God. But this his folly is also his ruin. Soli Deo Gloria.

We may describe the glory of God by relating it to two other terms that are frequently used in connection with it in the Word of God. These are the terms: praise and honor. Distinquishing them we may say that glory is the manifestation of that which is virtuous; honor is the acknowledgement or recognition of glory; and, praise is the expression of that recognition. Specifically, the glory of God is the manifestation of all His infinite perfections. When we are given to recognize these virtues; to see Him in the beauty of His own self-revelation, we acknowledge that He is good and we honor Him. Then we break forth to tell of His glory and this telling constitutes our praise. Hence, we see that all that is in God is glorious because He is the God of all virtue. He is good and there is none beside Him. His magnificence, His excellency, His pre-eminence, sovereignty, dignity, etc. are His glory.

II. Its Object:

When you then say, "Soli Deo Gloria" it is important that you not only realize that you are speaking about the manifestation of virtue but that you have in mind the virtues of GOD. Your theme demands the introduction of a second, closely related principle which is expressed in the words, "Sola Scriptura," which means, "Only Scripture." This is because in your doxology you are ascribing glory alone to God but at the same time we must be positively sure that we mean the God of Scripture. If we make our own god, fashioned after our own minds, made as we want him to be, the result is that we do not have a God Who is alone glorious and Whose is all glory. Our theme simply has no application whatsoever to the god of Arminianism and Modernism. To ascribe our theme to the vanities of our religious world is to make of it a most blatant lie. Any god that is equal to or inferior to the creature is not a glorious God. The idols of human philosophy have no glory and even the fact that millions bow before them does not make them glorious.

The true and living God to Whom is all glory forever and ever is revealed to us in the Scriptures. The Scriptures tell us Who and What He is and only as we are able, by His grace, to see Him in the light of His own Word and to believe on Him can we participate in the theme of our convention in truth. And although those Scripture reveal far more about Him than we can speak about tonight, I am going to mention three things about God that we must maintain without compromise. The denial of these truths is implicitly a denial of our theme.

First, Scripture informs us that the all-glorious God is the Almighty Creator of

heaven and earth and all that they contain. That GOD is alone glorious. Discard all of those theories of evolution that try to explain the origin of things apart from God and also those theories that speak of a god but deny His omnipotence, wisdom and sovereignty. Deny the claims of science and philosophy so-called. Hold to the Word of God and confess, "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth . . ."

In the second place, this all-glorious God is the sovereign sustainer, preserver and governor of all things. He made all things with a purpose and He controls and directs all things unto the realization of that purpose – His glory! Even the wicked unto the day of evil are made to serve that purpose. And don't forget that in His wise providence, God makes war and peace, famine and prosperity, death and life, sickness and health, etc. He does all these things. Be still and know that He is God, o'er all exalted high. Don't criticize Him when He does things that are not to your liking. All things are His and He does with them all as He pleases and in all He does, "Soli Deo Gloria."

Finally, remember that in the verse preceding the one from which the theme was taken, He is called the God of all grace. In grace He calls His church into His own eternal glory through Jesus Christ. This is the central, highest revelation of His glory. All things in heaven and earth converge in the purpose of His grace, the realization of His everlasting covenant with His people in Christ. And in that grace is included really all His virtues. In Christ we see not only the glory of His love but also the glory of His justice. We see election but also reprobation. We see the merciful kindness of God but also the righteous wrath of the Holy One. "Soli Deo Gloria" to Him and to Him alone!

III. Significance

In speaking now of the significance of all this, we do not have in mind the significance of the fact itself that "Glory is alone God's." From what has already been said this ought to be evident. It lies simply in the fact that GOD IS ALL and man is nothing. This is true in all things. His Name is to be honored, praised, magnified, memorialized unto all eternity and no other name may be compared or likened to His. This is especially true in the matter of salvation. That is from God and from God alone. No flesh can, may or ever shall glory in His presence. All that we are we owe to Thee. Saved by grace . . . and that not of self, it is the gift of God.

But we have in mind especially now the significance of our expressing this in this doxology, in our confession, in our life. Another speaker will elaborate on this and so I will just mention two things here. First, this is significant because the very expression of the glory of God in us, the desire to declare it and manifest it in our personal lives, our societies, our convention, is evidence that God has called us into His glory and that we are partakers of His salvation. Apart from that grace man does all he can to hide and to destroy every evidence of God's glory. Just look at the world in which you live today to see the proof of this. But when He calls us into His glory, establishes with us His covenant, this is different. Then we crucify our old nature and walk in a new and holy life, showing forth the praise of His glory in all that we do.

And finally, confessing His glory, we have a source of constant comfort and strength in every trial, tribulation and affliction that we may be called to experience in this present world. We know that also these things He works for our good that in the day of Christ our faith may be found to the praise of His glory. And so, I will close with the following quotation:

"He blesses them with all spiritual and heavenly blessings. What can he want, all whose need the God of grace, of all grace, promises to supply, 'according to His glorious riches?' He can, He will, fit for the combat; He can He will sustain during the conflict; He can, He will, make victorious in the conflict; He can, He will, reward after the conflict. If there be any necessary blessing not included in all grace, then the struggling Christian might have some cause to despond but when Jehovah, God Almighty (rather all-sufficient) says, I am the God of all grace, and 'my grace is sufficient for thee,' well may he glory in tribulation, count it all joy to be brought into manifold temptations, and sing with the apostle, I have all, and abound: having nothing, I possess all things: I am complete in Him. Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of the God of all grace may rest on me; though troubled on every side,

I am not distressed; though perplexed, I am not in despair; though persecuted, I am not forsaken; though cast down, I am not destroyed. The God of all grace has pledged His Word and oath to me that I shall want no good thing; and what would I have, what could I have more?" (J. Brown. Comm. on I Peter)

HONORING GOD'S NAME

by SHIRLEY GRITTERS

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

These words, which are read to us from the pulpit every Sunday, often tend to become a mere formality, so often repeated that, to many of us, they become customary, dull, and uninteresting. This is sadly borne out by the fact that the third commandment is so lightly taken and is transgressed daily. We hear God's name abused in the schoolroom, the office, the ballpark, and wherever we come in contact with the world and its amusements. In this fast-moving age, profanity is becoming so commonplace that we find ourselves accepting it and even taking it for granted. In fact, God's name is no longer profaned by the wicked only. More and more we find ourselves, the youth of today, conforming to the world and dishonoring our God by the careless use of His most holy name.

Most of us are very familiar with the different types of swearing. There is the direct use of God's name, by which His name is taken in vain boldly and shamelessly. More common, and probably more frequent among our people, is the use of indirect forms of God's name, such as Gosh or Gee. Words pertaining to heaven or hell, and attributes of God, are also types of swearing.

The catechism speaks of the sin against the third commandment as a heinous sin, greater and more provoking to God than any other. Transgression of this commandment is the only one of the ten commandments which is a sin against the most high God, and therefore it is to be punished with death. As people of God, we must be especially careful to honor God's name; for, although God is angered by the continuous abuse of His name by the wicked, how much more His righteous indignation must be when we, His chosen people, disregard His holiness by taking His name upon our lips boldly and carelessly!

Some of us may say, "But look at me — I never swear!" Let us take a closer look. The name of God is not taken in vain when we are conscious of His nearness and act with habitual reference to His will. However, it is abused when we, insincere and hollow, solemnly join in the most sacred act of worship, honoring Him with the lips when our heart is really far from Him; and aren't we just as guilty when we sit silently by, pretend not to notice, or even laugh it off, when our friends use God's name lightly?

What, then, is the solution? Must we mention Him seldom and with bated breath? On the contrary, this is evidence of our failure to think of Him aright, rather than of loving devotion. The only safe rule is to be sure that our conception of God is high and real and intimate; to be humble and trustful toward Him; and to worship Him sincerely and pray without ceasing. Then, by speaking sincerely and frankly, the words which will rise naturally to our lips cannot fail to do him honor. His name will be continuously upon our mouths, and yet we will not take the name of the Lord our God in vain.

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

Bishop James A. Pike, retired bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California, whose recent "God is dead" theory created a furor in the ecclesiastical world, is in the news once again. September 3, while on Canadian television, he took part in a seance, a spiritualist meeting, in which he talked with his dead son, who committed suicide in 1966. His medium was the Rev. Arthur Ford, a minister of the disciples of Christ church in Philadelphia, Pa. "Fletcher," a deceased friend of Rev. Ford, a so-called "spirit con-

trol," was said to bring forth third-person messages through the mouth of Ford when Ford was in a hypnotic trance.

The details of who said what are not important; the point is that Rev. Ford supposedly talked with "Fletcher," and then communicated these messages to Bishop Pike. Fletcher could talk with other dead people and bring messages from the dead to the living, as well as take messages from the living to the dead. Fletcher knew many of the now-departed people that Pike had known, and could converse with them.

What can be said of this event? It is highly unusual, mysterious, and extremely puzzling. Is it true? Did it happen? Could it have happened? No, it could not have happened. . . . There are arguments for the position that seances do happen, and that this particular one did. For instance, Ford, the medium, could hardly have known all of the people Bishop Pike knew; Ford could tell of personal relations that Pike had had with his deceased friends. Bishop Pike says, "Also, the persons who purportedly communicated had one thing in common: They were in varying ways connected with the development of my thought. They knew me at particularly significant times in my life, turning points." (*Grand Rapids Press*, Sept. 29, 1967).

Although the above argument seems to prove that the seance took place, it is not valid. For one thing, Pike's son, who committed suicide, is pictured, along with the rest of the departed people, as being happy. It is safe to infer from this that he was supposedly in heaven, the place of happiness, as were Bishop Pike's ex-colleagues. But were they? It hardly seems possible that Pike Jr., after being brought up by a Godless and Bible-denying father, and after committing suicide, which no Christian would do, could be in heaven.

There is a still more serious aspect to this matter. Bishop Pike is pictured as communicating with deceased people, whose souls are in heaven. This is a denial of the existence of heaven. As the Bible speaks of it, heaven is a place to which the souls of God's people go after physical death; heaven is a realm of sinless joy, completely separate from the corruption of this world. It is blasphemy against God and His Word to suggest that there can be inter-communication between mortals and immortals.

However, yet more serious is the denial of God's revelation that this event implies. God's revelation ended with the completion of the Bible. The church has acknowledged this fact; the true body of Christ has never attempted to add anything to God's revelation. Not only is this true historically, but also Scripturally. We read in Rev. 22:18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.' "

Whether or not this seance did actually take place, one thing is certain: It was not the work of God, but the work of the devil. If in this life communication with the spirit world does take place, the devil is behind it. If no communication takes place, seances are a deliberate attempt on the part of unbelievers to join in league with the devil.

It's a sign of the times, young people! These are times in which men apostatize from the faith, putting their trust not in God, but in themselves and in the devil. We must never be taken in by these pseudo-spiritualistic, impossible happenings, but instead, place our trust only in God and His revelation to us.

MARK HOEKSEMA

Announcements

The Federation Board on behalf of all the Young People expresses their appreciation to all those who helped to make the 1967 Convention held in Hull, Iowa, a very spiritually profitable and socially enjoyable time. We especially thank the Hull Young People's Society and all the church members who had a part in hosting the Conventioneers. We greatly appreciated the assistance many gave in transporting the Conventioneers to and from Chicago, and feeding them while in South Holland. We thank the young people for their co-operation in behavior and participation. But, above all we give thanks and honor to God for making the Convention possible.

The new News Editor of the
Beacon Lights
is MISS JUDY LUBBERS,
5301 Barry, Hudsonville, Michigan.

The Federation Board wishes to express appreciation to the following retiring officers: Jim Huizinga, vice-president; Barb Reitsema Huizinga, assistant secretary; and, Harry Rutgers, treasurer. Each of our retiring members has devoted many hours of service to the Federation Board. Your time and efforts have been appreciated.

The Federation Board wishes to express appreciation to Candidate Kuiper and Gerry L. Vanden Berg as they retire from the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund Committee. We thank them for their part in aiding young people who are interested in becoming ministers and teachers.

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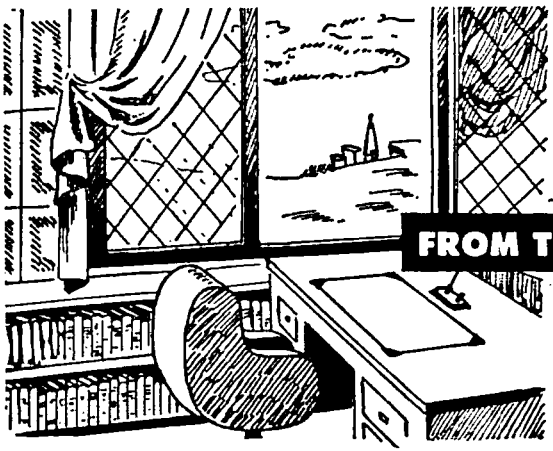
The *Beacon Lights* Staff and the Federation Board express sincere thanks to Darrel Huisken for two years of service as Editor to the *Beacon Lights*. Being Editor has required many hours of service and produced many challenges, both great and small, which we feel Mr. Huisken has capably faced and fulfilled. May God bless you as you further your studies and keep you in His care.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

ENTHUSIASM

"Were not our hearts burning within us . . . . ." LUKE 24:32

The time has again come upon us that we study, in a formal sense, the Holy Scriptures in your Young People's Society meetings. Truly, this is a wonderful time of the year for us as golden autumn fades into bleak November, and the long wintry cozy evening at the hearth, as well as in our well-heated and well-lit church parlors. Above, all it is wonderful to come together to live in the warmth of Christian fellowship, and in the enthusiasm which characterizes a fresh and new beginning. This is, of course, particularly true in the northern hemisphere "when the frost is on the pumpkin and the fodder is in the shock"!

Now the word "enthusiasm" is a very meaningful word. Of course, the meaning of this term is often used rather aimlessly and without seeing its rich and full implication. It is basically a Greek term. It is derived from the Greek verb *"enthousiazoo"* which means: possessed by a god. It meant among the Greeks to be inspired of the gods. Amongst us it often is used simply as a synonym for being excited over something. It is also very important that one notices that the verb *"enthousiazoo"* is really not an active voice, but a passive

voice. One cannot enthuse himself. That would be like lifting up one's self by his own bootstraps.

It is, of course, true that there is a two-fold enthusiasm. The one is of the flesh, is natural, and the other is of the Spirit and is, therefore, not merely psychological but is spiritual-psychological. It is the fire of heaven in our soul. The other is really the fire of this world, the flikkering fire of the natural which is ever growing dim, in the vanity of vanities of this life. Therefore, as there is a strong renewing of the human race in every young generation, there is a renewal of natural enthusiasm. Youth is enthusiastic in a natural, a purely psychical way. But it doesn't last; its fades and dies like flowers that grow is beauty!

Since real enthusiasm is Spirit-wrought it is enthusiasm which grows, even when the eye is dimmed by age. We see this in the aged Simeon who waited for the redemption of Israel. What a joyful enthusiasm is exhibited by this aged saint when he tenderly takes the young child Jesus in his arms, and exclaims in joyful praises:

> "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant to depart in peace, according to thy word: for my eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."
>
> Luke 2:29-32

This was true enthusiasm. It was not the wild enthusiasm of an infrenzied mob of rebels and rioters in the streets – the enthusiasm of world-reformers and revolutionaries as we see in our day. Such are the fires of hell, setting on fire the course of nature. No, this was true enthusiasm which still glows and burns unto eternity. It is the enthusiasm which only the fire of the tongues of the Spirit can cause to burn brightly.

Such was also the enthusiasm of the two travelers to Emmaus, after Jesus had opened to them the meaning of the Scriptures concerning the place of the Cross as the way to glory, and after he had been known by them in the breaking of the bread. It is then that they exclaim, returning from Jerusalem,

> "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked to us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"
>
> Luke 24:32

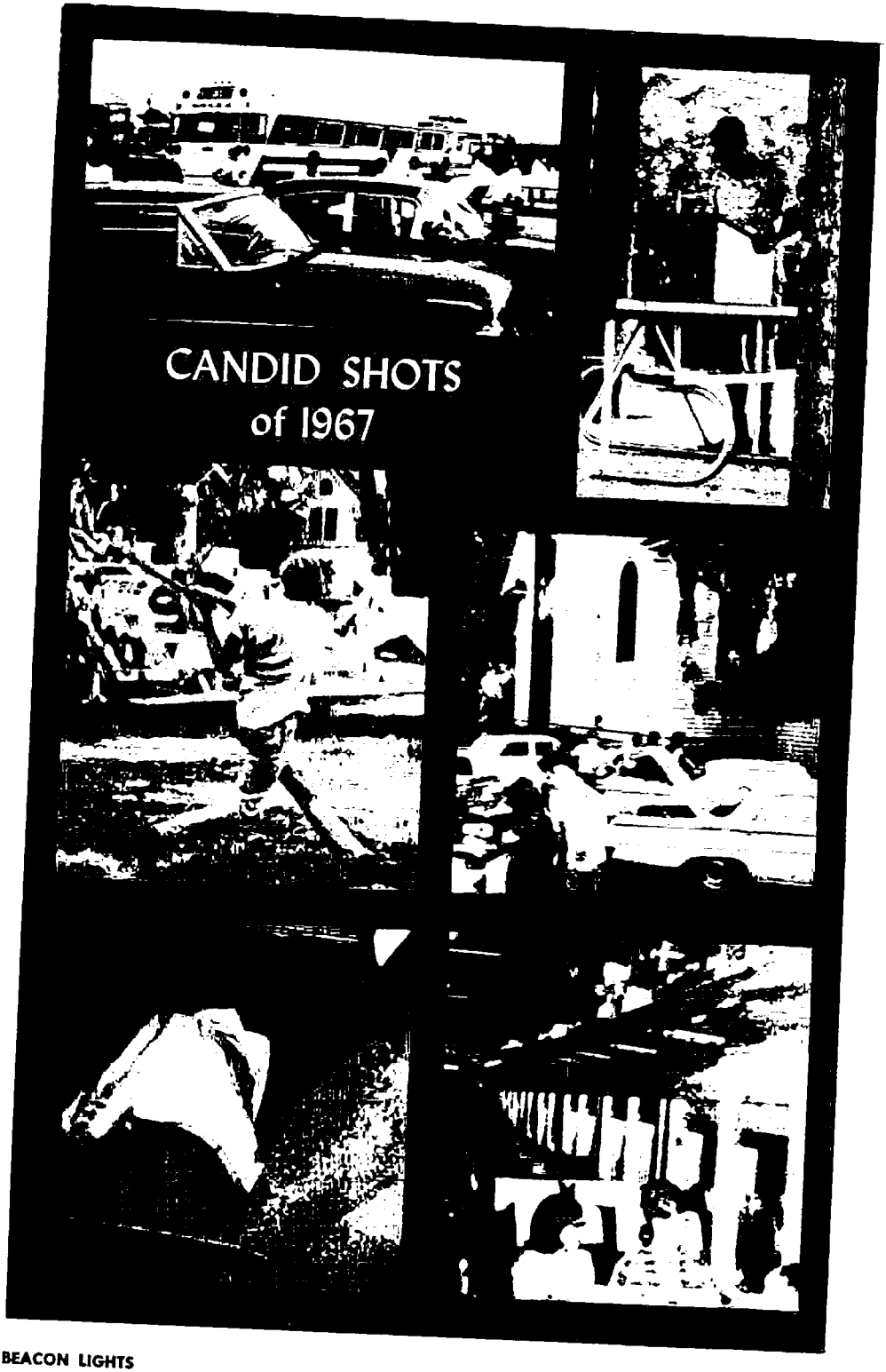
True enthusiasm is wrought in our hearts when we hear the glad-tidings of the gospel. It is the joy of the Christ in our hearts, causing them to overflow. It is the enthusiasm of faith and love and peace through the Holy Spirit. This enthusiasm we need. And God gives this to us by the means of grace. He enthuses us, inspires us by teaching us, correcting us, reproving us, placing us under the pedagogy of righteousness, that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Hence, it is not basically a question of getting enthused in order to go to the meetings of the Society, but rather going there to become enthused by God. Often we go dragging our feet, and we leave the meeting light-hearted and uplifted in spirit. We say: were not our hearts burning in us when we studied the Scriptures? Having experienced this uplifting, inspiring operation of the Spirit in our hearts, we then will be faithful members. Any other enthusiasm must needs grow more and more cold and dead. The question is not first of all: what did you contribute in the society, but rather what did you take along!

Now, this is sober business. Gird up the loins of your mind and be sober. Be instant in prayer. Don't say: I can't get enthused about catechism, church services, and society life. The hand of the Lord is not shortened, is it? He is able to inspire us by means of the God-Spirited, God-breathed Word. Do you ask Him to inspire you? Then you will surely be heard and receive exceedingly much above all that we are able ask.

Nothing has ever been accomplished without enthusiasm, that is, without the glowing conviction: God desires it for me. Don't dampen the spirits of others; quench not the fires of heaven. Pray for enthusiasm in the church of Christ, in our hearts. Read the *Beacon Lights* with enthusiasm. Pray that God may grant this to every contributor. Beseech God in heaven for this enthusiasm for the professors in our Seminary, ministers in the congregation, as well as for the elders.

Have an enthusiastic year, young people!

May your hearts be burning within you with the fire of heaven as you study the Scriptures!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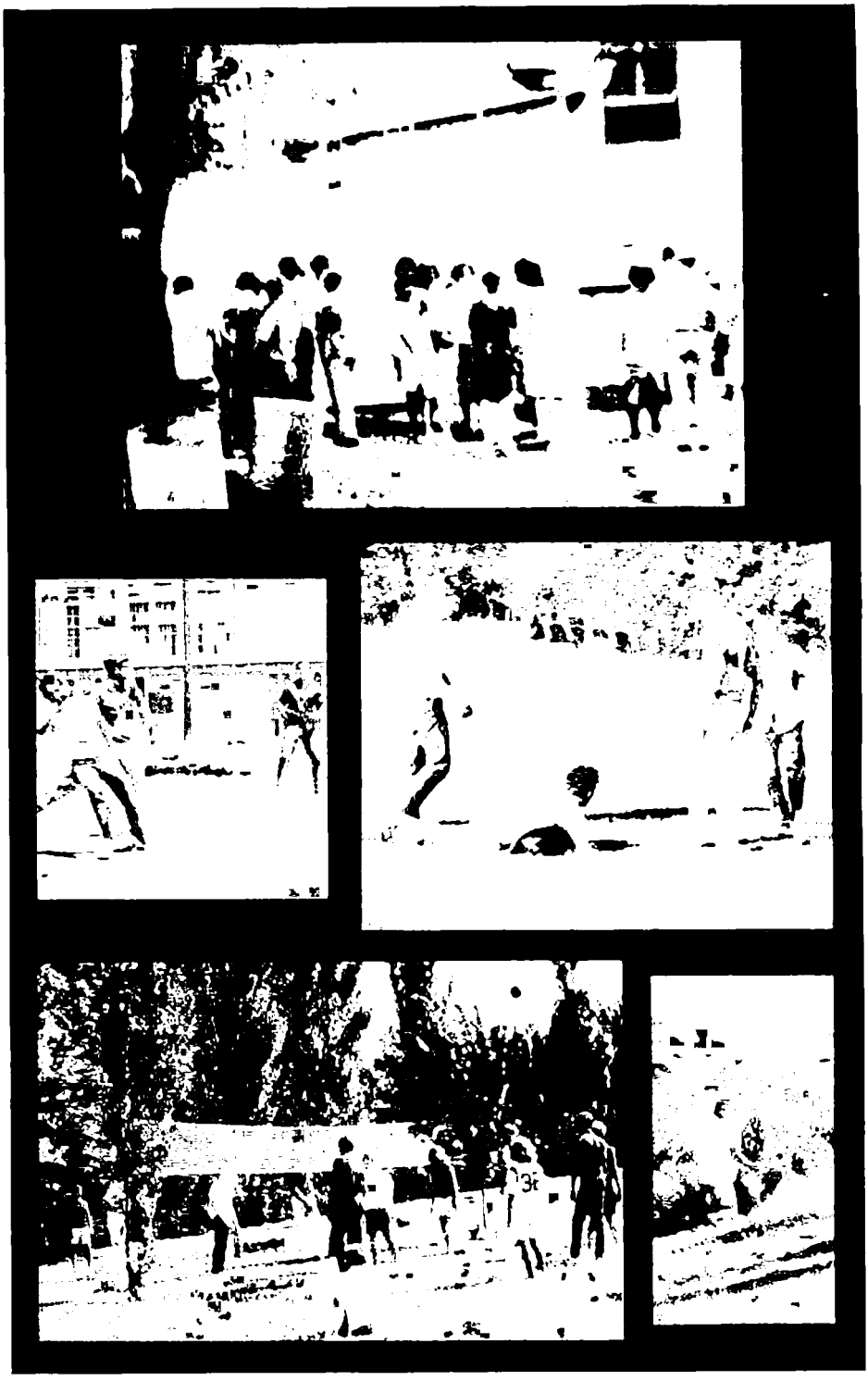

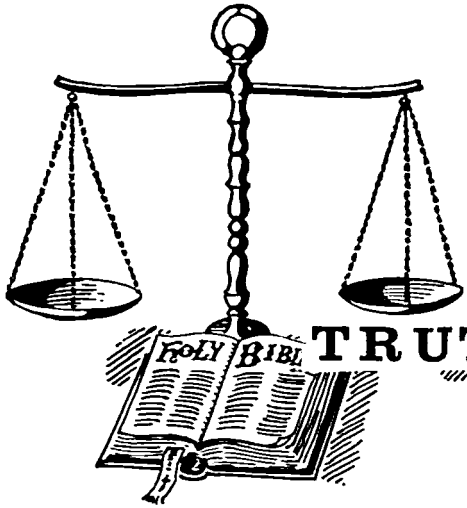

TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

ASSURANCE: Acquired and Proved

The identity of the elect is laid out for us in the words, "being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Here is clearly distinguished the regenerated elect from mere professing religionists, who have a name that they live but are actually spiritually dead (Rev. 3:1). The Word of God, living and operative, divides between the true children of God and the children of the devil. This "good work" begun in the Christian is that which distinguishes him from the mere natural man. What, then, is that "good work"? It is plainly described to us as the purifying of the heart by faith (Acts 15:9), as the love of God poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), as the law of God written upon the fleshly tables of our hearts (Heb. 8:10). Christian assurance is the certain knowledge that I am a child of God. This assurance rests on solid ground when there is congruence of my character to the character of the elect described everywhere throughout Scripture.

By means of self-examination our assurance may be strengthened. We may examine ourselves as metal is tested, whether it be genuine or counterfeit. Are we a vessel made unto honor, or merely "a potsherd covered with silver dross" (Prov. 26:23)? We want to be able to cancel out the consideration whether we are hypocrites, who are "reprobate silver" (Jer. 6:30). We want to be able to say, When He hath tested me, I shall come forth as gold (Job 23:10) or at least as sterling (Psalm 66:10).

We must examine ourselves as a criminal is examined before the bar of justice. For we are all criminals. That is the commmon character of man (Rom. 3:10, 23). Inquest must be made as to the particular crimes we have been guilty of, our mouth must be stopped before the tribunal of God and the verdict of guilty before God brought in against us (3:19). Court order must be obtained for the prosecutor (conscience) to dig into the wall of the heart to search out the secret abominations going on behind it. Then get further intelligence of those subversive activities, and see more and greater abominations (Ezek. 8:7-13). The examination must be strict, because the heart is deceitful above all things, resorts to many dodges, devices, evasions and shifts. Give your soul the charge that Joshua as a judge gave to Achan, "Give glory to the God of Israel, and make confession unto Him! Tell me, now, what hast thou done? Hide it not from me!" (Joshua 7:19).

That deceitful heart must be put under the laser beam of God's law, searched in every nook and cranny and every defilement burned away. Presume not that all is well. "There is a great difference between presumption and full assurance. Full assurance is reasonable: it is based on solid ground. Presumption takes for granted, and with brazen face pronounces that to be its own to

which it has no right whatever. Beware, I pray thee, of presuming that thou art saved; but if thou merely sayest, 'I trust in Jesus,' it doth not save thee . . . presuming that thou art saved! If with thy heart thou dost trust in (the triune God through) Jesus, then art thou saved; but if thou merely sayest, 'I trust in Jesus,' it doth not save thee. If thy heart be renewed, if thou shalt hate the things that thou didst once love, and love the things that thou didst once hate; if thou hast really repented; if there be a thorough change of mind in thee; if thou be born again, then thou hast reason to rejoice: but if there be no vital change, no inward godliness, if there be no love to God, no prayer, no work of the Holy Spirit, then thy saying, 'I am saved,' is but thine own assertion, and it may delude, but it will not deliver thee. Our prayer ought to be, 'Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, with real faith, with real salvation, with the trust in Jesus that is the essential of faith . . .' " (C. H. Spurgeon, *Treas. of the O.T.*, II, 4, paren.: RCH).

It does take some pains to acquire under the leading of the Spirit blessed assurance. The person who is ignorant as to what "prove your own selves" (II Cor. 13:5) means is probably not even concerned with the acquiring of assurance. So with those in love with self or taken up with life which has no place for God. The life of one who walks in the sphere of God's precepts, in the sphere of the church, in the sphere of the communion of saints, is not appealing to him. He could not bring himself to seek his soul's welfare. That would tend to force himself out of the way he much prefers to the other that irks him. Then there are temporal affairs, making a living, finding time for recreation, that the plea from the work of self-examination is made, "I pray Thee, have me excused" (Luke 14:18).

Quite obvious it is that the churches in general offer an easy-going religion acceptable to the sleepy and slothful. Their evangelists, pastors, tract ministry and radio work reveal that they do not believe one quarter of what the Word of God teaches on the total moral impotency of man, and that this natural condition makes it impossible for him to turn to Christ. They talk about his accepting Christ, which cannot be (Job 13:8), but rather God must accept him (Ezek. 43:27), which proves that the Cross is not a possibility for man to accept Christ, but the only way that God can accept man!

In this "only believism" of many churches, it is assumed that all they need for assurance is to believe that Christ died for them and to rest on John 3:16. Or, for example, they simply rest on the bare Word of God at John 5:24, that where the declaration "he that believeth in Him . . . *hath* eternal life" is counted on, then assurance from that promise may be grasped. But that certainly is not all there is to it, as has been shown. Also the *marks* of "he that believeth" must be found evident in the heart and life. The *character* of the possessor of eternal life must be manifest in the one resting on the rock of Scripture. There is more to it when we recall that "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). The implication of "only believism" has the effect of not seeming to know "whether there is any Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2). The putting of my hand to the promises of God as laid down in verbally inspired Scripture is not in itself sufficient to produce assurance in me. If all I needed was to rest on the rock of the Word, what need would there be for the Spirit and His testimony? or His sharing of the secret of the Lord with me? or His showing me His covenant, of His whisper to me, "Thou art Mine" (Ps. 25:14; Isa. 43:1)?

In the complexities of your daily round, in the pressures, trials and frustrations of life, is it not at times a matter of annoying uncertainty whether you are a child of God? Does it not take no less than the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit to confirm the fact, in order to leave you with a measure of peace? It is an amazing fact, neither of science nor nature but, of grace that God is my Father. But the assurance of that fact requires more than one act of faith exerted on my part some time in the (as I get older, dim and dimmer) past. It requires more than a supposed stand on the bare Word of God. Millions of superstitious religionists do no more than that today when they tenaciously hold to the word of Christ, "This *is* My body" and are immovable in the assumption that the bread of the Lord's Table is materially changed into Christ's corporeal body. But when the

Spirit witnesses to us in this connection, He never bears a testimony conflicting with our senses. Therefore the bread, although it signifies much, is and remains bread.

There is that work of the Spirit which He has begun in me, namely regeneration. That is certainly necessary before I *can* believe or rest on the promises. Then, too, He himself must give some authentication of His own work in my heart, such as delight in the law of God according to the inward (new) man. The witness of the Spirit with my spirit is therefore not by a dream. Now that the Lord has revealed the whole counsel of God in the Scriptures, the turning to a dream, a vision or voices for inspiration and guidance would be to by-pass the Spirit, to reject Him. Nor does the Spirit carry on His witness by bringing some verse of Scripture to mind. Satan can do that (Matt. 4:6). We are rather tired, these days, of Satan quoting Scripture. We wonder how he could deceive anyone with such worn-out tactic. Yet it does have the effect of producing in the souls of many the emotion of a false peace. The Spirit, however, does what Satan cannot do. He sanctifies us by the truth in a holy life. The devil can counterfeit. But he cannot produce real holiness.

What the Spirit does when He bears witness with our spirit is to produce the evidence of grace in us to our renewed consciousness. The natural man's own conscience is "also bearing witness" (Rom. 2:15) to what is good and bad. But the conscience of the natural man he is incapable of using aright, even in things natural, for he daily defiles his conscience and holds it down in unrighteousness. In this case, to "let your conscience be your guide" would mean to do what is right in your own eyes, to simply go your own way, regardless of what is right. But the desire of the Christian is to "have always a conscience void of offence toward God and men" (Acts 24:16). Then we will experience that our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that by the grace of God in simplicity and godly sincerity we have behaved ourselves in the world (II Cor. 1:12).

It is often said that we have assurance that we are children of God for nothing in ourselves. It is often pointed out that "in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). Yet there is also in me, in my spirit, the work and testimony of the Spirit. Then it is not wrong for the Christian to rejoice for something *in himself* (John 15:7, 11) or produced from himself (7:38). Then though "the backslider in heart is filled with his own ways . . . a good man shall be satisfied from himself" (Prov. 14:14). Reject not this thought on the ground that it is of the Old Testament, for it is really New Testament thinking, as we read there, "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4). How we have assurance of heart is not merely by taking hold of a promise of God and claiming, 'That applies to me.' There must be evidence that it applies to me. For example, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth: and in this (Gk.) we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him" (I John 3:18f). Assurance comes not merely in the intellectual appropriation of a truth, but by walking in the truth. Then your own spirit will testify to you that you are not only called a child of God (3:1), but that you are a child of God (3:2)!

INDEX FOR BEACON LIGHTS

The *Beacon Lights* Staff would like to know how great a demand there will be for the forthcoming index for *Beacon Lights.* If we can get an estimate on the number of copies, we can more easily determine the cost and the number to be printed. The Federation Board has graciously consented to cover the cost of printing; the index will cost you nothing. Just print your name, address, zipcode, the number of copies desired, and the church to which you are a member on the card enclosed in this issue. (NOTE: Please send this card before Nov. 10, as it is necessary in order to determine the number of copies to be made.)

CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING BIBLE

Several months have passed since I wrote my last article in the series which currently deals with a philosophy of education. In the article which appeared in the May issue of *Beacon Lights* I was writing about the curriculum and stated that I intended to begin a series of articles which dealt particularly with the different subjects of the curriculum.

I begin this ambitious task by writing about the controversial and difficult task of teaching Bible. My materials were the basis of a speech which I made for the Secondary Mothers' Circle and are basically the principles which I have written to guide our teachers in teaching Bible in our current grade schools.

* * * * *

The first chapter that appears in the *Course of Study* for Christian Schools following a general discussion of the philosophy and general objectives of Christian education is a chapter on the problem of Bible study in the school. This placement seems to indicate that instruction in the facts and the truth of the Bible is of prime importance in the instructional program in the Christian school. Its placement as the first subject for study in the day and as the first course to be reported on the systematic monthly or six-weeks report to the parent also seems to indicate a certain pre-eminence of the subject. We hope that tradition has not been the motivating force that has dictated the continued instruction of the truths of the Bible in our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools but that a sincere desire to grow in the knowledge of the Scriptures is the motivating force of all Bible instruction.

Even though there have been remarks at Seminars concerning the necessity and legitimacy of a separate Bible course in the Protestant Reformed Christian School curriculum, it is not the concern of this set of principles to evaluate the pros and cons of such argumentation. We submit that it is the concern of this paper to evaluate and elucidate the principles and objectives for the separate Bible courses in the curriculum of the Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. We realize full well that the primary task of the school is to educate students in those subject-areas which parents are not qualified to teach and to educate in such a way that the Christian School is not simply a school with the Bible but that Christian principles derived from the Word of God permeate all the courses taught in the school. We assume that the Bible has a very sacred and legitimate place in the Christian school curriculum and from such a starting point we formulate some principles based on the Word of God and the Reformed Confessions that should govern the teaching of the Bible in the school.

It is a fact that principles which govern the instruction of the truth of the Scriptures cannot be borrowed from secular teachers, philosophers, or methodologists. (This is done too often in the teaching of other courses in the curriculum and results in the destruction of a distinctive approach and interpretation.) Secular pedagogues will have nothing to do with the instruction of the Word of God. This is nothing but foolishness

to them. They may refer to the Scriptures as excellent literature but they quickly dispose of any ideas that would suggest that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that it is infallible and authoritative for all men in all places and at all times. Such beliefs belong to the hoary past which is enshrouded in the mists of superstition and mythology. Modern scientific man believes he has passed through such a period of religious superstition and has advanced by degrees in a process of positive thinking to the "rock" of scientific truth and objectivity which transcends all such primitive nonsense. Modern man holds for true all that has been proved to be true through controlled, objective, scientific observation according to his own norms and standards.

The Protestant Reformed Christian school teacher accepts and holds for true all that is contained in the spired Scriptures and is according to the law of God. He says with the author of one of our Reformed standards which speaks of the dignity and authority of the Holy Scriptures.

> We received all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; (the 66 books of the Old and New Testament, a.l.) believing without any doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts, that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilling.[1]

The Protestant Reformed Christian school teacher is also one who believes in God, the Father. He believes in the birth of Christ, his suffering, his death, resurrection, and ascension. He believes in the Holy Ghost as the third person in the divine trinity. He believes all that God has promised in the Gospel.

> What is then necessary for a Christian (teacher, a.l.) to believe? All things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us.[2]

This question and answer from the Heidelberg Catechism refers to the twelve articles of the Christian faith (the Apostles' Creed) which are all that God has promised in the Holy Gospel. In the Old Testament this promissory aspect is very much in the foreground while in the New Testament the promissory note recedes somewhat because the N.T. pronounces the good news that all the promises are fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

A teacher who desires to teach the Word of God must have a thorough acquaintance with the whole of God's Word. God's Word is a unit and each of its parts cannot be properly understood or come to its full and rich meaning unless the teacher has a "thorough, general knowledge of the Bible."[3] The teacher must also have an exact knowledge of the facts of the lesson to be studied.

Apart from the academic and intellectual requirements which are requisite in every teacher the following are some general spiritual requisites for anyone who presumes to teach the Word of God or begins to study the Holy Bible. He must be one who has a mind that *is opened* to know the Scripture and the meaning of Scripture. (Cf. Luke 24:45, Ephesians 1:17, 18, 19.) The Christian teacher must be one who is dependent upon the spirit of God and the mind of Christ as he seeks to determine the meaning of Scripture and to teach the children of God's covenant concerning the truths of God's Word. A Christian teacher must pray often for strength. This Christian virtue is often neglected as the teacher labors in the strenuous and difficult task of teaching the youth of God's church.

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1. *Confession of Faith, Article V. (Belgic Confession.)*
2. *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day VII, Question and Answer 22.
3. *Course of Study for Christian Schools*, p. 39.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Basis of Christian Unity:
An Exposition of John 17 and Ephesians 4 *by* D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 64 pages. Price $0.60.

As every one has noticed there are great social pressures for church unity today. The emphasis is on fellowship from an external point of view with no regard for doctrine or truth. It is from this situation that Dr. Lloyd-Jones speaks of the problems and of the proper viewpoint with regard to this particular state of affairs.

In the introduction of this subject the author limits himself to the examination of three main questions. They are as follows, "First: What is the nature or the character of true unity? Secondly: What is the place of doctrine and belief in this matter of unity? Thirdly: How does unity come into being?" These questions are answered very pointedly and thoroughly in the course of the elaboration of the two texts which are so constantly in the mouths of the ecumenists, namely, John 17:21 and Eph. 4:1-16.

Because of the fact that the text of Eph. 4 comes in the form of an admonition the author spends the greatest amount of elaboration to it. He then shows how this interpretation is corroborated by the rest of the New Testament. The last chapter of the book is devoted to the author's conclusions.

I recommend this book highly because of the exposition of the two texts, as it is good reading for all those interested in this problem and desire some good advise. But it should also be remembered that there is no really full regard given by the author to the significance of the history of a particular congregation or denomination. Also there is his particular conception of the preaching of the gospel which gives rise to the following quote found on page 61, "Nothing so surely drives the world away from the truth as uncertainty or confusion in the Church with respect to the content of her message.

"That is undoubtedly the main cause of the present declension in religion. The world will not be impressed by a mere coming together in externals while there is central disagreement about the fundamentals of the faith. . . . The question the world is still asking is, What is Christianity, what is your teaching, have you anything authoritative and powerful to offer us? It is interested in this rather than in organizational matters, and rightly so. It is also ready to respond to it." This whole theory is based on the author's improper exegesis of the word "world" in John 17:21. But this is not the whole book. ARIE NOBEL

Bishop Pike: Ham, Heretic or Hero?
by FREDERICK MORRIS. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 32 pages. $0.85.

This is a strange book as the author pretends to critically analyze a notorious heretic, yet it is our studied opinion that he merely is seeking to proliferate his own notions of the proper method of procedure for the Episcopal Church. This pamphlet does not authoritatively denounce the Bishop Pike with the Word of Truth, but, unfortunately, the author takes this stance on p. 17:

> Is the bishop a heretic or not? This is the question which still keeps arising and which seems very relevant to many people. I prefer to avoid the epithet, which suggests that it is a matter of black and white. It is far more complex than that. I would prefer to say that he often expresses views that sound more or less heretical. He cannot be accused of heresy in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity when he claims that he accepts what it seeks to say while rejecting the formula in which it is expressed. I suppose it must be said that his view of the Virgin Birth is heretical; but that would be an awkward ground upon which to take a stand, because it is perfectly well known that all too many clergymen maintain suspended judgment here if not outright skepticism. His view of the Incarnation and the Uniqueness of Christ, as I hear it in his speech and read it in his writings, seems quite definitely heretical to me.
>
> But I think his weaknesses and the reasons for faulting him lie in other areas than heresy. Prove him or condemn him as a heretic and you have done nothing so much as to make him appear a martyr. But to point out the lack of clarity in his thinking, the lack of perception in his views, the lack of scholarship in his theology, and the lack of discrimination in his values is to deal with him in a way that is constructive and effective, I believe.

The author's emasculated Christianity is revealed to a great extent in the above quote. For he consigns to oblivion all proper procedure in the church. Heresy must be condemned with Scripture and this must of necessity be done in and through the offices of the church. The author's standards of procedure are no different than the U. S. Senate's dealings with Sen. Dodd. In the church we care not for opinions unless they are proven to be in harmony with the Scriptures.

Also the author reveals the fact in the above quote that he follows the crowd and does not seek to combat all heresy for the sake of the gospel. The author very evidently wants the same goals as the Bishop Pike, cf. pp. 22, 30, but he is not at the same advanced point of development in this

road of accomplishment as the notorious Bishop. The author still wants to mouth a perversion of the gospel connected in name with Orthodox Christianity while the Bishop Pike seeing the vision of the World Church obviously "senses" that the gospel and orthodoxy are useless for the pursuit of this purpose.

The only use this pamphlet can serve is to reveal the mind of a modern liberal over against the blatant positions of a man such as the Bishop Pike.

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

ROMANS I

by REV. H. VELDMAN

V. Verses 26-27.

A. The connection.

1. In this verse Paul refers again to the judicial ground for the "gave them up" of verse 24 – see explanation of this expression.
2. In verse 24 he had written in general of the corruption in which the Lord had "given them up" through their own lusts.
3. In this verse (verse 26) he speaks of those vile, dishonorable and filthy passions in greater detail.

B. Notice what he writes here in these verses.

1. First, the apostle refers to those passions and movements of sin which are related to a sinful and impure sexual life – why does the apostle mention this first?
   a. First, this sin is really first, and stands upon the foreground in the world that forsakes God. How general is also this sin today! Explain.
   b. Secondly, it is the most abominable sin, a sin which lowers man beneath the animal, the basest of all evils.
   c. Finally, this sin stands at the beginning of the sum of vile passions in which God particularly burns with wrath upon the human race.
2. Secondly, the women are mentioned first, in verse 26.
   a. He does this, not only because this sin is more repulsive in women than in men, but also because the women generally lead the way in this sin.
   b. The meaning is not that they change the natural use of the man against nature, but that they satisfy their vile passions in their own bodies. Thereby they corrupt and destroy their own bodies.
3. Thirdly, in verse 27 the apostle declares the same of the man.
   a. How terrible is the sin of sodomy!
   b. And they receive in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet, proper.
      1) This "error" does not refer to the change of the female and male relations, because this is part of the recompense, but to their departure from the living God.

2) Whoever stands perverse over against God stands perverse and crooked over against all things.

3) God Himself sees to it that we can never separate the second table from the first table of that law. He makes the sinner unspeakably foolish, causes him to become lower than the animals. This is proper. If an animal be my god (verse 23) then that god must also stand above me, and I will do things that are unheard of even in the animal world.

VI. Verse 28.

A. The connection.

1. Again the apostle uses the expression, "gave them up," as in verse 24.
2. Only, now the apostle will refer to a further giving over by God of the sinner in greater sin and corruption than he had mentioned until now.

B. Their sin.

1. We read: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge."
2. We read literally: "And even as they did not approve to have God in their knowledge."
   a. To "approve" means to examine and then express a judgment, whether that judgment be good or bad.
   b. Man stood before the question whether to serve God or not. He could not evade that question. God burned it into his soul. He had to express a judgment.
   c. And his answer was: "I judge it not good to reckon with God." What a terrible and perverted judgment!

C. Their punishment.

1. God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do the things which are not convenient.
2. God gave them over to a reprobate mind. What is a "reprobate mind"? What does it mean that God gave them over to such a reprobate mind? Did they not already have this reprobate mind? Or, does it mean that He gave them over to it, so that they were completely governed by it, in all their life, so that they judged evil to be good and the good to be evil, in all their personal, physical, spiritual life, and also in their lives as in relation to others?
3. The result was: they did those things which are not convenient, proper, fitting. They did things that did not fit anywhere. Neither did they agree with the ordinances of God for their own life. They did things which worked their own destruction. They judged it to be not good to serve and love God. God shows them that He alone is good and whoever departs from Him must experience nothing but misery and woe.

VII. Verses 29-31.

A. In these verses the apostle gives a vivid description of the actual condition of the wicked world that hates God.

B. What a list of fearful abominations!

1. We read that they are filled; there is room for nothing else! The word "all"

applies to all these terms as expressed in verse 29. All these words, we must understand, apply to the sinner's inner life.

2. Unrighteousness. This sin is the opposite of righteousness which is harmony with the will and law of God.
3. Fornication. See what the apostle has written in verses 26-27.
4. Wickedness. Unrighteousness is rebellion against God. Wickedness emphasizes the evil as such of our nature, which hates God.
5. Maliciousness. This sin views this evil of our nature from the viewpoint of that evil nature to seek the evil. The word may be translated "viciousness."
6. Covetousness. This refers to the lusts of the flesh and of the pride of life to subject all of creation to their service of sin.
7. Envy. Man's evil nature desires all of creation only for himself and never for another.
8. Murder. A good nature will rejoice in the good of another, for God's sake, and is very sorrowful when the neighbor is in suffering. But murder is the natural desire to kill – note the example of Ahab and Naboth.
9. Debate or strife. This is the same as "murder," only as revealed in the word. Everywhere sinners seek themselves. Hence, there is no unity among them. This is also true of nations. Notice the "United Nations" today. How every country is out to cut and slash the other's throat.
10. Deceit or guile. Sinners try to obtain by means of deceit. The Dutch saying reads: "As is the host, so he trusts his guests."
11. Malignity. This is evil distrust. If we deceive another we expect to be deceived.
12. Whisperers. The meaning is that we are so conscious of our own deceit and evil that we speak in secret. What we say cannot stand the light of day.
13. Slanderers or backbiters. Over against each other they speak evil of one another. They kill each other by means of the tongue. Explain this.
14. Haters of God. In itself this word "haters" can be objective or subjective, hated of God of hating God. Here the meaning is subjective: hating God. As soon as you mention God among each other, this hatred reveals itself.
15. Despirteful or insolent. They stand in an attitude of disdainful pride over against each other.
16. Proud. Always they exalt themselves above the other.
17. Boasters. They always puff themselves up, and this in contrast to others.
18. Inventors of evil things. Always they seek to invent things that can cause evil to the neighbor. They use all their powers to create things to destroy one another.
19. Disobedient to parents. This is to be expected. Such sinners, who stand in that relation to God and one another, are, of course, revolutionary. They trample all authority under foot. How true today! This does not mean that, outwardly, they trample all authority under foot. But it does mean that they will obey only insofar as it serves their own interests.
20. Without understanding.
    a. The sinner has not understanding of spiritual things, and he has no conception.
    b. The sinner is a fool, also with respect to all things around him. He rejects all reality.
    c. He hates God, refuses to see all things as in relation to God, and therefore really knows nothing.
21. Covenant breaker. As soon as anything appears good to him he will break any bond.

22. Without natural affection.
    a. Natural affection is also found among animals, also, to a certain extent, among plants.
    b. In itself, this natural affection has no spiritual significance.
    c. But, as soon as the sinners' evil passions come in conflict with these affections, also this natural affection will suffer shipwreck: the mother casts away her child, brothers kill each other, etc. In broader sense, wars ensue.
23. Implacable and unmerciful. They are unbending and without any pity.

C. We do well to remember that all this applies to the natural man, also to the child of God as he is by nature. This must serve us to thank the Lord for the wonderful grace which saved us from these terrible things.

VIII. Verse 32.

A. They know the judgment of God.

1. This knowledge is a knowledge of experience.
2. It is therefore not a question of what they subjectively might judge to be right, but they experience this judgment, know it to be true.

B. The content of this judgment of God.

1. "That they which commit such things are worthy of death."
2. This judgment of God is proclaimed everywhere, because the wages of sin is death.
3. The sinner does not merely know that he dies, but also that his death is a Divine execution. However, he also knows more. He also knows that this execution is just, because God is righteous. The Holy Spirit engraves this knowledge of God's righteousness in the sinner's consciousness.
4. Hence, the sinner is one who, standing before the judge, continually affirms that the judge is righteous, that he is worthy to be sentenced, but nevertheless continues in his evil. Hence, he clearly shows that he hates and does not will the righteousness of God.

C. Besides, he not only does the same, but he also has pleasure in them that do them.

1. The sinner not only himself delights in sin.
2. But he also delights in those who commit it. This explains why, for example, Eve gave the fruit to Adam.
3. The sinner cannot tolerate the righteous. He hates him and will persecute him. Most clearly revealed in the rejection and crucifixion of the Christ.
4. And the culmination of this will be revealed in the antichristian world power shortly before the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the clouds of heaven.

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