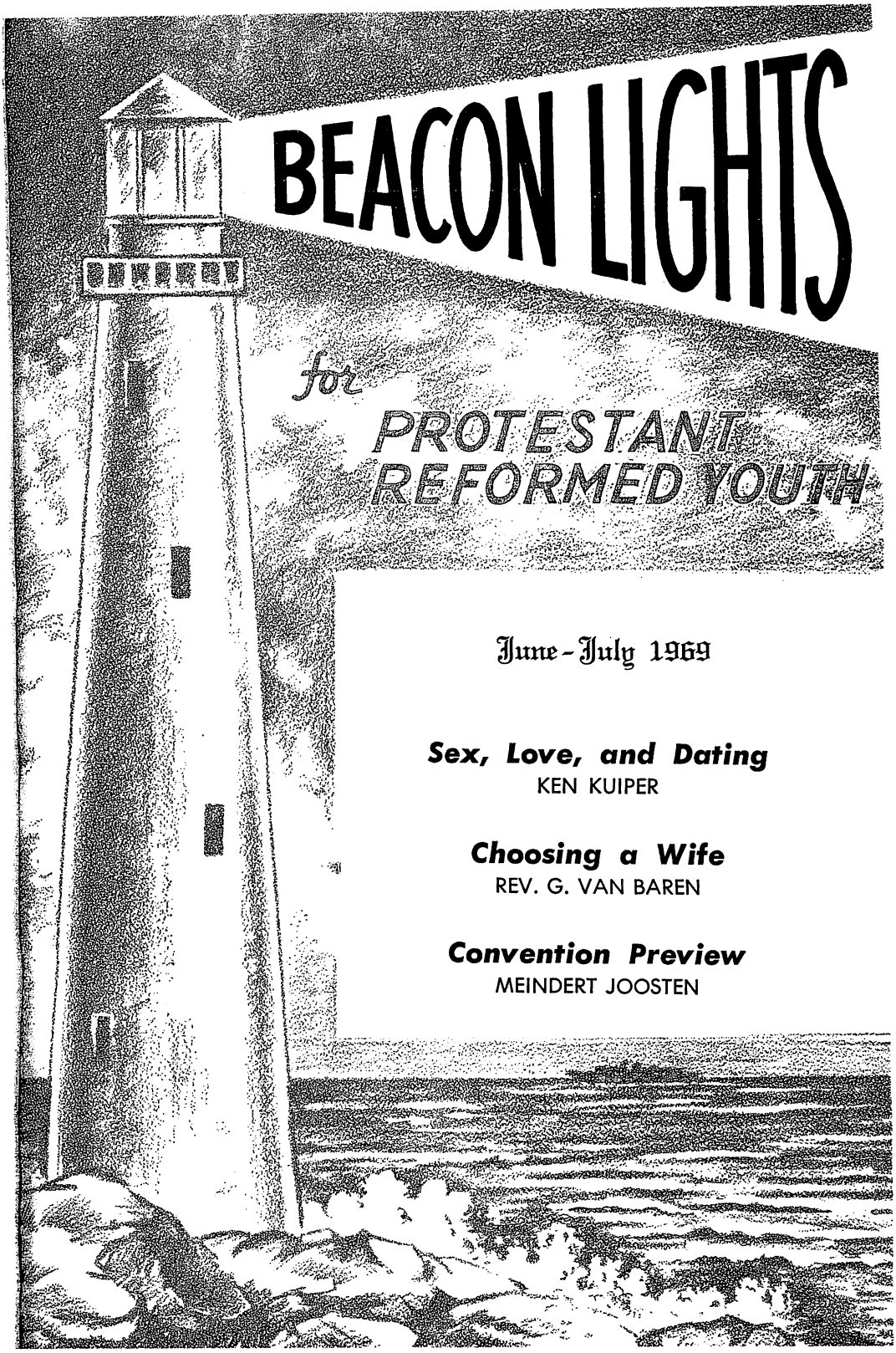


BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

June - July 1969

Sex, Love, and Dating
KEN KUIPER

Choosing a Wife
REV. G. VAN BAREN

Convention Preview
MEINDERT JOOSTEN

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XXVII | JUNE - JULY 1969 | NUMBER 4

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Ronald Van Overloop ..... President
Randy Meyer ..... Vice-President
Karen Kuiper ..... Secretary
Sue Swart ..... Assistant Secretary
Tim Heemstra ..... Treasurer
Ken Kuiper ..... Asst. Treasurer
Sally Elzinga ..... Librarian

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Calvin Reitsma ..... Editor-in-Chief
Rev. Richard Moore ..... Associate Editor
Jim VanOverloop ..... Finance Manager
Ben Wigger ..... Managing Editor

STAFF:
Doris Decker ..... Clerk
Gayle Dykstra ..... Asst. Clerk
Jim Lanting ..... Asst. to Man. Ed.

Beth Westra .....) Proof Readers
Joanne VanBeek .....)

Randy Meyer .....) Public Relations Staff
Mary Kregel .....)
Ben Wigger .....)
Karen Reitsma .....)
Jim Lanting .....)

Patricia Kamps .....) Subscription Managers
Karen Hoekstra .....)

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Rev. Robert Harbach ..... Truth vs. Error
Agatha Lubbers .....)
Shirley Gritters .....) Critique
Sherrill Gritters .....)
Judy Henson ..... News Editor
Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. G. Van Baren ..... From the Pastor's Study

All material for publication should be addressed to CALVIN REITSMA
3287 S. Canal, Grandville, Mich. 49418
Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to PAT KAMPS
14395 - 48th Ave., Coopersville, Mich. 49404
Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area please forward subscription dues to
MISS KAREN HOEKSTRA
1917 Kalamazoo Ave., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

All undeliverable material (Forms 3579) should be returned to Miss Karen Hoekstra
1917 Kalamazoo Ave., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

Second Class Postage paid at
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Subscription price $3.00

In This Issue

EDITORIAL 1
Living By Faith — Rev. R. G. Moore

IN MEMORIAM 2

FEATURE 3
Sex, Love and Dating — Ken Kuiper

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY 5
Choosing a Wife — Rev. G. Van Baren

CRITIQUE 8
Teaching and Interpreting American History — Agatha Lubbers

CONTRIBUTION 10
Delegates to the 1969 Convention — Ron VanOverloop

THE PR SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 11

TRUTH vs. ERROR 12
Christian and Obstinate — Rev. Harbach

CONVENTION PREVIEW 15
Meindert Joosten

NEWS FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES 16
Judy Henson

LIVING BY FAITH

Hebrews 11:23 *"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."*

The book of Hebrews presents the fact that Moses' parents hid him due to faith. This event was a great enough example of faith to be placed in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. When the parents of Moses hid their son they did so clinging to the promise of God. This was the promise that God would abide with His people, and He would deliver them from this land of bondage, and He would lead them to the land of promise.

Indeed, it took faith at the time of the birth of Moses to trust in this promise of God. For Israel was under great affliction at the hands of the wicked Pharaoh and the Egyptians. We read in Exodus two that Pharaoh had implimented three commands against the Israelites. First, he subjected them to a slave labor which was very severe. He did so to subdue this people unto his service. But under this affliction the Hebrews grew and waxed strong. Therefore, in wrath Pharaoh commanded the midwives to kill all the Hebrew male infants. This also failed, because the midwives failed to carry out this command. Finally, Pharaoh commanded all the people under his jurisdiction to kill any male infant born to the Hebrews.

This last commandment was in full force at the time of the birth of Moses. The Pharaoh had his spies by the homes of the Israelites, and it is for this reason that the parents were forced to hide Moses. The severity of this command is easily seen. If carried out, it would mean the destruction of Israel. Further, it would render God's promise of none effect.

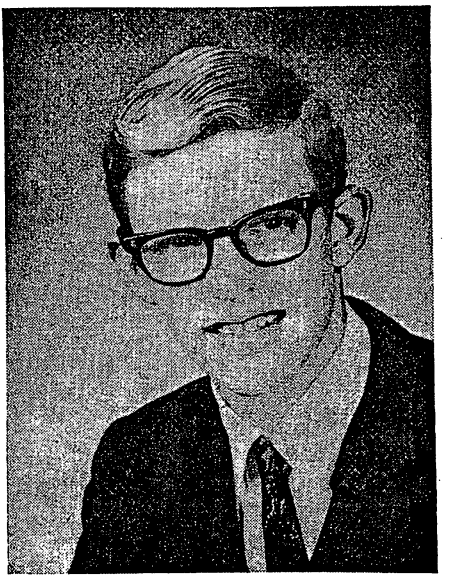
Oh, it took great faith to marry and to bear children in that day. It appeared from the earthly point of view that there was no hope. Today, it also takes great faith to marry and to become parents. It is true that the church does not live, at the present time, in fear for the earthly life of her children. But this earthly life we live does not have the same significance as it did at the time of Moses. Christ was to come from the loins of Israel, so that, death to Israel was the end of the promise. And this same spiritual life is at stake today as it was then. Today, it is the rapid development of sin in the world which threatens to swallow up the children of the promise.

Today, young people, as never before the world has developed in its sinful way. There are more ways and it is easier to sin than ever before. And this we must face antithetically. As parents when we look at this world — its riots, its hippies, its drugs, its nudity, and especially its complete departure from Scripture — it appears to be a hopeless time to raise a child of God. The devil has so many means to snuff out one's spiritual life. This I face now as a parent. This you face as parents of a few years hence, and today as children of the covenant. Beloved, we can only face the times ahead by faith, by a faith every bit as strong as Moses' parents. Only in faith can

we have courage to go on. Seek we must God's Word proclaimed. For in that proclaimed Word is the nourishment for our faith. We must trust in God, then the impossible becomes possible indeed. Pray for grace to look to the future in the faith that God never forsakes His work.

Rev. R. G. Moore

IN MEMORIAM



RON YONKERS

Nov. 24, 1949-June 25, 1969

Nineteen years, it seems like such a short time! Nineteen brief years, and with unimagined suddenness a close friend and fellow worker was taken from our midst. Nineteen years! Yet God had ordained that it was sufficient.

And sufficient it was. For his quiet, even disposition, we will always remember him. For his faithful work, we will remember him. But most of all we shall remember him for the fact that he was journeying to glory!

And we shall weep. We weep for the place that is empty, and for the joy of his companionship.

And we shall rejoice! For while we weep the angels are singing, singing in welcome. A covenant child has come home!

For his family, our deepest sympathy in your sudden loss. May our comfort be yours also:

For "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me . . ." (Ps. 23).

"Jesus said . . . I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live . . ." (John 11:25).

FEATURE

Editor's Note:

The following article was originally given as a chapel speech at Calvin Christian High School in Grandville, Mich. We hope that these thoughts will also benefit our readers.

SEX, LOVE, AND DATING

KEN KUIPER

My topic is not foreign to us, but I must admit that we do not hear many students speak on my subject. Usually ministers, or at least teachers, will try to communicate their thoughts on this topic. But somehow it just doesn't seem to sink in when a teacher lectures on sex. Maybe it is hard for us to imagine him ever being really involved in our situation. I hope this is one vantage point that I have, being a student. The problems of sex, love, and dating are real for me as they are for you. And because I am a student, I don't have to preserve the image that a minister or a teacher has to. I am free to speak openly about this subject. So let's be honest with each other in order to take a critical look at ourselves.

First, we live in a sex saturated society. If anything in the whole, wide world is true, that is. We are not isolated from this saturation simply because we are Christians attending a Christian high school. Sex is all around us – we are bombarded with it all our lives Before we are ten we are laughing at dirty jokes. We may not understand them, but we still hear them and laugh.

As we grow both physically and mentally, our knowledge of sex grows also, but its growth is usually not a healthy one. It seems as if every time a bunch of kids gather, talk turns to sex. It is really no wonder. The world uses sex in all sorts of ways, even as an advertising technique – and it is one of the best. Everyone knows that if a cute girl digs a guy in a Dodge, a lot of guys will go buy Dodges. All the songs we hear on our favorite radio stations have as their basis that three-lettered word "sex". It is always covered over with the word 'love", but it is still "sex". I could give many examples, but I hardly think it necessary.

Have you ever looked at the movie page? If you thought that I was exaggerating about the role of sex in our society, look at the movie section tonight – and don't forget Floyd Bloss's ad for "adult movies" – that's the best of all. We can bring the subject even closer to home than that even. The number of illigitimate children has risen steadily over the past few years, and the dropouts from Christian schools because of pregnancy number more than a handful.

The basic problem is that the world presents sex in the wrong light. It keeps trying to substitute "eros" (physical love) for "agape" (Christian love), and it can not be done. The world can not be the place where we learn our morals because of that wrong standard. Nor can we find

those morals from the animal world or in ourselves. We must take them from the Word of God. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

If we are to follow God's Word, we must live sanctified lives. This is hard. Face it. We are created male and female and God has placed in each of us the desire for the opposite sex. If that was not the case, the human race would soon die off. We have this desire – and it is as natural as the desire for food or drink or shelter – and it is meant to be fulfilled in sexual intercourse. But it must be fulfilled only in the marriage state which God has instituted as a sign of the relationship of Christ to His Church. Only then is the fulfillment of our natural desires in accordance with God's will. To break that sign is to commit fornication.

This poses a problem for us. In the time of the Old Testament and in a few societies today, people married when they first came to realize the desire – that is, when they had grown up physically. But in our society, people usually wait until they are 20 or 21 or older if for no other reason than financial difficulties. The result is a long waiting period, which can get pretty rough sometimes. But we must wait if we are serious about fulfilling the requirements set by our glorious God.

That fact makes a lot of difference to Christian young people who are dating. Society now accepts pre-marital sex. Why not? Contraceptives rid people of the consequencese and it is much harder to fight one's passions than it is to give in to them. But we must not go along with society, for we are called to be pure – both the woman and the man.

When we date, then, we must seek to love those we go with. For love is unselfish, it is kind, and it is thoughtful of the other person. We must not seek to rouse each other's passions, but rather we must concentrate on learning God's will. We must ask ourselves, "Is this the one God would have me marry?", because that is the purpose of dating after all – to find a mate. And as we search for the right person with whom to share our lives, we must strive to keep ourselves pure as we also keep the Church pure for Her Husband.

Now let's get a little more practical. What should we do on dates? I can not stand here and tell you what you may or may not do on dates. But I can tell you that we must flee temptation. We should always know what we will be doing and where we will be going on a date. Unplanned dates are often those which lead to temptation. Parking is another thing we must avoid. No good ever came out of an evening which was spent necking. Things like that leave us wide open for temptation.

Let's keep our dating what it should be, a searching of one another's personalities to see if the other person is the one that God wills you to marry, and save our love-making for marriage. It is certainly something wonderful to look forward to if one has kept himself pure.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

CHOOSING A WIFE

I'd suggest you read, before considering this article, the chapter of Genesis 24. There is found that interesting account of Abraham who sent his chief servant to the land of Haran to find a wife for his 40-year-old son Isaac. Of course, questions have been raised concerning the propriety of an elderly father (140 years old) choosing a wife for his son. I do not intend to enter into that question now. I do want to suggest that Abraham is deeply conscious of several important principles in choosing a wife (or husband) — principles which apply equally today. I want to point these out.

First of all, Abraham requires his servant to promise under oath that he will not obtain a wife for Isaac out of the land of Canaan, but would go to Haran to obtain her. Why was Abraham so concerned on this score? We often answer, correctly, that the girls of the land of Canaan were wicked. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had recently been destroyed because of their unbelievable corruptions. Nor was the rest of Canaan a paradise of righteousness by any means. But besides this, the Canaanites were the self-same people who were under the curse of God because of Ham's sin. These were the people who would finally be destroyed from the face of the earth. In addition to that, there is the fact that God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed. That seed would come through the line of Isaac (not from Ishmael who was sent away). Marriage with one of the daughters of the land would be an alliance between Abraham and the people who were to be cast out. It would unite those who might not be united.

Therefore, Abraham insists that a wife for Isaac must come rather from the land of Haran.

Do you see any principle which you can apply to yourself? It is this: light and darkness may never unite. Children of the covenant may never marry with children of this world. Marriage must never be considered as some sort of mission endeavor to convert a marriage partner to the Lord. Marriage is a sacred relationship between two who are united in the faith and seek a common goal. It is a relationship in which two can bring forth the seed of the covenant – and together instruct them in the fear of God's Name. This principle may never be forgotten in seeking a wife (or husband).

A second important principle is suggested by Abraham's actions. The servant asks Abraham what he is to do should the woman refuse to return with the servant to the land of Canaan. Should the servant then take Isaac to Haran and have him live there? The problem could conceivably arise. After all, this woman would have to leave her father's house to marry a man she had never met. She would never see her relatives again. She would have to live in a strange land with strange people and she would have to be ready to marry a strange man. What girl would willingly agree to all of this?

But Abraham insists that the servant may never take Isaac from the land of Canaan to return to Haran or Ur. Never! The land of Canaan was the land of pomise. It was typical of the heavenly and eternal Canaan. It was part of the type and shadow of the old dispensation. To forsake the shadow, even for a wife, would be to forsake the reality. By no means may Isaac do that. He must inherit Canaan with all of the spiritual blessings of God that went with that. To return to Haran would be as though he returned to the world with all of its wickedness and corruption. Isaac must stay in Canaan.

Can you apply that principle to yourself too? Usually marriage is of highest importance to young people – understandably so. It seems normal and right. When one "falls in love", what else can be expected but that these two marry? But there is a more important duty in the life of the saint than marriage. He is to praise and glorify his God in all things. Marriage can never be an end in itself, but a means whereby God's commands may be obeyed and His Name glorified.

The question then must be asked, will this marriage lead from the land of Canaan? Or put it this way, will this marriage lead one to separation from the church of Christ and a return to the world? Will it lead to separation from the church of Christ, where the word of God is most purely maintained, to return to such a church where the marks of the true church are not clearly seen anymore? Will one sacrifice God's word and truth for the sake of marriage? Then marriage no longer becomes a means to a specific goal, but it becomes the goal itself. God, according to this view, must be subservient to the desires of man.

But Christian young people understand well that their calling also is to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness – believing that all other things will be added unto them.

One may not forsake the truths of God's word even for a wife. Abraham recognized that principle – as we also should.

A third principle is also evident. Abraham's servant is reminded by his master of the faithfulness of our covenant God. The servant asks what he is to do if the woman refused to return to Canaan. Abraham reminds the servant that God had called Abraham from the land of Ur to go to Canaan. It was God's will to separate Abraham this way and to take him to the promised land. And God had abundantly prospered Abraham in this land. There God had given the son of promise. There God had given assurance of a seed as numerous as the stars of heaven. God had indicated that He would have Abraham remain in this land – though for the present he was a pilgrim and stranger.

This must mean, since God's will was very evident in all of this, that God also would not forsake Abraham and Isaac in the time of need. If the promised seed is to be born through the line of Isaac, then God would also see to it that he would receive a proper wife through whom the promise would be realized. There could be no doubt of it. By faith Abraham also believed this. It was in harmony with His promise that God also did indicate that Rebecca was the wife Isaac must have. Marvelous it is how God provides.

And did you apply this principle also to yourself? We often worry and fret. We might wonder if God will send a proper husband and wife to us. We can point to instances where some remained unmarried because they loved God's truths more than a union which would require separation from those truths. The principle, you must understand, is that God will provide. He does not indeed promise to every covenant youth a husband or wife. He does promise to provide according to His good pleasure.

Hold fast to the principles of God's Word – and believe that God provides. Walk according to the above principles, young people, and you will indeed experience His favor all of your days. Don't misunderstand or misconstrue the will of God. Don't say, as some have, that because I met so-and-so by the direction of God, therefore it must be the intent of God that I marry him or her – though he belongs not to the church. That would be a deliberate distortion of the idea of God's providence. Though it is true that God directs "chance" meetings of young people, He requires that we walk according to the principles of His Word in choosing a mate. By grace, do this – and enjoy His blessing on such a union.

The Federation Board wishes to announce the resignation of Jane Brummel as In-town-subscription manager and Ruth Noordyke as Proof-reader of **Beacon Lights.** Karen Hoekstra will replace Jane and Joanne VanBeek will replace Ruth. We wish all four God's blessing in their future endeavors.

CRITIQUE

TEACHING AND INTERPRETING AMERICAN HISTORY

AGATHA LUBBERS

Author's Note:
Nota bene: This article is a revised reprint of an article I wrote at one time for the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School *Highlights*.

At sometime in the school life of every American living in the twentieth century the history of America becomes a subject for study and reflection. It is necessary for the school, whether it be public, private, or Christian to acquaint students with the history of our country, the United States. In some states this subject is prescribed by legal statute. This is true in the State of Michigan.

Traditionally a course in American or U. S. History has included such topics as: The Discovery Period, The Colonial Period, The Revolutionary Generation in Charge, The Period of Federalist Dominance, The Era of Jeffersonian Democracy, The Rise of the Common Man, The Reign of King Jackson, The Westward Movement, and the Industrial Revolution. These are just a few of the many topics that could be considered in a U. S. History course. To teach the facts of these periods is not so difficult but to interpret and to see some pattern and reason for these events is the difficult task.

Leopold van Ranke (1795-1886) lectured at the University of Berlin and is considered by many as the "Nestor of Historians." He taught that history should be written from eyewitness reports and from the "purest, most immediate documents." The historian he said, must treat each period with unswerving impartiality. Each particular must be grasped as a part of universal history. This he considered to be the sole duty of the historian. His method has been called *historicism.*

In the book *Christian Reflections* by C. S. Lewis, the writer is quite frankly at war with the *hisoricist.* Lewis identifies and defines historicism as: ". . . the belief that men can, by the use of their natural powers, discover an inner meaning in the historical process."

With the position of van Ranke we basically differ. We differ because it is impossible for man to be "unswervingly impartial." I doubt very much whether van Ranke could write a history in which he tenaciously followed this basic principle. It is impossible to write such a thorough history of the world or of a nation which would include every fact of history. Some basic prejudice would be come evident in the very selection of the facts or details of the history being written. The reason for this is that the historian does not really write history. Only God writes history. The historian is a historiagrapher. The his-

torian is a sinful fallen man and will of necessity violate the principle of "unswerving impartiality."

I maintain that one cannot be so impartial. In fact everyone has a basic prejudice and bias which will determine his selection and presentation of the facts of history. It is my contention that one cannot teach or write history. He writes a history which must be understood in terms of his own basic prejudice. He places a construction on history. By his very nature man must give an interpretation of history. He will arrange history so that the pattern is according to his basic philosophy of life.

The teacher in the Protestant Reformed Christian School has the calling to interpret history and to be 'unswervingly partial." I am sure that he cannot come to a correct interpretation of the history of America unless he is in the first place a dedicated student of history. This means that he must be a student of the past so that he may give an interpretation which is consistent with the many events that occur and are called the history of the world. I also believe that if one is to correctly interpret history and the history of America he must be unswervingly partial to the word of God. He must be a student of the Scriptures. He must also be a student of the theology, of the philosophy, and of the literature that has been written and has been espoused in theory and practice by the American people. This is a big bill to fill. One wonders if there is anyone who is completely adequate to this task.

C. Gregg Singer in his book, *A Theological Interpretation of American History,* asserts that the student of history must be clearly aware of the theological backgrounds of a people to understand and interpret the history of the people. He believes this is especially true of the student of the history of America. America is the melting-pot of nations in more ways than one. I too am sure that the student of history in our Protestant Reformed community must be a student of the ideologies and the theological changes in America. He must study the growth of apostacy and the development of the lie in a land which was settled primarily by immigrants from Europe. The apostatizing of the Church, the development of the lie, and the tremendous growth of pseudo-Christianity has had a profound effect on the pattern of American political, constitutional, social, and economic development.

The truth of the Word of God and the Devil's lie came into America with the European settlers. It came into America in the form of western civilization and the established "Christian" church when the white man first stumbled upon the shores of America in the 15th and 16th centuries. The battle of the ages would be fought on a new soil in the context of western philosophy versus Reformed Biblical theology. This has had a profound effect on American history.

For this reason we must ultimately understand the history of America in terms of the teaching of the Scriptures. We must have taken our starting point in the Word of God. We must have heeded in our interpretation of American history the command of one of the seven angels which had the seven vials in his hand and talked with John.

"Come hither; I will shew unto Thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: . . . And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

Revelation 17:1b and 5b.

It is basic that we understand that the nations of the earth are the beast spoken of in Revelation and that these nations unite with the whore (the false church). America is one of these nations.

An interpretation of history involves an understanding of the teaching of the Scriptures concerning the ultimate victory of the Lamb. The Lamb shall overcome them for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings. They that are with the Lamb are called, and chosen, and faithful. Those that are with the whore and with the beast shall be made desolate for they are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues. This basic understanding and presupposition must form the basis for all interpretation that is given in the history classrooms of the Christian School in the Protestant Reformed community. (See Revelation 17).

This is not historicism but it is an "unswerving partiality" to the Scriptures. The Bible becomes the primary source for all the interpretation of the events of the past, the present and the future.

Show me a teacher who says concerning the history of the world and concerning U. S. history: "I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things," and I know that he interprets history theologically. Show me a teacher who declares with Amos: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" and I will know that he interprets history theocentrically.

Contribution

DELEGATES TO THE 1969 CONVENTION

Your Attention Please: You as delegate, have a special responsibility at the Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. You occupy a very important position. You have special duty. You, along with three other young people, represent your entire society.

Yours is the privilege, and also the right, to air the views and disagreements of your society about society life, the Federation Board, and the *Beacon Lights*. Yours is the right to aid in the development of the Federation. Yours is the priviledge to consider beforehand the nominations of the Board and also the right to bring the nomination from your society. Also you should consider the agenda to be brought forward at the Convention. Then it's your heavy responsibility to seriously elect the Board members for the following two years and also to decide matters which might affect society life for many years to come.

At this time the Federation Board would like to offer a suggestion to the

young peoples' societies and especially their presidents. We advise that your society call a business meeting a week or two before the Convention. At this meeting the nominations for the Federation Board members should be taken in consideration, as well as other nominations which your delegates can bring to the Convention. It is also expedient that at this meeting the society advise its delegates on how to vote on other parts of the agenda. Many important revisions of the Constitution are being brought to the Convention by the Board. These revisions should be very deliberately thought over so the delegates will be able to vote wisely. The Board will do its utmost to get the agenda out to the societies a few weeks before the Convention.

The affairs of the Federation should not be taken lightly. It is a cause very much worthly of its existence and deserves your serious consideration beforehand concerning these important matters.

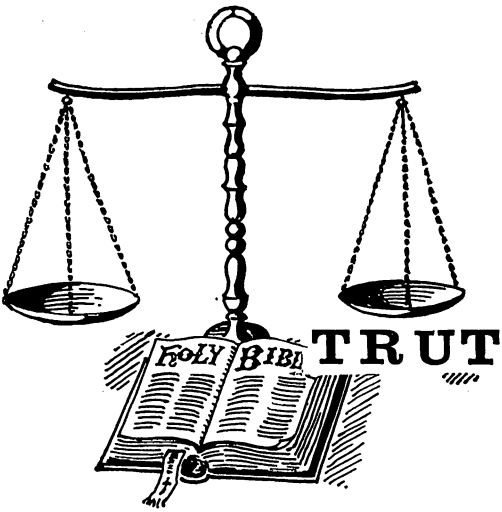
See you all at the 1969 Convention.

Yours in Christ,
The Federation Board
Ron Van Overloop, Pres.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMED SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance forward, May 31, 1968		$5,812.33
INCOME		
Bank interest	$ 297.28	
Federation Assesments 1967-1968 Season	460.00	
Federation Assesments 1968-1969 Season	490.00	
Gift — 1st PR Grand Rapids Ladies Aid Society	25.00	
Gift — Collection from Hope Choral Society (Grand Rapids)	60.25	
Royalties — Sale of "Perfect Peace"	11.70	
TOTAL INCOME		$1,344.23
DISBURSEMENTS		
Scholarship awarded	$ 350.00	
Advertising Posters and Postage	72.56	
Ad in STANDARD BEARER	2.00	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	$ 424.56	
NET INCOME		$ 919.67
Balance, May 31, 1969		$6,732.00

Respectfully submitted,
Donald J. Faber, Treasurer



TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

CHRISTIAN AND OBSTINATE*

*Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely co-incidental.

Obstinate, resident in the City of Destruction:
"I will go back to my place."

Pilgrim, on the Way to the Heavenly City:
"We are not of them who draw back to perdition:
But of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

When we first meet Christian, we find him in great distress, a "man clothed with rags." The meaning is that he lives in a world where all men, the Diveses as much as the Lazaruses, are so clothed; but here is a man who knows he is covered with rags (Isa. 64:6), and so knows that his own righteousness is insufficient for justification. He, therefore, with "a great burden on his back" and "a Book in his hand" turns his face from his own house (where justification certainly cannot be found) as others had done, Lot, Abram, Ruth. Though at a loss as to what to do, his guidebook got him off to a right start. By means of it (Rom. 3:20) he soon comes to a knowledge of how great his sins and miseries were. From that time onward he begins seriously to act on the directive in his book now impressed on his heart, "Flee from the wrath to come!" So imperfect was his knowledge at this moment that he knew not where to flee. He could not see that narrowed gate which leads to life, and he only thought he could see the light shining at the gate. But now constrained by the Word, "the man began to run!" He flees home and friends in the City of Destruction. He does so, not looking behind, with fingers in his ears and crying out, "Life! life! eternal life!"

At this early point in *The Pilgrim's Progress* we are introduced to Obstinate, one of Christian's neighbors in the doomed city, who, with them, as he fled the place, mocked him, threatened him and attempted to drag him back by force.

Christian had been long acquainted with this character, Obstinate. Christian, by nature, had a name pretty close to that of his neighbor's. It was

Graceless. Both of these men had been born and brought up together in the City of Destruction, Gomorrah County. Obstinate's father was none other than old Spare-the-Rod, while his mother's name was Doty (nee Spoil-the-Child). If you should suppose that his parents were ungodly people in this wicked city, you would be mistaken. They are not. Yet they not only spoiled but ruined their son by invariably allowing him to have his own way. They, like Eli, a godly man, failed to restrain their son and to correct him with the rod of the covenant. Hence, they were, as Eli, in part the cause of their offspring's destruction.

As long as Christian had known him, and that was all of his life, Obstinate was an ignoramus, by choice. He had never learned anything when a pupil in Jeopardy Junior High, nor while a "student" in Heedless High. In fact, the principal, Mr. Needless, expelled him before he could become a "drop out", because he had nothing but contempt for books, and for those who wrote, printed, proof-read, published, sold, reviewed or recommended them. If his teachers merely suggested that he take home a certain book from the library and read it (let alone buy, own and read a book), that was reason enough for him not to borrow, buy or read it. In the young people's society of his church, Obstinate was "a drag." He was too ignorant to produce a good paper, too hot-tempered for debate and could not stand those who confidently knew their subject. When he became of age he left the church of his parents to attend Two-Grace Church.

As he himself like to boast, many of his family tree "came over on the Mayflower," but he could trace his line back much farther as a direct descendant of Pharaoh, the Hard-hearted. Like his callous ancestor, he was sometimes conscience-struck with duty and aware of his best interests, but that iron sinew in his neck would not permit even a slight inclination in the direction of either. Even a cursory glance at his family history reveals that intrigues and plots in the state, and heresies, schism and divisions in the church are attributable to those in the line of his generations.

In school days, Christian never knew him to ask a question, to request that anything be explained to him, to admit, "I don't know," or to ever take back a wrong or hasty word. Christian found that Obstinate at home was surly and mulish, while in public his stiffneckedness prevented him from recognizing even closest associates, even though he often stumbled over them. He frequently went about as though he had a hatpin under his chin and smelled something bad. He could exert some politeness in company, but was always discourteous and borrish at home. He loved his family, but couldn't help being a "pill." There was one period in Obstinate's life, however, when a news-making change came over him. Everyone thought that perhaps he had become converted under the ministry of Evangelist. But that was not the occasion of this wonderful change. What was it? The man was in love! In the time of his courtship he was as sweet as pie. You could then give him advice without winning his snarl. You could correct him,

even contradict him, without his usual kicking out at you with both feet. He even began to read avidly the best books, attend the best preaching, and showed himself docile, humble with nothing of his old doggedness and bearishness. The warmth and love of a woman almost made him a well-rounded, well-adjusted human being. But it was not to last. Obstinate was soon his old, abnormal self, and was particularly silent, morose and insufferable to the members of his own family.

It became evident to all who knew him best that Obstinate was not only naturally proud and malicious toward men, but especially so against God. An old blacksmith opined that Obstinate constantly threw himself against the sharp bosses of His buckler. Some of his acquaintances secretly nicknamed him Carnal-Mind, and some suggested as a middle name for him the epithet "Enmity." In no sense was he ever subject to the law of God, and, constitutionally, he could not be. A mature, godly woman, deeply spiritual, penetrating in understanding of the Scriptures, once said that Obstinate in the deepest depths of his heart hated all men, all books, doctrines, sermons, principles and practices connected with the faith of God's elect.

The trouble with Obstinate, as his name reveals, was that he not only stood in his own way, but also in the way of others. Obstinate stands in the way of his own salvation, and does all he can to drag others away from theirs. Remember, he tried to bring Christian back by force. He and Christian engaged in a tug-of-war over Pliable. But in Christian he met more than his match. With one hand on the back of Christian's neck and the other crumpling his lapel, Obstinate bellowed, "Go back with us!" "That can by no means be," replied Christian, "because I have put my hand to the plow." Obstinate had always shown contempt for believers, and now this only made him revile Christian as "crazy-headed" and a "brain-sick fellow" and to blast both Christian and Pliable as "more fools still" and "misled, fantastical fellows."

One last word we may imagine Christian directing to Obstinate. "If you must be obstinate in wrong, I must be even more obstinate in right. If you condemn yourself as unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46), I with a holy obstinacy must have it at any cost!" Witth that, two obstinate men forever part. Christian will not linger to listen to any more. With fingers in his ears he rushes on shouting, "Life! life! eternal life!"

The only cure for obstinacy is the effficacious grace of the Holy Spirit, who alone can make the unwilling willing in the day of His power, make the tree good and its fruit good, open the closed and soften the hardened heart, change it from being evil, disobedient and refractory to rendering it good, obedient, pliable and productive of good actions (Canons of Dort, IV, 11). Pray to have that cure, and plead the promise of God, "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes . . ." (Ezek. 36:27). Then be warned that,

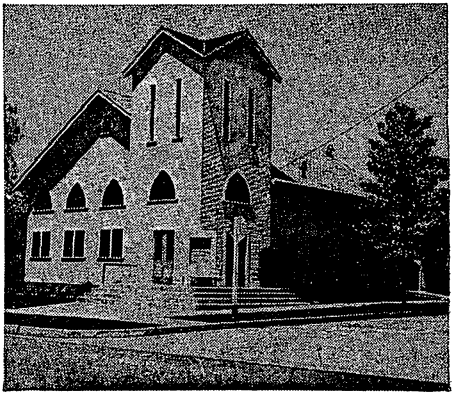
Sin, once possessed of the heart,
will play
The tyrant, force its vassal to
obey:
'Twill make thee thine own happiness oppose,
And offer open violence to those

That love thee best; yea, make thee to defy
The law and counsel of the Deity.
Beware then, keep this tyrant out of door,
Lest thou be his and so thine own no more.

— Bunyan

CONVENTION PREVIEW

1st Row — Left to right: Donna Van Uffelen, Allie Hanko, Karen Van Voorthuysen, Shirley Gritters, Chris Van Uffelen. 2nd — Dennis Van Uffelen, Meindert Joosten, Ed Karsemeyer, Jeanne Gritters. 3rd — Rev. Hanko, President; Everett Van Voorthuysen, Vice President; Larry Feenstra. Missing: Janice Feenstra, Joanne Feenstra



HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH
Site for 1969 PRYP Convention, Redlands, Calif.

For the Protestant Reformed young people the week of August 13 - 20 will mean "Westward Ho"; yet the young people of Redlands have chosen a more important theme for this week. The theme for the 1969 convention is taken from I Corinthians 13:, "The Greatest of These." The speakers chosen to discuss this theme are the following: Rev. Decker, Prof. Hanko, and Rev. Heys. They will discuss the subpoints I. The Greatest Virtue, II. The Strongest Bond, and III. The Highest Calling, as relevant in the lives of young Christians today.

D.V., the schedule of the '69 convention will be on this order:

On August 13 the plane will land at Ontario Airport, which is about 30 miles from Redlands. But don't worry — there will be buses. Following the non-air conditioned trip to Redlands, the conventioneers will be assigned their lodging. This may be a little hectic placing 150 people arriving at one time, and no doubt a little patience will be required, but we hope that the convention will warrant this. Then we will go to Sylvan Park for supper, volleyball, and swimming.

On the 14th registration will begin at the church at 9:00; the remainder of the day will be devoted to getting acquainted and organization. The day will culminate with a mass meeting at 8:00 at the University of Redlands.

Friday the 15th we will show our beautiful California mountains to the

conventioneers. The day in the mountains will be characterized by discussion groups, lunch, recreation, and the inevitable return to Redlands. The closing note of the day will be a speech, again at the University.

Saturday the 16th there will be a trip to the beach; here we will – oh, well, we'll figure something out!

Due to the lack of extra space in the Redlands church for 150 visitors, the Sunday services will be held at the University Chapel at 10:00. Discussions and debates will be held in the afternoon. Evening services will be at 7:30, followed by a Hymn Sing.

We suggest not eating Sunday evening so as to take full opportunity of the pancake breakfast on Monday morning. Then, after all have been filled at breakfast, there will be a business meeting, lunch, and the East-West ball game, of which I will not predict the outcome in order to maintain my neutrality. At 6:00 the banquet will be held at the University in the Casa Loma Room, followed by the final speech.

We hope that on Tuesday the 19th all the young people will take advantage of the trip to Disneyland. There is only one catch to this opportunity; you have to pay for the tickets. But cheer up – we will furnish transportation!

With regard to the discussion groups and debates mentioned above, among the topics that will be discussed are these: Dating, The Generation Gap, The Christian and Politics (Present Demonstrations), Christian Witnessing, Christian Liberty, and others. It is the hope of the Redlands society that each and every one of you will be prepared, with his or her guns loaded to discuss these topics.

So as you can see, the Redlands young people are working hard to plan a successful convention for '69 that everyone will enjoy. And come the 20th of August we will say "goodbye" to young people who were spiritually edified by the 1969 convention.

Meindert Joosten
(for the Redlands Y.P.S.)

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY HENSON

On May 11 at 9:00 the young people of Hope Church sponsored a talent program. The offering was for convention travel expenses.

On May 18 a singspiration was held in First Church. On June 15 the Federation Board sponsored a singspiration at Southwest.

On May 1 the Young People's Spring Banquet was held at First Church. Mr. J. Huisken was the speaker.

The Federation Board sponsored a Family Nite on May 23. Supper was served and many activities were planned.

Miscellaneous:

Following the evening church service on April 27, the choir of the South Holland Church presented a short program.

On Thursday evening May 8, the Young People's Society of South Holland sponsored a baked goods sale at the meeting of the Ladies' Auxiliary.

On May 21 the Kindergarten class of Hope School presented a program at Hope Church.

Graduation of the ninth grade of the Hope School was held on Wednesday, June 4 at 8 p.m. in Hope Church. Rev. Engelsma was the speaker. On June 5 the Adams School held graduation exercises at First Church. On June 6 graduation exercises of the South Holland School were held. Rev. R. Decker was the speaker.

On May 24 the young people of Hope Church sponsored a car wash at Covenant Christian. Proceeds were for the convention expenses. On May 23 the young people of South Holland sponsored a soup supper for the Young People's Convention.

The South Holland Church held their annual Memorial Day Picnic again this year. The picnic began at 10:00 a.m. with a fellowship hour and continued through the day.

On April 8, Miss Stella Wierenga from First Church celebrated her 81st birthday. Mr. Miedema and Mrs. Korhorn from Hope recently celebrated their 84th birthdays. On May 1, Hudsonville's oldest member, Mr. C. Woodwyk, celebrated his 96th birthday.

Membership:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter DeVries from Hope have transferred to First.

On April 6 Mr. William Lafferty made public confession of faith in First Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Van Baren have transferred from South Holland to Southwest.

Mrs. Grace Van Baren and Ruth have transferred from South Holland to First.

Births:

Mr. and Mrs. Dale Bartelds from First, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Pastoor from First, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Lenting from South Holland, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Holleman from South Holland, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Len Brinks from Hudsonville, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cook from Hope, a daughter.

Marriages:

Miss Janis Miedema from Hope and Mr. Wm. Bates on May 9.

Mr. Burton Van Prooyen and Miss Ardess Heyes from South Holland on April 18.

Mr. John Hoekstra and Miss Marie Kuiper from Hope on May 29.

Servicemen:

The address of George Bodbyl from Hudsonville is:

Pvt. George Bodbyl
US 54997156 Co. A 8 Bn.
4 BDE 3 PLT
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121

The address of Larry Koole from Hope is:

Pvt. Larry Koole US 5499443
Co. C 3 Bn. 3 Bde (AIT)
2nd Platoon
Fort Polk, La. 71459

The address of Will Haveman from Hudsonville is:

Will Haveman US 54985935
H. H. B. 1st Bn.
30th Arty. 1st Cav.
A.P.O. San Francisco, California
96490

Addresses for the servicemen from Hope:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miedema
44 Jackson Street
Ft. Stewart, Georgia

★

The Beacon Lights Staff takes this opportunity to thank Randy Meyer for the energy, time and imagination expended in the designing of the new headings for *Critique* and *From the Pastor's Study.*

★