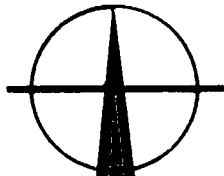


BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*



December 1969

*The Rule of
Christ*

MARVIN KAMPS



VOLUME XVII

DECEMBER 1969

NUMBER 8

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

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 Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area
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 952 Temple, S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

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

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"THE RULE OF CHRIST"

Rebellion! In a word that is the spirit of our times. Compare for a moment the concept "rebellion" with what is euphemistically called "student unrest," or compare with it what is termed the emancipation of the woman. What is the so-called "underground church," which has as its cornerstone the "uninhibited exercise of worship," but open rebellion against a church structure enjoined upon us by Scripture. The "underground church" despises and rejects the official means of grace as being an antiquated form of worship. There is something very subtle about the rebellion of today that makes it appear to be justifiable. The student claims he is fighting a corrupt establishment, the woman has been evilly treated and suppressed. The youthful "worshiper" has the same problem as the student, he sees hypocrisy on his right and left.

We live in a day of open rebellion and because of the glorification it receives it has an affect upon us. The urge to rebel rubs off on us!

Because of this I thought it would be beneficial to examine the concept of authority. What is it? Why is it necessary?

Authority can be defined as the "right to rule" or "the right to impose one's will upon that of another." He that is endowed with authority has the right to expect that his will is executed by all those under him. A father must demand and expect obedience from his children. The school teacher must demand and expect the same of his students. But if we say no more than this than authority soon becomes tyranny!

Authority, "the right to rule" is of God. He is the source, the fountain of all authority, whether that authority be of the church, the home or the state, it is all of Him. The father, the teacher, the officebearer of the church receives his authority of God through Christ Jesus the risen and exalted Lord. Christ must rule in our homes. Christ must rule in our schools and churches and that because He is Lord over all things to the glory of the Father!

If we use the figure of the human body to represent the spheres of the home, the school and the church, then the proper exercise of authority is analogous to the

function of the muscles and ligaments of the body. The muscles and ligaments hold all the members of the body in their proper place and they make it possible for the body to function properly. How could our bodies function without these muscles; how could we go about our daily activities? So it is with the exercise of authority, without which the home crumbles, the school becomes pure chaos, and the church becomes a manifestation of the anti-christian church. Authority is of God and the exercise of which is absolutely necessary for the Church of Christ.

All of us, young and old, those in positions of authority and those governed, must be willing subjects in all things to the rule of Christ in every sphere of life. When our fathers command, we must obey for Christ's sake; when our teachers make demands upon us, we must comply of Christ's sake.

But to be more specific let us consider how this concept of authority, that is "the right to rule," receives expression in the exercise of Christian discipline by the church. The "right to rule" over the congregation is given unto the elders by Christ, for He has called them to that office through the church.

The exercise of Christian discipline has basically three objectives or goals. In the first place, the honor of our God must be maintained among us. For God, who has redeemed us from sin and who sanctifies our hearts by His Spirit, requires of us that His name shall be honored and praised among us. If one walks in sin and after repeated admonitions refuses to repent, he must be set outside of the communion of believers in order that God's name be not dishonored. Secondly, the purpose of Christian discipline is to protect the body of Christ from evil influences. If a sin remains in the church it has a corrupting influence upon the whole church. An impenitent member must be cut off from the communion of believers. Thirdly, the purpose of Christian discipline is that the sinner may see his sin, be ashamed, and confess his sin to the church. By so doing he removes the offense and the honor of God is maintained.

Only in the way of the love of God, the

love of the brethren can this be accomplished among us. Only when the exercise of Christian discipline, when the authority of Christ is brought to bear upon our lives to the honor and glory of God, can we be proper instruments for the gathering of His Church. Christ, therefore, must rule in our lives for he has received a "name which is

above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philipians 2:10, 11.

M.K.

FEATURE

Looking at Change in the Church's Liturgy

BETH WESTRA

A church's form of worship is called its liturgy. In our churches liturgy includes prayers, songs, reading of the Scripture and of the Law or Apostles' Creed, an invocation, a benediction, and a sermon, an offering, and most often an organ prelude and postlude.

Have you ever thought of our services as such, a list of proceedings? (I hope not.) But very often lately the churches' liturgies have been re-examined for the sake of relevancy. People raise questions because they wonder if they fall short of praising God to the best of their ability.

Actually, this is a touchy subject. A person begins to wonder if he may question the traditional church service without offending God by experimenting with new forms of worship.

For the sake of this article, let's assume for now that God puts these new ideas into our hearts, and makes us wonder.

Let's start out with a common question: "Why do you go to church?"

"Because I want to praise God."

"Can't you praise Him just as well by meditating on His creation?"

"No, I believe that I can worship better when I learn more about Him by hearing His Word expounded, to see what God really has to say to us. I feel that God's Word is most important. In II Timothy 3:16 we read, 'All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.' We have to know more about God's Word to know more about God. That is one underlying reason for the sermon and Scripture reading before the sermon."

Paul says in Romans 10 by a series of

rhetorical questions that God saves His people only through the preaching of the Word by one who is sent for that specific purpose. And again in I Corinthians 1:21, "For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through its 'wisdom' knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the 'foolishness' of the preaching to save them that believe."

"Okay, so a sermon is necessary for a worship service, so what about everything else — prayers, for instance?"

"We pray because we need God's care, and because we can't do anything right on our own. God says in Luke 11:9, 'Ask, and it will be given to you.' God wants His people to talk to Him so that they're dependent on Him."

"Well, then how about the collection? Paul said he supported himself."

"The offering is for more than salary and church upkeep. It helps support needy brethren and sisters. But most important, Christians should want to give. And as to Paul's supporting himself, and our ministers not, Paul wasn't so busy as a minister with a large congregation. Elders were established in Paul's day to take care of visiting the sick and leading services in the absence of a minister. Paul didn't have two *new* sermons to prepare every week, nor did he have a lot of societies to lead."

"What about the reading of the Law or the Apostles' Creed?"

"The Law shows us how inadequate we are. It sets us in the proper mood of humility we so often fail to have in the presence of God in His house. The Apostles' Creed is a summary of our beliefs."

"But do these have to be read? Isn't there

too much of a chance that we lose the meaning of these if we seem to read these out of habit alone? Scripture doesn't say anything about reading these."

"You're right. It doesn't. And I do see a danger if people don't realize why we read these documents. But you're right, they're not mandatory."

"What about the invocation and benediction? When you use the same ones week after week, they become more-or-less automatic and so uninteresting that it becomes irreverently meaningless. Did you know that the secular magicians' term, "hocus pocus" originated from Roman Catholic priests who chanted their mass so fast that 'Hoc est corpus meus' (This is my body) was thought to be magic?"

"That means, to avoid such a pathetic situation in our churches, the congregations should know exactly what's being said, and *never* just assume a this-is-the-place-we-bow-our-heads attitude."

"And your songs! I realize God wants His people to sing Psalms and sacred songs, but do you *have* to have seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century music on an organ or piano?"

"No, but so far we haven't adopted any new songs for fear of being called irreverent by those who uphold the established tradition. I think they're afraid that if we sing new songs we will want new doctrines too, but that doesn't seem logical. Psalms will always be precious to God's people even if chorales are sickening."

"And do you *have* to sit quietly listening to calm organ music when you arrive at church?"

"The purpose of the prelude is to set us in a reverent attitude. But there could be other means to the same end. A good attitude-builder could be something novel. Even a pre-service singspiration with special numbers wouldn't be out of line. It would be a good opportunity to use our talents to God's glory. The question is, who's going to take measures to change things? Some of the brethren are really offended by a change of tradition, and we may not offend our brethren."

"But aren't they in the wrong to take offence at efforts to save Christians from

the death of apathy, when traditional ways lose their force and become dull and boring?"

"I'd hate to accuse them too much because the danger of all-out change for the worse is terribly prevalent, and those who uphold tradition are saving us from going too far in that direction. A happy medium is almost impossible to reach. Speaking of offence, there are those who are offended by having to uphold tradition for tradition's sake."

"A few more questions: Why is the sermon so long?"

"The sermon is long enough for the minister to 'go into depth' on his topic, not that he exhausts it, but that he gives underlying reasons, proofs, and related arguments for his points. He even states and attacks opposing points of view. We don't learn that much from a 'shallow' sermon. Sometimes I think a minister may go awfully deep for some people, and sometimes it seems he 'stuffs' his sermon with 'unnecessary' examples or too many 'Reformed clichés,' which have very little meaning for any visitors who might be in the audience. But you see, when a minister is preparing a sermon he has his congregation in mind, which is how things ought to be, considering that he has been called of God (through the consistory) to preach in his specific church. The minister knows the abilities of his congregation and tailors his sermons to their level of understanding. I think our ministers are doing a good job of (subconsciously maybe) reaching 'our level.'"

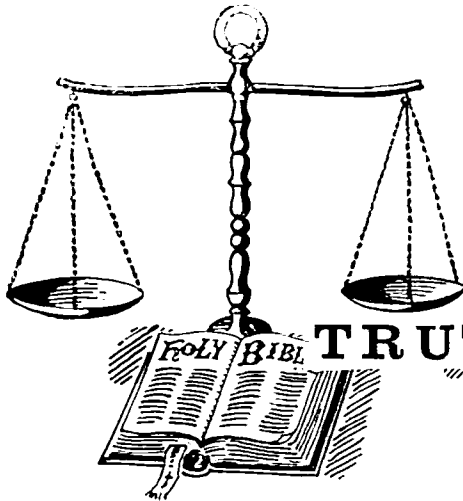
"What about these do-it-yourself church services, where people wear any clothes they want to, and sit on the floor, and have discussions about spiritual and moral matters?"

"I have no qualms about that, but I don't think that discussion groups should be substituted for a sermon; instead, they could be a welcome addition to our present services. Sitting in chairs or pews is often more comfortable than sitting on the floor. And concerning dress, I think we should dress neatly when we go to God's house, but not get so dressed up that we make ourselves uncomfortable."

The important thing to watch for in any form of service is the philosophy behind it.

Ask first of all, "Is it Biblical?" If it isn't, forget it, and try again another way. If a form *is* Biblical, then you may check if it's relevant and practical, and then if you want

to, try for change. But *always* remember that we must tailor ourselves to fit God's Word, *not* tailor God's Word to fit our crazy wants.



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH

MR. WORLDLY-WISEMAN

"With all speed get thyself rid of thy burden."

— W.-W.

"The wisdom of this world . . . nought."

"Foolish the wisdom of this world."

"The world through its wisdom knew not God."

"By the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight."

— PAUL

As Christian proceeded on his solitary way, now on that side of the Slough of Despond farthest from his house, a man was seen hastening over the field to meet him. Like Pliable, he was a gentleman, a man of distinction, as anyone could immediately detect, none other than self-satisfied Mr. Worldly-Wiseman. He was an alderman in the town of Carnal-Policy, but always went once a Sunday to the town of Morality to church. There he was an elder in Mt. Sinai Church. He also belonged to a club of the social elite called the *Autodikaiois*. In order to establish rapport with strong, influential men (he despised the weak) he naturally subscribed to *Fortune*, *Time*, *Life*, *News-wreck*, *Psychoanalysis* and *New Thought*. This man had some inkling and good guess of Christian, so that he took instant notice of his labored breathing, wearied pace, painful groaning and recurrent sighs. His greeting was not too appropriate, but typical

of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman: "How now, good fellow! where to in this burdened fashion?" Note his pretended, sneering compassion. Christian agreed that he was, indeed, burdened, and that he was on his way to the little narrow gate where he would be informed as to getting rid of his burden. To W.W. it seemed that a change to a more pleasant topic was in order. Hence, "Do you have a wife and children?" "Yes, but, burdened as I am, I no longer can take pleasure in them as formerly, being, then, as though I had none." That was away over W. W.'s head, but did not prevent him from offering advice to Christian. "Get *thyself* rid of thy burden," was the way he put it. To this it was necessary to reply that such was not possible; that there was not a man in the country who could remove it! Here was a man who in his humility, guilelessness, even in his naiveté, was too much for Worldly-Wiseman. Con-

sequently, the latter showed his contempt for Christian's capacity, hopes and aims.

"Hear me," he counseled, "I am older than you. In the way you take, you will meet with weariness, pain, hunger, nakedness, peril, sword, lions, dragons, darkness and death." The sound is much like that of Rom. 8:35. But he does not go on to, "I am persuaded . . .!" No, where he attends church he never hears a sermon from that book; nor does he ever read that book. "Weariness . . . and what not!" Christian everywhere in the world met with these things but they were not so terrible to him as the experience of how great his sins and miseries were! He feared the wrath to come more than dreaded evils in the world. The man who experiences this knowledge of misery cares not what he meets with in the world if only he can meet with deliverance. Now just how did this man come to get weighted down with such a burden, was what W. W. wanted to know! When Christian answered, "By reading this Book in my hand," the reply was, "I thought so! This which has happened to you has happened to other weak men who meddle with things too high for them. . . . They attempt to obtain they know not what!" There was a slap! reading and living by the Book, a sign of weak intellect! But Christian hardly heard *that* remark. There he was pacifist; but as to the desperation "to obtain they know not what" he was militant. "I know what I would obtain: ease for my burden!" Mr. Worldly-Wiseman deserves to be detested. Yet isn't there a large piece of him in us? We know not yet the plague of our hearts if we know not that we set more on the position and praise the world offers than on the position and praise that comes from God only. John 12:43. Watch and pray lest ye enter into Worldly-Wiseman's temptations.

With a great deal of contagious self-confidence, a way was proposed which would get Christian what he wanted without the dangers to which he was exposing himself. Wouldn't any man be glad for the key to such a secret? But Christian lived to be ashamed of that "secret," a "gospel" which promised no sinful nature to contend with! It was one which led to horror and folly. It was, nevertheless, all very plausible. In the town of Legality there lived another

gentleman, Mr. Legality, a man, as you can see, with very good name, skilled in ridding men of their burdens or in curing those a little crazy in the head about "burdens." The son of this indispensable person is a pretty man whose name is Civility, equally able as his father. Both their names come from their marvelous ability in making a righteousness of the law, or out of the sacraments, or out of their own works. The town was known for morality without faith, for faith without repentance, and for repentance without works meet for repentance. Mere morality is not Christianity. The Morality of this town springs from self-love. Its aim is to acquire reputation, distinction or secular advantage. It cares nothing about humility and shows no *delight* in obedience to God's law. It is prone, with the whole town, to worship the idol of humanism.

But Christian, taken with this folly, pressed on "to Mr. Legality's house for help." Now this place, full of motels with "occupancy," reasonable rates, and food cheap and good, was nevertheless so close to the Mount that it seemed to hang over Christian's head. Flashes of lightning streaking out of its summit made him break out in a clammy sweat. Now, when he wasn't shaking in fear he was kicking himself for taking Mr. Worldly-Wiseman's advice. About then he saw Evangelist (II Tim. 4:7) coming to meet him. That embarrassing question recurring, "What doest thou here, Christian?" had him red-faced and nearly speechless as he tried to explain how he had fallen for "a better way, a short cut." He began to feel better. Evangelist's good counsel would compensate for the regrettable course just followed. But wise Evangelist had no happy word for him. This got Christian shaking again like an aspen. But as Evangelist went on, he shook more. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. . . . Thou hast begun to reject the counsel of God against thyself, to draw back thy foot from the way of peace and to hazard thyself to perdition!" Evangelist never did appeal to the backslider's so called "free will," telling him, "You can choose" between the narrow way and the broad way. Nor did he evangelize on the false assumption that mere man can "refuse the evil and choose the good" (Isa. 7:16). Nor did he make begging, huckster-style invitations to

come to the Lord. He rather commanded, "Be not faithless, but believing," and "Give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," and, "agonize to enter in at the strait gate."

Mr. Worldly-Wiseman was a practitioner of delusion with his carnal policy and doctrine of this world. He loves this doctrine the best because it saves him from the Cross. He does business at Vanity Fair, buying and selling — selling the truth and buying destruction for his soul. A number of things are utterly abhorrent about this man. (1) He is continually turning people out of The Way, (2) removing the offence of the Cross, and (3) advertizing the ministration of death as the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness. He had misinformed Christian that the way he was in (the Way of Truth) would be his death. He had said that that would be his death which the Truth says we cannot be without and have eternal life. Damnable doctrine this, and must be abhorred! So Christian began to abhor himself for ever listening to such an alien as Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, to such a cheat as Mr. Legality, son of the

bondwoman, to Civility, a simpering hypocrite. These all aim at misleading pilgrims away from the Narrow Gate.

Even then Evangelist did not salve Christian with sweet words. Comfort does not come that way. The stony-ground hearer receives the Word immediately with joy. Christian receiving the Word had the opposite reaction: it made him miserable. "Thy sin is very great," admonished Evangelist, "for by it thou hast committed two evils: thou hast forsaken the good way and set foot in forbidden paths. Turn not aside again, lest thou perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." Sin should never be minimized, regarded as trivial nor approached as needing only a hurried, embarrassing reference. Our pilgrim had to be made to see that his guilt was greater than he had supposed, though not too great for the infinite mercy of God in Christ crucified. As the two parted, Evangelist was heard to sing,

*When Christians unto carnal men give ear,
Out of their way they go, and pay for't dear:
For Mr. Worldly-Wiseman can but show
A saint the way to bondage and to woe.*



CRITIQUE

DONNA VAN UFFELEN

We wish to welcome Miss Donna Van Uffelen to our staff as associate editor of Critique. She is a member of our Redlands Church and of the Young People's Society. Her first article appears below.

EDITOR

ARMED FOR BATTLE

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul gave us the command to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. We can not obey or carry forth this commandment if we do not wear the complete armor of God. Not just one, or some, pieces of this special

suit of clothing will make us completely able to stand against the subtle trickery of the devil.

We have an extremely difficult, spiritual battle to fight. The battle must be fought in every aspect of our worldly lives and

even in the church itself. We must wear the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, and the helmet of salvation. The shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit must be taken up. Do we dare fight in the armor of the world?

A girdle is a very necessary part of a warrior's armor. It keeps the complete armor in place, supports the sword, and gives strength to the warrior himself. Truth, therefore, is the band that girds or binds the character of the Christian together. It was also necessary for the people of Israel to have their loins girt when they began their march out of Egypt. They were ready and alert as the Christian soldier must be; for the call to march may come at a time that we least expect it to come.

The breastplate is a piece of armor worn directly above the girdle. It protects the vital organs, specifically the heart. Solomon says in his proverbs (chapter 4:23) that we must keep our heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Our heart is to be above all keeping. In the great test, our righteousness will be as filthy rags to cover our heart, and Paul prays that he may put on the perfections of Christ, "not having mine own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ."

If we wear the complete armor of God and our feet are not shod, we will be sure to stumble, for rocks lie ahead somewhere in life's path. Our feet must be shod with the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace. Since the Gospel is a message and every Christian is a messenger of the Gospel, his feet must be shod with preparedness and winged with speed. Many years before Paul, Isaiah had once said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7)

The head is one of the most principal parts that must be protected. When the head is wounded, the whole warrior is wounded, since that part which controls the whole body suffers. Since this is the case, it becomes very logical that Satan tries to assault the mind through the ear, the eye, and the palate. In order to protect our head and consequently our whole body, we must

put on the helmet of salvation. "He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." This shield is not only "above all" in importance, but the meaning implied is that it covers and protects all the pieces put on previously. The shield protects the warrior from the fiery darts aimed to kill. If the fiery darts of temptation—wrath, lust, revenge, doubt, and despair—are aimed at the unshielded Christian's heart, faith is lost as the warrior falls. We must live with our shield of faith and be willing to die for it.

To fight a good fight, we must carry the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Christ's religion with the banner of the cross has been propagated by the preaching of the Word. Satan fears no weapon as he does the Bible, for it is the Christian's one offensive weapon.

Paul concludes by saying that we must pray with all supplication and prayer in the Spirit and watch with perseverance and supplication for all saints. We do not have to "wear" prayer. If we have truth, righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God, we will naturally want to pray. In prayer, all our armor is strengthened, for we have a direct line to God anytime that we want to make it. If we do not pray, we can not possibly wear the armor of God.

We have now drawn a complete picture of a warrior, a Christian warrior, ready for battle, the spiritual battle of the saints. We can never erase it. Be armed! Be ready! Pray!



Shadows of the Cross

ROSALYNN REITSMA

The following article was first given as a speech at the Singspiration held at Hudsonville church November 23, 1969.

Twilight softly shadows the city, silently aloof on its hills. Towers stand gently gilded in the setting sun, for this is Jerusalem the golden. In the ravines and valleys, even to the plain beyond stand the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Mammoth war machines surround the embattled city. Jerusalem is under siege.

Inside the saffron city a people is dying. The last bastion of Judaism will soon fall. Yet, worse than the degradation of defeat is the erosion of the people from within. Morally, the people are nearly destroyed, their leaders have betrayed them, abdicating their authority. Starvation has driven even the strongest into deeds of sinful desperation.

A people is dying, a promise is fading. Yet, among the emaciated remnants of a great nation remain a few with a vision, the vision of Jeremiah. It is a dim vision, blurred by years of silence and confusion, but to those who cherish it particularly in desperation, it is a vision of hope. For these few are the children of God, the covenant seed, and their vision is the cross. Dimly, through the curtained mists of time, the indistinct outline of the salvation of the cross is seen. Their vision of hope in the time of death is the shadow of the cross.

Thick-soled sandals encrusted with dirt, mighty legions marching across the worn hills: The armies of the great Caesar rule the land.

Flame-lit marble echoes to the subtle sound of an oriental flute. Salome dances before the lustful eyes of Herod the tetrarch. In a nearby prison, a man waits, filthy, hungry, totally drained. In a matter of moments his head will ride upon a glistening platter.

Alone, forsaken, but not desolate. Frightened, yet emboldened; he is John the Baptist, and he has seen the Christ! John has seen the Christ, and in Him he saw salvation. He has been touched by the shadow of the cross.

A chill wind sweeps across the barren Judean hills. On the summit of a rocky hill just outside of the city gates a man shivers, binding his cloak more tightly around him. Above his head hangs the Christ dead. Christ is dead, and in him this cold, empty man has been filled with life. Raising his head, he is shadowed by the agony of victory which is the cross.

On a care-worn hovel, affixed to an unnoticed side of a door is the crude drawing of a fish. Inside a cluttered work-room, a man labors diligently at a potter's wheel. A thousand men in as many cities? No, for this man has been touched by the shadow of the cross.

It is a time of persecution. Christians daily are being burned at the stake or thrown to the lions, for dissolute Nero rules Rome. It is a time of persecution, yet, for those embraced by the covenant line, the sign of the fish is a symbol of security, of unity. It is a reminder of the binding hope fulfilled for them at Golgotha; it is a symbol of the purpose of their being even in a time of death; it is an assurance of the glorious eternity that awaits them at journey's end. Still, more than all this, the sign of the fish is a brilliant light from Christian to Christian, reminding each one that he is under the shadow of the cross.

Hair streaming like wet twine down jaundiced faces, "love" beads embossed upon dirty shirts, bare feet slapping against damp pavement: The "now" generation rules the headlines.

Flickering blue television light emanating from row upon row of similar houses; ideas, ideals, idiosyncracies, pressed and impressed upon the Church.

It is a time of persecution, but there is no sign of the fish.

Social justice, social love, socially-oriented church. . . . Live for your fellow man! . . . God is dead (or at least dying)!

It is a time of persecution. Oh, we seldom realize we are being persecuted. We speak of the day when persecution will scatter and decimate our churches, barely aware that the subtle persecution of the world around us has already begun. It is a persecution in the minds and hearts of the Church; it is a pollution and a distortion of morals not only, but of truths and ideals.

The persecution is an altering of judgment, so that we find ourselves judging ourselves by the world's standards, not by our God's. The persecution is a muting of awareness, so that we unconsciously slip into the habits and desires of the evil world.

It is a time of persecution, a persecution more severe and more subtle than any the Church has experienced before. Yet the hope and promise, both given and fulfilled, which has sustained the Church through countless generations, is still ours today, for we are under the shadow of the cross.

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The body of Christ which is the Church. What glories it receives, what agonies it endures! For untold millions, the shadow of the cross has been the staff of life. The cross: a vision dimly seen through curtained mists of time, a vision touched but not realized. The cross, a reality witnessed, a shadowy, but really functioning promise fulfilled. The cross: The agony of victory which has preserved the Church in time and given it eternity. The cross, coloring and hueing our lives with its glorious promise. Our reason for thanksgiving.

This is not to ignore the rich abundance of this earth's goods with which the Lord has graciously blessed us. We have been given blessings far beyond that which we need and want. In the cutting cold of winter, we will be warm and comfortable. Again with the miracle of the harvest, the Lord has promised us security.

Still, were the Lord in His wisdom to remove all of our human securities, we would still have the most vital reason for our thanksgiving.

For all our lifetimes, brief though they may be in the scope of eternity, we have lived under the shadow of the cross. This cross is not a dead shadow, it is not an idolatrous crucifix on a wall; it is a vital, functioning reality.

The shadow of the cross is a symbol of the being of the cross on Golgotha. It is a living reminder of Christ's conquering hell for His own. The shadow of the cross is the memory of this agony of victory borne in every child of God.

Yet the shadow is more than that; it is also the living reminder of the promise of Golgotha. Christ, the God-man died. He conquered hell for His elect, and by conquering hell, by being raised on the third day, by ascending into heaven, He gave us not life only, but Glory!

The shadow of the cross, often dimly seen and yet more vaguely realized by the people of God, is the heart of our thanksgiving. We do not stand blind and ignorant before the cutting cold of the world's persecution; we do not bow to the onslaughts of the devil, subtle though they may be, for we are God's children, shadowed and sheltered by the cross, and the promise it bears.

Jerusalem has long since fallen, its gilded walls darkened by the passing of years. John the Baptist is dead, his work finished. The cross stands no more on Golgotha outside the city gates. The sign of the fish is all but erased from the memory of the Church. We are engaged in a new kind of defense against persecution, a more vital kind.

Soon it will be Thanksgiving again, and we will sincerely give our thanks in our thoughts and hopefully in our lives. Yet this is only the bare shell of what we ought to be doing in thanksgiving. We ought to be standing in an awareness of the shadow of the cross which marks our beings. We ought to wear this cross emblazoned on our hearts and minds. We ought to live in obvious appreciation of the victorious life this act of the cross gives us. To give thanks for the cross and all God in Christ has given us in it is to live every day in a yearning toward God.

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A cross once stood on a barren hill. Christ hung there, windswept, desolate, forsaken. He went through the agonies of hell on that cross, He died there so we might live. For that cross, and for the shadow of promise it has given us and our Church for century upon century, we give our thanks.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

"STOP BECOMING UNEQUALLY YOKED WITH UNBELIEVERS"

"And be not unequally yoked with unbelievers . . ." II CORINTHIANS 6:14a

Of Israel of old it was said by the Spirit of God through the mouth of Balaam the prophet: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone"! And in the form of the Hebrew parallelism this is emphasized and explained by the addition: "and shall not be reckoned among the nations"! Israel is the church of the living God, the people of His choosing. It is a holy nation, an elect generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar possession of God. It is a people which in Christ is holiness to the LORD!

That cuts the line sharp!

It is the difference between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent!

Do you understand what this means, my youthful reader? No, not simply do you know what this implies theologically. That too. But I now mean do you know the

practical, spiritual-psychological implications of this for your and for my life?

Well this means that God has separated us from the world. We are in the world, yet we are not of the world. In a spiritual sense we are a different people; we are different from the world. We are children of light, while we once were in darkness. Now we are to walk as children of the light. That is our status. Such is our confession. Such is also our commitment. We have been committed to this position in the kingdom by God Himself, and, at the time of our baptism, our parents answered that "we are sanctified in Christ, and, therefore, ought to be baptized." Even as the children in the Old Testament were separated from the world through circumcision, so we have been separated from the children of the world through baptism!

Israel shall not be reckoned among the nations!

This is not always understood and practiced. It was not thus perfectly understood either by the church in Corinth. They were surrounded by an idolatrous world of spiritual fornicators. And the tendency of not a few in this church was to have as much as possible a voluntary association with the world of godless unbelievers.

You have made confession of faith before the face of God? Really, you and I have vowed that we would "forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." And you have "resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine (contained in the 12 Articles) to reject all heresies repugnant thereto, and to lead a new godly life!"

But now you begin to tire of this all. You are tempted not to take this all to serious. You begin to play with sin, and not take your calling serious. You trifle with the grace of election! O, yes, youth must have its fling. And, at what a price this fling is had! Simply discontinuing is not sufficient. We must have true sorrow for sinning against God and His commandments. We say with the prodigal son "Father, I am not worthy to be called thy son . . ."

Such was the case in Corinth. And now Paul's word is like a thunder-clap from heaven. Stop being unequally yoked with unbelievers! The Greek text is here very strong. The text presupposes that the Corinthians were seeking to walk arm in arm with the world. They liked the plays and dramas of the heathen, which presented the "gods" in acts of war, rapine and adultery. These very temples of the idols were attended by the harlots to the swing of the enchanting music, with all its suggestive rhythm. The young as well as the old loved the "dance." The theater was their delight. It was Hollywood on the T.V. screen! It was the "late show" with its filthiness, foolish talking and jesting. It is the suggestive borderline speech, which suggests much without saying it all.

Upon these things cometh the wrath of God!

The seeking to be "involved" with the world must stop.

It is either or! We cannot have God and the evil world. He that will be a friend of God is an enemy of the world. For what "fellowship" hath righteousness with lawlessness? Lawlessness is our shaking the head at the law of God. It is a refusal to obey the law. Such is the case with *unbelievers*. Unbelievers are ever the disobedient. It is a terrible thing, young people, to have one's portion assigned with unbelievers. (Luke 12:46.) The unbelievers have a terrible yoke. It is the yoke of sin, guilt, and the damnation of hell! Presently they shall all be in outer darkness with the Dragon and the false prophet. Rev. 21:8.

This is a hard yoke. It has nothing to do with the easy yoke and light burden of Christ. It does not give rest for our souls. It can only lead to hell and destruction. It does not belong to those who ask after the tried ways, the old way. . . . These do not stand in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, to walk therein and to find rest for their souls. (Jer. 6:16.) These say: we will not walk therein!

Be not unequally yoked with such. Do not choose such as your friends. Tell me who your yoke-fellow is and I will tell you who you are. Be he an unbeliever. Well, be prepared to hear it: you are with your neck in the yoke of an unbeliever. You are yoked with one who is not of your kind. It is another kind of yoke; it is heterogenous! But be sure of one thing: the unbeliever will never have his head with the believer under the light yoke of Christ. If two are unequally yoked, this can only mean the unbeliever is dragging, as a child of hell, those yoked to him—with him down to death's dark portals of hell and destruction.

Stop! Be not unequally yoked any longer with unbelievers!

The world only loves its own. If we were of the world the world would love us. Count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

For the temple of God ye are. And the temple of God is holy. Sanctify the Lord in your heart, and be ever ready to give an account of the hope that is in you.

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

KAREN LUBBERS

Miscellaneous

On October 16, the young people of our South Holland church gathered at Geneo's Steak House for a dinner and evening together.

Rev. Heys gave a lecture on Nov. 13 based on the topic "The Measured Steps of the Coming Anti-Christ." Proceeds went for the Jamaican missions.

In raising funds for the upcoming convention, the Hudsonville young people sponsored a car wash and baked goods sale on Nov. 8.

A Federation Board-sponsored singspiration was held in the Hudsonville Church on Nov. 23. Mr. Hib Kuiper led the singing and special numbers were also provided.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Miedema from South Holland celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary and held an open house in the church on Oct. 22.

On Thanksgiving Day a special program concerning the work in Jamaica was held in First Church in Grand Rapids. The program was sponsored by the young people of that church.

On Nov. 14 a hayride was held at A. Haveman for all the Grand Rapids area young people. Proceeds again went for the 1970 Convention.

Marriages

Mr. David Poortenga of South Holland and Miss Lindsay Budgell on October 10.

Miss Shirley Bouwkamp of Hudsonville and Mr. Henry Bergman on November 11.

Membership

Mr. and Mrs. R. Hoving and eight children have transferred from Oak Lawn to South Holland.

The following people in the Hudsonville Church have made confession of their faith:

Miss Mary Holstege, Miss Mary Lanning, Miss Lillian Lubbers, Mr. James Van Overloop, and Miss Pat Van Overloop.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lenting from South Holland, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob DeYong from Hudsonville, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. George Kamps from Hudsonville, a son.

Our Pastors

On October 31, Rev. Decker was installed in the South Holland Church. Prof. Hoeksema conducted the installation service.

Rev. Engelsma, who is presently in Loveland, has declined the call extended to him from Doon, Iowa.

Rev. Engelsma has written a pamphlet on "The Christian School: Why?" and over 2500 copies of this pamphlet have been mailed to residents of Loveland, Colorado Springs, Denver, and other cities. We congratulate them for their zeal in Christian education.

Our Servicemen

This is the month of Christmas. Please remember our servicemen. They miss our company and our Christian fellowship especially at times like these. Do not forget to impart a little of your Christmas happiness to them where ever they are.

Christmas . . . for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord!
O Zion! . . . lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, BE NOT AFRAID, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
49: 1157-1158-4 (1965)
GLENDA D. ILLINOIS 415

