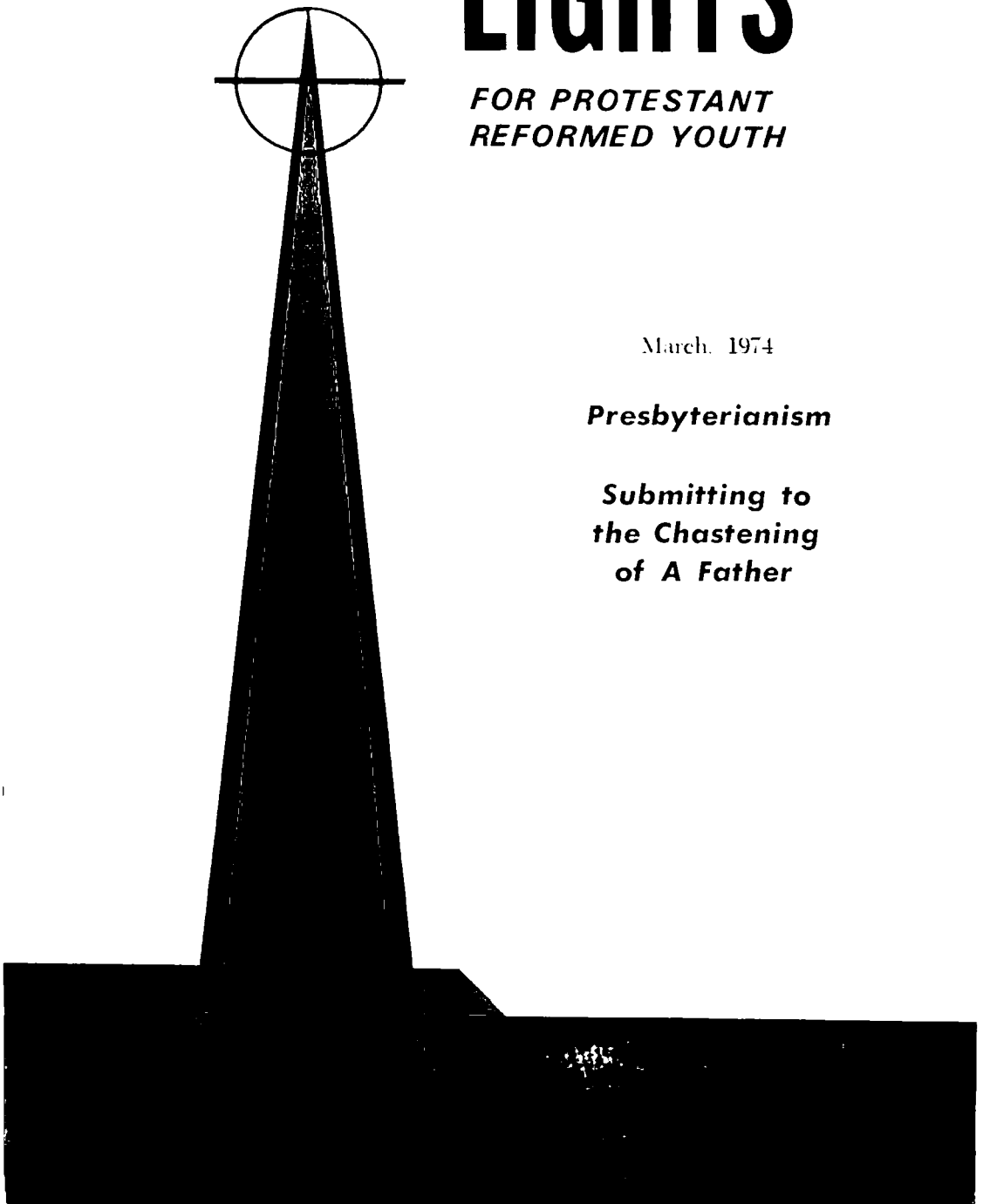
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



March, 1974

Presbyterianism

Submitting to the Chastening of A Father

VOLUME XXXIII MARCH 1974 NUMBER 1

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Ken Koole — President; Ron Hanko — Vice President; Sue Terpstra — Secretary; Dawn De Jong — Assistant Secretary; Daryl Kuiper Treasurer; Linda Vander Venteen — Librarian; Jim Schipper — Youth Coordinator.

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF:

Jim Van Overloop — Editor-in-Chief; John Kalsbeek, Jon Huisken, Tom DeVries, Associate Editors; Tom VanOverloop — Finance Manager, Dawn DeJong, Kathy Koole, Betty Kuiper, Ruth Maring, Mary Ophoff.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Rev. Robert Harbach, Agatha Lubbers, Donna Van Uffelen, Jeanne Gritters, Rev. G. Lubbers, Rev. M. Kamps, Rachel Lubbers, Vi Vanden Top and Bertha DenHartog.

If any of the material of BEACON LIGHTS is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source.

The articles of BEACON LIGHTS do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

Contributions of general interest are very welcome.

All material for publication should be addressed to JIM VAN OVERLOOP
950 Coral, Jenison, Mich. 49428
News Editor: MRS. EDWARD KARSEMEYER
4602 Quebec, Wyoming, Mich. 49509
Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to KATHY KOOLE
554 Kenowa Ave., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504
Subscribers outside of Grand Rapids please forward subscription dues to
RUTH MARING
4129 Jenison St., Grandville, Mich. 49418

Forms 3579 should be returned to BEACON LIGHTS
Box 7383, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49510

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

In This Issue

EDITORIAL 1
The State of the Union: Ten Steps Forward For the Beast — Jon Huisken

FEATURES
The Christian and Gambling — Marcia Bylsma 3
Presbyterianism — Mrs. Esther Kamps 5

TRUTH vs. ERROR 9
The Shepherd's Boy — Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

CONTRIBUTIONS
Then Backwards Becomes Everything — Peter A. Hoekstra 11
Awareness — Jim Van Overloop 13

CRITIQUE 14
The Missouri Lutheran Conflict — Agatha Lubbers

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY 17
Submitting to the Chastening of a Father — Rev. G. Lubbers

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS 19
Blind to a Loss — Rachel Lubbers

Editorial

THE STATE OF THE UNION: TEN STEPS FORWARD FOR THE BEAST

JON HUISKEN

While the Congress cheered, President Nixon made it known that his legacy to the United States and the world would be a structure for a lifetime and our children's lifetime of world peace. This, said the President, has been his primary goal and will continue to be the primary goal of his administration. Such was the President's announcement in his state of the union address on January 30. This primary objective coupled with nine other subordinate objectives will constitute ten great steps forward to utopia. The energy crisis, inflation, Watergate are only minor obstacles in the way of sure progress. The nation's economy, citizen health, jobs, etc., etc., will all be accomplished without doubt because of the great strength of the American people. There may be hindrances here and there but we are moving steadily toward an inevitable utopia. We, as Americans, will live in security and prosperity.

Now, you might say that that's good news. We like security and we like prosperity, don't we? Who in his right mind would call for calamity and affliction and poverty. But, is that the question of the Christian, whether we will or desire to have security and prosperity? Is world peace, is security, is prosperity, is utopia the constant prayer of the Christian? Can we agree with the President and say, "Yes, Mr. President you are right. America is great, America will persevere because the American people, by their own ingenuity and strength will meet the crises head on and will once again persevere. And, we support you wholeheartedly in your efforts toward establishing a structure of world peace."

We know better, don't we than to answer this way. World peace, physical security, and material prosperity have never been objectives of the Christian because the Bible tells him differently. He knows and believes that there shall be wars and rumors of wars. He knows the running of the horses in Revelation 6. But, it will appear for a time that Mr. Nixon is right — we are heading for a seeming utopia. The reign of the beast, the antichrist, is sure to come. And, the rise of the beast to full power will bring with it a peace to the world. For a time it will appear that swords will be turned into plowshares and the much-longed-for universal brotherhood of man will be accomplished. What President Nixon has promised in reality, however, is ten steps forward for the beast.

You understand, however, that I am not saying that it will be America who will give birth to the beast nor dare I say who it will be who will give birth to the antichrist, which nationality he will be. We do not know; we can only speculate. But, one thing is sure: history is moving toward the reign of the antichrist and it ought to be clear to us that we are dealing presently not only with the talk, the dream, of world peace but with its imminent realization. The foundations are being laid for its accomplishment.

It makes one a bit uneasy, a bit fearful, does it not, when we begin to see more and more clearly the signs of the return of Jesus Christ. The Christian, contrary to any millenium theory, will not be removed from this earth but will be required to live through the history of the realization of antichrist. And, that scares us a bit. We do not like to face affliction and persecution; our earthly natures yearn for security and prosperity. But, pilgrims and strangers we are and as such we must live, not in fear but by grace with confidence that "all things work together for the good of them who love God." God, you see, in his infinite wisdom has given us Revelation chapters 4 and 5 before he gave us the rest of the book of Revelation. The vision of John in Revelation 4-5 is the vision of the victorious Lamb of God. The church, led by its head Jesus Christ, is given the blessed assurance of sure victory. The antichrist will come. Each year presidents will prophesy peace and prosperity. Each year we move closer to the reign of the antichrist. But the

Christian as pilgrim and stranger with his pilgrim's view of history will live in his life not in seclusion, not with his head in the sand, but he will live life with the knowledge of the assurance of victory. He knows and understands what is going on; his teleology is spiritually guided and by faith he will press on as Paul exhorts us to do in Philippians 3:14, "toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

What a different purpose in life, then, and what a different view of history, then, and what a different view of things contemporary, then, has the Christian. He does not set his hopes upon utopia, upon material prosperity and physical security. He knows that these things have no intrinsic value; he knows that all the things of the world are subject to moths, and rust and rot. His hope, rather, is the same as the "cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 11, his hope is for a city whose builder and maker is God, and his assurance is that everything, including President Nixon and congressional colleagues with their grandiose utopian schemes, are in God's hands. All things will indeed work toward the deliverance of God's people.

As one views history, then, and as one listens to pronouncements such as President Nixon's state of the union address, one must keep his historical perspective. The Christian must not despair and wring his hands. God will realize his counsel. Rev. H. Hoeksema in his commentary on Revelation 4 and 5 in *Behold He Cometh* gives us that perspective. It bears repetition and emphasis:

> Men have repeatedly exerted themselves to work out their own salvation and the salvation of the world. Systems of thought, world-systems of philosophy, have been built up by human minds one after another, to show the true way to peace and righteousness and to establish an imitation of the kingdom of bliss. But they have all met with utter failure and disaster. No human wisdom has been able to call back the paradise lost. The might of the world, kings and rulers, have throughout history attempted to realize the world-kingdom, embracing all the earth. If only they could attain their end, if only such a universal kingdom could be realized, they would surely bring peace to the world. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, William of Hohenzollern, and Hitler are their names. But they have failed. Their glory is faded. Their power is broken. Their name is trampled under foot. Today we are told that the glorious dawn of a new day is faintly seen at the horizon of history. Democracy will perform what autocracy failed to bring. Crowns must be removed. Thrones must tumble in the dust. We must have the rule of the people. Besides, all the nations of the world must combine in this great movement for universal peace and righteousness. A league of nations is what we need and what has already been established. In this way righteousness shall come to dwell on earth, and peace shall reign undisturbedly. But already it may safely be predicted that also this ideal shall never be realized. Never shall it bring the much longed for kingdom of peace. Also in our day men of social service assure us that society must undergo a radical transformation. It must itself be regenerated. It must have new laws, new institutions, new customs, new relationships between capital and labor, shorter working days and better living conditions for the working man, the abolishment of liquor and other evils of society. If thus we labor, so they say, for the regeneration of society, we shall bring in the kingdom of God. All these human efforts, put forth by mere human strength and ingenuity, present the historical realization of the challenge of the angel: "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" And the ultimate failure of all these attempts constitutes the historical realization of the statement: "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." History must reveal the failure of all attempts to bring the kingdom of God without the Lamb, and that simply because of the great fundamental truth entirely ignored by the men of the world that at the basis of all trouble and confusion and war and destruction lies the guilt of sin and the corruption of the nature of man.

When John heard the response to the question that no one was worthy to open the book, he wept bitterly. He wept, that is, until he saw the "Lamb as if it were slain" and then realized that the Lamb was worthy. The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ has earned the right to open the book. He had ascended to the right hand of God and was given "all power in heaven and earth." He it is that now rules and He it is that will control and direct all things for the good of His people. Glory to the Lamb who now lives and reigns forever.

THE CHRISTIAN AND GAMBLING

MARCIA BYLSMA*

A very beautiful motto is inscribed on all the pennies circulated in the U.S., "In God we trust." But nowadays very few people believe those words. The events in today's world show the very opposite of trust in God. One example of this is the increase of gambling and the legalization of it in many states. State governments legalize gambling so that it can be taxed and thus increase their revenue. In this article I hope to show the sin and godlessness of gambling – that it relies on "luck" and "chance" and thus makes a mockery of God and trusting in Him.

The definition of gambling is "to risk money, or anything of value on the outcome of something involving chance." Chance is ". . . the absence of any known reason why any event should turn out one way or another." Luck is defined as "the seemingly chance happening of events which affect one."

These very definitions by themselves would be enough to condemn any gambling. Can there be such a thing as "chance" or "luck"? How can there be an "absence of any known reason," or "a seemingly chance happening of events"? Isn't God the reason for what happens to us? Don't we confess that all is under His control? It is true that we don't always know why an event turns out the way it does, but we believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God . . ." (Rom. 8:28). To take part in any type of gambling which relies on "chance" is sinful.

But there is more that can be said. I am not going to discuss the more obvious gambling of the wicked world, such as, the stock market, the gambling casino (where poker, dice, roulette, etc. are played), and gambling at sporting events. However, there are some forms of gambling which are becoming so common that we sometimes will participate in these events without thinking twice about it. Who hasn't been tempted by the numerous sweepstakes offered by cereal companies or national magazines? Or what store at one time or another doesn't offer some kind of lottery or door prize to promote business? And how easily we can get involved in gambling in our own homes when we speak of betting with each other on this or that, or even playing games with small amounts of money.

All these activities are not the innocent pastimes we may think they are. How easy it is for us to ignore sin. We must carefully guard our steps lest we become so used to these kinds of activities that they no longer appear to be sinful.

Many businessmen will frequently use raffles or lotteries to attempt to promote business. The sponsor of such an event will offer a prize to the holder of a certain number. A person can usually obtain a number by making a small purchase. This type of lottery is very appealing and attractive to man. But we as Christians must avoid it. It is obvious that the sponsor of such a lottery profits very greatly. The customers' purchases easily offset the cost of the prize. This type of business tactic is wrong. Consider the words of Paul in Romans 12:8, ". . . he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity . . . ." The sponsor is not giving with simplicity, he is giving in order that he may receive more in return. So often the phrase "something for nothing" is used as an argument against gambling. The fact that someone gives something for nothing is not wrong. We are told in Acts 20:35. "It is more blessed to give than receive." All that we have is a free gift from God. But to give a little in order to get more in return is what is wrong.

We have a calling as children of God "to live according to the will of God in all good works" (Heidelberg Catechism – Lord's Day 33). The catechism defines good works as "those that proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to His glory; and not such as are founded

---

*Marcia is a member of First Prot. Ref. Church.

on our imaginations, or the institutions of men."

The lotteries and raffles can by no stretch of the imagination be classified as good works. The lotteries refer to "luck" and "Fate." Man trusts in "luck" to obtain possessions. But we as children of God must seek our needs through faith and prayer, "give us this day our daily bread." In Romans 14:23 we read, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

A great temptation in this world is to seek after material goods. It seems that everywhere we turn we are pressured to obtain more possessions. There is the constant struggle to keep up with the Joneses. This is one reason why these lotteries and sweepstakes have been so popular. They promise a "get rich quick" opportunity. The success of these various events depends on the greed, selfishness, and covetousness of man. He covets the goods of his neighbor, thereby breaking the tenth commandment, and attempts to obtain more for himself through the lottery.

But as pilgrims and strangers on this earth, we must not set our hearts on the things of this world which pass away, but rather "to lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven." Our goal is not to seek material goods and riches. Why seek to be like those who are rich in this world, when we will be so rich in the world to come? "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to those that love Him?" (James 2:5)

There are some raffles and sweepstakes for which one does not have to make a purchase. In certain raffles all one has to do is write his name and address on a card and deposit it in a box, hoping that his card will be chosen and he'll win a prize. What about the sweepstakes sponsored by various magazines and mail order houses? Usually you can enter the contest without making a purchase, but by simply returning certain numbered coupons or something similar to that. He who participates in raffles or sweepstakes of this sort says that he didn't gamble because he didn't spend any money. What about these? Can these be called gambling? I would answer, "Yes!" Even though no money or anything of value is involved, the element of "chance" is still present. Whoever deposits a ticket in the box or sends in that coupon does so with the idea that he has a "chance" to win. In the Heidelberg Catechism – Lord's Day 10 we read, ". . . and all things come, not by chance, but by His Fatherly hand." How can one who denies that anything comes by chance, take part in these raffles? How can one deposit that ticket and still pray to God, "give us this day our daily bread." When we pray this we ask God "to provide us with all things necessary for the body, that we may thereby acknowledge thee to be the only fountain of all good, and that neither our care nor industry, nor even the gifts, can profit us without thy blessing; and therefore that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures, and place it alone in thee" (Lord's Day 50).

Gambling of any kind, whether it be in the casinos, the grocery store, or through the mail, is sinful. It does not recognize God, give thanks to Him, or glorify His Name.

We must pray to God that He will give us abundant grace to keep ourselves unspotted from this sin and to seek Him alone as the "only fountain of all good."

Men's Creation?

Swirling between leaf covered banks,
A small creek makes its way to the sea.
Small animals' pawprints dot its sandy spits.
Frogs jump into shallow pools, and
Chipmunks skitter across on logs.
God's handiwork is surely seen here.
Could man have created frogs,
Or trees, or
Even animals?
No, the beauty of creation is God's alone,
Meant for man to enjoy and marvel at,
Not destroy.

GWEN VAN EENENAAM*

**Gwen attends Covenant Chr. and is a member of First Church.*

PRESBYTERIANISM

MRS. ESTHER KAMPS*

There it is again, a muffled sound of drums. The sound is lost and re-emerges through the misty half light. The Catholic sentry stirs uneasily. What is that eerie keening drifting closer on the wind? That shrill, bloodstirring wail that couples now with the chant of drums? Can you hear them? Now in the grey dawn the Romish hackles rise in terror. 'Tis for sure the bagpipes and the swelling thrum of marching feet and the cursed cadences of the Psalm-singing regiments of the Black Watch. Those Scotch rebels-to-Rome have come to the aid of their Irish brothers once again.

My imagination summoned up that sound as I coughed my way through half a dozen dusty tomes to prepare for an article on the history of the Presbyterian church. From this reading I learned once again that the church of Christ fights the same old enemies generation after generation. Secondly, the problem of church and state has always loomed large in the Presbyterian church. Finally, unbiased histories which lay clear the doctrinal issues are almost nonexistent. Furthermore I learned as I set pen to paper that I can no longer be unemotional and objective myself, for my anger rises anew as I approach the climax of it all in the events preceding the split of 1936 and the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, then called the Presbyterian Church of America.

Consequently, this article will attempt a sort of taste of the church's doctrinal position, splicing in a few historical highlights much as a book reviewer might try to whet your appetite and appreciation for the spirit of that age. Finally, the concluding paragraphs will occasion some observations and warning about apostacising churches especially as shown in the external events and the underlying spirit which prevailed in the early twentieth century.

Presbyterianism, then, is a form of church government. It is that form of government in most Reformed churches. It is based on the oldest Biblical directives concerning elders, deacons, congregational rule, and the whole ecclesiastical system. All Reformed churches, to my knowledge, are presbyterian; but, sad to say, very few Presbyterian churches can any longer claim to be Reformed. They would call it "mellowing"; we would say they have largely negated their founding principles; namely the sovereignty of God, the Holy Trinity, the total depravity of man, unconditional election, the eternal decrees, and the vicarious atonement set forth so plainly in Scripture and distilled so beautifully and logically in that blood-bought Westminster Confession of 1578, the catechism I learned as a child even as you learned the Heidelberg.

We know intellectually but cannot see that spirit which moved armies, stirred the blood of our forefathers, and resounded in the assemblies of the presbyters. So that underlying spirit must sometimes be experienced in the imagination, in the soul. For none has recorded the fervent prayers of two or three huddled round a campfire, in some miserable hut, or on the knees in a dark prison cell under the persecuting sword of monarch or renegade. Church history is red with the martyrs' blood. It is sad, glorious, pitiable, inspiring, disillusioning, ironic, revolting! It illustrates the mighty hand of the Lord of Hosts – calling sometimes with trumpet sound to battle, whispering often, softly to His saints in humiliation and defeat. But always that voice comforts and that hand guides, sustains, and builds the glory of His Church.

The magnificent contribution of the Church of Scotland, out of which American Presbyterianism sprang, was the defense of the principle that "The Lord Christ is the only Head and King of the church." Establishing this principle required the shaking off not only of popish dominion but also all state control whatsoever. This right that the church govern in its own sphere not subordinate to civil magistrates was bought with centuries of blood and bitter strife. Out of this persecution came a staunch church whose spirit flamed gloriously for three centuries or more.

Mrs. Kamps is a member of our Hope Church in Walker.

Monarchs of the 1500's considered themselves the rightful rulers over both church and state. The lists of martyrs is too long, the intrigues and counter-intrigues, declaration, imprisonments, exiles, far too complex to spin out here. Stated briefly, however, that spark of resistance to tyrannical invasion into sacred rights in Scotland led to the Long Parliament which called the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1578. The proclaimed object of the assembly, to frame a system of church government and public worship as "might unite the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland," was never accomplished! But the doctrines formulated in that confession have graced the Presbyterian churches for 400 years.

In 1660 Charles II was restored; 28 years of horrible persecution followed for the church of Scotland, a dark but heroic era, an era of imprisonment, brandings, and torture until the accession of William and Mary brought relief. It was an age in which Christ purified, moulded and built up a powerful church. No historical resume would pass muster which failed to mention John Knox, who learned at the feet of Calvin and returned to Scotland to defy that Romish Harlot and Murderess, Mary Queen of Scots. Nor should we forget Andrew Melville, deputy of the church assembly, informing proud James VI that he was king of the commonwealth, but Christ was King of the church "whose subject James is and of whose Kingdom he is but a member." For his principles Melville was imprisoned and later banished, as were most ministers who would not bend to James' campaign of bribery and subversion. No less noteworthy is old Jenny Geddes who threw her chair at Charles I's episcopal priest as he attempted to read mass during a service in her church on July 1637. "Wilt thou read mass at my ear?" she cried and virtually started a revolution.

You will notice on page 54 of our Psalter at the end of the canons a list of subscribers appears. It is pertinent to our subject to notice that many signed as deputies not only of their church but also of their republic — the Duchy of Gelderland, the State of Groningen, etc. The whole story of the Reformation finds monarchs or pretenders to the crown taking a religious stance, and followers who believed it their sacred calling to uphold their leader with arms even to the death. Many there were who changed religions with every change of political weather. But there were many also who were faithful to principle. The name of William of Orange is an example. Or one thinks of those Psalm-singing Scottish regiments who with their chaplains marched to the aid of their beleagured Irish brothers in the persecution of 1642. Those troops stayed long in Ireland and their chaplains set up consistories and eventually the presbytery of Ulster. (Does that ring a bell?)

There was much intercourse between these two countries. At first much work had to be done to excide Unitarianism from the Irish branch of the church. Later, Ireland served as a refuge to the Scots under church persecution. So it is not surprising then that the Scotch-Irish presbyterians who adopted that same Westminster Confession and founded the presbyterian churches in the new world were highly concerned with safe-guarding their religious freedoms. We judge them now perhaps rather harshly for their inordinate, as we see it, participation in the new government. Had we lived in their times and shared in their background and problems, I wonder what we would have judged proper.

However right or wrong their motives may have been, the fact remains that when the church mixes into the realm of temporal power, troubles will result. Ministers of the gospel must make the preaching of the cross their main concern — not the founding of prestigious seats of learning, not the signing and writing of historic political documents, not even the influencing of the community to good by legislation or by prestige.

J. Marcellus Kik, in his book *Church and State* finds the proto-type of the church's temptation to rely on Might and the power of the state rather than the power of the cross in Jesus' temptation by Satan. Rather than the lowly way of humiliation and suffering, the Devil would tempt our Lord and His Church to gain dominion by force and conquest. How often the church has succumbed to this temptation. How natural for the early churchmen of our nation to desire insurance for their children and

safety from persecution by means of unwarranted meddling into temporal government.

This principle follows through in the history that follows, and how easy the logic of it is: Why not use Christ's dominion for the material welfare of mankind – a social gospel, a "relevant" gospel. Why not show that God is really "Fatherly," to all men? After all, did not CHRIST himself multiply the loaves and fishes, heal the blind, raise the sick to health? Are not men really brothers? Later on in Presbyterian history we see the "Gospel and Gunboats" up the Yangtse River. The Mission of the church became the unifying of nations into One World, the educating of men, the healing of their physical illnesses. This was the real "participating" evangelistic, protesting, and truly "with-it" church!

We will see some of the details of this worldly involvement in the following paragraphs. How sad that a church with such a beautiful past could have fallen so completely for the empty bauble of worldly power! Why could it not have remembered Christ' rebuking Peter: "Put up thy sword again in its place; for all who take up the sword shall perish with the sword." As the Presbyterian church in the United States moved towards this century, there were battles and skirmishes on every side. Already back in Scotland there had been amendments to the Confession to soften the idea of Election and to give the ungodly some credit for "acts of righteousness" though they could "never lead to redemption." Serious troubles were felt in the New England states over that old dragon unitarianism. The presbytery of Philadelphia felt the need to tighten the guards on the acceptance of candidates from the ever liberalizing Ireland. The southern states were arminianizing. And under everything rumbled the problem of slavery which eventually split the national church.

So, although some of these concerns divided presbyteries, in other cases compromises patched together an unholy peace. More troubles were on the way. There was increasing competition in scholastic realms which had traditionally been the almost exclusive domain of churchmen. The temptation to become heroes in the world of the intellect rather than to remain to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness gave impetus to the rising tide of the Dutch and German "Higher Criticism." To round out the gloomy picture we need only say that in the mission field, where the Presbyterian Church had vast holdings in schools, hospitals, and properties, big money was supporting the preaching of a social gospel to further the One-World ideal of the brotherhood of man, popularizing the American government and, oh yes, grease the wheels of big American corporations abroad!

If I tell the following story with bitterness, it is because liberal men in the church went about to destroy the church of my heritage, the church in which I heard the gospel. In telling about what they did, I can no sooner speak unemotionally than we can of '24 or '53.

This story reads like a page from a Textbook for Apostacizers. The Liberals had a strategy. I call it "Infiltrate, Intrench, and Propogate." The policy was to get liberal men into key positions of faculties, institutions, and committees. After all it only takes one wolf to wreak havoc in a sheepfold. A very few men in powerful positions could perpetuate their influence by passing rulings, screening new applicants, and influencing policies. Furthermore, when prestigious men speak, little men tend to listen! When a presbytery submits to a hierarchy, beware!

Here is an example of how the strategy worked: In the early 30's the Inter Church World Movement (seed of today's ecumenism) published an impressive, three volume, Rockefeller financed "survey" of foreign missions. It showed the direction of the wind for sure in recommending that missionaries and ministers not promulgate doctrines offensive to the Chinese, doctrines such as the blood atonement! It proposed that the compulsory teaching of the Bible in missionary schools be eliminated. It suggested that a more cooperative, consiliatory, liberal, understanding handling of the missionary endeavors would pacify the Red-agitated anti-christian-anti-foreign movement and benefit the mission program! How right they were, of course! How true that the preaching of the cross is and always was an offence. How ironic that it should be a church agency that would say so!

The second stage of the strategy was soon felt by conservatives. A self perpetuating screening commission appointed by the board of foreign misisons was soon culling out men whose stand was not to their taste. A non-presbyterian, Harry Emerson Fosdic, evidently very much to their taste, was one of the choice speakers at the annual missionaries' summer retreat up in the cool hill country of the Yangtse in the 1920's. Conservatives stiffened in angry astonishment. Yes, Harry Emerson Fosdic was very much to the liberals' taste; so much so that (and this is hard to believe) he was called to serve a presbyterian pastorate in Manhattan. The battle begun on the mission field by an Independent Board of Foreign Missions founded by conservatives was now joined on the floor of the presbytery of New York. The independent board was later to be ruled illegal, unconstitutional, and breach to unity: the conflict concerning Fosdic distilled into a declaration concerning candidacy to Presbyterian pulpits which was signed that year. That infamous document was called the Aubern Affirmation of 1924.

I will bring this paper to a close by telling you something of this Affirmation because it's rhetoric is the rhetoric of apostacy. It is worth learning about. The pages of this document state that ". . . the doctrine of inerrancy, intended to enhance the authority of Scriptures, in fact impairs their supreme authority for faith and life, and in fact weakens the testimony of the church to the power of God unto salvation . . . ." The Affirmation goes on to defend the right of qualified applicants to the presbyterian ministry regardless of their views concerning cardinal doctrines. This Modernist rhetoric effectively bludgeoned orthodox "trouble makers" who were "upsetting the peace of the church." The modernists used such persuasive means as the rallying cry: "No creed but Christ" or "Not a doctrine but a life." Its followers were chiefly rationalists ("Find some rational means of making Scripture believable") and Barthians (Subjectivists — "Truth becomes true as you believe it. Christ becomes Divine as you believe in Him.")

In Princeton and other presbyterian schools orthodox professors had done their work well. They could now sit back as seeming good fellows, tolerant and compassionate towards the older generation, the conservatives who "could not understand the new movement." And their seeming piety, their subtle use of old terms with a new meaning, deceived many. They lauded a personal involvement in religion rather than a dead orthodox insistence on doctrine. They declared the historicity of Scripture an irrelevant issue, thus making the defence of it irrelevant also. Whether Abraham actually pleaded with the strangers or whether the flood actually covered and destroyed the earth was pronounced unimportant. What was really vital was how you interpreted and reacted spiritually to these picture-myths! Truth, you see, had no abstract Platonic life out in space somewhere (neatly side-stepping by ridicule the logos, Christ, Truth in the flesh). No, truth was only true as it lives subjectively in your heart. How proud these men could now be! Intellectualism was sounding trumpets from all the parapets! Now the great minds of earth such as Heari Bergson, Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin could lend approval to their thorough scholarliness. Now the church too could say that mankind was "spiritually achieving his evolutionary potential; man was reaching out to become divine." It could be preached from the pulpits now. The Aubern Affirmation gave the legal right. Infamous document!

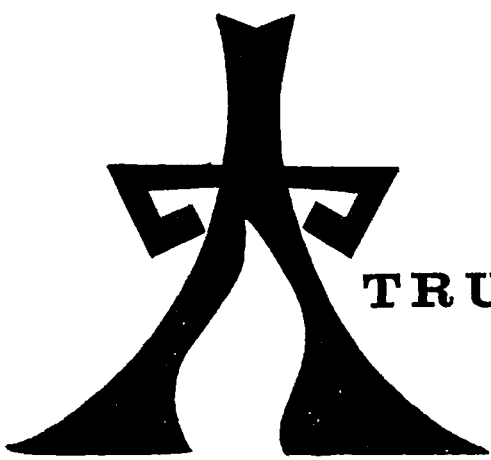
Beware when churchmen begin to sound the trumpets of Intellect. Traditionally reformed churches in our area and within the lifetime of most of you have lauded those who tend to eliminate confessional terms such as Justification, who seek to make a religious terminology which is "anti-abstract." But does not the elimination of terms such as Trinity, Reprobation, or Sanctification tend to undermine the very truths thus described. Such a tendency may sound to some like the Battle shout of a more sincere religion, a more personal, reformed scholarship. But to me it sounds like the dikes breaking!

Beware when intellect pillages the simple faith of ordinary Christians. Beware when pride is impatient with the simple, clear teaching of the Bible, when interest flags, itching for topics, for titilation, for entertainment! Beware when the church forgets to preach the cross and attempts to cure

the world of its ills. Preserve at all price the wisdom of the fathers who worked to preserve our church by its church order.

The growth of heresy and destruction is always inherent in the carnal seed within the church. But know that God will preserve his watchmen on Zion's walls. When the liberals of 1936 rendered it tactically impossible for conservatives to contend further they got out. Men such as Machen, Murray, Wilson, Van Til resigned from Princeton and founded Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. Others resigned their charges, left their homes, and formed a new church based on old principles. But that is another story.

The tapestry of church history is still a-weaving. We have not seen the last of the red of martyrdom. There is much of the black and pale greens of decay and heresy on the loom of our century. But there are also the azures and shimmering white of the prayers of the saints woven about the gold thread of God's covenant promises. We join the saints under the throne in the cry "How long, O Lord of Hosts, How long?" as we look back on the magnificent cloth and hear the thundering shuttle of God's loom booming through the ages even as we have briefly here in this history of the Presbyterian church. We are reassured once again that the church will most surely come to the wedding of the Lamb. Dressed and jewelled and splendid! Not by the tramp of the marching regiment, not by the shrilling voice of rhetoric, but by the calling of the Still Small Voice will she come! In spite of pomp and pride, in defiance of rebel or king, in spite of heresy and sloth she will come. It will be by the foolishness of preaching that despised Bible. It will be through sin and grace. But it most surely will be! We will come to that city that hath foundation whose builder and maker is God.



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH

The Shepherd's Boy

It was a steep way down into the Valley of Humiliation, but Great-heart, guiding Piety and Christiana, encouraged them not to be so afraid of this valley, as there was nothing to hurt them. In fact, it is a fruitful vale, and, although some are hardly beset in this place, it is of the best ground, with fat meadows, green fields strewn with lilies and growing with good estates.

Talking together as they passed on, they noticed a boy feeding his father's sheep. His clothes were in tatters, but his face was like Stephen's, the face of an angel. Great-heart had them pause a moment to listen as the boy broke out in song:

He that is down need fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride;

He that is humble, over all
Has God to be his guide.

I am content with what I get,
Little it be or much;
And, Lord, content, I shall not fret,
Because Thou savest such.

Fulness, to such, a burden is,
That on pilgrimage go;
Here little, and hereafter bliss
Is best to have it so.°

°With apologies to John Bunyan. — RCH.

"Just listen to that!" advised their guide. "Few happier than he who wears that herb called heart's ease in his bosom."

It's been said that "nobody knew better than John Bunyan knew, that no shepherd boy that ever lived on the face of the earth ever sang that song," meaning, of course, to imply the added thought, "no, nor anything like it!" But certainly this is simply not true. There are people with real humility, and child-like humility who sing this continually. David, a shepherd himself, did. He sang:

Lord, my heart is not haughty,
Nor mine eyes lofty:
Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too high for me.

Surely I have behaved and quieted myself,
As a child that is weaned of his mother:
My soul is even as a weaned child.

Let Israel hope in the Lord
From henceforth and for ever!
— Psalm 131

But then, listen to this song:
In lowliness of mind,
Let each esteem others better than themselves. Phil. 2:3

Does that ring a bell? Yes, it does! Seems I heard it, some years back. Well, what does it mean? Oh, come now; need we go into that? Come now, yourself! You certainly ought to be able, right from your own heart, to say what these words mean. You don't need a commentary, except that of your own conscience to tell you what it means. Or are you now at this point feeling a little anger at an old familiar Scripture, and that because, though a long standing command of the gospel, you have never begun to measure up to it? What is this attitude of spiritual lowly-mindedness toward the brethren? It is for me to consider you above, while you also consider me above, and so all around the family circle of the church. Then no one is looked down upon, and everyone is looked up to! "In honor preferring one another." On my list, everyone else is at the top, while I place myself at the bottom. You do the same, placing yourself at the end of your list. The Christian has his "list" arranged in this order. In the world, Number One comes first, all else last. Or in most cases, everyone else is in effect shoved off the edge of the world.

"The humble Christian is clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior, and with a soft, sweet, winning air and deportment. He is clothed all over with these things, in harmony with, 'and be clothed with humility'" (I Peter 5:5). Pure Christian humility has no such things as roughness, or contempt, or bitterness. It makes a person like a little child, harmless that none need be afraid of; or like a lamb, destitute of bitterness, wrath, anger and clamor, agreeable to Ephesians 4:31.

"Ministers of the gospel especially ought to be so clothed. They ought to be thorough in preaching the word of God, without mincing matters at all. Handling the Sword of the Spirit, they ought not to be mild and gentle. They are not to be gentle and moderate in searching and awakening the conscience, but should be sons of thunder. The word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, ought not to be sheathed by its ministers. They must let its double edge have full effect, dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow (provided they do it without judging particular persons, leaving it to conscience and the Spirit of God to make the particular application). But all their manner of life should have the aroma of lowliness, good will and love to all, dispelling a fragrance wherever they go. Or it will be like a light shining about them, their faces shining with it. They should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons.

"The humble Christian, the more furious the world is against him, the more silent

and still will he be, unless it be in his closet, and there he will not be still. Our blessed Lord Jesus seems never to have been so silent as when the world compassed him round, reproaching, buffeting, and spitting on him, with loud outcries and horrid cruelties. In controversy, pulpits and side-talk must not ring with such hob-nailed language as persecution! or Pharisees! or carnal seed and serpent's brood." (The last three paragraphs, above, condensed from Jonathan Edwards.)

It was the shepherd of Geneva who said, "I have always, indeed, been exceedingly pleased with this observation of Chrysostom, that humility is the foundation of our philosophy; but still more with this of Augustine, 'As a rhetorician,' says he, on being interrogated what was the first thing in the rules of eloquence, replied Pronunciation, and on being separately interrogated what was the second, and what was the third, gave the same reply. So, should any one interrogate me concerning the rules of the Christian religion, the first, second, and third, I would always reply, Humility" (John Calvin, Institutes of the Chr. Relig., II, ii, XI).

Go back to those words of David. He continued in his lowly vocation of shepherd, following the ewes great with young, until God called him to a higher station in life. He never had his eye on the throne, and it would not have been any grief to him if God had passed him by to make another king. When Saul rewarded him by calling him to his court, and he was to become the king's son-in-law, he thought himself unworthy of the honor. "Seemeth it a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" (I Sam. 18:22).

David could honestly say, "Surely I have behaved . . . myself." The great wrong with people today is not "mental illness," nor "emotional problems." It is wrong behavior. People feel badly because they behave badly. A good conscience depends on good behavior. David was on his best behavior. He said, I quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother. The weaning child frets, cries, makes trouble for itself and others. But "my soul is even as a weaned child." The weaning child is loud with din and dither. But the weaned child is quiet and content. He has new desires now, new food. Those old desires no longer worry him. The weaning child wants this and that, is never satisfied, pouts and quarrels with mother (that is, you quarrel with God), is not on good terms with mother (with God). The weaned child would no longer be pampered, does not kick, struggle or murmur, as if mother (God) were cruel, but leaves all to an all-wise, all-loving Will. The weaned child neither frets nor worries. The weaned babe depends on God alone. My expectation is from Him, says that child. Then, as a weaned child, you don't want half the things you wanted before. Then you don't have half the occasion for trouble the covetous and discontented have! But you say David's psalm you had better not sing because you can't sing it truthfully? Maybe not. Then sing it for another reason. Sing it as instruction to your own soul. Sing of what you ought to be. Sing of what, by the grace of God, you can be!

CONTRIBUTION

*Then Backwards Becomes Everything**

PETER A. HOEKSTRA

Some time ago in a realm called Naitsirhc°, trouble developed. Everything seemed to be working backwards. The lawmakers made many laws that were not for the good of the citizens. The chief law enforcer was in the midst of a scandal that involved breaking laws while trying to make certain that all the citizens kept the laws. The impartial judicial segment of that realm upheld the bad laws, and was infested with graft, bribery, faulty logic, and many other types of corruption. Still there was more trouble.

In this realm there existed a group who

proported to be followers of a man called Nivlac.* This group of people were also in trouble. Their teachings and beliefs were summed up in the word tulip. It seemed, however, that many of the Nivlac-ists no longer thought it important to hold their truths of tulip, or to teach them to their children. They soon began to see dire results because of their actions.

Just as the magistrates of the realm were doing things backwards, so the Nivlac-ists found many things happening backward in their circles. They were bickering, fighting, and gossiping amongst themselves. They began to address God as one of themselves. Many began to find fault with God's Word, choosing to listen to some of it and reject other parts of it, especially if they could not twist it to fit their way of thinking. They no longer prayed, "Father thy will be done"; but rather, "Father this is my will, bless it please." In fact, addressing God as Father was an exception to the rule. He became known as dad or pops and was spoken to in terms of you and your, not Thee or Thou. The degeneration of their beliefs and practices were not without effect on their children. They did just as their parents did. They showed little or no respect for their parents, teachers, or anyone in authority. An underlying reason for all these things will be mentioned later.

There was also a group of Nivlac-ists in the realm of Naitsirhc who had not slipped quite so far in their beliefs, but they were also in trouble. Their lives were far from being examples of Naitsirhc living. Their children soon followed. The children soon heard of something called Nis.* They found out that they had been performing acts of Nis from the time that they were born. As they grew older, they found out that Nis was fun. Their parents told them that Nis was bad, but their parents played the game themselves. It had become a game to them! Little children played it, but were usually caught. As they got older, however, they became more proficient at hiding Nis. When they did get caught, they had many pointed questions wihch they directed at their parents. This led many parents into saying that some types of Nis were not as bad as others. Nis was not good, but some Nis was not too bad either, they rationalized.

Being confused and ignorant, the children concentrated on finding out which types of Nis were acceptable (what one could get by with). It didn't take long to find out that if one talked long and loud enough, he could convince others that a new type of Nis was acceptable. So the situation became progressively worse. Soon parents and children alike were participating in the entertainment of the general populace of the world; the world's music, movies, partying, and literature. The parents sent their children to be educated by the corrupt government. They had their children go out and play with the children of the world. They forgot that it takes very little black paint to turn a vessel of white paint gray, but it takes an abundance of white to turn black into white. The situation became worse.

The types of Nis of the world soon became more evident as the dress of the world was seen in their circles. The rebellion of the world was manifested in the relationship of children to parents, parents to employers and employees. The home which once had been on a solid foundation began to teeter. No longer was it a place where the family united to learn of God's wondrous works and ways, guided by the father as its head. It became a place for family members to come and eat and sleep if they wished. Mother was not there to comfort and teach the little ones; that was left to a hireling and a T.V. set. The very seed that was the potential for future generations was doomed for destruction in the bed chambers. The game of Nis was no longer a game. It was an ugly monster that controlled their lives.

An underlying reason for all this backwardness can be found by explaining how they thought concerning God. He was thought of as a faithful friend who could be what they wanted Him to be. He could be forgotten about if they chose to forget about Him. He could be called when they decided to call out to Him. In short, they thought of God as if His holy name was spelled backwards, as are all the words in this article which were marked with an asterisk when they were first mentioned.

Psalm 139:7, 8 – *"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."*

AWARENESS

JIM VAN OVERLOOP

Young people, are you aware of God? Do you realize the power of God? Your first inclination would be to retort, "Why of course I know God. God is in heaven. Sure, I know He is powerful. I know He can do wondrous things." You probably would consider my question to be out of place. You, the reader, most probably are Protestant Reformed. You have attended our Christian elementary and/or high schools. You have been brought up in a Christian home. You know who God is.

My next question is, are you *really* aware of God's power, of God's omnipresence, of God's omniscience? Do your lives show that you know this? Is this mere head-knowledge or have you applied this to your lives? Do you in your daily lives act as if you know this? Are you afraid to show this? Or heaven forbid, don't you care?

Have you ever considered the fact that God knows your every single solitary thought? He knows what you think, what you say, what you do. He is always present. He is always with you. This God is with you on your dates; He sees what you do. This God sees what parties the young people of the church attend. This God hears His name being taken in vain. He sees the bodies that He has given you being driven by a mind that is in a drunken stupor or made insensible by drugs.

Young People, have you ever really truly let this sink in? The almighty, all-knowing, everywhere-present God knows your secrets, your actions, your words. Maybe your parents don't know, but God does. And God HATES SIN. Solomon in Proverbs 6:16-19 says, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

This God knows what you do on Sundays. He knows if you attended society or not, if you were prepared for it and contributed, or if you were making it hard on the discussion leader. This same God is with you Sunday nights after church. You may be out of the sight of your parents, minister, or teachers, but never out of God's sight. God hates the Devil. He HATES SIN. He hates the old man within us. Is it not a wonder that God doesn't kill us in righteous indignation? Our sins are innumerable. But no matter how unfaithful we are, God does not change. His covenant stands . He is faithful to the end. He sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts. It is only through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we can pray for mercy and forgiveness. Notice that we cannot do it of ourselves. The Holy Spirit must be working in our hearts before we can become aware of our many sins and miseries and how dead we are in them. We cannot of ourselves do one good thing. It is not of us at all.

With this knowledge of our total depravity (and if we could ever understand the depth of our depravity, we would be truly humble), we will want to know more about God's gift, Christ crucified. With this knowledge our hearts overflow with gratitude to God for such a great salvation. With the constant aid of the Holy Spirit we must run the race. We must be ready for the battle; no, we are in the battle now! We must pick up the Word. And with the knowledge of the Word we must fight principalities and powers, the rulers of darkness. As Paul says to the Ephesians. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" Being so armed we can resist all the many temptations presented in this world. Being so armed we will be aware of sin; we will fight it!

God grant us the grace to be aware.

AGATHA LUBBERS

The Missouri Lutheran Conflict

The modern church history course which I teach at Covenant Christian High School includes a consideration of contemporary religious events. I think that students will verify my asserting that this is one of the most interesting and helpful aspects of the course. Although we ought to know about the past, current history should not slip past unnoticed.

There are two basic difficulties, however, that confront the writer who reports and evaluates contemporary ecclesiastical history. The first is that the editor will have such a plethora of material when the article which demands contemporary printing arrives, that the article will not be published until the news or the activities being discussed have long been settled. The other difficulty is one which besets all writers and involves two basic aspects. Either the reader is not interested in the situation being discussed or the reader knows as much or more than the writer concerning the situation under discussion. I will accept the first of these risks, i.e., that my reader knows more than I know concerning the situation in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and will also assume that as Reformed Christians we all are concerned with that denomination which is currently troubled greatly because of errors being taught in the seminary.

Although Luther did not personally approve its use, there is a segment of the Protestant church which derives its name from the man who drove a deep wedge between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. It is the denomination which derives its name from the Augustinian monk of the 16th century that today is shaken by doctrines which Luther would have denounced with colorful but stern language.

Every reader of BEACON LIGHTS knows that the church of the late 20th century has fallen upon difficult days. The days in which the church is called to live exalt the doctrines of man and denounce the doctrines which exalt the Sovereignty of God, justification by faith only, and the absolute dominion and authority of the Scriptures.

This is the problem at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Nearly 700 students attend Concordia Seminary, but it has been shut down for several weeks because of a faculty and student boycott. The president of the seminary, Dr. John H. Tietjen, has been ousted on charges of teaching errant doctrines — and he has, if the reports concerning his and the teachings of his colleagues are true. Dr. Tietjen does not deny the factuality of the reports. I am certain that he is willing to defend his doctrinal position.

Since 1969 and until January 20, 1974, Dr. John H. Tietjen, 45 years old, has been the president of Concordia Seminary. He has been battling with the Missouri-Lutheran majority and Synod president, the Rev. Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus, who is the head of the conservative majority in the

Synod. The fight has been a fight concerning doctrinal interpretation and concerning the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Dr. Preus insists, as the spokesman for the conservative segment of the Missouri Lutheran denomination, that the Bible must be literally interpreted. Are Adam and Eve historical individuals? Did Adam and Eve really fall? Is the story of Jonah and the great fish fiction or is it true? These and many other questions are at the heart of the controversy.

Although BEACON LIGHTS and those who write represent the Calvin or Reformed side of the Protestant Reformation, we nevertheless grieve with Christians in the Missouri Lutheran Church who will be misled by those who deny the infallible Scriptures. We grieve because the church or denomination, which is named with the same name that Martin Luther bore, does not really represent the rallying cry of the Reformation and the chief emphasis of Martin Luther in the 16th century. It is the rallying cry of all those who are Reformed and ever Reforming, *Sola Scriptura.*

The controversy concerning the inerrancy of the Scriptures is not an unimportant issue. A denial of such historical realities, as a real Adam and Eve, a real fish to permit survival for Jonah, and a real fall into sin can only lead to a denial of the cardinal truths expressed in the Apostles' Creed concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person in the divine Trinity.

This controversy in the Lutheran Church, which we observe, is not some isolated kind of instance. It is the same kind of happening that we see occurring in the Reformed Church world. Those who belong to the Calvinist tradition are also denying the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Sin develops and comes to manifestation in many forms. This is one of the forms. Intellectual sophistication often bears exactly this kind of fruit.

Many have commented on the fracas in the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. Dr. Tietjen himself said:

> The members of our synod must become aware of the moral bankruptcy of the actions of the present leaders of our synod and of the seminary's board of control. Such evil, if allowed to continue, will bring the judgment of God's wrath on us all."

That is strong language and sounds almost like some *ex cathedra* pronouncement by the pope in Rome. It also is an attempt by the accused to take the offensive, but it does not satisfactorily change nor solve the issue for the concerned conservative Christian in the Missouri Lutheran Church. He wants a solution which includes a discontinuation of teachings which destroy the faith of seminary students and distorts the truth of the Word of God.

Dr. Preus has been accused of being tyrannical in his position of power as President of the General Synod of the church. The accusers of Dr. Preus have complained that the church owes allegiance to God, not to Dr. Preus. To this charge, which is also peripheral and flimsy compared to the central importance of the essence of the controversy, Dr. Preus responded:

> I agree. This is God's church, and we ought to be faithful to God's Word."

That is the central issue! Obedience to God's Word! Willingness to bow before the Scriptures is more important than pronouncements about the judgment of God's wrath on us all. "Obedience is better than sacrifice."

Dr. Richard Klann, chairman of the Systematics Department of the seminary, said that the charges of teaching false doctrine against 44 of his fellow professors at the school are true and warranted. There are 49 professors on the faculty of the seminary. Dr. Klann was one of the "minority five" professors who continued teaching when 44 professors boycotted classes. Dr. Klann, who spoke in the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Grand Rapids, cited Biblical passages including the story of Jonah and the great fish, all historic facts in the earthly life of Jesus, the creation of Adam and Eve as real people and their fall into sin, and the doctrine of angels as Biblical issues in the controversy. He went on to say:

> You must believe all the Bible, even if you don't understand parts of it; not to do this would be to deny the Lutheran confessions."

Although we have been taught to recognize that there is a certain synergism in the theology and confessions of the

Lutheran Church, we nevertheless grieve with one local Grand Rapids Lutheran pastor who deplores the "new theology" that is creeping into the church by means of bad teaching in the seminary. We grieve because every denomination has its "Kuiterts" and "Daanes."

Protestant Reformed people ought to be very thankful, therefore, that we have a seminary supported by the Protestant Reformed Churches that inseminates according to the Reformed Confessions in the truth of the Word of God. Professor H. C. Hoeksema says it well in his last editorial, "Things I Never Knew," *Standard Bearer*, February 15, 1974.

> We are about to dedicate a new seminary building. (We have done so, A.L.) We are active in home missions. We are active in Christian education. We are active in all our congregations with sound and edifying preaching; and our people do not have to sit in the pews wondering what new heresy or liturgical oddity they will have to stomach on Sunday. We have no theistic evolutionists and other deniers of the historicity of Genesis among our teachers and preachers. We have no teachers of universal atonement in our Seminary, like Prof. Stek's colleague, Prof. Harold Dekker. We have none in our midst who publicly admit to signing the Formula of Subscription with mental reservations. We have none among us who publicly express agreement with men like Harry Kuitert, as does the Christian Reformed Church. Thanks be to God's grace alone, we are Reformed. By that same grace we intend to remain Reformed. And by that same grace, we will continue to develop in the Reformed line."

During the weekend of February 16 and 17 special meetings were to be held between the members of various boards responsible for the control of Concordia Seminary. The scheduled forum will handle Constitutional problems as well as the primary reasons for the shut-down of the seminary. As in all ecclesiastical conflicts, however, the political aspects of the fracas are beginning to take preeminence and the real doctrinal issues are being forced into the background. Personality clashes and personality issues are being forced to the front, and substantial issues are being shunted to the sidelines. This can only mean compromise, but the instruction of young men for the ministry will be hindered. Sincere instruction in the truths of God's infallible, inerrant Word, will no longer be possible unless the real issues are solved. I presume we have not heard the end of the matter.

When we observe such events in the ecclesiastical world we ought to be stimulated by God's grace to be more vigilant in the battle against all that hinders the cause of God.

We also ought to be stimulated to confess with more urgency and fervency than ever the sure promise of Jesus Christ: "The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church" (Matthew 16:18).

* * * *

Post Scriptum: One of the hazards of long range news reporting is the daily round of affairs. The latest news from St. Louis as this article goes to print is that 40 of the faculty members of the Seminary have been relieved of their positions and that a "Seminary in Exile" of the majority of the students will meet while approximately 100 students may return to classes at the resumption of the Spring term in March.

Quotes

The best way for a man to train up a child in the way he should go is to travel that way himself.

Cheerfulness means a contented spirit; a pure heart, a kind and loving disposition; it means humility and charity, a generous appreciation of others, and a modest opinion of self.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

By REV. G. LUBBERS

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." — Hebrews 12:11

"SUBMITTING TO THE CHASTENING OF A FATHER"

It is sometimes said that the Bible should be made more simple. Young people really cannot read the Bible and it is not very meaningful for young people. Have you ever heard that said, my youthful friend? Of course, you do not agree with this propaganda against the sacred Scriptures, do you? And do you know why I am so certain that you do not agree with this? It is because I believe that the Holy Spirit was promised to you no less than to the adults in the church. You are a member, a living member of the Church of Jesus Christ, of His body of which He is the Head. The Spirit dwells in Christ as in the Head and also in you as members of the body. You are Christians and are such only because you are partakers of Christ's anointing.

You are sons of our heavenly Father; the objects of His eternal love and mercy in Jesus Christ you are. He was pleased and delighted to adopt you as His sons and daughters. And as the children of His infinite delight he makes you the objects of His special chastening and hardships for Christ's sake. It is given also unto you, young people, out of mere grace not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer in His behalf (Phil. 1:29). Because you are God's covenant young people you are different from the children of the world, and you are also to conduct yourselves differently than they. Your citizenship is in heaven where Christ is our Head.

Now to form you and me as the potter forms the clay the heavenly Father as the Father of spirits puts you in His program of spiritual exercises. These are all exercises unto godliness. We must hate the lie of false teaching and all external worship and then "exercise thyself unto godliness" (I Tim. 4:7). And the Lord gives us the spiritual "workout" so to speak. We are exercised by Him in the warfare of faith and godliness. We are to become partakers of God's holiness. We are not to be simply some exemplary moralists and legalistic perfectionists. Nay, we are to share in the holiness of God Himself, conformed to His image as sons and daughters. To bring us to that perfection he gives us hardships,

affliction and sufferings for Christ's sake, which he sanctifies to our hearts by His Spirit.

We are, therefore, as covenant youth a very peculiar group of spiritual gymnasts. We must run a different race which is set before us. It is the race of the hope eternal in the heavens. This race is not run by the unspiritual bastard children. Nor do they receive the afflictions and sufferings which God gives to his true children, whom He loves so very dearly.

I know it; I know it! You really do not desire this road of affliction. You do not like to be hated of all men for Christ's sake. You wince at the thought, that you will not be loved if you confess the Name of the Lord, wherever you are, in word and deed. And it is painful not to be accepted because you confess your Lord overagainst all the enemies of God's Word inside and outside of the church of God in the world. It is painful to be in a little church which does not receive any acclaim from the church world because you have doctrines which they reject. It is painful to hold to the Five Points of the Reformed teaching in a church-world where man is put in the center of all things and the God of the Scriptures is rejected. No, that experience for you young people is not joyous. When you meet that young girl, whom you cannot join in life, because she does not love your God, then it is painful to leave her forever because you can only marry "in the Lord." Yes, the chastening of the Lord is not joyous for the present but gives grief and pain to the flesh.

But, come, my youthful fellow-member in Christ, and see what it works "afterward." It is a blessed reward that is ours which the Lord gives us in His spiritual gymnasium. It is the peaceable fruit of righteousness. We must look at the "fruit" of the Spirit in our life. This is good fruit on a good tree. It is the fruit of faith which has been purified from the dross. The final fruit is to enter into the glory of the Lord. Here it is called the fruit of righteousness, that is, a fruit which consists in personal righteousness in the keeping of God's commandments. This righteousness is merited for us by Christ on the Cross and is ours by the Spirit of grace in our hearts.

You are still young and inexperienced in the gymnasium of your heavenly Father. He will have many trying experiences yet for you to endure with patience. Life will not be easy for you as a Chrisian. Everyone that will live godly in this world shall suffer hardships. We must pass through many trials into final glory. But to those who "are exercised thereby" there is the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

The exercise of these trials is that we are forced to study the Bible for the sake of our comfort and hope. It causes us by grace to drink deeply from the waters of life in God's Word and to eat of the heavenly manna. It whets the spiritual appetite of the young Christian. Think of Luther in his cell as he sought for peace. Think how we will need to search the Scriptures for hope and comfort when we will need to stand up and be counted when Antichrist will come. Yes, we will then be exercised in much prayer, fervent prayer. Did not the apostle Paul pray when in prison? Was he not exercised when he went through all his trials. And cannot he finally say: I have kept the faith, I have run the race, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life, and not for me only but for all who love his appearance.

Accept the chastening of the Lord, Christian friend. You have accepted the chastening of your earthly father and profited thereby to be sure. Shall we not much more accept the chastening of the Father of spirits and live. He does all for our profit, our eternal benefit. He is the Father, who created the spirits of men and angels, yea, of the very devils in hell. And he has His lofty design with us.

In the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ our faith must shine forth as the product of His grace. It must be found unto praise and honor and glory of Him. Hence, he exercises us to make our faith strong; he gives us such hardships that we cannot go in our own strength one step but lean on His everlasting arms of mercy in humble trust. Thus we walk life's pilgrim's journey in the knowledge, that, although for the present the chastisements are grievous, afterwards they shall yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Then we shall thank God forevermore for these afflictions from His hand!

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

Blind to A Loss

RACHEL LUBBERS

Through this beautiful cool-cracking dawn slowly walks one man. His brown collar on his coat stands up straight hiding the soft morning breeze. It appears that he is enjoying the quiet hours of morning and yet somehow reassuring himself that truly there are hours of such enjoyable peace. He strolls on convincing himself that all of each day is not spent in forever going noise, business which causes constant hurry and scurry. During this peaceful hour he watches the sky, observing how the stars fade out while rays of light begin to streak the blue morning sky. As the soft breeze touches through the trees his eyes are drawn to the faithful reappearing buds of the maple trees which speak of the promise of life after the destruction of winter's death. After the first soft glow of morning comes forth the great and final strength of this day – the ever breath-taking sunrise which spreads its wings far and wide as though it is coming to conquer the world.

Through this display of beauty the remaining world sleeps on.

As he continues his walk his mind wonders and he begins to reflect on the meaning freedom has for people today. He contemplates this desire for freedom, which has destroyed so many lives, yet plays a vital part of living each day. Many adults use it in living with the law. Their conception of freedom breaks the law apart so that each law can be used or even excluded as each individual wishes. Many of those who do know they are not living according to law can always somehow manage to justify their action through some other means. Therefore, society will allow almost anything to be done and comfortably be accepted. Those in authority over us are expected to meet their obligation toward society and if they do not they too are either ignored, or tolerated.

Small children and young people watch out for what fascinates their eye – freedom. They live in demand and determination which has no boundries. The authority of parents has become but an "idea" and rude rebellion has replaced respect. Often today tense parents fill themselves with overwhelming exasperation in seeing and feeling a lack of unity within the home. Everyone goes on his own way and about his own business excluding himself from the bother of others. One no longer lives according to the obligation of the law, but rather, many test the law to see what it will allow them to do.

Yet, his mind travels on to a freedom which is the overpowering ruler of all. God, who is the authority of all, now is so sadly being molded to fit man. God, who is the unchangable, is now becoming mutable. Many of His laws are being revised, forgotten, or being interpreted differently. Many are even going so far as to exclude Him altogether in order to make life "easier" to live.

As one properly evaluates this problem he can easily see another side effect of this misuse of and craving for freedom. Human sensitivity is slowly dying and of course once you lose that, you have a great loss. There is a definite push for individual advancement and a lack of neighborly help, concern, and love. And when society becomes hardened to human need then it loses a true sense of fear, truth, respect, guilt and sin.

This love and craving for freedom has caused a terrible loss. Each of us today must become a living witness to a freedom which does not take this route.

Leaving the scene for a minute he looks about and finds the whole world aglow with beautiful beaming sunshine and he turns around and walks steadily back to his home.

Extra copies of this and other issues

are available from the editor at

30¢ a copy while supply lasts.

MOVING? Please fill out form and mail to subscription manager (see inside cover for address).

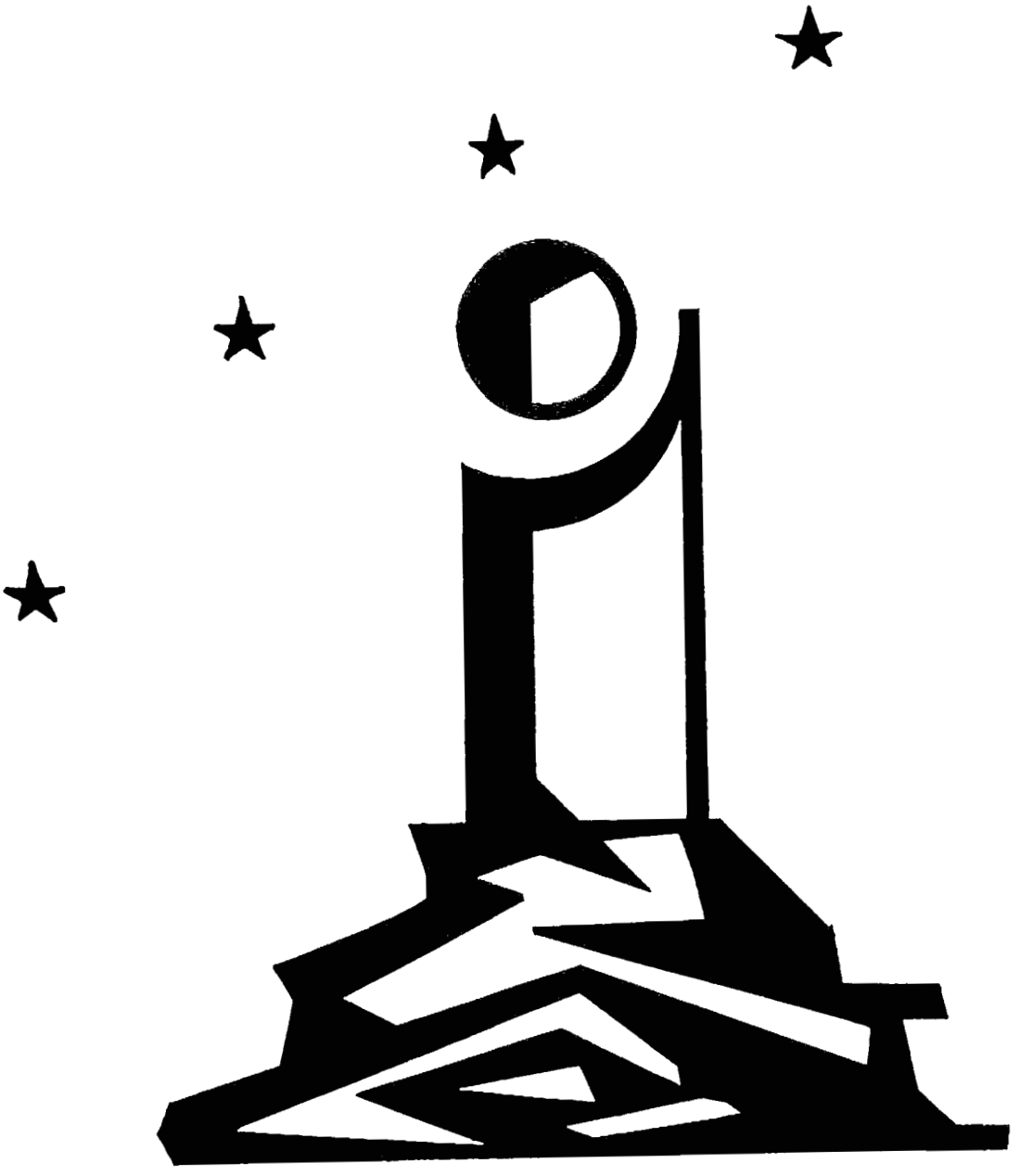
(cut here)

Old Address: ....
name

....
street

.....
city state zip code

New Address: ....
street

.....
city state zip code

MR & MRS JOHN ZANDSTRA JR.
[illegible] GLENWOOD-LANSING RD.
[illegible] D, ILLINOIS 6 425