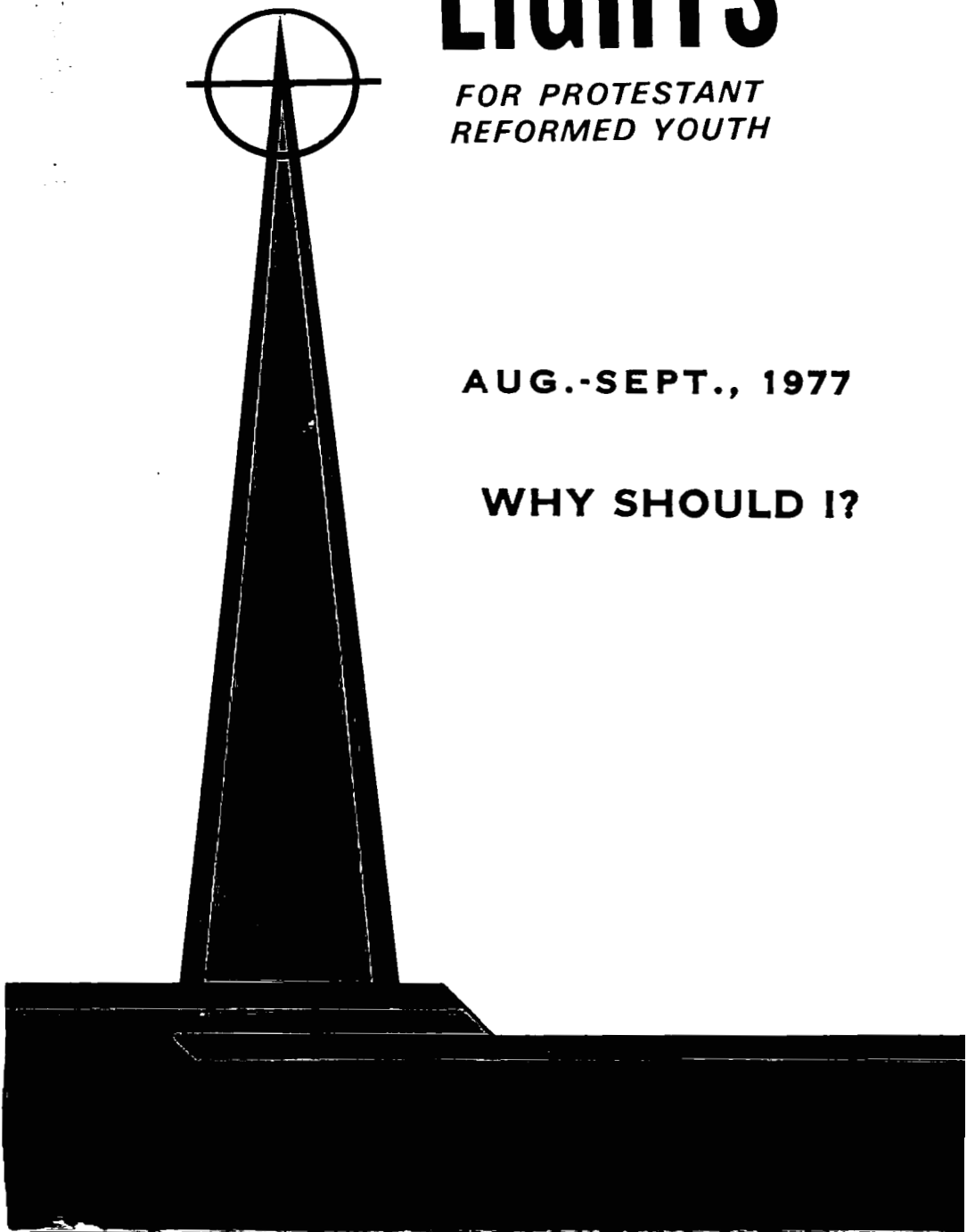
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



AUG.-SEPT., 1977

WHY SHOULD I?

VOLUME XXXVI AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1977 NUMBER 5

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Contributions of general interest are very welcome

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

by Dave Moelker

Beacon Lights is now in its 36th year of puplication. It has continued to shed its beacon of light on the paths of our Protestant Reformed young people.

Each month approximately 750 issues are mailed. The balk of these are sent to subscribers in the United States. It is sent as far west as Australia and as far east as India.

Many people contribute many man hours to complete and get each issue out on time. These include every one from editors and rubric authors to subscription managers and mailers. Each doing their part, each contributing of their time and resources for the benefit of the youth of the church.

Let me take a few lines to give you a "tour" of what goes on. We begin with the staff meeting. The editor and staff meet once per month to plan one issue. The issue being planned is usually 4 or 5 months away yet. At the meeting topics for feature articles are thought of and likely authors are selected. Problems are discussed and new ideas are formulated to better the publication.

Thirty days prior to the month the issue is to come out, articles from the various authors are expected to be in the editor's hands. The articles received must be proof read for grammatical errors as well as for content.

The corrected manuscripts are then sent to type-setting. Once type-set they must be once again proofread. They are then laid out and "pasted up" to fit actual page size. **Beacon Lights** is now a magazine in the rough.

From type-setting the master copy is sent to printing. Here each page is reproduces photographically onto a metal plate. This plate when placed in the press and inked, reproduces each letter as it comes in contact with the actual page and cover paper. It is then stapled, trimmed and ready for mailing.

Each subscriber's name and address is pressed onto a small metal tab. When combined with a appropriately sized frame, it is called an Addressograph plate. These plates are placed in the Addressograph machine and each **Beacon Lights** is place in the machine to receive its proper address. They are then bundled according to Zip Code and are finally mailed.

This though is only the mechanics of it. We have not mentioned the hours spent in producing each article. The thought, research and typing of them by each author. And this is really the heart of it, its' true content, through these articles the shedding of the Beacon Light of the truth on every area of life

As the first editorial in 1941 stated "Read and reread it, ponder upon its content, turning them over in your mind to formulate your own opinions.... Discuss it with your friends and get them interested. Learn to use it to your best advantage." You will gain much and lose nothing if you follow that advice.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema made this statement in **Beacon Lights** once "(it) should be an all around magazine for Prot. Ref'd. youth. But let it never lose its fundemental aim of shedding the beacon light of our Prot. Ref'd. truth, the true and complete doctrine of salavation, upon the path of life. For if that aim should be forgotten, it would become a beacon without any light."

Let our prayer be that God will continue to use this means for the instruction and edification of His church.

Editorial

STANDING ALONE

by Gerald Kulper

When I lived near the Rocky Mountains I looked forward to my occasional fishing trips in the mountain rivers of Colorado. Although I never caught many fish, I enjoyed the quiet beauty around me, and often fished on a large rock in the middle of a mountain stream. I often thought of all the years that rock had been ravaged by the elements, and yet had stood steadfastly unmoved. I noticed that the rock, even though smooth and worn because of the constant pounding of the water, was the one stationary object amid all the motion of the river. This was especially impressed on me when various things like minnow buckets or packages of fish hooks would slip off the rock, and to my dismay quickly disappear. Along with the leaves and pine cones they rushed madly in the current until they either sunk or were flung up on the river bank.

I thought how this picture could be applied to the lives of men in the world today, and especially to the lives of young people. There are "currents" in the world today — the current of lawlessness, the currents of fashion, the current leading away from the churches of our fathers to the "churches" of the world today, the current away from the institution of marriage — to name just a few. We can find today those who stand solid in the midst of these currents, and regretably, those who are swept away with them as the leaf.

Young men and women of God, which are you? Are you as the rock, grounded on your faith in Christ and His Word, or are you as the minnow bucket, being tossed about in the current on your way to ruin? When you are confronted with these currents, do you drift along with them? If you do, you find that soon you are rushing along wildly with all the other rubble in the river, and that you cannot easily escape those turbulent waters. Then in the middle of trouble, you long to be as that rock which stands unhurt by those waters.

Oh, how clearly God can speak to us in His creation! We see in our picture that there are but two possibilities — utter ruin, or safety. We all, whether young or old, are called upon to stand everyday as the rock. We find that this is so hard to do, because when we do not join those who are swept along with those currents we are ridiculed and scorned by those about us. And sometimes we are faced with this even when we are with fellow members of the church. How we are hurt if even they scorn us for not following along! We feel for a moment a little of the despair that Elijah felt when he said, "It is enough, now let me die".

Remember though the answer of God to Elijah that there were yet seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Perhaps we like Elijah must seek those people of God for our companions. Then too, we better leave those who desire the music of the world, or who live the life of the drunken fool, or those who leave their homes to live in "freedom" away from the restraints of parents and church. But leave them with the figure that we have illustrated here, and show them that unless they change, they are on their way to ruin. And seek those, who, even when faced with the currents of the day, can stand, grounded firm and deep as the rock. Then, walking in the fear of the Lord, and being constant in prayer, you will be blessed, and God's name will be glorified.

George M. Ophoff (17)

by Prof. H. Hanko

In our last article we concluded the history of the controversy of 1924 and the role which Rev. Ophoff played in it. At the time of this history Rev. Ophoff was minister in what is now the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. After the formation of the Protestant Reformed Churches, Rev. Ophoff continued his work in Hope for a while, but then took a call to the Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan. These years form the subject of the present article.

In order to put these years in their proper perspective, it is important first of all to understand somewhat the situation which existed in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and in the labors of Rev. Ophoff particularly.

Rev. Ophoff was not only the pastor of a congregation during these years, but he was also professor in the Seminary. At the very outset of the history of our Churches, the Seminary was established. Those whom God used to begin our own denomination felt very strongly that if the denomination was to continue in the truth of God's Word, it was imperative that the Churches train their own ministers. So the Seminary was established and Revs. Hoeksema, Danhof and Ophoff were appointed as teachers in the Seminary. The enrollment was rather large at the outset and the work was difficult. This was true for various reasons. In the first place, all three teachers had pastorates of their own requiring their time and attention. In the second place, the Seminary trained ministers not only in the subjects normally taught in a Seminary curriculum, but also gave to the students a large number of college courses. The average stay in the Seminary for the students was five years. The number of subjects that had to be taught was great. In the third place, within but a few years after the Seminary was begun, Rev. Danhof left the Protestant Reformed Churches, and the entire teaching load fell upon the shoulders of Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff. (For further information on the controversy which led to the departure of Rev. Danhof, our readers can consult "The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches." The subject would carry us too far afield if treated here.) In the fourth place, none of these men had taught in Seminary before, and the work that had to be done to provide a good Seminary training was enormous. It must not be forgotten in this connection that not only did the professors have to prepare all the courses which they were instructed to teach, but they had to prepare, in many instances, their own material. They were determined to give instruction which was thoroughly Reformed and Biblical; they were determined to do more than repeat in parrot-like fashion what others had said before them; they were determined to carry forward the Reformed faith. And so they prepared much of their own material in syllabus form for the use of the students.

This latter is worth a bit more discussion. We must remember that the men who worked in our Seminary were, in their own way, intellectual giants. God had given them unusual gifts for the cause of the Church of Jesus Christ. They knew and loved the Reformed faith as it had been maintained by the Church in the past. But they were also deeply conscious of their calling to develop the Reformed faith yet more as they searched the Scriptures to learn the depths of the truth

of God's Word. And so, building on the past, they blazed new trails in the work of the development of the truth. These syllabi, prepared for use in these early years, have become the foundation for all the instruction which was and is given in the Seminary until the present; and the work of these men laid the foundation for the truth as maintained in our Churches throughout our history.

I sometimes think that we do not adequately appreciate this. Not only do we have, as Churches, a deep commitment to the Reformed faith, but we have a clearly articulated theological position which is based squarely on Scripture. We live in times of doctrinal confusion, of departure from the truth, of theological innovation. As a result, there are few denominations (if any) which have the clearly defined theological position which we have. We know what we believe, and we stand together united in this truth. Others from outside our Churches have often remarked concerning this to me. We have our God to thank for this, and the work which God performed through those who have set this truth forth in clear and systematic form.

In these early years in the Seminary, Rev. Hoeksema began the work which was later to become his published "Reformed Dogmatics" — a work which was the fruit of a lifetime of teaching theology in the Seminary. The early work done in the Seminary also became the basis for the later published "Chapel Talks" on various books of the New Testament which have been of such help over the years. And these are but two instances of the heritage which Rev. Hoeksema has left us. But this was no less true of Rev. Ophoff. While his work has not been published anyone who is at all acquainted with the bound volumes of **The Standard Bearer** knows the rich mine of material which can be found there and which came from Rev. Ophoff's pen. This is especially true of his writings on Church Polity and Old Testament History. Over the years, ministers, Sunday School teachers, and those poeple of God interested in the truth have found in these articles not only extremely delightful reading, but a wealth of material which formed the basis for the Reformed Church Polity as maintained in our Churches and for the understanding of the Old Testament which is so important for the knowledge of the revelation of God.

But the point which needs to be made here is that these men were, in these early years, almost unbelievably busy. Add to all this work the responsibility of writing for **The Standard Bearer**, the responsibility of getting a fledging denomination off the ground and going in the right direction, the responsibility of working on Combined Consistory Meetings (the Churches, until 1940, held combined Consistory meetings instead of Classes and Synods), the responsibility of helping to solve innumerable problems which arose in the Churches in common and in the congregations in particular, and the mind staggers at the work demanded of these men.

It is no wonder that the midnight oil burned almost every night, that there were many nights when they got no sleep at all, that their families did not always get the attention that they would have received under normal circumstances, that the work in the congregations sometimes suffered.

Although the congregation of Hope was reduced in 1924 to nine families, Rev. Ophoff continued to labor fruitfully with that flock. The congregation had lost the parsonage as well as the Church in 1924, and so Rev. Ophoff also had to move his family to another location. The first residence was on 1925 Watson St. just off Butterworth Dr. in the vicinity of John Ball Park. The second residence, during his years of ministry in Hope was on 1100 Jackson St. In 1930, at the age of 39, Rev. Ophoff moved his family to Byron Center

after accepting a call to that congregation.

During these years, Rev. Ophoff's family was also born. The oldest son, Fred, now deceased, was born just before the split in 1924 on July 27, 1922. George was born on August 23, 1925. Herm was born on July 26, 1927. and Ed, the youngest, was born the year of the move to Byron Center, September 20, 1930.

The greater part of the responsibility of bringing up these boys fell upon Mrs. Ophoff. She was however, eminently suited for the task not only of caring for her growing sons, but also for the work of giving them spiritual instruction. She wanted them to know why their father did not have the time for them that most other fathers had; and she wanted them to have a deep appreciation for his work, for his place in the Church, and for the importance of the movement of which he was one of the leaders. She was able to make the history of the controversy live for her boys, and she impressed them with the seriousness of the issues and with the role that their father had played in the work of Church reformation. One of her most prized possessions was the newspaper clipping from the **Grand Rapids Press** which had correctly described Rev. Ophoff's stand on Classis Grand Rapids West with the words: (OPHOFF PREFERS DEATH.)

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We are very pleased to have a continuation of the series by Prof. Hanko on the life and ministry of Rev. Ophoff in this issue. We prematurely ended this series in the May issue and are happy to be able to have it continue.

Home where Ophoffs lived on Watson St.

Byron Center Parsonage

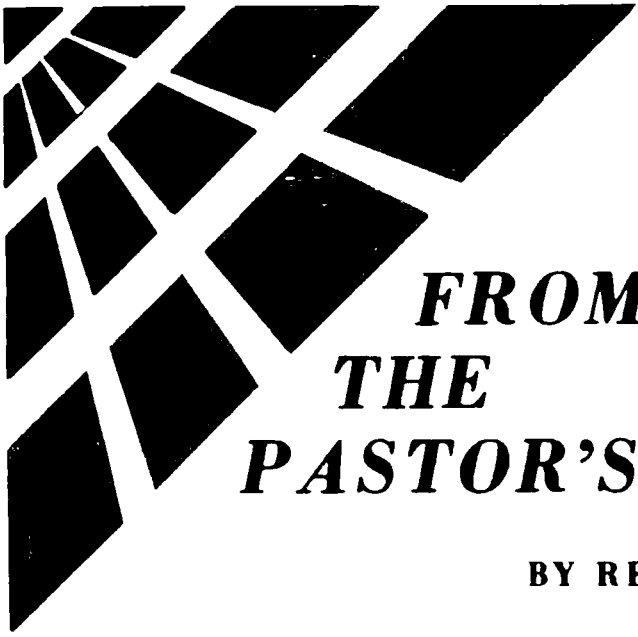
Rev. Ophoff with oldest son Fred in front of home on Jackson St.

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. Who took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? I Kings 18:4
2. Who was the servant of Elisha? II Kings 5:20
3. Of whom was it said by Jesus that "among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater..."? Matt. 11:11
4. What did God create on the second day? Gen. 1:6-8
5. Who wrote the book of Thessalonians?
6. Who contended with the devil about the body of Moses? Jude vs. 9
7. Name six of the twelve disciples. Luke 6:14-16
8. About how long did the flood last? Gen. 8
9. What is the fifth commandment? Exodus 20;12
10. Which deacon in the church at Jerusalem was put to death by stoning? Acts 7:59

The heart of man is the heart of a rational and moral creature. And as a rational and moral creature, man is responsible to God for all he does. He is also responsible for what he does with the preaching. He must give an account of it. Those who hear the preaching bear a greater responsibility even than those who do not.

p. 16, The Mysteries Of The Kingdom by Prof. H. Hanko



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

"We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." I John 4:6

THE BIBLE: Is It The Inspired Word Of God?

Did you know, young people, that for some people the Bible is a closed book? These people are not believers in God. They are the unbelievers who are blind; deaf like an adder that stoppeth her ear, they are. They are not elected unto life to believe in sovereign grace, or they may be those who are not yet regenerated to see the kingdom of God. At any rate, the Bible is for them a closed book!

The Bible teaches that there are some who have blessed eyes which see, and blessed ears which hear. These men to whom Jesus spoke these words were not wise and learned scholars of the world, learned Greeks and informed Scribes, who stood head and shoulders above the people in learning. they were rude and simple fishermen from Galilee, with a Galilean accent in their speech. These have blessed ears which the Lord had opened to hear the Word of God, and they have blessed minds to understand.

Understanding the Bible is a matter rooted in sovereign election of grace whereby men and women are born out of God! By this grace of election we receive a living, saving faith which hungers for the Word of God. For the Word of God has become very powerful in such. (I Thes. 2:13) Writes Paul, "...when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, **which effectually works [energizes] also in you that believe**" Ponder this just a bit, young people. Let this sink deep into your hearts. Also the understanding of the Bible is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who shows

mercy. Yes, the Bible speaks clear language, so that all who hear it can understand it in their intellect; but they do not like what they hear so they "stop their ears" like the adder. Satan takes it from them. They, therefore, deny that the one speaking to them in that Bible is God Himself. They are such whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds; the minds of such as believe not are blinded, lest the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. The light shines, but these unbelievers cannot see this gospel-light with a believing eye.

Do not be fooled and hoodwinked, young christian friend. You, who like Timothy, have known the Scriptures since you were a small child. (II Tim. 3:15) Yes, these Scriptures are inspired of God. They are able to make you wise unto salvation which is through faith in Christ Jesus! This is true of all the Scriptures, both the Old Testament Scriptures, and the New Testament Scriptures. They are power and breath of God. They are full of the spirit, the breath of God. Thus you experience them when you read them, study them, or hear them preached. Soon you will be having your Society meetings again. Remember that you understand that Bible and hear and heed its warning, teaching, correction, instruction in righteousness because you are "man of God"! John says, "he that knoweth God hears us". You are in that class of "hearers"! You are not like the unbelieving deniers of the Word, who have difficulty with the truth that the Bible is inspired of God. You have no trouble with the bread of heaven, because you eat it. You have no trouble with believing in God because you know God, experience His sovereign love of election, according to which you are blessed with all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, making you to be such that are holy and blameless before Him in love. Then you are not going to be deceived by unbelieving deniers of the Bible, and its trustworthiness as to being really the Word of God!

I deeply appreciate the observations of the learned Dr. B. Warfield in his contribution appearing in the **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**, Vol. III, pages 1473-1483. It is a very good presentation of the mystery of the Word of God. Speaking of the term "inspired by God" as translated in the KJV of II Tim. 3:16, he avers that the Greek term has nothing to say about inspiring or of inspiration: it speaks only of a "spiring" or "spiration". What it says of Scripture is, not that it is breathed into by God, "or is the product of the Divine "inbreathing" into its human authors, but that it is breathed **out** by God, "God-breathed", the product of the creative breath of God. In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that they are a Divine product, without any indication how God has operated in producing them. No term could have been chosen, however, which would more emphatically have asserted the Divine production of Scriptures than which is here employed. The "breath of God" is in Scripture just the symbol of His almighty power, the bearer of His creative word! (Ps. 33:6)... God's breath is the irresistible outflow of His power. When Paul declares then that "every Scripture" or "all Scripture" is the product of the Divine breath "is God-breathed" he asserts with as much energy as he could employ that Scripture is the product of a specifically Divine operation."

We do well to read and reread this quotation from the pen of the late Dr. Warfield!

It should not escape without notice that Paul is writing this to Timothy and to the church of God in the New Testament with a very practical purpose. Timothy must learn to have a very high and holy regard for these Scriptures in which he was instructed as a child. (II Tim. 3:14,15) He knew these Scriptures, having learned

them at the knees of his mother and grandmother. They had with these Scriptures, under the gracious life-giving Spirit of God, instilled their faith into his little heart. He knew the Scriptures. The same is true of you, dear grandson and granddaughter in the Lord. You have learned these Scriptures. Now, do not let some spiritual ignoramus dissuade you from believing these Scriptures, which are such a great creation of the very breath and Spirit of God. Continue in the things which you have learned. Know that you learned them from your parents, your minister, your christian school teacher. You did not learn them from untrustworthy people. You learned them from those, who, in sovereign election, received the gift of faith. They are those who know God and, therefore, hear the Bible. Then listen to this God-breathed Bible, which is very much real, up-to-date for every age and for every circumstance of life. It is profitable for instruction, for solid teaching. From the pages of this Bible we learn from God. He speaks. He instructs us by His Word and Spirit, making us wise through faith unto salvation.

Give me your listening ear for just a few more minutes!

Is the Bible God-breathed? What does this Bible mean to you when it reproves you, tells you that you are wrong when you sin? Do you listen with a trembling soul? Are you convicted in your conscience by God Himself? You are!

Is the Bible God-breathed when you are corrected, and shown the way of wisdom and of life? Is this just like some worldly advise to you from some unbelieving moralist? Or does this furnish you thoroughly unto every good work. It does!

Is this Bible "instruction in righteousness" for you? Yes, the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven, the righteousness which you do in the keeping of God's commandments, which are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb? It is!

It was no old foggy who wrote the Belgic Confession, but a man who died for the faith on the gallows in the townsquare for the faith in the Bible, he writes, and the church has ever confessed with him, "We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith, believing without any doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts, **that they are from God**, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilled." Belgic Confession, Art. V. Page 26, Psalter.

The spirit of truth and the spirit of error is known in this from those who believe God in the Bible and those who disobey Him!

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Take note of the convention outlines included in this issue. They are provided for the benefit of the convention discussion groups. Now is a good time to begin to "think on these things".

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Do you have a topic you would like to see written about in **Beacon Lights**? Let us know! We will consider it and do our best to get something written about it.

HOLDING FAST OUR HERITAGE IN THE USE OF THE SUMMER MONTHS (2)

by Rev. R. Miersma

The last time we discussed this subject we looked at the meaning of holding fast our heritage and applied it to our use of the summer months in our social life in general and the Young People's Convention in particular. At that time we learned that a heritage is a precious possession which has been passed down to us through the generations. Our spiritual heritage is the Word of God as it is contained in the Scriptures and as it is explained for us in the confessions. The Word of God is the most precious thing that we have. For that reason we want to hold it fast, retain it in our memory, and act accordingly, also in our use of the summer months. This covers not only the sphere of our lives which we treated last time, our social life, but every sphere of our lives whether that be at home, at work, at church, at play, or at school which will soon begin again.

Let us concentrate for a moment on the fact that we must hold fast our heritage in the sphere of labor. As young people there are perhaps three different reasons to work, 1) we live at home and work in one way or another for our parents, 2) we are not yet out of school and seek, temporary employment for the summer months, 3) we no longer are in school and seek permanent employment in preparing for future home and family. In respect to work we must hold fast our heritage both with respect to seeking a job and while actually working.

The heritage which we wish to retain must always be in mind while we seek employment. If our parents provide the work for us many of our difficulties are solved. However, if one must seek employment on the open job market there are things which must be considered. Looking into this matter of work we see first of all that we must work, whether that be at home or elsewhere. If God has given us the ability to labor we must do so. Nothing is more disgusting that to see able-bodied teenagers loaf all summer when they could be working. This may mean a good-paying job or working for no pay as a volunteer or for one's parents, but certainly one should not be idle. This idleness is the cause of much unrest, vandalism, and simple troublemaking. Remember what Paul said to the Thessalonians in II Thess. 3:10, "For when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." We must live as parasites, but be contributors in the way of our work.

After we see that it is incumbent upon us to work we must seek employment that will not cause us to forsake our heritage. In other words we would not seek employment in the tavern, or in the movie theatre, in professional sports, in the night club, etc. No, such jobs would certainly destroy that heritage within us. Having ruled out certain types of employment does not settle all of our problems. A particular job may be good in itself, but the time and place of such labor is also important. We must ask ourselves, Do I have to work on Sunday? will I be taken away from the sphere of church activity? We may have to settle for a job less desirable to us, but the sufferings of this

present time can not be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. We must realize that our whole life revolves around our church and the heritage that is preserved therein. Take a job 50-100 miles from church with the idea that you can be at home and in church on Sunday and what do you have? Seemingly the best of two worlds, a good job and church on Sunday. However, you will soon find out that your church-life suffers and you become what is known as a Sunday-Christian. You are outside the sphere of believers in your work, you have no societal life, no visiting with the fellow saints. Sooner or later this kind of job and life will take its toll. Always seek work, young people, in close proximity to our churches. This cannot be stressed strongly enough. Finally, after finding a suitable job at a suitable time and place, there is always the question, "Is union membership required?" One certainly wants no part in this world's ungodly unions which rebel against God-instituted authority.

One may think that he has now answered all the questions with respect to holding fast our heritage in the sphere of labor. But alas, we have only discussed the seeking of work. What about holding fast our heritage while we are working after we have found a job? The apostle Paul reminds us in Rom. 12:11, "Not slothful in business," and again in vs. 17, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." And once again listen to God's Word in Eph. 6:5-8, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." From these Scriptural passages there can be seen several principles which apply to our labor. In the first place, we must do our work well, to the best of our ability. One who is slothful actually is stealing from his employer for he is getting paid for work not done or not done well. Doing this in our work will also affect our attitude toward other things in other spheres of life.

Secondly, one must never forget that the employer is the boss, the one who has authority over the employee. Hence, we must obey all of his orders, unless they are directly against God's Word. Furthermore, one must be a good example unto fellow employees. By doing as we are ordered and performing our tasks well we are obedient to our God which obedience others will see. God uses this action of his children in the salvation of His people. By our good example God brings His own into the sphere of the church where the Word is preached while by that same example He hardens those whom are not His own. Therefore, we must be careful not to profane the name of the Lord in our conversation with co-laborers. We must keep ourselves free from the pollution of the world.

By now it certainly must be evident that a job is more than simply a job, but that it too is subject to the Word of God. Our whole life is governed by that Word and our calling is to maintain that standard, hold fast our heritage, also in our daily labors. We all have to be made mindful of this fact, especially as young people. May God grant you His grace that our heritage may be held fast.

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

Modern Speech Versions of the Bible

THE LIVING BIBLE (Continued)

The New Testament word **monegenes** (only begotten) is truly a mysterious term. It seems to be especially so to some who just cannot see how it could apply to the divine person of the Son of God. Hence many modern and anti-theological versions of the Bible eliminate "begotten", as LB eliminates it from 10 verses: from Jn. 1:14; 3:16, 18; Ac. 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; 11:17; I Jn. 4:9; 5:1. John alone used the expression "only begotten Son." John 1:14 should read "the only begotten of the Father." The word "Son", not in the text, is therefore here in LB unjustifiable. Verse 18 has the word "Son", but the text should read, not as in LB, "His only Son", but "the only begotten Son." This unique, indispensible term should be retained, not omitted, as it refers to the peculiar properties of the first and second persons of the trinity. Preserve the KJV and you preserve Protestant and Reformed theology. The KJV is full of Reformed theology. But the LB paraphrases the Bible in the language of the **Saturday Evening Post**, and so is emptied of all theology. Reading it does not necessarily reveal of what it is a paraphrase. No one would guess it a paraphrase of Old Testament Hebrew or New Testament Greek (which it isn't), not even that it is a paraphrase of a version (which it is).

Part of our theology is the branch known as ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the church. Many young people are not taught this doctrine, as they go off together into little anti-church religious groups for so called Bible study, where they use the LB, which has no ecclesiology as the Hebrew, Greek and KJV texts do. For example, in I Cor. 1:2, "church" is dropped and made "Christians," "saints" is dropped and made "his people," and "called" is dropped and made "invited." In Rom. 16:1, the "church at Cenchrea" is paraphrased (actually perverted to) "town of Cenchreae," and the "church in their house" (16:5) comes out "those who meet to worship in their home." Those who meet to worship in a home may not be of any church, but are set up on a par, even above those belonging to a church. So "the church of God" is made "all of you

Christians there in Corinth" (2 Cor. 1:1), and "to the saints at Ephesus" becomes "Dear Christian Friends at Ephesus." So, too, when preaching on I Cor. 1:1, the word "missionary" would not be sufficient in exegeting the word "apostle." The latter is a much richer term, and "missionary" is no paraphrasing of the term. The LB is not anywhere near an indispensable English text, which is the way we think of the KJV. Nothing in this shallow, spiritually low-calibre age will ever replace it.

Another instance of where the LB removes the doctrinal bases of the English Bible is found in the word **virgin** (virginity: Lk 2:36) omitted from 12 vv.: Matt. 25:1, 7, 11; Lk. 1:27 only once instead of twice; Ac. 21:9; I Cor. 7:25, 28, 34, 36, 37; 2 Cor. 11:2. It appears in Mt. 1:23, and is inserted, where it does not exist, in Lk. 1:24. Doctrinal support for any biblical truth cannot be found or appealed to in a non-doctrinal book, which the Bible is made to be by LB. Not non-doctrinal in the absolute sense is LB, for it does teach false doctrine. Especially is it a free-will, humanistic Bible. The familiar Rom 8:28 is made to say, "We know that all that happens to us **is** working for our good IF we love God and **are** fitting into his plans" (emphasis, RCH). First, note what **is** a fact (wonderful!), but, second, that it **is** a fact only IF **we** do something, viz., if we are fitting ourselves into God's plan. God's plan is not fitting all things together for our good, but we must fit ourselves into his plan for the enjoyment of any good! It is all up to us. The greatest reality is, after all, dependent upon man to make it a reality.

This is evident, too, in Rom. 2:29, "He is looking for those with changed hearts", which implies that God is looking for those who change their own hearts! God conditionalizes the whole of man's existence; He does nothing sovereignly. You must trust Him, then He will save you. "Your further reward for trusting Him will be (future tense) the salvation of your souls", I Pet. 1:9, LB. But the verb is a present participle, "receiving." It's up to you! So, "we **can** have peace" (Rom. 5:1, LB), not "we **have**" it. It's not **all** of God, since God, so very, very Romish-wise wills it be done by a synergistic cooperation of man with Himself. "He used Christ's blood and our faith to satisfy God's wrath" (Rom. 3:25, LB). This, denying the one satisfaction, sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ once-for-all accomplished on the cross, is an accursed idolatry (Heidelberg Catechism, 80). This synergistic blasphemy is repeated in "our salvation...is based on what Christ has done **and** (emph., RCH—i.e., **plus**) our faith in Him", which is Rom. 3:27 for "where is boasting then? It is excluded... by the law of faith." Here is denial of Scripture, the making of faith something of which to boast, and what Christ has done is not enough until something is added to His work by us! But faith itself says, "not by works of righteousness which we have done," and "salvation is of the Lord" and "God worketh in you both to will and to do." It's a treacherous bible, full of the boasted exercise of man's will, which sets in the shade Scripture's central display of God's sovereign grace. Take Rom. 8:30, "Whom He called, them He also justified." It's a downright shame this is made, not "when He called," but "when we came, He declared us not guilty"! This flies in the face of Romans 4, where God justifies the ungodly, and implies that the ungodly have the power to come unto Him in response to His call. This is Pelagianizing tampering with Scripture. So also to change "the Gentiles have attained to righteousness" (Rom. 9:30), so their salvation is an actuality, and twist it to "God has given the Gentiles the opportunity to be saved", making their salvation a mere possibility.

Doctrinal extractions and exotic insertions are made also in the Old Testament passages. In Lam 3:37-38,

God's sovereign counsel and control over good and evil are removed, and the dualistic concept of permission is introduced. Where the Bible teaches that God's counsel embraces absolutely all things, including evil, the LB removes evil from the realm of God's counsel and sovereign will, from the holy hand of the Judge of all the earth, leaving Him the work of merely bringing forth disasters. Not "shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6), but LB has, "for I, the Lord, am sending disaster into your land." (According to LB, God permits things to happen, and man also permits God to do certain things: "live in Me and let Me live in you" (Jn. 15:4).

Toning down Scripture, blunting its sharp edge, concealing its real statement and intent is a damnable sin. This is done, further, where "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Ps. 5:5) is rendered, "how You hate their evil deeds", the Pelagian lie that God hates sin, not the sinner. Also "the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man" (5:6) is deliberately changed to "how you abhor all murder and deception!" According to Scripture, God abhors (a stronger term than "hates") specific, concrete sinners. The LB interprets (not translates) this to mean that God abhors mere abstract moral-ethical aberrations. Use this Bible in Bible discussion and study groups and it will be impossible to teach from it, learn or discuss Bible doctrine. It leads one far astray from such a sound, solid basis.

It is going astray about as far as can be when one goes astray as to God's covenant. In Gen. 9, "covenant" is made "promise." In Gen. 17 it is made "contract" and "agreement." In Jer. 31:31, 33, "new covenant" is made "new contract." Lk. 22:20 for "new testament" has "God's new agreement." In Heb. 8:7, "the first covenant" is "the old agreement," and "they continued not in My covenant" (v. 9) slides off into "they did not keep their part in the agreement, so I had to cancel it." That's terrible! God does not, cannot maintain His covenant, but, frustrated, is forced to cancel it and give it up! No less offensive is, "the blood of the everlasting agreement between God and you" (Heb. 13:21), as though there is a blending of the blood of God (Ac. 20:28) with the blood of mere man to effect man's salvation! The covenant according to true scripture is not an agreement or compact, but a divinely established relationship of friendship.

So the Bible is made to say despicable things, to say things it does not say, to say even the opposite of what it does say. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (Jn. 11:26) is one thing. "He is given eternal life for believing in Me" is just the opposite. The living depends on the believing. The believing, pumped up out of man himself, makes possible the living. Faith, according to Paul, is the operation of God (Col. 2:12), but LB changes this statement to "you trusted the Word of the mighty God."

Then not providence, nor God's sovereign ordination of all things, according to the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11), but chance prevails over all things. That is, God, to keep man a free being, gives him, right and left, all kinds of chances. "God will give us many chances to preach" (Col. 4:3, KJV, open a door of utterance). So you must "make the most of your chances" (4:5, KJV, be "redeeming the time").

Not the Living Bible, but a deadly bible is this corrupt and corrupting book. If it would not be the greatest pleasure to do so, it undoubtedly would be the wisest to send it to its proper place by a heave to the trash can.

Current Events & Comments

THE LOVE OF GOD

by David M. Harbach

When this article is printed, our Young People's Convention will not be too far away. Many of us will be busy anticipating the numerous activities that, D.V., will take place at Camp Geneva. We will think back to last year's convention and remember all of the joyous times spent with friends from far away and those nearby. Then those fond memories will cause us to look forward to the month of August, when once again we can enjoy the Christian fellowship of young people from our churches. We will also take the time to consider the spiritual purpose for taking part in the convention. This brings us to the purpose of our article. Is our Young People's Convention a living example of God's love for His people?

The main emphasis of our question, as we can readily see, considers God's love for His people. Secondary importance considers our Young People's Convention as a living example of the main emphasis. We must stress the importance of the question in the above manner because we must come to a proper understanding of why we hold a convention at all. Then we can easily understand the importance of all that takes place.

The Holy Scriptures bring to our minds and hearts the truth that God alone is the source of all love. God is Love (I John 4:8). Quoting from "Reformed Dogmatics," chapter 3, page 106, we find. "Also in His love God is perfectly Self-sufficient. He has no need of men's hands to be served; He is not in need of a man's heart to be loved; He needs no object outside of Himself to love.... Constantly, eternally, He beholds Himself, contemplates Himself with infinite delight in His own perfections." The emphasis is that as God does love us, it is because of Himself, and not because of us.

Consider the ninth and tenth verses of I John 4: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." We, therefore, as the people of God are made spiritually alive through the perfect death of the Son of God upon the accursed tree. That is God's love for His people.

Now, what about the secondary importance? To simplify our question we will ask another question in its place. How does God love us through our Young People's Convention? To start, we must be thankful unto God that He brings us together as His young people for His purpose, to love Himself through us. Not only does God love Himself through us but also through our parents. This is true because we can never separate God's love for us from God's love for our parents, or for that matter, God's love for His people. The convention serves the purpose of bringing us together for the love of God.

Again we go to Scripture; this time to the eleventh verse of I John 4: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." There is the amazing blessing which Jehovah has given to us. The love, which is of our Father in heaven, is bestowed upon us that we might also love one another, because as God loves us, we are enabled to love one another. We love the brethren in that we

would lay down our lives for the brethren. We are brothers in Christ. When we keep His commandments, we love God and thereby love one another.

Our reason for going to this year's convention must be out of a love of God. This means, too, that we must prepare ourselves spiritually. When we meet old and new friends, the love of God must not only be in our hearts, but upon our lips also. Our conversation and walk must show each one to be a recipient of Jehovah's love. Consider all of the times we will spend with each other. No doubt we will be excited, concentrating our every thought and effort on winning each game. We do so with a love for God by performing our best and being at peace with one another. That is, we willingly seek the good for our fellow brother in Christ. That doesn't mean we let the other team win, but we try our best to win. Upon winning or losing we give thanks to God for the strength of our youth.

Just as we concentrated our every effort on winning, so must we concentrate our efforts on hearing in our hearts what God says to us through one another in prayer, through those who will teach us, and from each other during discussion groups. As young people from our many Protestant Reformed Churches, all of our activities must be performed out of a living faith. The faith which is given us by Christ enables us to be humble and to fight against the pride of our youth. Then we know that Jehovah is our Faithful Covenant God.

When our convention is over, we will certainly talk about the many events that occurred. In our hearts will be the joy of having had the fellowship of each other during which Jehovah was glorified. Then, too, we will more earnestly seek to have our hungry and thirsty souls fed the following sabbath day by the faithful preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of our daily experiences must cause us by faith to seek the Kingdom of God.

CONVENTION
Discussion Group Outlines

PRAYER

by Rev. C. Hanko

I. What is prayer?
   A. Prayer is communion with God. See Psalter number 203.
      1. What was there distinctive about Adam's creation that made it possible for him to have communion with God?
      2. How is that lost through sin?
      3. How is that restored in Christ?
   B. Various forms of prayer.
      1. In the Old Testament. We read of Enoch that He walked with God, of Abraham that he was a friend of God, of Moses that he communed with God face to face. We have David's prayers recorded in the Psalms,

Solomon's prayers recorded in Scripture. We are told that Jesus spend whole nights in prayer.

2. The earliest means of communing with God was through the altar. Why the altar? What did the sacrifice signify?. Do we have something very similar? John 16:23, 26. I John 2:1.
3. What did Asaph mean in Psalm 73:17? Or David in Psalm 42:4?
4. What posture should we assume in prayer? Do circumstances make a difference? Can we pray even while we are actively engaged in other things? Is it proper?

II. The Necessity of Prayer.

A. Which two things are mentioned in Lord's Day 45, question 116, that make prayer necessary for the believer.
   1. Why should God require this of us?
   2. Why is there a personal need for prayer? Give a few examples.

B. Scripture speaks of prayer as coming in God's presence, standing before His face, bowing in the beauty of His holiness, pouring out our souls, calling upon God in the day of trouble, worshipping, praising, seeking, longing, crying, clinging to God. How do these various aspects of prayer reveal a real necessity?

C. Why is intercessory prayer necessary? See James 5:16.

III. The Requisites For True Prayer.

A. Which are the three requisites of prayer mentioned in Lord's Day 45, question 117?
   1. If we briefly sum these up as including **faith, humility**, and **confidence**, must these three characterize every prayer we make?
      a. Can an unbeliever pray? What does Scripture say about the prayer of the unbeliever in Proverbs 15:8? In Isaiah 66:3?
      c. Can you give other reasons why the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to God?
   2. In this connection, what is your opinion of the use of "You" and "Your" in prayer?

B. Which requisite is mentioned in James 1:6-8?
   1. What kind of a person is a double minded man?
   2. What does it mean to waver when we pray? Mention an example or two.

C. What does Hebrews 11:6 say about prayer?
   1. When we believe that God is, is that the same as believing that there is a God? Is a pagan just as certain as we are that his god is the true God? See Romans 1:19-21. Why does he worship his idol?
   2. How do we know Who and What God is?
   3. Is it proper to say: "Go to the church of your choice?"
   4. Of whom is God a rewarder? What does 'rewarder' mean?

D. What does our Lord teach us in Luke 18:1-8?
   1. What is the point of comparison?
   2. What does Jesus encourage us to do?
   3. How does this harmonize with Luke 11:5-9?
   4. Is it true that if we persist in imposing our whims upon God He will ultimately be persuaded to grant them? Does God sometimes grant sinful wishes as punishment or chastisement? See Psalms 106:15. To what does

Psalm 116:15 refer?

IV. The Contents Of True Prayer.

A. What does Scripture mean when it urges us to make **all** our needs known by prayer and supplication? Phil 4:6.

1. What is wrong with **national** prayer services?
2. What is wrong with prayer services commonly held for rain, for peace, etc.?

B. May we tell God all our problems, all our cares? How is this different from imposing our whims upon God?

1. Is it sufficient simply to say, "Thy will be done," and then leave the entire outcome to the Lord?
2. Or is it important for us to pour out our souls to God, with the plea that His will may be done? Do we have a clear example of that in the life of Jesus? Where?

C. Jesus gave us the perfect prayer. Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:2-5.

1. What was the occasion for this prayer in Matthew's account? What was the occasion in Luke's account?
2. What is the purpose of giving this perfect prayer? Is it sufficient if we simply recite it?
3. In which two main sub-divisions is this prayer divided?
4. How are the first three prayers related?
5. What is meant by our daily bread? What is the lesson for us?
6. Is it still necessary in the new dispensation to ask for the forgiveness of sins? If our sins are forgiven at the cross, why must we still ask for forgiveness? Why the added phrase: "as we forgive our debtors?" Is this a condition that we must fulfill before God will forgive us? See Matthew 6:14,15. Ephesians 4:32.
7. Does God actually lead into temptation? How does this compare with James 1:13? Can you give an example of God leading someone into temptation? Why does God do that? Why do we make this petition?
8. What does 'deliverance' include?
9. Why is the doxology important to our prayers? How does this relate to the first three petitions and also to the next three?
10. What does the word 'Amen' mean? See Heid. Cat., question 129.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

by Rev. M. Joostens

In keeping with the central theme of the 1977 Convention, I want to consider with you the idea of stewardship. If we are to seek the Lord, then most certainly we must do this in all that we are and in all that we have.

I submit the following outline not as an exhaustive presentation but as a study guide to stimulate you in your thinking and discussion of this topic.

I. The underlying principles.

A. We must begin with the absolute ownership of God.

1. This is true according to creation.

a. In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is.
   1. They were eternally in His conception and counsel.
   2. By the creative word God gives a dependant existence to the whole creation.
   3. That which has its origin in God is most certainly His.
b. The Bible speaks of this repeatedly:
   1. Ps. 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein."
   2. Ps. 50:10, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."
   3. Is. 66:1, "...The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; ...for all those things hath my hand made,...saith the Lord."
c. We are instructed in this in the two beautiful L.D.'s on God the Father, (L.D. 9 & 10).

2. Not only is God's ownership absolute but also all-comprehensive.
   a. Simple truth is that nothing can exist apart from Him.
      1. The existence of all is dependent.
      2. God must continue to speak the creative word in order to uphold and sustain all things. (Heb. 1:3)
      3. This is true re our person and belongings.
         a. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being;..." Acts 17:28
         b. And God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift.
   b. How well David understood this: I Chron. 29:12-14, "Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.... But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?"

B. Derivitive from this is a relative ownership.
   1. God makes this clear, for example, in the 8th commandment.
      a. We must respect the property and possessions of others.
         1. So that I may not steal or defraud.
         2. No, we may not even covet that which is not ours.
      b. Because God doles out according to the measure He sees fit.
         1. As He is the Lord and Master of all things.
         2. So He places the creation under the responsibility of the creature.
            a. Made plain already in Paradise; Adam was the friend-servant of God (Gen. 1:28).
            b. Christ pointed this out in the parable of "The Talents" (Matt. 25:14ff., cf. **Mysteries of the Kingdom** by Prof. Hanko, pp. 287ff.)
   2. This brings us to the idea of stewardship.
      a. A steward is one who must give account to his lord.
         1. He is a manager, supervisor and administrator of that which belongs to his master.
            a. He is entrusted with a certain portion of his master's goods.
            b. And is held accountable for them.
         2. There comes a time when the master says to his steward, "What have you done with my goods?"

b. So it is with us who are christians; God makes us stewards.
   1. He has given to us life. Life has a purpose!
   2. He has given unto us talents. Talents must be exhausted!
   3. He has given to us wealth and possessions. These must support the cause of the Kingdom!

II. The practice of christian stewardship.
A. Has to be rooted in the confession that we are not our own.
   1. An unbeliever can never be a proper steward.
      a. Because:
         1. He does not confess God as the sole proprietor of all things.
         2. He does not deal with the responsibility he has before God.
         3. He thinks that he can do what he pleases for his wellbeing.
      b. "(They) serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Rom. 1:25)
   2. But we confess the 1st L.D. of the Heidelberg Catechism!
      a. That I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ Who has bought me with His precious blood.
         1. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Cor. 6:20)
         2. He is Lord and with Paul we must not hesitate to call ourselves the slaves of Christ.
      b. The Holy Spirit Who gives me this confession, "...makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto Him."
B. How does this work out practically?
   1. We first have to deal with our own person.
      a. God has made us persons and particular individuals.
         1. Each of us have strengths and weaknesses, assets and liabilities.
         2. Our talents are not all the same.
         3. We must honestly evaluate ourselves before God!
      b. And search out His will, prayerfully, as to how He would use us in His service.
         1. Then we may not minimize, nor may we be lazy. We may not take the path of least resistance.
         2. Remember, a slave seeks only the welfare of his Master never self.
   2. And what about all that we have?
      a. In the old dispensation God taught His people to tithe.
         1. They were to give 1/10th and if they held back they robbed the Lord. (Mal. 3:8-10)
         2. But that was only a picture.
            a. The 1/10th was symbolic of the whole. It showed them that all they had belonged rightfully to the Lord.
            b. We must not be legalistic! Everything must be used to His glory.
            c. Paul tells us that we must give as the Lord prospers us and as we purpose in our hearts. (I Cor. 16:2, II Cor. 9:7)
      b. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God....That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to who be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 4:10 & 11)

SEEKING THE LORD — IN DATING

by Prof. H. Hanko

Introduction.

A. The Christian's life must be antithetical in all that he does.
   1. This is true also in dating and marriage.
   2. Thus it is proper for Christian young people to discuss this matter as part of their lives as children of God's covenant.

B. The subject can very well be treated in connection with the theme of the convention.
   1. We are called to "seek the Lord" in all our life.
   2. We are called therefore to "seek the Lord" also in dating.

I. Because dating and marriage stand closely connected, we must say a few words about marriage first of all.

A. It was instituted by God in Paradise, and is rooted in the creation ordinance.
   1. God created Eve for Adam to make Adam's life complete.
      a. Thus Eve was a wife who could truly be a help-meet (fitted) for Adam. Gen. 2:20-25.
      b. But the marriage of Adam and Eve was also for the propagation of the human race. Gen. 1:28.
   2. Marriage always remains rooted in the creation ordinance, even though sin has entered the world.
      a. Thus even outside the Church of Christ in the world, there is always the marriage relationship which must be maintained inviolate.
      b. The laws of God respecting the sanctity of the marriage relationship must be observed, or judgment results.

B. Nevertheless, within the sphere of grace, marriage, after the fall, becomes a picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church.
   Cf. Eph. 5:22-33.
   1. This is possible only within the sphere of the grace of God in Christ.
      a. I.e., this relationship is possible only when those married are children of God.
      b. The relationship has been corrupted by sin, but it has been redeemed by Christ.
   2. Thus, when two believers are married in the Lord, they become "one flesh."
      a. They are one spiritually.
         1. This is the basic union of marriage.
         2. They are both one in Christ, saints and believers standing in a higher and everlasting relationship of grace, brother and sister in Christ.
         3. They are thus one in faith, one in hope, one in calling.
      b. They are one psychologically.
         1. Just as the mind and will of Christ become the mind and will of the Church, so do husband and wife become one in mind and will.
         2. Their thoughts and desires are one, for they are united in Christ.
      c. They are one physically.

1. In the begetting of children.
2. These children are begotten after the image on their parents.

II. The relationship to dating.
A. What Scripture has to say on this subject.
1. In general.
a. In Biblical times there was no dating such as we know it today.
1. Especially in Old Testament times, the parents chose the mates for their children.
2. And even in New Testament times, when children had some voice in the matter, parents still made the final decision.
b. But Scripture considered betrothal so important that it could be broken only by a legal divorce.
c. The Scriptures emphasize throughout the holiness and importance of marriage and preparation for marriage.
2. More specifically:
a. Parents were deeply interested in godly mates for their children. Genesis 24; 26:34; 35; 27:46; 28:1-5.
b. The concern of godly people throughout the Old Testament was marriage and children for the purpose of bringing forth the Christ.
B. From all this we may deduce various truths.
1. God still brings two people together. As our marriage form puts it: "...witnessing thereby that he doth yet as with his hand bring unto every man his wife."
a. God does this in a variety of different ways, but those who are conscious of this can often look back at God's providential guidance to bring them together.
b. The point is that God has already determined who our partner in life shall be.
1. It remains for us to learn the will of God in this respect.
2. This must be the goal and purpose of dating.
2. In close connection with this, dating must also be for the purpose of preparation for marriage.
a. When two find that it is God's will that they marry they seek to prepare for their coming marriage.
b. Especially if the unity of marriage is a picture of Christ and His Church, such preparation is with that goal in mind.
c. Thus they must seek to know each as much as possible that they may make their marriage what it ought to be.

III. Thus the character of dating is determined.
A. There are several truths which are negative in character which follow from what was said.
1. It is possible to begin dating too young.
a. What is a proper age to begin dating?
b. What dangers follow from dating too early?
2. It is possible to date for wrong reasons.
a. May one date "to play the field?"
b. May dating be only to have a good time?

c. Ought dating always to be to seek for a marriage partner?

3. It is possible to date those who are not one in the faith with us.
   a. May we date others outside our Churches?
   b. If we do, ought we to date anyone? Does Paul's injunction in II Cor. 6:14-18 apply here?
   c. If we do, what ought to be our goal?

B. Positively, we ought to remember the following:
   1. Dating is not something frivolous, meaningless, a game to be played. It is serious, important, and has great consequences for life.
      a. Thus we ought to seek the Lord's will so that we know that He directs us to the one whom He has chosen.
      b. We ought to do this prayerfully and in full consciousness of our calling to do His will.
      c. What role ought parents to play in the choice of a mate?
   2. Although one can and ought to have a good time dating, the real goal must be to learn whom God wills to be our life-time partner in marriage.
   3. There are rules of Christian conduct in dating.
      a. Above all, young couples must keep themselves pure.
      b. Boys must treat girls with respect and proper regard for their place in God's covenant.
      c. How far should parents set up rules to control dating?

WHY SHOULD I?

by Cindi Dykstra

In an interview aired on May 19, former President Richard M. Nixon declared that when he was in the White House, he had inherent power to order burglaries, eavesdropping or other illegal conduct against American dissidents. He said, "when a President does it, that means that it is not illegal". In other words, whatever a President does is, by definition, legal.

When we as Christians hear about things like this, we may be justly horrified. Well we know that no person, no matter what his office or position has the right to say that what he does is legal by definition thereby implying that he is the final authority. There is no authority apart from God. He is the final authority. He is authority not only by His very nature but also because He is Lord and Creator of all.

God confers authority to man through Christ. No person has the right to use this God-given authority for his own end, rather he must use it only for God's glory. But regardless of whether or not someone in authority uses that authority correctly, he must still be respected. Why? Because God places people in positions of authority over us. In the Heildelberg Catechism we read of the fifth commandment that it requires that "I show all honor, love, and fidelity to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand".

It is not our place to determine whether or not those in authority are **worthy** of our respect. God commands us to respect them and as long as they are over us, we owe them our respect for His sake.

"Why am I bothering to read this article? I might need a little reminder now and then, but **really** I know the Bible says I have to respect and obey those in authority. I know what the fifth commandment requires of me. After all, how many times haven't I heard sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism? I think the minister just preached on that one not too long ago."

But wait a minute. Do we **really know** what is required of us or is our knowledge merely intellectual head knowledge?

Covenant parents have the awesome responsibility of bringing up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. They set up and maintain schools to help them in carrying out this responsibility. Covenant children coming from homes with God-fearing parents are expected to show respect to all those in authority over them. But, what is expected will not be reality if children hear parents, babysitters, or anyone who cares for them speaking negatively or with any hint of disrespect about those in positions of authority whether it be the government, church, or school. It is in this way that they plant the seed of disrespect for authority which, if not stopped soon, grows into disrespect for authority in every sphere of life.

Children, especially young children, are great imitators. They learn much from listening to and watching others. Often actions speak to them much louder than words. They can see whether their parents actually respect authority by the way they react to what is said by a president, policeman, teacher, minister or anyone with whom they come into contact.

As young people, we also should watch what we say and now we say it. Often we can say something which may sound harmless but one look at the facial expression accompanying it quickly reveals an attitude of disrespect.

We must honor our father and mother and **all** in authority over us because in doing so, we give honor and glory to Jehovah our God who has taken us out of the bondage of sin and death to make us along with our parents His own chosen people.

NEWS From, For and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS:

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kuiper of First Church in Grand Rapids rejoice in the birth of Kristy Kay on May 8.

Mr. & Mrs. Carey Kamps of Faith Church rejoice in the birth of Timothy Ryan on May 17.

Mr. & Mrs. Eric Ophoff of First Church in Grand Rapids rejoice in the birth of James David on May 20.

Mr. & Mrs. Jerry VanDenTop of Hull rejoice in the birth of Kevin on May 24.

Mr. & Mrs. T. Hugg of Faith Church were blessed with the birth of Rachel Ann on June 29.

Hope Church had a number of babies born within a week. On June 21 Titus Marinus was born to Mr. & Mrs. B. Kamps, Amanda Lane was born on June 23 to Mr. & Mrs. F. Haney, Marianne was

born on June 24 to Mr. & Mrs. L. Meulenberg, on June 26 Rozanne Marie was born to Mr. & Mrs. C. Bult, and Jennifer Ann was born on June 27 to Mr. & Mrs. D. Tanis.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

Hudsonville has received the membership papers of Mrs. Gary Holstege (nee Davonna Miersma) from First Church in Grand Rapids.

Hull has sent the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Jim Jansma and one baptized daughter to Edgerton Prot. Ref. Church.

Hudsonville has sent the membership papers of Mr. Ken Schuitema and his family to him at his request.

Southeast has granted dismissal papers to Dave Offringa, Jacob Rietsema, and Tom Slopsema at their requests.

Southeast has received the membership papers of Enock Hauck from the now dissolved Forbes Church.

South Holland has received the papers of Mrs. Bessie De Vries from the Munster Chr. Ref. Church.

Hope Church has transferred the membership papers of Mrs. Tom Schipper (nee Luanne Terpstra) and those of Sam Reitsma to Hudsonville Church.

MARRIAGES:

Ron Corson and Linda Kuiper were united in marriage on June 16 in Hope Church.

Bob Vermeer and Mary Hoekstra were united in marriage on June 17 in Hudsonville Church.

Bill Bruinsma and Mary Zandstra were united in marriage on June 17 in South Holland.

Ralph Vander Veen and Cindy Buiter were married on June 24 in First Church.

Dave Kregel and Mary Rau were united in marriage on June 30 in Hope Church.

Ray Van Til and Barb Ondersma were married on July 1 in Hudsonville Church.

John Van Uffelen and Linda Vander Vennen were married in Hudsonville Church on June 15.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES:

First Church Junior Young People's Society sponsored a car wash at Adam's School on May 7.

Hudsonville's Young People sold baked goods in the kitchen at Van Hill's Auction on May 18. Proceeds are for the convention.

First Church Young People's Societies sponsored a casserole supper at the church on May 26.

Southeast's Young People held their annual potluck supper at the church on May 26.

A Singspiration with the theme "Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord" was held in Southeast Church on June 12.

South Holland's Young People sponsored a car wash on June 18. Proceeds were for the convention.

CONVENTION NOTE

In this last issue of the *Beacon Lights* before the convention, Aug. 22-26, the Steering Committee would like to inform and remind you of a few things. Don't forget to bring your Bible, beach towel, sleeping bag, and any sports equipment such as footballs, frisbees, or tennis rackets. All your belongings must be at Hudsonville Church by 3:00 p.m.

Registration will be at 11:00 a.m. sharp. There will also be a short lunch available for you at the church.

Last year there was a problem of seating at the banquet. This year all people who come to the banquet will be required to have a ticket. Tickets *will* be collected at the door.

If you need a ride from Kent County International Airport to where you are staying, call any one of these numbers:

Bev Zwak — 669-9419
Deb Miedema — 538-4835
Sandy Miedema — 457-2244
Greg Van Overloop — 669-6547

Don't forget there is a special event on Wonderful Wednesday. Guaranteed fun!

Curfews this year will be the same as last year, 12:00 midnight on Monday thru Wednesday, and 1:00 a.m. on Thursday night. Remember we are representing ourselves, our parents, and our Protestant Reformed Churches.

Yours in Christ,
The Steering Committee
Gerry Schut, Pres.

JOHN ZANDSTRA, JR.
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