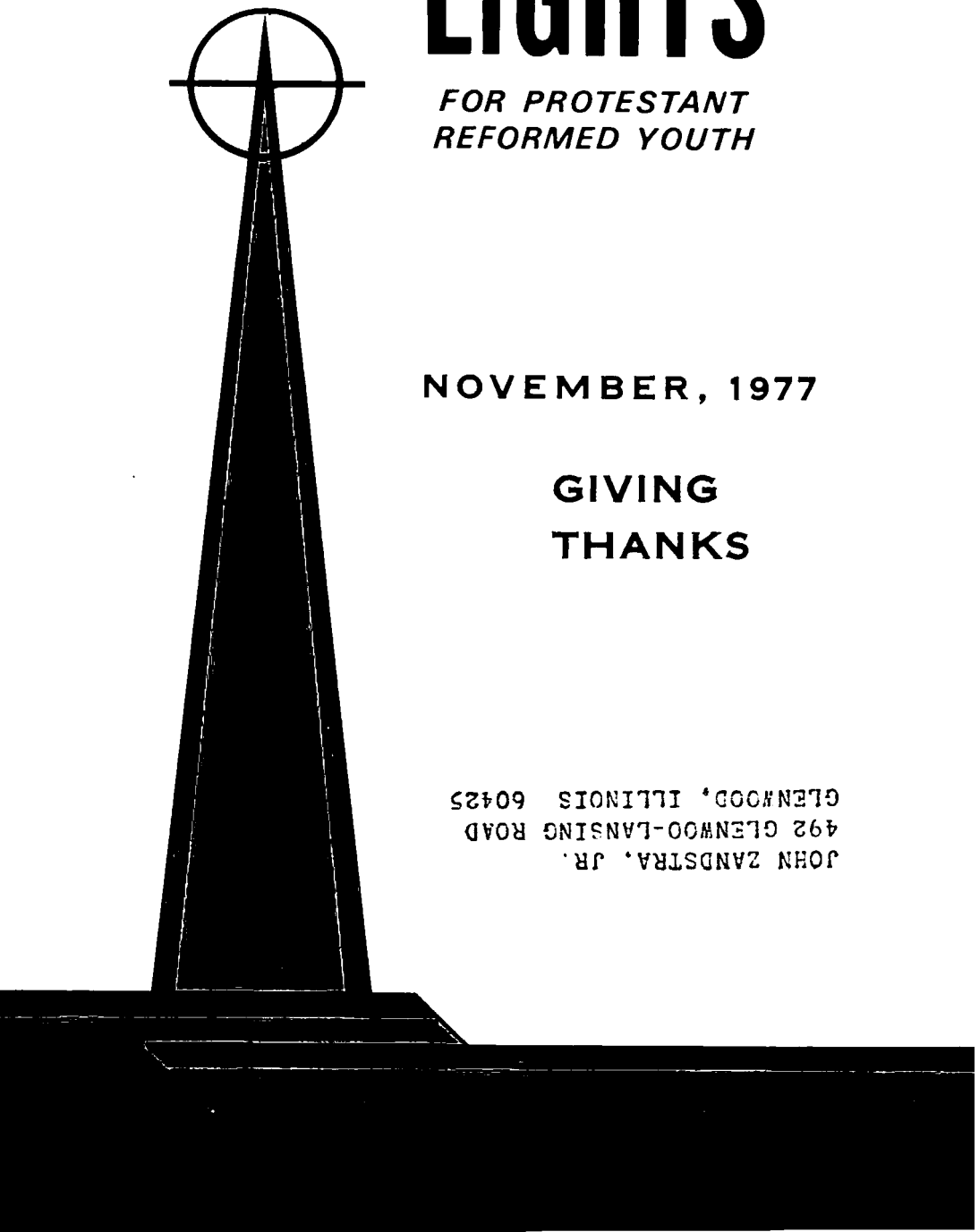
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



NOVEMBER, 1977

GIVING THANKS

JOHN ZANDSTRA, JR.
492 GLENWOOD-LANSING ROAD
GLENWOOD, ILLINOIS 60425

VOLUME XXXVI NOVEMBER, 1977 NUMBER 7

Published monthly (except June-July and August-September are combined) by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Rick Noorman - President; Barry Gritters - Vice-President; Cindy Buiter - Secretary; Mary Rau - Assistant Secretary; Neal Hanko - Treasurer; Ron Koole - Assistant Treasurer; Beth Bos - Librarian; Cal Kalsbeek - Youth Coordinator

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF

Dave Moelker - Editor-in-Chief; John M. Faber, Harry Langerak, Gerald Kuiper - Associate Editors; Tom Van Overloop - Finance Manager; Ellen Hanko, Nancy Van Dyke, Grace Faber, Vicky Klamer, Sandy Kamps

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Duane Alsum, David Harbach, Rev. R. Harbach, Rev. M. Kamps, Agatha Lubbers, Rev. G. Lubbers

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 Dave Moelker 1401 Su-Lew S.W. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504
News Editor: Cindi Dykstra 4625 Ju-Le-On Dr. S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Michigan subscribers please forward subscription dues to Grace Faber 4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506
Subscribers outside of Michigan please forward subscription dues to Nancy Van Dyke 3502 Bluebird S.W., Wyoming, Mich. 49506

Forms 3579 should be returned to **Beacon Lights** 1401 Su-Lew S.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504

Second Class Postage paid at Jenison, Michigan
Subscription price $3.00

IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL - An "E" Pistle to my Grandchildren - John M. Faber 1
Giving Thanks Always For All Things - John Kalsbeek Jr 2
How Much He Gives - Sharon Bylsma 6
CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS - The Law of God - David M. Harbach 7
CONVENTION SPEECH - Seek Ye the Lord in Your Decisions In Life - Rev. R. G. Moore 8
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY - The Bible: How Does it Teach? - Rev. G. Lubbers 11
George M. Ophoff (18) - Prof. H. Hanko 13
CRITIQUE - In Defense of History - Agatha Lubbers 15
TRUTH VS. ERROR - Television 1984 - Rev. R. C. Harbach 19
News From, For and About Our Churches - Cindi Dykstra 21

Editorial

An "E" Pistle to my Grandchildren

by John M. Faber

Dear Grandchildren:

You will have noticed the date line in the upper right hand corner of my letter. Yes, September one! And you have just received it November one. Postmaster Moelker warned me about that. The mail moves so slowly these days by dog-sled, by rowboat (have you any idea how long it takes to row across Lake Michigan?), by carrier pigeon, and on foot. What other reasons could there be to cause a two-month delivery time?

I have in mind to write you about inclines. Yes, inclines, you know, steep ones when you are skiing or bob-sledding, and gradual ones when on a skateboard. But whether they be gradual or steep, all inclines take you down to a lower level. It is so easy to go down hill, and so much fun!

The inclines I wish to write about are of a different character but having many of the same characteristics of ski slopes. Those which concern me this time are those the Heidelberg Catechism calls, "inclined to all evil." We all have that inclination, babes, toddlers, boys and girls, young adults, parents and grandparents! Worse still, we have an inclination to **all** evil. That incline differs in different people and different ages (I'm sure that toddlers and grandparents do not incline to listen to rock music) and the resistance put forth to avoid falling down differs also. Are **you** on one or more inclines which inevitably lead downhill towards the abyss of hell? How much resistance do you put up? To incline to sin is one thing, but to **fall** into sin is much worse. Skiing down hill is one thing, but falling may give you a broken leg!

We mentioned "all evil." What is evil? The shortest and most comprehensive list is found in Exodus 20. The Ten Commandments engraved by the Finger of God on a slab of stone. You have all memorized them in Catechism and school, so I do not have to remind you of their contents, nor how our Lord Jesus summarized them -all ten- in just 29 words. But even though they may be summed up in 29 words they are still so rich and comprehensive that it takes your minister twelve Sundays to preach the truth of them.

Back to the differences of inclines and resistance. Toddlers incline to be disobedient at a very early age; boys and girls add to that first inclination, and young adults must resist many more: (toddlers and boys and girls are not inclined to experiment with drugs, are they?) and parents and grandparents have still other inclines to resist.

Do you put your trust in any other object besides the One True God Who has revealed Himself in the Bible? Do you possess a picture of Christ and tell yourself that it looks like Him? Of course you do not have an inclination to worship that picture or any other likeness of Him, do you?

How about it so far, no inclines yet?

But do you ever swear, or hear others take God's Name in vain without resisting it? When a person on the radio or T.V. does so you immediately snap the switch to the "off" position? Or do you overlook that heinous sin-the sin which carried the death penalty in the Old Testement times? Do you laugh at his

jokes when they include the profaning of God's Name either by swearing directly, or by oblique references to the Deity, or by snide sarcasm in regard to religion? Or do you resist the inclination by turning him off, and deciding never to tune in on that program again? That incline (that of profaning of His Name) is so serious that the Catechism tells us there is no greater sin or more provoking to God! Is there such an incline in your life that you say, "Gee" for Jesus; or "darn" for damn; or "heck" for hell; or that you even dare to say "heavens" when you know that heaven is His dwelling place? You say that such a small incline as using slang for swear words? Yes, but a small incline under your skateboard may give you a nasty fall, and is an inclination to the abyss. God doesn't like those words at all. He hates them! And do you feel comfortable about using words God hates?

I see another ski slope (incline) which endangers some of my grandchildren. The letters, S.O. are on the caption. Sabbath Observance. Of course we do not observe the O.T. Sabbath anymore. That day has been fulfilled when our Lord entered The Rest on Resurrection Day. That is why when we "remember the Sabbath Day" we do so each Sunday. The Sabbath Day rest of the O.T. was so important that a desecration of it was often punished by stoning. So horrible was that sin! But now we "remember the Sabbath" joyfully and without fear. We attend Church twice each Sunday. We attend each catechism class faithfully. We prepare for the lesson by memorizing the questions and answers. Do you? Do you sometimes feel an inclination away from that norm? Do you sometimes wish that you did not have to go to church? Or, that you fell asleep while the Minister was speaking for God for your benefit-but now to your condemnation? Is your inclination to skip your bed-time prayers or your thanksgiving at mealtime? And you young adults, are you inclined to forget to "contribute to the relief of the poor" in the collection box?

I ask all these questions because I am unable to see all your inclines. Your keen sense of equilibruim tells you when your path is inclining, so your conscience tells you when your spiritual path is inclining to a lower level. So you must answer all my questions for yourself. Be honest with the answers and you will have taken the first step to resisting them. First you must know your sins and miseries before you can seek forgiveness and walk in a new holy life. Does that sentence sound familiar?

Now my letter is getting so long and the envelope will be so heavy that it may slow down the rowboat mail delivery. And up to now I have only looked at the one side of the stone tablet, which is called the First Table of the Law. My next letter will be concerned with the Second Table, which Jesus compressed into the few words: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

'til then,

Love, Gramps.

GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS

by J. Kalsbeek Jr.

At this time of the year it is customary throughout our country to observe a National Thanksgiving Day. Since 1941, Thanksgiving Day has been set by an act of Congress as the fourth Thursday of November. It's a day in which

we are to give thanks for National Prosperity, for the "perfect union" of our states, the "established justice" guaranteed by our constitution, the "domestic tranquility" to which we all have a right and for the "blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." It's also a day set aside for feasting and rejoicing for the individual prosperity enjoyed throughout the country. Tables groan with the weight of luxurious foods while afterwards garbage cans bulge with exotic wastes. It's a day of reflection: people sit down with their tally sheets, count up their blessing on one side and their misfortunes on the other, like credits and debits, and hopefully end up with something for which to be thankful. So the world eats, drinks, is merry, and tries to be thankful for tomorrow they may die.

In Article 67 of our church order we read, "The churches shall observe, in addition to the Sunday... The National Thanksgiving Day.." This was not in the original church order adopted by the Reformed Churches in the 1500's but was added to this article in 1914. Since then, its been the practice of Reformed churches in general and our own Protestant Reformed Churches in particular, to observe this special day as a day for thanksgiving. This is well and good. However, the church and the child of God will have a different motivation and goal as they celebrate this special day. Our celebration is a call to worship in order to show forth thankful praise to our gracious Father in heaven for His care over us. We are called upon to emphasize the spiritual nature of thanksgiving. Such a special day has a proper and rightful place once a year in our lives. But for the child of God it must not be the extent of our thanksgiving. Rather, thanksgiving must be an everyday response of gratitude. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Since the world also talks about Thanksgiving and claims it can be thankful, we must, first of all, consider the idea of Christian thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is exclusively a Christian response and virtue. It is foreign to the nature of sinful man to be thankful in any way for any thing. How can a man destined for everlasting hell fire be thankful? How can wicked man living in enmity with God be thankful in any but a superficial way? He may outwardly pretend to be thankful and even be very convincing to himself and before others yet it is truly impossible for him to show thanksgiving. Only a child of God who knows that he is saved by grace through the work of Christ the Lord, can be thankful. With the child of God it is the spiritual reality of salvation from the misery of one's sins that prompts the response of thanksgiving. It is not based upon or determined by physical well-being or material prosperity. He can and must be thankful when these are given him in this life but they are not the basis of his thanksgiving and gratitude. A child of God gives thanks always because he is a regenerated, sanctified through the blood of Christ, child of God.

Furthermore, thanksgiving depends upon contentment. Someone who is not content with his lot in life will not be and cannot be thankful. If you, as a young man, desire a newer model Corvette and Dad instead buys a rather ordinary looking, older model Chevrolet Biscayne, do you think you could or would be thankful? Outwardly you feel you should thank your father-so you do-but inside you are seething with indignation and disappointment. You are not content with your gift and therefore not at all thankful even though you said "Thank you."

This is also true when trials come your way and you question God's wisdom in afflicting you. Can anyone possibly be thankful when he is dissatisfied with God's dealings with him? Of course not. Again, only a child of God who is assured

that God is good when He sends trials, disappointments, afflictions and even death, can be content and therefore, thankful.

In all things we must give thanks. This is a requirement we are required by God to do. "All things" includes poverty and riches, sickness and health, war and peace, sadness and joy, failure and success, life and death. Imagine being thankful when a young father or mother is struck down with a terminal illness and the children will be left behind fatherless or motherless; when war ravages the land, bombs destroy your home and bullets kill your sons; when poverty, want and starvation is your lot and empty stomachs of crying, hungry children your constant care and concern. Yet that is the calling of every child of God. Thanksgiving is an amazing work of God's grace. It is so unexpected and unnatural that the world is stunned when it observes thanksgiving at times such as these. The triumphant thanksgiving of the child of God is that "in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-39. Thanksgiving, impossible by nature yet possible by grace every day of our life.

Finally, the response of the child of God is that he continually offers to the Lord the sacrifices of thanksgiving. These sacrifices are rendered to God in many different ways Some examples of Biblical heroes of faith will help to make clear the meaning here. Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his very own brothers, lived a life of thanksgiving in the house of Potiphar and in prison. He refused to turn in sin against God and give in to temptation. He was diligent and honest in his dealings with his master and the head of the prison. Paul and Silas, though unjustly beaten with whips, bound in stocks and cast into the inner most dungeon of a Philippian prison, sang songs of praise and thanksgiving to the wonderment of their fellow prisoners. Daniel, was cast into the lion's den and his three friends into the burning fiery furnace because of their thankful walk in a world of sin. David, in Psalm 51, confesses his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and asks God to clean him of this sin because he is thankful that God, through the prophet Nathan, pointed out to him his sin.

Covenant Young People of God, you have a responsibility before God to be thankful everyday of your life. Show your thanksgiving in the way you honor your father and your mother. Sarcasm, ridicule and disobedience towards parents in the home is condemned by the fifth commandment. Show your thanksgiving by being courteous to your elders at all times. Refrain from walking in the way of the world and pray often to God for spiritual stamina to withstand the pressures of friends who would lead you astray into sin. Be careful that you do not lead others into sin. The thankful child of God makes a conscious effort to stay away from even the appearance of evil. May God bless you with a life of thanksgiving.

NOTICE!!! Watch for "Leaving father and mother", a series by Rev. C. Hanko, beginning in the December issue. Don't miss it.

Drawing by Randy Looyenga

HOW MUCH HE GIVES

by Sharon Bylsma

We often thank Him so little,
For the highest means He has provided,
That we may continually see all of His glory,
And express our gratitude for His daily care.

How much we take for granted!
Our Maker, who formed our very senses,
Hath given each a distinctive voice,
That in His presence we may praise Him.

Who hath fashioned our eyes,
And set them apart in perfect order?
Our God created breath for life,
And favored us with a mind of wondrous design.

Each step He measures and controls,
And directs the course we are to go,
He adopts us to the calling He choses,
Always blessing us in endless degrees.

Overflowing with plenty is our food,
Of which we taste at our heart's desire,
And the ease with which we live,
Reveals the knowledge God has imparted.

Every moment we need that solace
Which God in His goodness decreed,
So that by these trials we might be strong,
And desire to magnify His name.

Seeing the whole of His domain,
We know what an Almighty King we have,
And having Him for our Savior,
Enables us to live in thanksgiving.

As our souls are lifted in thanks,
We remember God's compassionate mercy,
So let us see the works He has completed,
And thank God for giving us this day.

THE LAW OF GOD

by David M. Harbach

During the month of November, we as Protestant Reformed young people will gather around our families table on a special day to eat lots of tom-turkey with all the trimmings. Since this day is special we will be full of joy and will want to pack in all the fun and games we can until, for some, we just get tuckered out. Prior to this day we will be made aware of the historical aspect surrounding November 24. We will either be informed by others or find out by ourselves, that the United States will celebrate that holiday instituted by the Pilgrims to give thanks to God for their survival. As covenant young people we know that only God's people can truly from their heart thank Jehovah for their survival today. The thanks that comes from other than God's people is a lie, a mockery, a put on or show of goodness and never does our faithful God receive such false thanks of men outside of his covenant.

Protestant Reformed young people this gives us much reason to all the more be thankful for the blessings of our faithful covenant God. Consider the amazing truth that we as God's people are born in the line of continued generations who knows the truths of God's Word. God has promised us His eternal covenant faithfulness to us generation to generation. We are born into the covenant friendship of God through the regeneration of our heart. Truly with all our heart we must give thanks to God for all the wonderful blessings He has poured out upon us abundantly day by day, every day of our life. None of this would be possible except that the Son of God would perfectly and willingly give His life for the remission of our sins. This Jesus of Nazareth did that we would be abled to glorify God's holy name.

Now we can most sincerely thank Jehovah for our parents, teachers, ministers, deacons, and elders; our schools where we are taught from a covenant point of view, the church where we sit under the preaching and where we also have catechistical instruction, and the seminary that teaches and trains young men to be faithful covenant ministers of God's Word. We could not write enough books that would contain all of God's blessings that we should give him thanks for. Yet that fact alone impresses upon our hearts and mind the need to pray because as the Heidelberg Catechism puts it Lords Day 45 Q.A. 116 "Why is **prayer** necessary for christians? Because it is the **chief part of thankfulness** which God requires of us: and also, because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of him, and are **thankful** for them."

The Third Part-of Thankfulness from the Heidelberg Catechism you will note follows the practical aspect of the life of a child of God. What is even more interesting and the subject of our article is the fact that there is the treating of the law of God before the treating of prayer. My question to you is when was the last time you gave thanks to God for his law?

Perhaps that question sounds strange to some of you, yet when one closely examines the Psalms we come across these sincere expressions of the love of

God's law: Psalm 1:2 "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Psalm 37:31 "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide."; Psalm 40:8 "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."; Psalm 78:1-11 (here we quote only verse 7) "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:"; Psalm 103:17,18 "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."; Psalm 112:1,2 "Praise ye the **Lord**. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mightly upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed."; Psalm 119 and here we quote only verse 97 "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

One may question this love of God's law knowing that today we are under the grace of God. We are not like the psalmist in the sense that he was under the bondage of the law. Today we are free. I quote from the Triple Knowledge Vol. 3 pg 126, "...He certainly must stand in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. This means, first of all, that he is free from the curse of the law, because Christ is become a curse for him. The law can never curse him anymore....." The law of God curses us no more but now is vitally important for us as God's people as speaks Hebrews 8:10,11 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

The law of God then becomes our constant guide as we walk in this life. The law shows the way to perform good works, that is, our good works must be in perfect harmony with the law of God. Can we do that as young people with the multitude of temptations that surround us daily? Yes, we can and must keep the law of God for that is part of the quickening of the new man. By faith we perform good works according to the law of God to his glory, for we delight to live according to the will of God.

CONVENTION SPEECHES

Rev. Woudenberg's speech will appear in next month's issue.

SEEK YE THE LORD- In Your Decisions in Life

by Rev. R. G. Moore

Beloved Covenant Youth;

Our text from which you have taken your theme implies that we must make decisions. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found," implies that we make a decision in fact to seek the Lord. The Scripture is full of langurge that teaches us that in life there are many decisions

that one must make. The reason for this is that in the Scripture we face the reality of life. There are moral decisions that we face-whether we shall serve darkness or light in our moral walk. There are decisions that have to do with our daily vocation - in our job - in school - etc. Decisions concerning our bodies in the matters of sex or drugs-Should we follow the way of the world or no! And so we could go on.

A decision is the formation of a judgment on a matter under consideration. Further, however, not only does it concern the judgment in a case, but also implies that one takes a firm position upon that judged to be right. Here is my judgment of right and here I stand! Thus we must stand upon a firm basis. So are we called as God's children. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed....a double minded man is unstable in all his ways." James 1:6,8. Understand then Scripture knows of no room for compromise. When concerned with life one cannot ride the fence. One must decide-must be on a side! For spiritually the unstable man is ripe for judgment! And our youth is no excuse!

Really when we speak of decisions in life-they all come down to one. "Whom shall ye serve?" God or darkness? Thus saith the Word! This is set forth for the church already clearly in the Old Dispensation. Read Joshua 24:14-15. A decision was to be made between serving the idols of their fathers or the heathen and in both cases this would be foolishness; or would they as Joshua answer, "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The fathers on the other side of the flood (the river Euphrates) depart from God's Word to serve idols and the people in their generations were cut off, while God called out Abraham and continued His covenant faithfully with his seed. Understand also today to depart from the Word is to be destroyed. Either you serve false gods unto destruction or you serve God, the God of salvation!

Again in the Old Testement we see God's people called to make a decision: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." I Kings 18:21. There is no third way, beloved youth! If you serve not Jehovah of the Scriptures, then you serve an idol. And with idol service comes destruction. But, you say, Rev. Moore, is there not some gray area where we can seek some of the same goals as this world in whose midst we live? But the Word is plain—"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6:24.

It is impossible in life not to make a decision-a firm position either to serve God or an idol, darkness and satan. Jesus taught this also by the parable of the two builders. The wise man builded his house upon the rock, and the fool builded his house upon the sand. And there is no third way. He who does the will of God-who lives from the Word of Christ is wise founded upon a rock, He who does not is a fool!

The calling is clear. God tells us to serve Him in obedience as His people. This is the love of God, "that we walk after His commandments." II Jn. 6. To serve the Lord in the decisions of life is therefore to choose God and His way as the only blessed way in life. To count then all other ways as foolishness.

And this is an urgent calling! Our text says seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon Him while He is near! And while this does not mean that God is hiding and we must look to find Him, it does emphasize the urgency of our calling. We are called to serve the Lord every moment of our lives. You cannot ride the fence! There is not a time in our youth when we can take the attitude that this is the time to sow our wild-oats, and later we

can settle down to spiritual things. The man who built greater barns for his great crop found out how quickly God can require one very soul! The signs, furthermore, beloved youth, speak of Christ's speedy return! Labor in the day ere the night cometh in which no man can work! Our battle of faith is now!

Oh! But Rev. Moore, how can we fight this battle and make these decisions! The decision that God's Word requires is the yes of obedience, but before the law and before the Word we stand condemned. We are to choose Christ and His ways, but we stand in enmity to God and His Son as we are by nature. We are to make the right decisions, but our whole life testifies against us. This is the testimony of the Word and the law! We are all gone astray. We are to live as strangers and pilgrims, but we have chosen the way of amalgamation. Even this past week we did not stand as strangers in this world, we failed when we entered the taverns of this world, when we picked up that trashy flesh magazine, when we entered the ungodly theater, when we watched the deceit based drama on the television...Oh! so often we stray. Beloved youth, you are right, in that naturally the right decisions in life are an impossibility. Modern theology and modern philosophy will try to lead you to believe differently—that you are the commanders of your own destiny. They will try to build up in you a confidence in self in this life. But such philosophy robs you of all comfort-for you know better!! We are sinners, our will and our way is evil naturally. I will not make the right decision if I must stand in my own strength.

Thus covenant youth, it is only in the way of grace that you shall make the right decisions of life. That way of grace demands that we fall down before God in ashes and dust. All pride we put aside!! And we humbly cry out, O! God, my God, have mercy upon me a sinner. To make the right decisions in life, God's child relies alone upon God as his faithful savior. And as God gives us grace to be humble, He also shall surely reveal the sure mercies of David. David confessed before God to have sinned against God, and that his trust must needs be alone rooted in the faithful covenant God's mercy, cf. Ps. 51:1-5. We also so trust, and our God's mercy shall indeed save such as He has ordained from eternity to life in Christ. And for them God sends His only begotten Son in the flesh. Christ comes as the first-born of many brethren. And that Christ brings the blessed and perfect obedient yes over against the no of our sin. He in faithfulness bears the eternal wrath due unto us. When we answered God's Word commanding obedience with the terrible no-"I will go to the world's entertainments", "I will enter the gutters of the world's morality and take birth control pills, and indulge in fornication," I will stray with every wind of doctrine," Jesus obediently answered yes by going the way of the accursed tree in our behalf.

That Christ has ascended to heaven and has poured forth His Spirit and His Word now also to empower you by His grace to answer the decisions aright. Thus His beloved children are led powerfully by Him to decide in the way pleasing to Him all things in life.

He gives to His own grace and He gives to them His sure word. How shall we make the right decisions in the way of His grace? We hear His Word when the Psalmist asks: "Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way?" and the answer, "by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Ps. 119:9. Christ gives you His Word and that Word is powerful to turn and to save. And by grace and in the covenant faithfulness of God, His children turn to the Scriptures as an infallible guide for all life and walk. Hence, in the way of that grace they turn to God alone in their decisions. You see, it is Christ in us that enables us to make the

right decisions in life. He says in John 15:16-19 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." It is Christ alone who strengthens and empowers us to serve God in all of our decisions.

As then by grace we trust in Christ and His Word in all our life, we know too that all things shall work together for good. And we know too that as by grace we stand as pilgrims, the house shall stand. And that because of God's faithfulness and the sure mercies of David, we shall be everlastingly kept unto the inheritance that is undefiled and that fadeth not away! May we glory in God alone, and may He grant us the grace to so serve Him in all of our decisions in life.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

THE BIBLE: HOW DOES IT TEACH?

by Rev. G. Lubbers

"Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently"
Psalm 119:4

The attentive reader will remember that this little series was triggered by a visit which your "pastor" received from four College students, who presented a series of questions concerning the "Bible." These questions were all somehow related to the leading question "Is The Bible Symbolical or Literal?" In this first question we are dealing with the diabolical attempt of the father of the lie to take the Scriptures from the believing church of God. We have answered that the teaching is very literal in some passages, and, in others, the teaching is not "symbolical" but that the Bible uses symbolism to make the very real truth of God to come before our believing conscience and binding upon our hearts. For the Bible is the inspired Word of God; it is Godbreathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

But evil men are rather persistent with their questions. That is not because they are so wise and understanding in the Scriptures, mighty in handling the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit, but because they are very adept sleight-of-hand artists, full of the winds of errors which would blow freely in the church of God. They would uproot the simple and godly faith of the redeemed in the veracity of the Scriptures! And so they have one more arrow, poison-tipped, in their sinful quiver. And they ask: How Does the Bible Teach? Now these College students were rather naive; they were not fully conscious of the implication of their question.

But, young reader, let me point out a few matters in this important question.

Do not forget that when unbelief asks this question it is because they know and do not understand, they hear and do not perceive. When the Bible speaks its clarion-note of crystal-clear truth, they do not have ears to hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. (Matt. 13:14,15) And when the truth is sounded and dinned into their ears by prophets, rising early and late, they stop their ears as does the adder. (Ps. 58:4) In Jesus' day these same unbelievers said to the greatest preacher ever, who spoke as one having authority and not as the Scribes, "tell us plainly if Thou be the Christ." (John 10:24) God told Moses to write all the "words" upon the stones "very plainly". This meant that the **explanation was in the very words and sentences**, and that it was not couched in the dark sayings of the false prophets who peep and mutter. (Deut. 27:8) But, in spite of this, unbelief complains that it is not clear how the Bible teaches. Unbelief does not have the key to understand the Bible!

It was Satan in Paradise who suggests to Eve that the Word of God concerning the way of life was not clearly stated by God. And that tactic of Satan is the one followed by those, who come as having serious and valid questions whether the Bible teaches clearly the way of salvation and the way of obedience. Such is the way of those who will not do the will of God. Jesus says: if ye would will to do the will of God, ye will acknowledge concerning my doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17) In Isaiah's day the evil priests and prophets are likened unto drunkards, spiritual drunkards, upon whom the Lord poured out the spirit of deep sleep. These were men to whom the Bible was a word which were sealed in a book. This sealed book is delivered to the one that is learned He is told to read it. But he says; I cannot read it, for it is sealed. (Isaiah 29:11) This learned man cannot understand the Scriptures when he does not have faith. Such are they who cannot read whether they be learned or unlearned. For the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit. They are foolishness to him. But he does not confess his sin, but ascribes the inability to understand to the lack of clarity of the Scriptures. These they say are not really perspicuous and transparent to the reader. The fault is with these Scriptures. The meaning is not given in the very words—clearly, plainly.

On the other hand, do not forget that the Bible is confessed to be very clear by the poet in Psalm 119:4. "Thou has commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently." It is of interest to notice that these **precepts** of the Lord are extolled by the poet and interpreted to us by other terms, each with a distinct and clear meaning. A little study will show that that precepts are called **law, testimonies, ways, commandments, judgments, statutes.** When the poet therefore confesses that the Lord has "commanded" the children of God to "keep" the precepts, we are not at a loss as to what this means. We need not raise up barriers to our understanding of the Bible and ask: how does the Bible teach? Perhaps the Bible does not mean just exactly that we shall **keep** the precepts by **walking** according to them, because somehow this may be a **symbolical** teaching and not a literal teaching!! Not at all!

The term "law" which is used twenty five times in Psalm 119 means: teaching, directive for life. It is instruction, it is doctrine. It comes with the basic and structural truths of faith and life, the full revelation of God's covenant relationship to His people, the relationship of His people to Him. To this law God gives His "testimonies". This term is used fifteen times in Psalm 119. It is the authoritative Word of the God of the Ark of the Testimony in Israel, speaking of redemption in blood. And this testimony speaks of the "ways" of the Lord in which we are to walk and keep His covenant. The term

"ways" is employed by the poet in Psalm 119 thirteen times. The term "commandments" speaks of the concrete, clear and authoritative will of the heavenly Father for his children. These are set down in God's statute books of the Throne, from whence God rules his people in grace. The term statute is used some twenty-one times by the poet in Psalm 119. And such are also God's judgments." This term is used some twenty times in Psalm 119. And this term indicates that which in God's statutes is just and good for us.

Now we stand with the poet-psalmist before the face of our Covenant God and Father, and we say as children of obedience: thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. **in the new obedience in faith in Christ**; that we keep the precepts of the Gospel promise. Yes, we are to do so diligently, that is, **very much**, with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. We are then not under law but under grace. We do not say: let us sin, that grace may abound, but we say: God forbid.

We know that the Bible teaches us by precepts and by his commandments to walk in His ways diligently. Yes, we will then study these Scripture as they are a light upon our pathway, and a lamp to our willing feet, as this shines more and more unto the perfect day.

How does the Bible teach? Study that Bible in your Bible Societies, Catechism Classes, in your private reading, with a believing heart. It is not closed to those who do not merely worship God with their lips, but who worship Him with true hearts which are sprinkled with blood and washed with pure water. It is profitable to make the man of God thoroughly furnished unto every good work!

George M. Ophoff (18)

by Prof. H. Hanko

We were talking in our last article about the work require of Rev. Ophoff during his years in the pastoral ministry in Hope and Byron Center. And we emphasized especially the labors of the Seminary. While we intend to speak of this a bit more in detail at some future date, this is probably as good a point as any to bring up another feature of that labor: the unique relationship which existed between Revs. Ophoff and Hoeksema.

I say this relationship was unique. This was true for various reasons. In the first place, these two men were so diverse in character that there was little possibility of a deep and personal friendship between them. Although it is difficult to say, it often seemed to me that the two would never have been able to get along together in any sense if they were not united in the cause of the truth. Rev. Hoeksema, to cite but one example, was very systematic in all his work. He was orderly in the work he did in his study. He was systematic in his preaching and writing. He was organized and orderly in his teaching. Rev. Ophoff was exactly the opposite. There was almost no order and system to anything which he did. His study looked as though a tornado had recently sped through it, and only he knew (most of the time) where any thing was. A man took his life in his hands if he dared to move anything about in that study. He had little order and system in his writing, teaching

or preaching—as his students and those who heard him preach will readily admit. I, when working for the Doorn Printing Company, often set his **Standard Bearer** articles on the linotype machine, and was hard pressed to make head or tail out of them when they came in on different sized sheets, with voluminous notes, marginal jottings, arrows, and references to different places in the manuscript. In a way this was indicative of vast differences of character between these two men.

Nevertheless, they labored together in harmony for almost forty years. Rev. Ophoff, when asked why he labored with Rev. Hoeksema, often said: "I saw in him a champion of the truth with bull-dog tenacity. There is principally no other choice than to support him." At the same time, Rev. Ophoff was his own man and did his own thinking. He was not what the Dutch would call a "ja-broeder". And there were many times when they disagreed on questions of exegesis, points of the truth, ways of doing things, and courses of action to follow. Rev. Hoeksema, on the other hand, though sometimes perhaps secretly exasperated with Rev. Ophoff, never showed anything but the greatest respect for his colleague. I and those who knew these men could not help but be impressed with the fact that there existed a mutual respect between these two men which was of the highest sort. They never called each other by anything but their last names. They never debated in a heated and angry fashion. They never forced their own positions on the other, but allowed the greatest latitude for disagreement. They could discuss the most abstruse theological points and disagree while discussing them, and enjoy every minute of it. But they were not "friends" in the sense of socializing together or spending time in each other's company for purely social reasons.

In a certain sense of the word, Rev. Ophoff stood in the shade of Rev. Hoeksema. For various reasons, in the public mind Rev. Hoeksema's work overshadowed that of Rev. Ophoff. It seems to me that this was due in large measure to the fact that Rev. Hoeksema had the greater gifts of organization and making popular the truth which these men set forth. But whatever may have been the reason, this fact never seemed to bother Rev. Ophoff in the least. He was never jealous, never dissatisfied with his lot, never concerned about the fact that his considerable achievements were often unrecognized and unnoticed. This was due to the fact that Rev. Ophoff was basically a meek man. There would be some who would quarrel with this. His writings were not always characterized by what one would call meekness. He possessed a fiery temper which sometimes broke out against his children in his home, sometimes against his parishioners in his congregation, and sometimes against his students in school. In fact, he fought all his life to control his temper, for he knew his weakness better than most. Yet I do not hesitate to say that he was meek in the good sense of the word. In my own acquaintance with Rev. Ophoff I was sometimes reminded of Scripture's description of Moses: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Num. 12:3. When Ophoff became angry it was often because he was driven to the very point of distraction by those who attacked him without mercy. When he wrote or spoke vehemently, it was never out of personal hatred or dislike, but always as a passionate defender of what he believed to be the truth. And if he was shown to be wrong, he never hesitated to apologize openly and publicly for his wrongdoing and for his inability to hold his temper. But his meekness came out especially in that he could stand comfortably in the shade of his colleague Rev. Hoeksema all his life and never once murmur or complain even though his own achieve-

ments were sometimes overlooked.

This was the man who labored after 1924 for some twenty years in the pastoral ministry and in the Seminary.

His labors in Byron Center were not, for the most part happy labors. Rev. Ophoff moved to Byron Center in 1930 and worked there as pastor for fifteen years. The fact that Rev. Ophoff's stay in Byron Center was such a lengthy one certainly testifies to the faithfulness of his ministry in that place. Nevertheless, there were troubles in that congregation, and these troubles eventually led to the dissolution of the Church. We do not intend to go into these troubles in any kind of detail in these articles. This is because of the fact that they were not doctrinal issues which divided the congregation, but personal issues which more or less revolved around the personality of several in the Church and the personality of their pastor. I have read all the material of this history as it came to Classis and finally to Synod. And the point that stikes me more than any other is the fact that it is difficult if not impossible for a man to do justice to teaching in the Seminary and caring for the needs of a congregation. This seems to be at the heart of the problem. Rev. Ophoff was far too busy. He simply could not do all the work that needed doing, and the result was that congregation in Byron Center suffered. There were people who were unhappy with the situation and who complained about it. It did not help any that Rev. Ophoff's rather natural short temper was made shorter by all the pressures of work, by the lack of sleep, by his own awareness that he was not doing justice to his work in the congregation, and by the fact that there were those who severly tried his soul. The trouble that came to the congregation was not surprising. It dragged on for many years, was finally resolved when Rev. Ophoff assumed full time labors in the Seminary in 1945, and came to an end when the faithful in Byron Cetner joined our other Churches and the congregation there dissolved.

It is worth our notice that Rev. Ophoff's strengths never really lay in the pastoral ministry. We have said before that this must not be construed as meaning that he could not preach. In his own inimitabel way, he was preacher of unusual ability. It must also be remembered that he never really had an opportunity to prove himself in the pastoral ministry, for almost from the beginning of it he was thrust into the double role of pastor and professor. Nevertheless, God did not give Rev. Ophoff the gifts to be a pastor in the strictest sense of the word. He was a teacher and a preacher—above all the former. There was the place where his gifts could be put to best use. And there he took up full time labor after 1945.

CRITIQUE

IN DEFENSE OF HISTORY

by Agatha Lubbers

An alarming but also understandable statement appears in an article entitled "Repeating History" (National Review, September 16, 1977.) "At every level of schooling in America, the study of history has been declining," says Russell Kirk.

For those of us who have been busy in a workshop sponsered by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools this is an alarming statement. We presume, however, that this does not characterize the present situation in the schools which have their membership in this Federation. If this were true, much of the work done by the workshop to produce a history manual is an enormous waste of time and effort. The purpose of this workshop has been to more adequately prepare Protestant Reformed teachers to teach history distinctively and also to produce a history manual that will assist other teachers in the teaching of history from the viewpoint of the Scriptures.

The decline in the study of history is a problem in many of the schools of America. The historical discipline has been abandoned so that courses in "special social problems" can be taught. Courses which are a conglomeration of history, geography, sociology, and anthropology have been taught for several years. The result of this procedure is that the student know nothing about history. He also does not understand geography, nor does he have a correct view of man and the social situation.

There are undoubtedly several reasons for this decline besides this interdisciplinary approach. Who wants Thucydides, Herodotus, Gibbon, or even the non-historians' historian, Durant, if you can have Barbara Walters or some of her counterparts. (For a detailed discussion of the interdisciplinary curriculum, recommend an article by Mrs. Lois Kregel in the September, 1977, issue of **Perspectives in Covenant Education.**)

National Review, reports that Professor Kirkendall's report, "The Status of History in the Schools" (**Journal of American History**, September, 1975), proved, if proof is necessary, that history is in crisis and that history's crisis is not merely a part of the large difficulties of academic life at the present time." Kirkerdall and his colleagues found that the notion that history "is not a practical subject" was one of the chief causes for declining interest in history.

This is typical of the American response. We live in an intensely materialistic time and American people are extremely pragmatic. People live for the moment and are concerned only for the here and the now. They do not think of this life as being temporary or a pilgrimage and that after this time they will be doomed to hell eternally or will live blissfully everlastingly in heaven. In early civilizations there were philosophers who at least formally and intellectually taught men to see this life as having no ultimate meaning. The followers of the Platonic view of reality maintained that reality does not lie in the present visible and touchable phenomena but reality is in that which is universal. They said the world of the ideas and the ideal world is best. This was the world of the thinker. For such men the study of history was significant. They did not want to make the same mistakes that men in the past had made. They wanted to learn from the errors of the past so that they might live better in the present and in the future.

Russell Kirk puts it this way: "...the modern unhistorical, or anti-historical, attitude is unique in this history of civilized man as a widespread social phenomenon. It seems to parallel the wide lack of interest in the question of the immortality of the soul. I suspect that people uninterested in the soul will forfeit their own souls; and that a people uninterested in history presently will cease to have a history, or to be a people."

Our Christian schools may not yield to the temptation to reject the study of history. As time goes on more and more history is made. More and more of the full counsel of God is revealed. We have a very unique view of history. We believe that all the events that occur do not

happen by chance. We believe in Providence. We believe in the "almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs, heaven, earth, and all creatures;..." (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 10.) All creatures includes man and history of man, which God controls. We share the view of the prophet Daniel when he said to reprobate Nebuchadnezzar. "...know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will..." (Daniel 4:17) We teach history, and we must continue to teach history, inspite of the influence of the world around us because, "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35)

This high motivation for the teaching of history the men of this world cannot share with the children of God. We do not merely teach history, therefore, so that we may understand the present. It certainly is possible to understand the present better by knowing the past. The present events are rooted in events that have happened in the past, and the present is the germ of the future, but we understand too that all things happen ultimately because we have a Father in heaven who through His Son, the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us, causes all things to happen. God said to wicked Cyrus of Persia, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me:...I am the Lord, and there is none else...I the Lord do all these things." (Isaiah 45:5-7)

T.S. Eliot remarked in a memorable lecture, according to Russell Kirk, that "we have been condemning the rising generation to a new form of provincialism: the provincialism of time, imprisoning people in their own little present moment." It is possible to understand a comment like this from the poet Eliot if we know that he wrote at a time when life seemed to be for him a wasteland of meaninglessness. Eliot knew, however, that aside from Revelation, i.e. the Scriptures, our only source of human knowledge is history.

We must not be lured into condemning our youth to a new form of provincialism. Instead we must lift the horizons so that the Covenant youth see all things that happen in this world in the past, in the present and in the future from the viewpoint and from the perspective of the Word of God. God in His Word declares to us all things from the beginning to the end of the world.

The philosopher Hegel wrote, "We learn from history that we learn nothing from history." History does not teach the natural man to fear God and turn from his wicked ways. Although history does not correct the deeds of men, because men have been doing the same evil works and have become progressively evil, history does teach and inform God's people. We read God's Word concerning the things that must happen. We read God's Word concerning the running of the Red Horse, the Black Horse, and the Pale Horse, (wars, famines, social struggles, death) and the victorious running of the White Horse. In this way we understand the events of history. This is a miracle of God's grace and sovereign power. "We know God by two means: first by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe...Secondly, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His Holy and divine Word that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation. (Article II, Belgic Confession) As reformed and regenerated people we are informed.

Let that which is happening in the schools of America not happen to ours. We Reformed Christians have established schools so that the seed of the Covenant will be thoroughly prepared to understand the world in which they live and to

live then as Christians in this world. That means that they must understand the past in the light of the Word of God. God is the author of history, and He gives us the "Key of Knowledge" so that we through His Spirit may know the things that are necessary for us to know.

Russell Kirk reports that at St. Louis late last year a representative 122 high school students were tested on their knowledge of basic American history, government, and world affairs. "The test, a sound if simple one, was prepared by the Gallup organization and the National Municipal League. The passing score was supposed to be seventy out of one hundred questions. In fact, the average grade was 49.15. Only 22 students passed the St. Louis test; one hundred failed. Most of these students were graduating seniors."

This may indicate that for at least 70 average seniors from those tested for whom high school is terminal, or for those who go on to college, the schools had not provided sufficient background in historical studies so that they could pass a simple test.

Russell Kirk writes: "Consider the **New York Times** History Knowledge and Attitude Survey, conducted among 1,856 freshmen at 194 college campuses last year. Forty-four questions were asked. The average student in the sample answered correctly only 21 of these questions; the highest score by any student was 41. History department chairmen and social science coordinators in six cities were asked to evaluate this test. They estimated that a typical college-bound high school senior ought to be able to get a score of 70 percent. Actually only one college freshman in 12 scored that high."

It ought to be obvious that something is wrong. Historical studies are neglected. Knowledge of events in the past and perhaps in the present is not required. Apart from the possible unreliability of the test, we ought to conclude that the schools do not consider the study of the history of the world to be significant. That should not be our attitude, however. We have a precious heritage. We have a calling and responsibility to transmit that heritage to our children through the study of history. They must see that all things happen because of the will of God, and they must know the events that occur in this creation. They need facts to substantiate their beliefs, which are based on the interpretation of all events by the Word of God.

For this reason a history manual has been produced (September, 1977) that will assist the teacher in the Reformed Christian schools to teach the history of the world from the Creation of the World to the Fall of Rome. For this reason a group of dedicated teachers will continue to work on materials so that teacher can distinctively and properly teach the history of the Middle Age from the perspective of the Scriptures.

History? Yes! It belongs to God. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:1-2)

THE PSALTER

No. 402

His statutes and His judgements
He makes His people know;
To them as to no other
His grace He loves to show;
For matchless grace and mercy
Your grateful praises bring;
To Him give thanks forever,
And Hallelujah sing.

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

TELEVISION 1984

Rev. Truthgood had just preached on Paul's words in I Cor. 6:9. He explained the text decorously, presented it comprehensively and uncompromisingly and applied it inspiringly and relevantly. (But what text could be more relevant?) Everyone, including the elders, for they had suggested he preach on the passage, thought it a timely and much needed sermon. Except for Mrs. Highclunk. She accused the pastor of bringing dirty language into the pulpit. Oh? How was that? the pastor inquired. In your discourse you used the word "homosexual." He had inoffensively called a spade a spade and got called down for it. If he had conformed to the bent of his critic, he would have done no more than to quote the King James Version of the Bible. But he knew it his duty to begin with the beautiful and classical KJV, then to go on to exegete the original languages in which God's Word first had been written and on which the English Bible is based.

For personal as well as pulpit reading, and general church and Bible study use, the pastor consistently utilized the King James Version, not one of the modern paraphrases. To this Mr. Thunderfizz objected with his claim that no one anymore had a grasp of the King James vocabulary, and that modern versions were much clearer. He felt especially aided and abetted when both Mr. T. E. V. Nebi and Mr. Murky sided him in this. Elder Vandenboek replied by reminding them of the pastor's frequent remark in his preaching and teaching to the effect that no one is going to be harmed or hindered by the King James Version, and as for clarity, is itself marked by perspicuity.

For example, he advised, check out the New Berkeley Version in Modern English. There in Joshua 6, Rahab is three times called "Rahab the innkeeper" (vv. 17, 22, 25), while even LB has "prostitute." Aside from the fact that "innkeeper" is by no means current modern English, the word there in the Hebrew (ha-zonah) by no stretch of the imagination can be so rendered. There is no ground at all for it. The word in the original, a little stronger that the Authorized Version, is actually **whore**. This, then is the biblical designation, "Rahab, the whore," which is not to be understood as an opprobrious term, but a gracious emphasis on the sovereign mercy of God,

revealing, not what Rahab was then, but what she had been. Just as **Simon the leper** meant one who had been a leper, now one cleansed, and **Matthew the publican** means one no more so, but who had been of that despised and corrupt profession.

We would not care to have a practicing whore, a female "tramp," exerting her seductions (which are deathly, Prov. 7) right in our home, would we? But that is exactly what happens by means of TV. Telecasters tell us that Billy Graham has said that Houston (pronounced **Yew-stun**) is much more wicked than Hollywood. This has significance if it is understood that Hollywood makes the men of Sodom look like babes in the woods. But now in our modern day, Hollywood is not just far off there, obscured by arid mountains and enve loped in smog and maze. No, now the USA and nearly every home it it is almost entirely "wall-to-wall Hollywood." That because of the incessant use of TV. Even the news is getting so bad, gotten up and produced as it is, as to be unfit for family viewing. It is now X-rated news. For the news broadcasts are full of the lewd and lurid activities of whores, the "gay" cummunity, all kinds of sexual perverts, as well as the usual adulterers and fornicators. So called documentaries run series on the "gay" crowd, the lunch-hour whores, the massage parlors, and the homosexuals in government and on the police forces. Some time ago, Billy Graham's wife, Ruth, was said to have remarked in connection with these evils in our land that if God did not punish our nation He would have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, which, of course, God will never have to do, for God is not mocked.

Years ago, an organization known as S.I.E.C.U.S. said it would cram its pornographic filth ("sex education") down our throats. Now it is doing as it had boasted. Even the TV commercials are full of shocking and nauseating vileness. For example, a ladies' undergarment commercial is crudely risque, with female ogling, male wolf whistles, suggestive words and revealing actions by a female (exploited? or exploiting?) demonstrator. The frazzled word "sexy" is used everywhere in TV advertising, even in selling cleansing creams and toothpaste. A perfume commercial stars a cocktail bar-fly. You have to spew this sort of thing out of your mouth! Who needs it? There are wine and toothpaste commercials with pimping and accosting terminology. See what our TV-children are being exposed to? Feminine hygiene products are distastefully imposed on the viewer, some raucously shouted like a fish-wife by "liberated women" from gigantic billboards, or (as they brainwash us with their unisex philosophy) they pander their products from in front of a football team's locker room. A recent TV commercial monitored was one salaciously besmirched with various forms of incest. A late evening soap opera had male actors who portrayed hero and anti-hero characters who were bisexual perverts and promiscuous aberrant fornicators. A notorious "show" continually sprays the public with its prurient sludge of transvestitism.

In all this horrifying evil, women debase and degrade themselves so as to command not the least respect. Men on TV are dolts, buffoons, dancing dogs and staggering bags of garbage which no real man wants anything to do with. The "best of TV commercials waste and tax the mind with "pure silly rot." The news may show a negro M.D. abortionist (murderer!), guilty of hundreds of baby-murders, shedding tears because a verbal attack on him in court had racial overtones! Then this sort of thing is re-run **ad nauseam**. The news media puts police, law and order, FBI, CIA, and the armed forces in as bad a light as possible. This alone makes the media suspect. Members of these civil agencies are arrested, fined,

and jailed for using wire-tapping methods of crime-detection. Synopses and "shorts" of dramas portray exorcism, demon possession, Satan-worship, reincarnation, clairvoyancy, necromancy, necrophilia, cannibalism and necrophagia.

Saturday TV is utilized by empty-headed mothers who brainwash their children with wicked cartoons which mock and distort the Bible history. Samson is played off as a wild, raving maniac who liked to destroy things and kill people. Abraham, Isaac and Sarah form a noisy Jewish family who yell at each other, tear hair in grief and complain about what sort of fix god will get them into next. The little two year old is placed before the Saturday TV and left alone like a heathen devotee before an idol of Buddha. There it is programmed with religious regularity in semi-hard Rock. Why do such mothers wonder why their children are high strung, hyper-active or just plain viciously destructive?

TV is this bad, and everyone knows it. It is probably worse at this moment, for it's always later than you think. What will TV be like in 1984? Will it be as George Orwell fictionalized it—two-way TV with home viewing only when and what the state will allow, but with the State always watching every move and sound you make in your own house, even to the secrecy of your bedroom? But then Orwell's **1984** would be a moral improvement over TV 1977. As it is, improvement is not in sight. The whole rotten business is hurtling madly down deeper into the pit of the abyss to unimaginable, horrifying depths. As to allowable bad language on TV, first there was damn, then hell was added, now the taking of Christ's name in vain is very frequent, next, if not already, the most base and offensive obscenities. The ungodly world turns the living or family room into a latrine.

People are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Every evil perversion and deviation is made to look normal and socially acceptable. Few are shocked at any depth of vileness anymore. There is no knowledge of God in the land. People swear, lie, kill, steal, commit adultery, plunge to the depths of Romans 1, create violence everywhere with murder after murder. This is why production and employment fail, living things are poisoned and die; animals, birds and fish disappear, and why God will destroy the carnal Israel (Hosea 4:1-6). Flee the present wrath (Rom. 1:18) and the wrath to come. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (II Cor. 7:1), wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS

Mr & Mrs. Pete Vander Schaaf of Faith Church were blessed by the birth of Deliah Jane on July 24.

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Brands of Edgerton were blessed by the birth of Daryl Jon on July 26.

Mr. & Mrs. Ken (Karen) Kuiper and Mr. & Mrs. D. Wedekind of Southwest were blessed by the birth of daughters.

Mr. & Mrs. Allen Driesen of Hull were blessed by the birth of Rebecca Ann.

Mr. & Mrs. Arvin Bleyenberg of Edgerton were blessed by the birth of Vonda Lynn.

Mr. & Mrs. Harley Buys of Edgerton were blessed by the birth of Michael Lee.

Mr. & Mrs. Dann Heyboer of Faith Church were blessed by the birth of Tom Charles on Sept. 10.

Mr. & Mrs. Ken Koole of Hope Church were blessed by the birth of Justin Michael on Sept. 10.

Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Regnerus of South Holland were blessed by the birth of Ryan James.

Mr. & Mrs. Ron Hanko of Hope Church were blessed by the birth of Ryan Herman on Sept. 20.

Mr. & Mrs. Ed Lotterman of Southwest were blessed by the birth of Heidi Joy on Sept. 26.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Hope Church has sent dismissal papers to Mrs. Edward Holleman at her request.

Hope Church has sent Mr. & Mrs. Terry Kooienga's papers to Faith Church.

First Church has sent Daniel Koole's membership papers to his home and has transferred Mr. Dave Kregel's to Hope Church.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Kuiper and one baptized daughter from Hull.

First Church has received the membership papers of Mrs. Bob Looyenga (nee Kathy Knoper) from Fair Haven Reformed Church.

First Church in Edmonton has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Henry Nieuwenkamp and two baptized children, Albert and Korine.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Tim Orme and two baptized children from Faith Church and has sent the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. David Poortenga and two baptized children to them at their request.

Hope Church has received the membership papers of Cari Sugg from Trinity Church in Houston.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Gerrit Tibboel and their baptized son Mark from Calvary Independent Church.

Southwest has sent dismissal papers to Mr. & Mrs. H. Vanden Berg at their request.

Southwest has received the membership papers of Mrs. Ray Van Til (nee Barb Ondersma) from Hudsonville Church.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. James Wiersma, their two confessing children, David and Kathleen and one baptized child, Joel from Calvary Independent Church.

CONFESSION OF FAITH:

Mrs. Bill Clason made public confession of her faith in South Holland on August 28.

Randy Groenendyk made public confession of his faith in Southwest on Sept. 18.

Sharon Haak and Louis Regnerus made public confession of their faith in South Holland on Oct. 2.

MARRIAGES:

Keith Bruinsma and Wanda Kuiper were united in marriage in South Holland on Sept. 9.

Charles Zandstra and Carla Doorn were united in marriage on Sept. 16 at Calvary Christian Reformed Church in South Holland.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Rev. Moore gave a lecture in Pella on Sept. 6. He spoke on "The New Hermeneutics".

Seminary Convocation was held in Southwest Church on September 7. Prof. Decker spoke on "Buying the Truth".

Miss Marjorie Martin from the Ryde Reformed Presbyterian Church of Sydney, Australia gave a slide presentation and short talk on "Life in Australia from a Reformed Christian's Viewpoint" in Hudsonville Church on Sept. 23.

On Sept. 25, our church in Edmonton celebrated their second anniversary by getting together at the olkert Tolsma home for singing and fellowship.

A singspiration was held on Oct. 9 at Southwest Church. Its theme was "God our Strength and Rock."