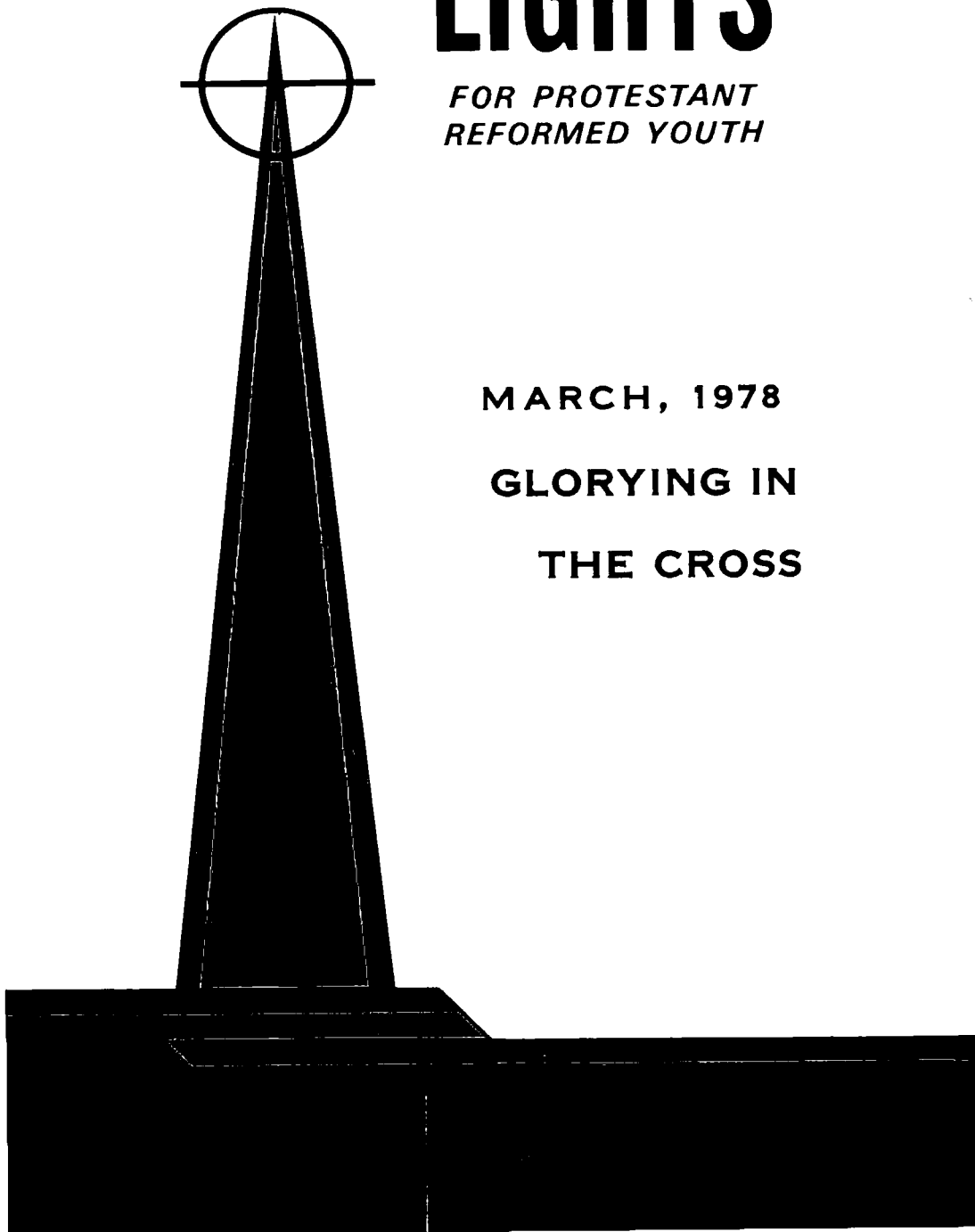
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



MARCH, 1978

GLORYING IN THE CROSS

VOLUME XXXVII MARCH, 1978 NUMBER 1

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Barry Gritters - President; John Van Baren - Vice-President; Deb Miedema - Secretary; Carolyn Van Baren - Assistant Secretary; Ron Koole - Treasurer; Greg Van Overloop - Assistant Treasurer; Beth Bos - Librarian; Duane Alsum Youth Coordinator

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF
Dave Moelker - Editor-in-Chief; John M. Faber, Harry Langerak, Gerald Kuiper - Associate Editors; Gerrit Boverhof - Finance Manager; Ellen Hanko, Nancy Van Dyke, Grace Faber, Joan Schut, Sandy Kamps

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
David Harbach, Rev. R. Harbach, Rev. M. Kamps, Agatha Lubbers, Rev. G. Lubbers, Jessica Poortinga, Ben Wiggers

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 Comments - Dave Moelker 1
EDITORIAL - Look, Listen, and Stop - Gerald Kuiper 1
CRITIQUE - Pray For Each Other - Ben Wigger 3
Glorying in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ - Rev. Den Hartog 4
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY - Watchfulness unto Prayer - Rev. G. Lubbers 7
Open Letter From New Zealand - Rev. Van Overloop 10
Leaving Father and Mother (4) - Single Persons Who do Not Marry - Rev. C. Hanko 13
George M. Ophoff (22) - As Old Testament History Scholar - Prof. H. Hanko 17
CURRENT EVENTS & COMMENTS - Can We Give Up? - David Harbach 20
Beacon Lights Index - Volume 36 22
News From, For and About Our Churches - Cindi Dykstra 25

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In this issue, we welcome a new contributor to the Critque Department of *Beacon Lights*. Ben Wigger is a member of our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. He will be alternating with Miss Agatha Lubbers. The first of his articles appears in this issue.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Rev. Van Overloop has taken time in his many labors in Christchurch, New Zealand to write an open letter to you in this issue. He tells you a little about the country, its people, climate, economy, and what to do when you can't find a little thing like the steering wheel on a car. Watch up coming *Standard Bearer* articles for more from Rev. Van Overloop.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Stop.... at the editorial. Look....at what it has to say. Listen.... with the sanctified heart of the child of God. (Good after recess subject? It certainly is!)

Editorial

LOOK, LISTEN, AND STOP

by Gerald Kuiper

Young People, take a walk with me, please-a walk through our church and high school parking lots, as they are filled with the various modes of transportation before Young People's Society and church itself, or the daily schedule of classes, or a walk through your own private rooms where homework is done and hobbies are worked on, or a walk to the local pizza shop where all the guys and gals gather after the basketball game. Notice with me the tapes and records lying on the front seats, or on the bed, bookcase, desk, or in the playing machines of the eating places. Now notice the titles on the various tapes and records as they lie strewn around in careless abandon. There's one of the "Beatles", another by "Chicago", one by John Denver, and yes, one by "Kiss", too.

Now listen with me as many of these cars leave the parking lots to drive along to their individual destinations. With those Jensen speakers in the back, or those grotesque homemade boxes sticking up on the rear deck, the private auto

becomes an exclusive concert hall; exclusive because all else can be tuned out except the sounds of the music from the tape deck. Even as the homework (catechism, Y.P.S. studying) is being done, "outside" noises can be shut out easily with the use of the head phones. Exclusive concerts-"off limits" to all who are concerned with what sort of things young people listen to. Exclusive concerts because it is a way of not really letting others know exactly what is being heard.

And just what is being listened to? As we listen closely to the lyrics, we discover that those singers really tell it like it is! They know the true meaning of love. Love is never saying you're sorry. Love is meeting a stranger in the night. Love is that head-long tumble of passionate embraces, and that desire for someone elses wife or husband. A sweet angelic voice sings out for months on end in #1 spot, "How can it be wrong when it feels so right?". And what about the establishment? Here too, they tell it like it is. Our parents hang on to us too rigidly. Our church life holds us back from experiencing life in all its fulness. Our materialistic world exploits us.

And what are we to do? The lyrics tell us to rebel. We are to seek out those who really understand our problems, even though it means throwing away all we have learned. Listen again to the effeminate, painted guys sing of the joys of drugs. Forget the misery of today, they tell us, and turn to true joy.

What has happened to the truth that God has prepared a mate for each of us to marry in the Lord? What is put across about finding our friends of like background, experience and faith? The music of today has that thrown so far out, it'll never come back, and it laughs in our faces with mocking words against these principles. What about the commands to obey for God's sake, when every other song urges us on to rebellion? If ever any of these things were true, they aren't any more. If ever Christ was the answer, He isn't any more today.

What is happening to us-those who listen openly to, shake with, and sing along with this modern melee? What is hapening when parents confront us with a stand against the powers of hell as they are seen and heard in the contemporary music? Look and listen to the majority of the tapes and records that are played. **Really** look and listen! I think one would be absolutely amazed if he took a moment to **really** hear the words. And it is so easy to just sing along with those words and ideas, building them up inside us as insidiously as a disease spreading unnoticed for a while. Young people, how can God be pleased with WLAV? How can He be pleased with the majority of those $8 tapes in our collections? How can we possibly imitate Christ in our joining in the spirit of the "rock groups" we follow? Only a fool would imagine that can be done.

After really looking, really listening, it is high time we stop! If the listening is just because others do, stop! If it's because that sort of thing is actually craved and looked for, stop!! It is time to get rid of the addiction to today's music. And in stopping, then look for a use for those tape decks in which God's name is **not** blasphemed, and the breaking of His law is **not** advocated. Certainly the filling of that void is harder than the actual throwing away of those tapes. But it can be done! Perhaps in the next few months more can be written concerning this question.

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

by Ben Wigger

Ask yourself this question, Do you think that it is important to have other people, other young people, praying for you when you have a problem? Or is it enough for you just to pray by yourselves?

Of course, there may be burdens and problems that cannot be shared with very many people because they might be misunderstood. In such a situation, we know that God hears our prayers, and knows our hearts.

There are also some prayers that we can make individually. For example, when sin needs to be confessed in our lives, we alone can make our prayer of confession and repentence to God. When King David committed grievous sin, he later wrote "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgivest the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32:5

David had sinned and only David could repent.

On the other hand, there may be many occasions when we should seek the prayers of other Christians. It is very plain from Scripture that this is not only proper, but is a duty of ours. Paul asked the Ephesian Christians to pray both for him and for other believers. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me." Ephesians 6:18-19.

James also wrote, "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

Prayer is an awesome responsibility for each Christian. And there always seem to be so many things that get into our hearts to crowd out meaningful prayer. If we are to have a spiritually worthwhile experience in our prayers, we must, by God's grace overcome our sin.

Instead of our confession for sins committed before the face of God, we so often turn our backs in rebellion and refuse to seek forgiveness.

It is also so very easy to let criticism get the better of our opinion of a fellow young person, rather than take the needs of that believer to the face of God in prayer. We often consider ourselves better and draw our satisfaction from that.

We do realize that it is only by grace in our lives that we can overcome our shortcomings in prayer. We are commanded to take everything to God in prayer. Not just our own needs, but also

the needs of the brother or sister in the Lord. Our prayers are so often full of our own needs. The one characteristic which would probably best describe most of our prayers would be self-centered.

This is the point that we so often overlook. It is our duty to pray for others. By doing this, we are exercising a privilege of ours, that is, to enjoy the closeness of the fellowship of the saints in prayer for each other.

If you are at all sensitive to the people around you, then you are also aware somewhat of their needs, both spiritual and physical.

No matter where you spend most of your time, at school, or at work, your neighbor has needs. Put yourself in the person's place for a moment.

Try to imagine what he or she is going through, what problems they are having to face. And remember, there are no small problems when they are your problems.

Now wouldn't it make you feel a close awareness of the fellowship of the saints if you knew that there were other young people praying for you? What a blessing and comfort to know that there are those who do just that. They care enough to pray for us.

Do you care enough for those around you to include them and their needs before the throne of God in prayer?

Glorying in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ

by Rev. Den Hartog

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians 6:14

On Good Friday, we commemorate again in a special way the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed it is fitting that Christian young people should set aside a day for such special celebration of this great wonder of salvation. The cross of Christ is the source and foundation of all our salvation. On the cross, our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself in perfect love that we might have life everlasting. There are many perspectives from which we can meditate upon the wonder of the cross. The **Beacon Lights** staff asked me to consider in my article a positive attitude toward the cross of Christ Jesus, the truth that we celebrate on Good Friday. After giving this some thought, I remembered the beautiful verse from Galations 6. In this verse, the apostle Paul speaks of the cross as the sole object of His glorying.

If you would search the epistles of Paul, you would find some of the most beautiful verses in the whole Bible about the cross of Christ Jesus. In this same epistle to the Galations, we find in chapter 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." In another letter, I Corinthians 2:2, Paul writes, "For I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

It is a confession of faith that Paul makes in the passage which we quoted

above, a personal confession of faith. It is a resolve for all of his life. And indeed it is a firm resolve. God forbid, he says, that I should glory in anything else save in the cross of Christ Jesus.

Men love to boast in themselves. This is their sinful corrupt nature. They love to pretend that they are something when they are nothing. They take great pleasure in being highly regarded among men. Therefore, they exalt their own virtues and greatness before men. They love to speak of their own lineage and high breeding, their own distinctions that make them greater than other men. Ultimately, man glories in himself, boasts in his own worth and merit even with God and even over against and above God. It was the desire to be like God that was the awful sin of our first parents in Paradise.

In Galations 6, Paul speaks against all such boasters in themselves. There were those in the church of Galatia who boasted particularly in the law of the Old Testament. They boasted in that they were circumcised and sought even to force the Gentiles in the church to submit to circumcision. They boasted that their circumcision alone placed them in a position of favor with God. They boasted that their own observance of the law merited righteousness for them with God. Many are there in our day who are such boasters, who boast in their own righteousness and their own good works, their own station and position before God because of who and what they themselves are. These boast in order that they may have glory of men.

Paul severely condemns all such boasting in self. In another place. Philippians 3, Paul says that he above all had reason to boast in the flesh if indeed there was to be such boasting. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews: as touching the law a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Yet in considering all of these, he says they are but dung in comparison to the excellencies of Christ.

As for Paul, he will glory only in the cross. Indeed, the cross excludes all room for boasting in self. The cross is a devasting condemnation of man the sinner before God. It is a demonstration that my sins were so great in the sight of God, that it was necessary for God to send His only beloved Son into human flesh to be taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain. My sins were so great that there was no other atonement that could be made before a just and holy God than the sacrifice of His own Son.The cross speaks very loudly of the awfulness of my sin and leaves me absolutely any ground for boasting in the sight of God. The natural man hates that and therefore he hates the cross. But the Christian can only glory in the cross. He knows that to glory in himself is to deny the glory of the cross. He knows that he can and may do nothing else than glory in the cross.

To glory in the cross is, of course, absurd for the natural man. To the natural man the cross is contemptable, it is a reproach. It is a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek, as Paul states in the first chapter of I Corinthians. It is because the world so hated the Christ, the Son of God, that they crucified Him. The cross was in fact a revelation of the utter contempt and hatred that the world has for the Christ. The pious self-righteous Jew and all self-righteous men stumble at the cross because they see no need at all for a crucified savior and redeemed. How then can the crown possible be the reason for glorying?

Yet as for me, Paul says, I will glory alone in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. I will glory in nothing else but the cross alone. And that is the confession of the Christian. That must be your and my confession. Notice how beautifully Paul uses here the full name of our Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. I glory in the cross

exactly because that cross is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, He to whom I belong from eternity, who is my Lord. He who is the revelation of Jehovah's salvation for me, He who is God ordained and annointed to be my chief prophet, only high priest and eternal king. It is through the cross that Jesus becomes my Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore I glory in that cross.

But what exactly does it mean to glory in the cross? To glory in the cross involves a deep spiritual understanding of the great glory of the cross. It involves an understanding that I am nothing in myself, that all that I am and all that I shall be is because of the cross. It means that I know that my position before God is determined only on the basis of the cross. It means that I look for and expect all of the blessings of salvation and life everlasting from my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ only because of His cross. To glory in the cross means that I exalt the cross before God in prayer and worship in thanksgiving to Him. To glory in the cross means that I daily kneel before it in confession of my sins in the faith that the cross has made atonement for them all. To glory in the cross means that I rejoice in it, that I find all my comfort and hope of salvation in it. To glory in the cross means that I boast about the wonderful accomplishments of the cross for me to my fellow saints. It means that I exalt the cross in all of my confession and life in the world as the foundation and source of my salvation.

Why is it that I glory in the cross alone? Many indeed are the reasons. The cross is the revelation of God's righteousness and holiness. In the cross, I see how wonderfully righteous and holy my God is. That He so hated my sin, that rather than let it go unpunished, He punished it in His holy wrath on the cross.

The cross reveals unto me the wonderful love of my God and Father and my Lord Jesus Christ. Though I was a sinner and worthy only of wrath, and the enemy of God, yet God sent His only beloved Son. He gave for me the greatest of all imaginable gifts. So much did He love me that He gave His own beloved Son even to the awful and shameful death of the cross for me. And my Lord Jesus was willing to die that dreadful accursed death of the cross because He loved me even to the end. What amazing and wonderful love!

Why is it that I glory in the cross alone? Because the cross is all my righteousness before God. I was a damn-worthy sinner having no righteousness before God. I was an enemy of the God of heaven and earth, even my Creator. I was worthy even of eternal wrath before the Holy and Just God. My Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross for me to make atonement for all my sin. On that cross, my Lord Jesus bore away all the curse and wrath of God against me. Through the cross, He made me perfectly righteous in the sight of God. Because of the cross, I am received as the friend of God into His wonderful favor and love. The cross has made me worthy of perfect and everlasting blessings from God.

The cross is the power of my new life. I was dead in trespasses and sins, bound for eternal death. Though I was alive, I was in the midst of death, for I was separated from God and to live apart from God is death. Really, I had no life at all in me though I knew it not. My God in His wonderful grace united me unto my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And, therefore, I was with Jesus in that cross. My old sinful nature was put to death on that cross. I died with Christ Jesus on that cross. In that death, I was delivered from the bondage of corruption. I was crucified with Him that I might live with Him. And now I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me because of that wonderful cross. Daily now I have life and strength because Jesus gives me that life and strength which He merited on the cross through His Spirit.

Paul says in the last part of this verse 16 of Galations 6, that through the cross I was crucified unto the world and the world unto me. Through the power of the cross, I am separated from the sinful wicked world in which I was born, which is bound for destruction. I am separated from it by crucifixion, that is, by such a separation there is enmity placed between me and the world. The world no longer has dominion over me and I have the victory over the world.

That cross is not only my righteousness and salvation. It is the righteousness and salvation of all the company of His saints. The cross is the power and wisdom of God in the preaching, whereby all those whom God has chosen as His glorious church will be saved.

What a glorious cross! How much more could be said of the glories of the cross. Shall I then glory in myself or in any other creature? "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

WATCHFULNESS UNTO PRAYER

"Remember the wife of Lot" Luke 17:32

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Genesis 19:26

We must not only believe that the Bible is the Word of God. We must not merely be good orthodox Christians, sound in faith and doctrine; but we must be alert sobor, vigilant, watchful Christians, who constantly live in the earnest expectation

of the coming of the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven! We must be those of whom Paul says "love his great and magnificent appearing". II Timothy 4:8.

The Lord Jesus is coming again, my young reader. Did not the angels, standing with the eleven apostles on Mount Olive say, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have see him go into heaven"? (Acts 1:11) Yes, heaven must receive until the time of the restitution of all things. (Acts 3:21) But, when the elect have been gathered, then shall Jesus come, "and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen! (Rev. 1:7)

Behold, He cometh!

Are we looking for this blessed return with uplifted heads in earnest expectation: are you looking for the exceeding great glory which shall be revealed in us"? (Romans 8:18)

Remember the wife of Lot.....

This is not a word of mere man, but it is the warning note of Jesus to His disciples and to the church of the entire New Testament. It is a warning to you and me! Do not think for a moment that we must not take this warning seriously. Jesus spoke most solemnly here. He is giving minute instructions what we must do and not do in "that day". What day is this? It will be the day when the Son of Man shall reveal Himself in all His glory and shall come with all His saints from heaven to take His beloved people from the four corners of the earth, and bring them with Him into the air, so that thus we may ever by with the Lord.

Yes, that is the final wonder of God's grace for our perfect salvation in body and soul. Then will be the wonder not only of the glorious and blessed resurrection of the saints, but then also shall those who are living on earth be changed as in the twinkling of an eye. (I Cor. 15:52; I Thes. 4:16, 17)

Concerning this, we really do not need so much instruction. This we all readily accept as a doctrine concerning the last things. We learn about it in "Theology" and we call it Eschatology. And the Bible teaches us many wonderful and comforting things about the end (consummation) of the ages and the coming (Parousia) of Christ. Jesus elaborated wonderfully about this great wonder to come, and about the entire history of the world from Pentecost till Christ's return, in the wonderful instruction to His disciples as given us in Matthew 24! We do well to read this chapter often, carefully and prayerfully. Do not forget the latter, for that is the attitude of living hope which is ours through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (I Peter 1:3) Now all these things we know, do we not?

But Jesus raises a warning finger to us, His church.

Be ye watchful unto prayer!

Remember the wife of Lot.....

Lot's wife is seemingly only mentioned in the Bible for our warning. God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plane. Yes, there were terrible men in Sodom. They were what is now called "homosexuals". They were men who fall under the wrath of God, and are delivered to "uncleanness through the lusts of their heart, to dishonor their own body between themselves", "men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (fitting). (Rom. 1:24, 27) Such were these men of Sodom. But that was not their only sin, these men of such an affluent society in the valley, which was like the garden of God. These men were, one and all, very wicked: "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor". (Ezekiel 16:49)

Here is a description of our land and times. Here is a description of the world in which we live, and of which the Bible says: love not the world: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride (boastful living) of life.

It is hard to leave it all behind when we once have accumulated riches. It is not possible to have our eye upon heaven when we seek things on the earth.

Remember the wife of Lot....

She looked back. She hankered after her filthy possessions in sin-ridden Sodom. There were not ten righteous men there, were there? Only Lot, who is pulled as a brand out of the fire, after he had vexed his righteous soul no end, (II Peter 2:5, 7-9) is spared. And while God is sparing her righteous husband, Lot's wife does not share in that deliverance. The same fire which destroyed Sodom also destroyed Lot's wife. She could not leave her worldly things. She was not watchful unto prayer. Her heart was in Sodom. She loved this world which passes away and the lusts thereof....(I John 2:15-17)

Jesus applies this lesson of Lot's wife by saying, "In that day, he that shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let likewise not turn back."

Remember Lot's wife....

No, we do not stand looking up into heaven. We must marry, have children, teach them in the fear of the Lord, and till our soil, plant our gardens, and reap our crops. But we do this as pilgrims and strangers, who seek the better country. As such strangers, who are tied with a thousand ties to this earth, we need the serious reminder that we seek the things above, be heavenly minded, in our homes, our churches and in our schools. We need to take the warning to heart of the Lord Jesus. Hold that thou hast that no man take thy crown! He that shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

The world has a motto: let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. It is a bad communication which corrupts good manners, good Christian aspirations and living in Christian hope. This saying quoted by Paul in I Corinthians 15:32, we can read in Isaiah 22:13. It is a fearful indictment against the sinful church of the Old Testament. These men and women had been called to repentance: to weeping, to baldness, to mourning, to girding with sackcloth; and behold, instead there is joy and gladness, slaying oxen, killing sheep, eating flesh, drinking wine. And the motto? It is: let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die!

Let us, young people, be watchful unto prayer!

Remember the wife of Lot.....

Take your Bible seriously, and not the least the solemn admonitions and warnings.

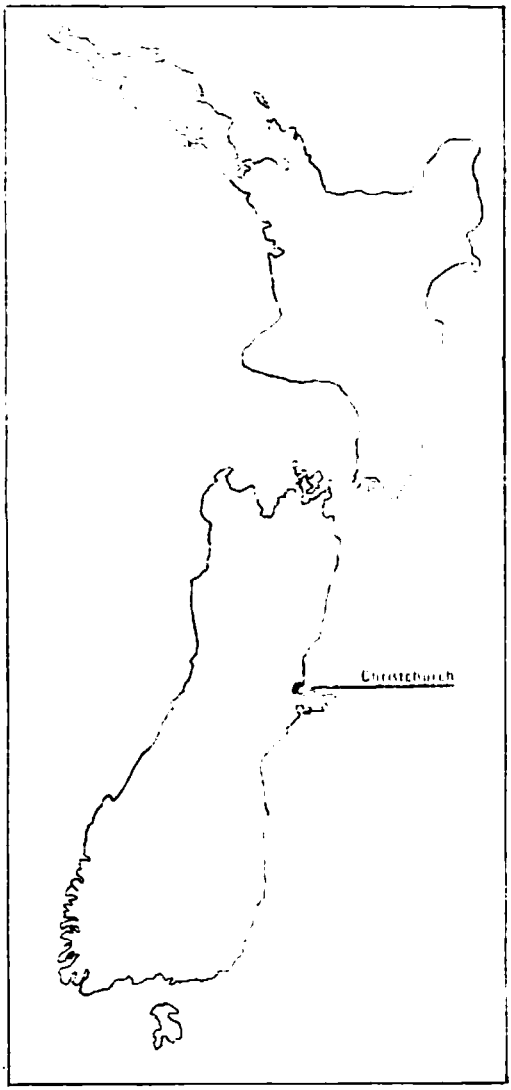
Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that ye may approve the good, the acceptable, the perfect will of God.

Remember.....

How shall the young direct
their way?
What light shall be
their perfect guide?

Thy word O Lord, will
safely lead,
If in its wisdom
they confide.
The Psalter No. 311

Open Letter From New Zealand



Jan. 31, 1978

Dear Young People,

Greetings to you from New Zealand. These greetings come to you in the name of our Father Who is in heaven.

We have been in New Zealand for almost six weeks now, although it does not seem as if that much time has gone by already. Much of our time thus far has been taken up with settling into the New Zealand culture and the Orthodox Presbyterian congregation in Christchurch.

The Lord willing, I hope to keep up this correspondence with you by also writing in the **Standard Bearer**. Thus, I hope to be able to tell you a little of what it is like in New Zealand and what it is like in the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand.

If you have any questions concerning what I write, please feel free to write me, and I will try my best to answer you. You may also write, of course, even if you do not have any questions.

In this first letter to you, I want to tell you a little about New Zealand. There are two reasons for my doing this.

I know that you are more interested in my work in the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches. So am I. But, you see, I have only been here among these Churches for a little over a month. That is not a very long time to get to know a church well. When one of our ministers goes to a new charge in a different congregation, he may have learned a lot about that congregation in a month's time; but it would have been very hard for him to get a complete picture of that congregation in that short a time. I have learned much in the time I have been here, but I want to get a more complete picture of the situation before I will feel capable of telling you what it is like here. So, first, we turn to the country. This gives me more time to learn the ecclesiastical situation.

The second reason why I want to tell you of the country first is because it is important to know about the land and

customs in which one is working. It might not seem so important. It is though. This is because the members of the church are also people of this country. When a minister preaches, he must know his people in order that the preaching might fill the needs of his portion of the flock of Christ. It is true that sin is universal. And the same sins are performed in New Zealand and in Jamaica as are committed in the congregation of Hope. But still the people are different, and these differences you must know in order to preach and be a good pastor to them. I believe that this is what the apostle Paul meant in I Corinthians 9:19-22. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under that law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,(that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

That is why it is important to know about New Zealand culture and about New Zealanders in general.

One of the big things that strikes you very quickly after getting off the airplane is that New Zealand is influenced by England. You can see this in some of the architecture, in the large amount of Anglican and Presbyterian churches, and in some of the words which are used. New Zealand is a member of the Commonwealth, having as their figurehead Queen Elizabeth II. But New Zealand governs itself with its own Parliament and Prime Minister. Also eighty percent of the people in New Zealand can trace their family lines back to England. The vast majority of the people in the Orthodox Presbyterian congregation in Christchurch are of third or fourth generation extraction from England.

There are some other differences which strike you as you leave the airport. The average size car is smaller than that in the States. The average size here is the Ford Cortina or the Plymouth Valient. Also you see many bikes and motorcycles on the streets. Many women and businessmen ride a bike to work or to the store.

As in Jamaica, they drive on the left side of the road and the driver sits on the right side of the car. When I first started to drive here, I really had to keep this in mind at all times. When you turn out of a driveway or onto a different road, you have to be very careful that you are on the right, I mean correct, side of the road. The most difficult time to remember this is when you back out of a driveway onto the road. By now it is becoming a habit for me, but at first I had someone ridiing with me. It was a good thing too.

Also, I have had some embarrassing moments when I have gone to the wrong side of the car. Suddenly realizing that I am on the wrong side, I quickly shut the door and as I walk around the car to the correct (left) side, I look around to see if anyone saw my mistake.

As far as dress is concerned, the New Zealand way of life does not place as much emphasis on fashion and hair as do Americans. Dresses are much more common. Many men, whether working manually or in a business, will wear what they call walking shorts and knee socks. This we are told, is a Kiwi (nickname for a New Zealander) tradition.

The metric system is in full use here. You buy meat by the kilogram (their equivalent to hamburg is 95 cents a kilogram). Milk comes by the milliliter (600 ml is 9 cents). You drive by kilometers (average speed in the city is 50 km).

There is no central heating, no

insulation in the homes and the large windows they have are only a single pane in width. Because the city of Christchurch (population of almost 300,000) is on the Pacific Ocean, the people say that they do not have a climate, just weather. They mean that the weather is so variable it is difficult to say what its climate might be. Further inland and on the west coast there is a climate. To show you how variable the weather is, let me give you the high temperatures for the last two days. The high for Sunday was 31C. and the high for Monday was 21C. This is in the middle of summer. The primary sports in New Zealand are cricket, rugby, and football. By football they mean soccer. When they refer to the kind of football we know of in the States, they speak of "gridiron".

Today is the first day of school for our children. Yesterday we obtained the last articles of their uniforms. Yes, uniforms. All school children, whether public or private (there are no parental schools here), wear uniforms.

Although there are differences, there are also many similarities. The most important of these is language. The only thing about that is that they have an accent (and they say we do).

But the greatest similarity is the unity of faith and belief that we have found in the small congregation in which we are laboring. But of them we will tell you more in our next letter.

Often we wish that you could be here to see and experience what we see and are experiencing. But while we are apart, remember us even as we remember all of you. Pray for us as we labor in the Gospel.

In His service,
Rev. R. Van Overloop

FUTURE
PROTESTANT REFORMED TEACHERS AND MINISTERS

The Scholarship Fund Committee is again offering scholarships this year. An essay of 300 words written on the topic "Reflecting back — Why was your covenant education an asset to you?" is required along with a record of high school and/or college grades, and a recommendation from your consistory. The scholarships are applicable to tuition only. If you are interested in an application contact:

Deb Miedema
2850 36th Street S. W.
Wyoming, Michigan 49509
Phone: 538-4835

Applications must be in by May 1, 1978

Leaving Father and Mother (4)

by Rev. C. Hanko

Single Persons Who do Not Marry

In our discussion, we may not ignore those who never leave Father and Mother to enter the marriage state. Therefore, we devote this article to those who remain single all their lives, not because they need commiseration, but because I am convinced that they also have a special place and calling in God's church.

As we may expect, Scripture gives us guidelines in regard to single persons. Paul speaks rather extensively about them in the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. Evidently, the church at Corinth had written Paul about certain problems in the church. Among these was the question whether it was proper that single people remained in the single state. Paul proceeds to answer the question, immediately impressing upon the congregation at Corinth that there is nothing wrong with a person remaining single. He even declares that it is good, morally excellent for a man not to touch a woman, that is, to remain unmarried. Although it is the general rule in the world, and also in the church, that a man or woman marries, this does not mean that it is obligatory. In verse seven of this chapter, Paul states that he would that all men were even as himself, that is, unmarried. He repeats in verse twenty-six that it is good for a man (or woman) to remain single, and he adds in verse twenty-seven, "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife." At the conclusion of the chapter, he mentions that a woman is happier if she does not marry.

At first glance, these passages from 1 Corinthians seven seem to be in conflict with the rest of the Scriptures. Paul states:

"It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

Genesis 2:18 teaches us:

"It is not good that man should be alone."

The contradiction is, however, more imaginary than real. If Paul were to advocate celebacy, or to teach that a single life is holier or more pleasing to God than married life, he would be in conflict with the Scriptures and with his own writings. The apostle always maintains that marriage is honorable to all and the bed undefiled. (As taught in Hebrews 13:4.) Paul presents the marriage of believers as a picture of Christ and His Church. (Eph. 5:32) But Paul does say that there are definite advantages for those who do not enter the marriage state. On the one hand, married persons are liable to involve themselves so much in their families, that the kingdom of heaven does not receive its due. Paul also saw days of persecution approaching for the church at Corinth, so that those who were not bound by marriage should not involve themselves lest the burden of persecution be made heavier by the duties of a family. The apostle speaks of being happier in the single state, primarily with single-minded dedication toward the kingdom of heaven in mind, not denigrating the role of marriage as a covenant responsibility.

Scripture considers the role of the single person in the church unique and vital. Let us consider the instruction Jesus gives us in Matthew 19:12, where He says, "For there are some eunuchs, which were born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

A eunuch, according to the definition in the dictionary, is a castrated male. This may be taken literally, referring to someone who was emasculated by some master or lord, or someone who was self-mutilated. Kings in the old dispensation would sometimes make their servants eunuchs to prevent any problems with their sexual drive. This was especially true in the case of officers in the army or with chamberlains who worked in the harems. The word eunuch, therefore, can refer to a servant or slave in the general sense of the word, or can also refer to a chamberlain. The law of Moses forbad anyone who was thus mutilated to serve in the temple (Leviticus 21:16ff), or even to attend the public worship (Deuteronomy 23:1). The very idea of such emasculation was completely abominable to God and to true Israel. In Jesus' day, eunuchs were still known, even as we read of the Ethiopian eunuch in the Book of Acts. Figuratively, there are those who have such complete mastery of their sexual desires that they are not interested in marriage for themselves.

Jesus mentions three possibilities. There are eunuchs who are born with a natural restraint to sexual impulses. There are also those eunuchs who are forced to remain single by the attendant circumstances of life, or who choose to remain as single persons for their own personal reasons. Finally, there are eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. I want to say a few words about each of these.

We are all aware of the fact that there are people who, because of some physical handicap, or for some other reason simply cannot marry. They may be born with the natural gift of continence, the sexual urge in them being never very strong. Evidently God does not intend that these should marry. They certainly should not marry for ulterior motives.

In a woman, the ulterior desire to marry may be triggered by a desire to have a home of her own, to have someone support her, to have a male companion, to name but a few. If, for example, a woman hates housework, hates to be bothered with children hanging on her skirts, hates the cares and worries of a family, but on the other hand, likes to have her own career, likes to live her own life: that woman should not marry under any circumstance. She should make up her mind that she was brought into this world, not to marry, but to use her gifts and talents in some other way.

This holds true for a man also. In a man, the ulterior desire to marry may be triggered by the need to have a home, to fit in with his friends, to be cared for by a woman. Yet he, too, may be totally unsuited for the rigors of marriage and family. A man may not be suited for the nurture of children, may not be able to become family-oriented. He should give prayerful consideration to the use of his talents in another way, and should not marry simply to follow the crowd.

Those who marry for ulterior motives, and not because they are suited for marriage, can only made life miserable for themselves, their mates, and for the children they may receive.

Jesus speaks of a second group, who either through attendant circumstances, or by their own choice, do not marry. There was a time when anything related to sex was considered filthy, whether among the single or the married. People thought that the only reason that the Bible gives for marriage is to prevent fornication. (see, for example, I Corinthians 7:2) They never

read that marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled. (Hebrews 13:4) Nor did they understand that Scripture speaks of a **holy** marriage state. They spoke behind their hands about married people, hid themselves with shame when they were pregnant, and often with a false sense of decency would avoid discussing sex openly with anyone, unless they did so in a contemptuous manner. These people, if they did marry, often made their marriages most unhappy because of their perverted view of the holy institution which God Himself introduced into our lives already in the state of righteousness in paradise.

Then there are young men, and likely also young women, who for their own selfish reasons either never marry or postpone marriage as long as possible. Often these single persons have a good job, they make good money, and they enjoy spending their time and money on sports and pleasures for their selfish interests. They can afford to buy themselves a nice car, go on vacations, indulge in all kinds of luxuries, and live a care-free life of self-indulgence. They look with a bit of disgust upon their former friends who are struggling to support a family, walk the floor at night with a baby on their arm, and appear to be most miserable with a ball and chain that keeps them home. These single folk should remember that they are wasting important years of their lives, stealing the time and talents God has entrusted to them for their selfish ambitions, while they should be devoting themselves as good stewards in God's House to the things of God's kingdom. Too often they forget, or ignore, their covenant obligation. Unless they are celebate to the glory of God, to better function for His kingdom, they are covenantly bound to marry and give birth to the Church of God. Too often this covenant duty is forgotten, not prayerfully considered, buried under selfish desires. Let these young men and women bear in mind that in the great day of days they must give account of what they have done with these important years of their lives, when they should have been preparing themselves for more useful duties in God's church.

Young people who put off marriage because they are enjoying themselves too much in their care-free way of life are also a bad example for younger brothers and sisters, as well as for younger members of the church. You can see young boys looking green-eyed with envy and admiration at the brand-new sports car or the new boat of the single man. You can recognize the yearning of young girls to first have their fling before they settle down to the serious business of speaking their marriage vows.

Worse, some of these young men, instead of living like bachelors, like to take out girls without becoming too "serious" with them. It seems to appeal to them to have a different girl for every occasion. No doubt, this often becomes more than just an evening out. These young men may even expect from each girl a certain amount of necking, whispers of love, or more, while real caring for the girl is farthest from their minds.

There are girls also, who merely use men to flatter their pride and to satisfy their carnal desires. These people are definitely hurting themselves. Peter speaks of carnal lusts, "which war against the soul". (I Peter 2:11) These carnal lusts are like a well-trained army that makes its assault upon the soul, depriving us of our spiritual sensitivity, forcing our conscience into silence, drawing us ever farther into the snares and allurements of sin. These young people are also playing havoc with their innocent victims, who may take them seriously, not realizing that they are pawns, to be thrown away like an old shoe when the fun is over. Many a heart has been broken, many a life irrepairably damaged by the flighty fancy of these selfishly thoughtless young people. Re-

member, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are bound before God to care for and nurture one another, both spiritually and physically. When we treat one another in such a careless way, we are an abomination to the Lord.

A word of warning fits in here quite nicely. There are some boys, but there are particularly girls, who are so haunted by the specter of remaining single, that they will throw themselves at most anyone who is available. There are people who make no secret that they rue the day that they plunged into marriage is so permanent. A life time is a long time to grieve with a wrong mate. Married life at best has its problems. Our Marriage Form begins with the statement that "married people are generally, by reason of sin, subject to many troubles and afflictions." That is so much worse in a marriage where the partners are not suitably mated. What fools people can be to deliberately rush into a lifelong misery, and that to avoid being unwanted, or thought undesirable. I don't know why, but in all the years of my ministry I have seen attractive, intelligent girls (and boys) passed by within the church only because the grass looked greener on the other side. As some of the young men once said to me: "We can't marry the girls in our own church, we know them too well. They're like sisters." Yet some of them did, and were happy as a result of it. The point I want to make is this: Young men, young women, don't ruin your lives by plunging into an unhappy marriage. Especially, do not marry outside of the church. If you begin marriage as truly one in the Lord, any difficulties ahead are manageable. Do not risk the joy, the serenity of the Church of God merely for a band of gold. There are worse things than remaining single all your life.

There is still a third group, of which Christ says, that they have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. This should not be taken in the literal sense, as if Jesus were to advocate self-mutilation. There is a more excellent way for the sincere child of God to suppress and gain mastery over his sexual desires. All may not be able to attain this; let them marry. But it is possible for men and women to control their natural instincts as if they were sexless. The victory they attain by their self-restraint is far more valuable to them than a negative, feelingless situation created by emasculation. Jesus speaks of making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. They become so absorbed in their work that they neither have the time nor the desire to give themselves to marriage. Jesus Himself was a perfect picture of becoming so engrossed in the work entrusted to Him, that in the closing hours of His life He could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4) Elijah in the old dispensation and Paul in the new are examples of complete devotion to the things of God's kingdom, so that these men had no desire to marry. In I Corinthians 9:5, Paul states that he had as much right to have a wife as any of the other apostles, yet that evidently was not his desire.

This peculiar position of remaining single for the sake of the kingdom of heaven may not have been a matter of choice with some men and women. Many single persons, particularly women, simply did not have the opportunity to get married when they were younger. Even though they would gladly have had a boy friend, for some reason or another this privilege never came to them. They may even have prayed that the Lord would lead them to a life mate of His choosing, only to discover that the Lord had not planned a mate for them. Rather than becoming bitter, or sour on life, these young women sought to use their gifts and talents in the church. We are thankful for them, especially for those who have become

devoted teachers of our covenant children. They will undoubtedly realize, especially when they stand before the great white throne, that they served God's cause and kingdom better this way than in any other..

Often the men and women bachelors feel left out. They are too old to associate with the young people of the church. They cannot join the Mr. and Mrs. societies. They are not invited to affairs involving married couples. In fact, they often feel themselves looked down on by the married people, as if they belong to the unwanted. This is not right, and is an injustice that the married do well avoid. We must all see the providence of God in keeping some people single. God has His own purpose with each of us. He knows how we can best use our life, our health and strength, our gifts and talents to His glory. For each one of us is God's workmanship, God's carefully formed masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus unto those good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. By all means let all of our single saints be thankful to the Lord for Hs benefits, living a full and rich life in the fear of the Lord.

George M. Ophoff (22)

by Prof. H. Hanko

As Old Testament History Scholar

It is somewhat difficult to describe the writings of Rev. Ophoff in the field of Old Testament History. This difficulty arises from the fact that his writings are voluminous. He compiled massive syllabi for use in the school and he wrote literally hundreds and hundreds of pages for the **Standard Bearer** in this field. It was truly his specialty.

There were few men who knew the Old Testament Scriptures as Rev. Ophoff did. And there were few who could make these Scriptures live the way he did. This was true in his writing as well as in his preaching. Those who remember hearing him preach will surely recall that he preached from the Old Testament most of the time, and that these sermons on the Old Testament were preached as few men could preach. He had a knack for bringing his audience into the history with him so that one felt he was actually present at the events which were described. All of this could characterize his work only because the Old Testament was his one great love.

Yet he preached in such a way that one heard the gospel as it is in these Old Testament Scriptures. He did not busy himself with story-telling. He was not content with pious moral homiles. He preached the gospel.

So extensive are his writings, that one could pick almost at random to find a sample of his labors in this area. I have chosen a section from his Old Testament history notes which does not deal directly with the subject of Old Testament History. It deals rather with Ophoff's views on inspiration. It is rather interesting, because Ophoff faced the same questions then already which are currently being faced in the Church. Ophoff is dealing with various views of the inspiration of the Scriptures--especially the Old Testament. In the section from which we quote excerpts, he is dealing with what he calls

"a would-be Reformed position". He writes:

"What the men of this position hold is plain from the notes of Dr. Albertus Pieters of Hope College, Holland, Michigan. The doctor writes, 'The position taken by the author of these notes (the author is Dr. Pieters himself) is that the Bible is the word of God in all its parts--the position usually designated in theology as belief in the **plenary inspiration** of Holy Scripture.

'He believes also that inspiration involves the **trustworthiness** of the Old Testament in its statements of facts of whatever kind, as well as in all its teachings with regard to religious truth and duty.

'It is to be carefully noted however that the **trustworthiness** of the Old Testament is not the same as inerrancy in every detail. (Notice here how Pieters makes the same distinctions which De Koster, the editor of **The Banner**, made in his controversy with Lindsell, H.H.) When it comes to statistics, dates, and similar matters, there are certainly errors in the Bible as we have it. It is possible that many, perhaps most, of these errors are errors in transmission, and did not exist in the original documents; but no one can be sure that this is true of them all. If the inerrancy of the original documents is asserted, this is not on the basis of evidence, but merely as an inference from the doctrine of verbal inspiration. This is not the same as plenary inspiration. The author of these notes holds to plenary inspiration, but not to verbal inspiration.... A document can be a trustworthy source of information even though minor errors exist in it; and therefore it is not inconsistent with the position here assumed to believe that some minor errors may have existed in the original documents' So far Dr. Pieters.

...."Our position is that inspiration was certainly plenary in the sense of verbal. What is meant thereby is that the men of God through whom God gave us His Word wrote under the infallible guidance of His Spirit so that their productions are in truth God's very own infallible Scriptures and thus incapable of error as to the form of all their words without a single exception, incapable of error therefore also in such matters as numbers and statistics.

"The position of Dr. Pieters raises unanswerable questions. Why should God have withdrawn His infallible guidance respecting statements specifying times (dates)? Did the greatness of God prevent Him from troubling Himself with matters so trivial? But the greatness of God does not stand in His way of numbering the hairs of each man's head. Besides, the dates of Scripture are not of trivial importance.... Further, if the organs of revelation could err in their statements specifying time, and thus could err as historians, why could they not have erred as teachers of religion and ethics? Why limit the fallibility of the Scriptures, of the autographs, to statements respecting time and to the genealogical tables of the Old Testament? What is there to prevent one from going all the way? Nothing at all. For the proposition that the autographs are infallible in their religious and ethical teachings is purely an article of faith. Likewise the proposition that the autographs are infallible regarding their statements of historical facts, in particular as to their statements specifying time. Hence, to reject the infallibility of the autographs regarding their historical date, is to forsake the position of faith. Now if the student of Holy Writ

forsakes the position of faith with respect to the historical data of the Scriptures, what is there to prevent him from forsaking the position of faith with respect to the whole of the Scriptures? Nothing at all.

"Dr. Pieter's position is not that of faith. ....The doctor actually advocates...applying to the historical data of the Scriptures the touchstone of archeological findings to determine whether or not that data can be accepted as fact. What is there to prevent him from submitting the religious and ethical teachings of the Scriptures to the authority of the teachings, let us say, of Confucius, for the same purpose, or to the authority of his, Dr. Pieter's own reason? Nothing at all. To be consistent, the doctor should do one of two: he should either accept verbal as well as plenary inspiration or reject both. And any man who can occupy his position, will eventually do the latter, if he has not already done so in his heart....

"Our Bible, then, is a competently correct reproduction of the autographs. It makes therefore all the world of difference whether the autographs are the infallible or fallible Word of God. If the latter, our Bible is nothing more or less than a competently exact reproduction of fallible autographs and in this case we know not whether it can be said of a single phrase in our Bible whether it is the very infallible Word of God. But if the autographs are infallible, our Bible is the competently exact reproduction of infallible writings and thus the very infallible Word of God.

"The question may be asked whether there is on hand external historical evidence--evidence not contained in the Scriptures--to prove that the autographs were and that our Bible is the infallible Word of God. The question of course must be answered in the negative. The proposition that the autographs were and that the Bible is the infallible Word of God as to the form of all their words, is an article of faith. The proposition can be proved only by the testimony of the Scriptures themselves. But this testimony has worth only for God's believing people. God's people believe, are firmly convinced, that the Bible is God's infallible Word, only because God tells them so in their hearts by His Spirit testifying with their spirits through the Word, thus only because God causes the light of His Word to shine in their hearts unto the salvation of their souls. The believers need no other testimony. They rejoice at the findings of the archaeologist corroborating the statements of fact contained in the Scriptures. But their faith does not lean on these findings; and therefore should these findings clash with the Scriptures, they cleave to the Scriptures and they say with Paul, 'Let all men be liars and let God be true.'

"It is also said by men who want to be known as Reformed that the testimony of the Holy Spirit gives certainty only regarding the religious and ethical teachings of the Bible and in particular of the Old Testament Scriptures but not regarding their statements of historical facts, such as the deliverance of the people of Israel from their Egyptian bondage. Thus the truth or falsity of the historical data of the Bible must be determined by external evidence. Such was the position of Dr. Janssen of Calvin Seminary. The doctor, sad to say, has many followers in the Christian Reformed communion of Churches. The position is thoroughly modernistic, liberal. As has already been said, the religious and ethical teaching of

the Bible is so intimately bound up with the history that it narrates, that the testimony of the Spirit necessarily involves both. The religious and ethical teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures lie firmly embedded in Israel's history. The history of Israel is symbol, type, and prophecy. As such it signifies and pre-indicates the great truths of the religion of the Scriptures."

After asking the question whether or not the presence of seeming contradictions in Scripture militate against its infallibility Rev. Ophoff quotes Dr. Vos:

"The contradictions in themselves do not prove anything as long as:

a) They can be harmonized

b) The differences explained on other grounds.

"And it can be confidently claimed that all of them have met with satisfactory solution long ago."

Rev. Ophoff himself goes on to say:

..."Why then is the position taken that (the autographs leave errors?) Because it cannot be proved that in a positive way that the autographs were flawless? If God causes His Word to dwell richly in our Hearts, we do not demand such proof. We then have all the evidence we need and desire. And that evidence is our faith. Then we refrain from saying that the mistakes in the transcriptions may also have existed in the autographs. What causes otherwise believing men to forsake the right position is their fear of the ridicule and contempt of higher critics, of the renowned scholars among the unbelieving students of Scripture. But there is nothing as unscholarly, truly unscholarly as the scholarship of the unbelieving man."

And this was written over thirty years ago!

Current Events & Comments

CAN WE GIVE UP?

David Harbach

When this article is written, Christmas will have been six days ago and tomorrow will be New Years day. To tell you the truth, I would rather write about the birth of Jesus Christ than about some other topic, because now my thoughts are centered on the incarnation of our Lord. In March, D.V., you will be reading this article and next month will be Easter at which time we will center our thoughts on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must decide upon a topic which falls in between Christmas and Easter. Taking you into consideration, nothing could be more appropriate than writing something that as young people we face daily, so that no matter what day of the year it is, we will be confronted with the task to center our thoughts on a particular truth. The truth is that we are to give ourselves to serve God with that zeal as we are bound. This truth becomes increasingly more important to us after we have made public confession of faith, but is also important to us in our younger years.

To begin, the word zeal has many meanings. Basically, the word zeal means

an eager interest and enthusiasm: ardent endeavor or devotion. A related word to the meaning of zeal would be the word resolution or resolute. Ardent endeavor means an intensely enthusiastic attempt or effort to accomplish something. Devotion means to dedicate, or give up or apply oneself or one's time to some purpose or person. Resolution means the act or process of having or showing a fixed, firm purpose; determined; unwavering. Zeal means therefore an intensely enthusiastic effort and a fixed, firm purpose to give ourselves to serve God. Simply put it means to keep the faith, to be faithful, to be obedient unto our calling.

Today, we can have a zeal for many purposes. In fact, we show more enthusiasm and eagerness for purposes other than giving ourselves to serve God. We serve our golden calves more often than we serve our faithful covenant God, at times. We even try to serve both, thinking in our minds that we can do that foolish action. Who can fool the Almighty God? God, who knows the depths of our hearts, the thoughts and intensions of our mind, sees us as open books before His searching eyes. Sometimes, we are even overzealous for those other purposes. We lose sight of our real purpose in what we perform by becoming guided by too much zeal for these other purposes. We become blinded by the lie. Whether suddenly or gradually, we are overzealous for those other purposes when we fail to have fixed before our eyes the purpose of giving ourselves to serve God. Indeed, we must be zealous to strive with the weakness of our faith and the evil lusts of our flesh. Can we give up and say that it is no use anyway because I am still going to be zealous for those other purposes? No, not if you believe in the Word of God; not if you accept as truth the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism; not if you accept as truth the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordrecht. All of these clearly show to us our purpose here on earth. That purpose is to serve God alone, for He is God.

There is a beautiful truth to be seen. We know that our only purpose is to give ourselves to serve God with a zeal to bring glory to His name. In the first place, that means we are of God's kingdom. Therefore, as members of His kingdom we are called by God to serve Him in some capacity which He has determined for us. No matter what that capacity is, our Lord Jesus uses us to fight Satan. That's right, to fight Satan! I quote from H. H. Hoeksema's book, **Behold He Cometh**, page 422, "We, as the covenant people, as being of God's party in the midst of the world, fight the battle of Jehovah against the old serpent, the devil. There is magic joy in the very idea that the Lord will use us as instruments in His hand, nay, as His living people, to fight against the old dragon." And no matter what that capacity is, we are bound to have a zeal in the quickening of the new man. That is as the Catechism puts it in Lord's Day 33, Question and Answer 90, "It is a sincere joy of the heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works."

But let us not forget the zeal in the mortification of the old man. Again I quote from the Catechism, Lords Day 33, Question and Answer 89, "It is a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them." We can see that our sincere sorrow of heart is the fruit of the work of God in our heart. He it is who causes us to mortify the flesh more and more by the spirit of prayer. He it is who enables us to press forward to the goal of perfection, till being at length delivered from this body of death, we are brought to reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.

Therefore, we serve God with a zeal when we fight Satan, quicken the new man, and mortify the old man. Then we

serve God according to His purpose and not ours. In fact, we actually hate to serve our golden calves when by God's grace we sincerely repent of our sins. Then all those other purposes fade away and we begin to see clearly before our mind and in our heart that our covenant God gives us a zeal for the cause of His kingdom. Onward to battle, onward Christian soldiers!

Beacon Lights Index - Volume 36

March 1977 - February 1978

Beth Bos - Federation Board Librarian

Article	Author	No.	Page
—A—			
America - A Christian Nation?	D.D.	4	11
An "E" Pistle (ED)	J.M.F.	10	1
An "E" Pistle to my Grandchildren (ED)	J.M.F.	7	1
—B—			
Beauty of Creation, The	R.B.W.	2	2
Beauty of The Snow, The	M.H.J.K.	10	10
Bible: How does it Teach?, The (PS)	R.G.L.	7	11
Bible: Is it the Inspired Word of God?, The (PS)	R.G.L.	5	7
Bible: That Unique Book Called "Ruth", The (PS)	R.G.L.	9	4
Bigfoot (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	8	11
Blessed River, The (PS)	R.G.L.	2	14
—C—			
Called Into the Fellowship of the Son of God (PS)	R.M.K.	3	8
Called to the Ministry	R.J.K.	9	15
Can You Prove It? (CEC)	J.P.	4	8
Christ Died for the Ungodly (PS)	R.M.K.	6	9
Christian Education	L.P., D.H., D.V.B., N.L.,	3	3
Christian Stewardship (CO)	R.M.J.	5	18
Christmas	S.V.B.	8	2
Christmas Brought Division (PS)	R.M.K.	8	27
Clown and Calvinists (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	9	19
Communications	P.K.	3	6
Country School, The	J.D.S.J.	8	19
—D—			
Decline of Excellence-A Proneness Toward Mediocrity (Crit)	A.L.	10	11
Dinah's Debut (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	10	17
Do You Know Your Bible?	C.V.B.	6	3
—F—			
Familial-y Pistle to my Grandchildren, A (ED)	J.M.F.	1	1
Family, The	B.V.D.T.	1	3
Four Horsemen, The	N.V.M.	2	8
—G—			
Gift Giving In the Light of the Gift	R.W.B.	8	7
Giving Thanks Always For All Things	J.K.J.	7	2

God With Us (ED)	G.K.	8	1
Good News For Modern Man (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	6	12
—H—			
Holding Fast Our Heritage In the Use of the Summer Months	R.R.M.	4	9
Honor the Weaker Vessel	E.K.	3	14
Hope Christian School in Redlands	D.V.U.	4	6
How Much He Gives	S.B.	7	6
—I—			
Incomprehensible God, The	M.J.M.	10	13
In Defence of History (Crit)	A.L.	7	15
Is the Bible Symbolical or Literal (PS)	R.G.L.	4	13
—L—			
Law of God, The (CEC)	D.M.H.	7	7
Leaving Father and Mother (1)	R.C.H.	8	5
Leaving Father and Mother-Seeking a Life Mate (2)	R.C.H.	9	8
Leaving Father and Mother-Courtship (3)	R.C.H.	10	20
Living Bible, The (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	4	15
Living Bible, The Continued (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	5	12
Love of God, The (CEC)	D.M.H.	5	15
—M—			
Making Confession of Faith	P.H.	2	9
Money	A.U.	4	13
—N—			
News From Hull's Young People's Society	A.U.	4	18
New Song, A (CEC)	D.H.	9	14
Note From Houston, A	E.S.	1	15
—O—			
Ophoff, Rev. George Series			
Article 14	P.H.H.	1	3
Article 15	P.H.H.	2	11
Article 16	P.H.H.	3	11
Article 17	P.H.H.	5	3
Article 18	P.H.H.	7	13
Article 19-His Work As Professor	P.H.H.	8	21
Article 20	P.H.H.	9	17
Article 21	P.H.H.	10	8
Our Membership in the Church (PS)	R.M.K.	1	13
—P—			
Peace on Earth	S.P.	8	24
Pentecost (ED)	H.L.	3	1
Personal Witness in Our Daily Lives	R.R.M.	1	11
Peter's Mathematical Error	P.K.	8	9
Praise Ye the Lord	M.R.	1	10
Prayer (CO)	R.C.H.	5	16
—R—			
"Reading Maketh A Full Man..." (Crit)	A.L.	3	18
Redeeming the Time	G.K.	2	1
Reformation...1977	D.M.	6	1
Revised Standard Version	R.R.C.H.	1	7
Rich Fool, The (ED)	H.L.	9	1
RSV Contradicts the Truth (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	2	5

—S—

Search For Life, The (CEC)	D.M.H.	3	16
Season-y Pistle To My Grandchildren, A (ED)	J.M.F.	4	1
Seeking the Lord in Our Daily Walk (CS)	R.B.W.	8	14
Seeking the Lord in Our Spiritual Activities	R.M.A.	6	4
Seeking the Lord-In Dating (CO)	P.H.H.	5	21
Seek Ye the Lord In Your Decisions in Life (CS)	R.R.G.M.	7	8
Spiritual Body Building	L.D.	9	6
Springtime	S.V.B.	2	4
Standing Alone (ED)	G.K.	5	2
Stop and Smell the Roses on the Way (CEC)	J.P.	6	3

—T—

Teaching	N.D.	4	7
Television 1984 (TVE)	R.R.C.H.	7	19
Test Time Before God	M.H.B.	10	3
Thoughts on Family Visitation	T.F.	9	22

—W—

Why I Became a Minister	R.C.H.	10	15
Why Should I?	C.D.	5	23
With a Strong Hand	A.R.	9	11
Wonder of it All, The	S.B.	3	2

—Y—

Years In Thy Sight	R.R.C.H.	9	12

AUTHORS' KEY

J.M.F.	John M. Faber	M.H.B.	Mrs. Harold Brands
J.K.J.	John Kalsbeek Jr.	D.D.	Dawn De Vries
S.B.	Sharon Bylsma	H.L.	Harry Langerak
D.M.H.	David M. Harbach	L.P.	Linda Pastoor
R.R.G.M.	Rev. R.G. Moore	D.H.	Duane Huisken
R.G.L.	Rev. G. Lubbers	D.V.B.	Dale Van Baren
P.H.H.	Prof. H. Hanko	N.L.	Nathan Lubbers
A.L.	Agatha Lubbers	E.K.	Esther Kamps
R.R.C.H.	Rev. R.C. Harbach	D.M.	Dave Moelker
G.K.	Gerald Kuiper	C.V.B.	Carolyn Van Baren
S.V.B.	Sherry Van Beek	R.M.H.	Rev. M. Hoeksema
R.C.H.	Rev. C. Hanko	N.V.M.	Nancy Van Melteren
R.W.B.	Rev. Wayne Bekkering	P.H.	Paul Harbach
P.K.	Peter Koole	R.M.J.	Rev. M. Joostens
R.B.W.	Rev. B. Woudenberg	C.D.	Cindy Dykstra
J.D.S.J.	Joel D Sugg, Jr.	L.D.	Lori Dykstra
S.P.	Sue Porte	A.R.	Alice Reitsma
R.M.K.	Rev. M. Kamps	R.J.K.	Rev. J. Kortering
B.V.D.T.	Barb Van Den Top	TVE	Truth vs. Error
M.R.	Marilyn Reitsma	ED	Editorial
R.R.M.	Rev. R. Miersma	PS	From the Pastor's Study
E.S.	Elisa Sugg	Crit	Critique
D.V.U.	Dennis Van Ufflen	CEC	Current Events & Comments
N.D.	Neva Doezema	CS	Convention Speech
J.P.	Jessica Poortinga	AU	Author Unknown
T.F.	Thys Feenstra	CO	Convention Discussion group Outlines
M.J.M.	Mrs. Jake Mantel Sr.		
M.H.J.K.	Miss H.J. Kuiper		

EWS From, For, and About Our Churches

THS

Mr. and Mrs. John Heys of Loveland ice in the birth of a daughter, Lorinda

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Huizenga of dolph rejoice in the birth of a daughter in Jean.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Decker of First rch rejoice in the birth of Brian James Jan. 8.

Mr. and Mrs. Evert Hoekstra of Hull ice in the birth of Keith Alan on Jan.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Van Overloop of h rejoice in the birth of Nathan Wayne Jan. 14.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Lenting of South land rejoice in the birth of Brian Todd.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Kooienga of First rch rejoice in the birth of Kimberly on Jan. 20.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerry Dykstra of Hope ice in the birth of Eric Paul on Jan. 23.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Bleyenberg Jr. of erton rejoice in the birth of Joy abeth on Feb. 10.

JRCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Edgerton has sent Eugene Bleyen-'s papers to him at his request.

Hull has received the membership rs of Mrs. Evert Hoekstra (nee Kathy rs) as a baptized member from the Chr. Ref. Church of Sioux Center.

First Church has transferred the bership papers of Miss Laurie Kregel oveland and those of Mrs. Johanna idt to Faith.

Loveland has granted a dismissal to Lanting at his request.

South Holland has sent the member-papers of Mrs. Karlene Oomkes to ome at her request.

Randolph has transferred the mem-ip papers of Mr. and Mrs. Harry ers, Sr. to First Church.

Loveland has received the member-ship papers of Mrs. Janna Ussery and a baptized daughter, Tahni Lynn from Redlands, California.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

Rich Regnerus and Sandy Regnerus made public confession of their faith in Randolph on Dec. 25.

Mr. and Mrs. Evert Hoekstra made public confession of their faith in Hull on Jan. 8.

Joanne Hop made public confession of her faith in Edgerton on Jan. 22.

MARRIAGE

Ron Koole and Sherry Van Beek were united in marriage on Jan. 18 in Hope Church.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

South Holland's Young People made and sold pizzas on Jan. 28. Proceeds were for the 1978 Convention.

Hull's Young People held a Convention Singspiration on Jan. 29.

The Federation Board sponsored a hayride on Feb. 3 at the Van Dyke farm followed by refreshments at Hope School's gym.

The Federation Board sponsored a Spaghetti Supper at Hope School on Feb. 8.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Covenant High School Choirs presented a concert in First Church on Jan. 15.

Is your Young People's Society having problems coming up with money-raising projects? Take a look at this list of some of the things our South Holland Young People have planned and are planning to help finance the coming convention.

Jan. 28: they took orders, sold and delivered large pizzas (15")

March 6: a rollerskating party for all ages

March 31: a Talent Program

April: Young People will be donating

their work money for a day (approximately $10.00). Young People without jobs will be available to work for people of the congregation (spring cleaning, washing windows, mowing lawns, babysitting, etc.)
A salad luncheon is planned for sometime in the spring.
June 12-23: Paper Drive
A garage sale is planned for this Spring.

The Young People have asked the congregation to save things for this.
An Ice Cream Social is planned for this summer.

If anyone has any more ideas for fund-raising activities, the Young People will probably be glad to hear from you!

Young People and Society leaders: Reserve April 21 for the Spring Banquet.

THE SOUTH HOLLAND P.R.Y.P. SOCIETY

(HOSTS)

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