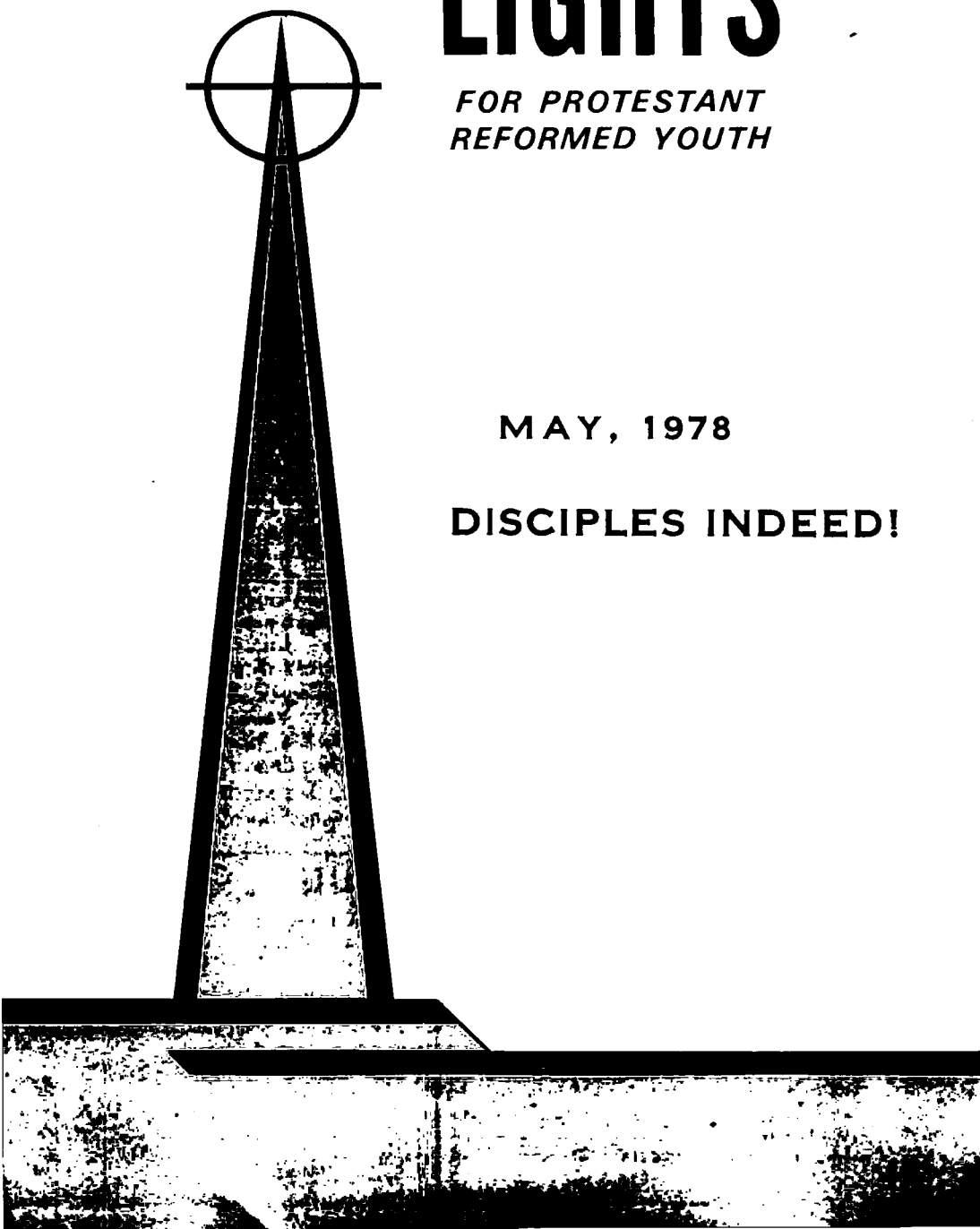
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



MAY, 1978

DISCIPLES INDEED!

VOLUME XXXVII MAY, 1978 NUMBER 3

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

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Beacon Lights
1401 Su-Lew S.W., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504
Second Class Postage paid at
Jenison, Michigan
Subscription price $3.00

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Editorial

A Preach-y Pistle to my Grandchildren

Beloved Children:

Are you surprised that I would preach to you? Well, I am old (I can remember when a nickle could buy a package of gum, or a cup of coffee, or a coke, or a ride in a taxi that was called a Jitney Bus) enough to have the right to preach to you young people.

Today's letter is all about signs. Do you know what a sign is, Bill? You say, "Something that represents something else"? Yes, partly. Sherry, can you add to that definition? You say that a sign shows something that cannot yet be seen? Yes, that explains it a bit better.

You are all acquainted with signs all about us. When driving down a rural road, and we see by the side of the road a white post with black-and-white cross pieces at a forty-five degree angle to the post, we say to the driver, "Watch out! There is a railroad track there, and maybe a train is coming." Or, if while driving in the city between rows of buildings, we come to two red lights on a post at the curb, and the lights start flashing, we say, "Stop. There is a train coming!" No, you do not yet see the train which is a-coming. You only see the sign that signifies that it is coming. So, although you do not yet see the train, you had better believe the sign! We call those red light sign(als). Even the word, signature, has that same idea in it. When you receive a letter you first look at the sign(ature), so that in your mind's eye you can see the writer.

In somewhat that sense, Christ spoke of signs. Shall we look at a few of them? In Matthew twelve, some of Christ's enemies asked for a super-natural sign to prove His authority to teach God's will. Our Lord refused their request. He said, "You already have a sign in your Scriptures. You know that Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days. Jonah preached to the city of Nineveh and they repented of their sins." You see: Jesus showed them that the sign (signal?) of Jonah was indicating an un-seen thing in the future. What was that not-yet-seen thing? This: That Jesus preached to them but that they do not believe Him, and unlike the Ninevites, they do not repent. They would ignore the sign(al) of Jonah and will be destroyed by the approaching train-the judgment of God upon those who would deliver Him up to death and His three-day grave.

A very long time ago, before you were born, in the time of World War II, England was subjected to air-raids by their enemy, Germany. Their planes would drop bombs on the large cities. When such raids were approaching their shores, the English air raid sirens would wail for everyone to hear and heed. The signal said, "Everybody into the air raid shelters!" Now, the people could not yet see the planes, but when they heard those sirens they could see them in their mind's eyes, and would hurriedly seek shelter to prevent being destroyed.

Our Savior also spoke of other kinds of air raid sirens. Read about it in Matthew 24:24,30; Mark 13, and Luke 21:11,25. But because those signs are still in the future, we cannot understand them yet. Just as George Washington would not have understood someone speaking of flashing red lights as railroad signals, they had not yet been invented. Christ spoke of the sun and moon being darkened. Who can understand how that will be? He spoke of the heavens being shaken,

dropping stars down like a fig tree drops figs. We can imagine that a little bit because we have already seen a star fall. But our Lord Jesus spoke of a much more mysterious sign. He called it, "The Sign of the Son of Man." We do not understand what that sign will be; but we will know it for what it signifies then! That will be the air raid siren that will be the end of all air raid sirens. The great difference between England's sirens and Christ's last siren is that England was being warned of the enemy, while the last one will tell us, "To lift up your heads for our redemption draweth nigh." That last sign will be the signal that our Friend and Lord is invading the land-His Own earth. Then we will know that, as flashing red lights warn of an approaching train, so His sign will loudly proclaim that our risen and Glorified Lord, the Lord of Heaven and earth is "coming around the bend" to judge the living and the dead.

Already today we hear of events in this world of which Christ foretold, which are also His first-warning-signs: earthquakes, floods, storms, flu epidemics; all of which are called, pre-cursory signs. Pre-cursory means introductory. They are those which introduce the coming of the following ones. At an airport terminal we notice pre-cursory signs of an on-coming plane, while that plane is still out of sight. We see the porters busy placing the baggage carts in position to receive the plane's cargo. So, seeing that activity, we say, "It must be that our plane is coming in soon."

So, after many years of those introductory signs, the Day approaches, as our Lord taught us in the Parable, the signal is given, "The Bridegroom cometh, the Bridegroom cometh!" Then do not get caught unawares like the Five Foolish Virgins who had lamps which could not be lighted because they had neglected to get oil for them.

I wonder what that means for you young people today. Maybe it means that in your Foolish unpreparedness you had flashlights, but had neglected to get batteries. Maybe it means that you were too busy watching the Devil's Hollywood productions on the boob-tube, that Theatrical Villain, in that church members' living room, den, bedroom, movie house. So busy that you had no time to prepare for your Sunday School lessons, your catechism and young peoples' meetings. Too busy trying to be "one of the boys" chumming with those who experiment with "pot", "beanies" or whatever name you give the latest in drug poisoning. Too busy making and enjoying a dance-date at a local Bar, so that you have no desire to double-date with Christian young people spending time in wholesome entertainment, with another couple who confess the same Lord as you do. Does this sound like I am writing to one of my own grandchildren? To young people who go to catechism, to Sunday School, and young peoples' societies in one of our churches? Yes, sad to say. Besides making your gramp and gram sad, your father and mother, your ministers are sad. But, and this is worse, you also grieve the Holy Spirit with such business which contributes to unpreparedness to meet the Lord when He comes again.

And why am I writing all about the end of the world to you young people and children? I'll tell you why. Jesus is coming to judge the **living** and the dead. And who will be living in that Day? Grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, mothers, young people and children, that's who! Does that list leave anyone out? Jesus said, "When ye see these things come to pass, know that the Kingdom of God is at hand." That is what it is all about. The Kingdom is near. What Kingdom? That Kingdom in which the Risen and Glorified Christ shall reign in the New Earth - and we with Him!

Listen! Is that a siren I hear?

Love, Gramp.

George M. Ophoff(24)

by Prof. H. Hanko

The Polemicist

In our last article, we were talking about the basic reasons for the doctrinal controversy which troubled our Chruches in the years preceding 1953. Our purpose in doing this is to describe the role which Rev. Ophoff played in this controversy, for he took an active part in the defense of the truth during those years. We had talked about the fact that, though our Churches, in the last of the "forties" had considerable contact with the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands and with many immigrants from these Churches, there were also deep doctrinal differences particularly on the question of the covenant of grace.

There were a number of ministers in our Churches at that time who were interested in seeing our denomination grow. While this was not in itself bad, I am convinced that this matter of church growth became more important to them than purity of doctrine. These men saw, in our contacts with the Liberated and in the large influx of Liberated into this country and Canada, an opportunity for the denomination to increase rapidly in size. If these Liberated people could be persuaded to join our Churches, the results in terms of growth would be spectacular.

The problem however, was the difference in the doctrine of the covenant. Contact with the Liberated brought these differences to the fore. I do not think that all the ministers who left us were simply determined to see the Church grow regardless of doctrine; but were themselves persuaded, for one reason or another, of the truth of the Liberated position on this question. This is somewhat strange when one considers that the errors of the Liberated were the same errors as had been rejected by our Churches in 1924, except that now they were applied to the covenant. But whatever may be the explanation for this, such was nevertheless the case. The result was that there began, from these ministers, a certain agitation in support of these Liberated views; or, at least, a certain agitation for freedom of belief in this area. If we did not agree wholly with the Liberated position, then at least we could tolerate their position within the Church.

It was a number of years before the split actually came that there were certain indications of trouble ahead. And it is not an exaggeration to say that Rev. Ophoff noticed this before anyone else in the Churches. Prof. Hoeksema has told me on more than one occasion that Rev. Ophoff spoke of these things to him. Prof. Hoeksema was at this time taking post-graduate work in the Seminary. And often, after classes were over, Rev. Ophoff would stop Prof. Hoeksema to talk with him awhile. In a very troubled frame of mind, Rev. Ophoff spoke of the fact that all was not well in the Church, that trouble lay ahead if things did not change, and that the troubles centered in the contacts which we were having with the Liberated Churches. It was hard at that time for anyone to believe the truth of these fears of Rev. Ophoff. Things seemed to be going along well. Rev. Schilder had come

to this country, had proved an amiable man appreciative of the similarity between the struggles of our Churches and his Churches in the Netherlands. He had lectured and spoken throughout the Churches, and many had found him a congenial man of vast learning and of deep love for the Reformed faith. But, whatever else may be said about him, there were these important differences in the conception of the covenant.

It was not too long and the effects of Dr. Schilder's teachings began to be heard in the Churches. A paper by the name of "Concordia" was being published in the West; and this paper began to include articles in it which included strong defenses of a conditional covenant. To these articles Rev. Ophoff addressed himself when he now saw proof that his fears were indeed not imaginary.

It must be understood that, prior to this time, our contacts with the Liberated Churches had been fruitful in spite of the differences. There had been a great deal of discussion concerning the whole idea of the covenant of grace both in the Netherlands and in the **Standard Bearer.** When Dr. Schilder was in this country, a conference was held with him in which all these things were discussed. There was even some talk about establishing sister-church relationships. And all this was worthwhile and interesting. It could have continued to be a profitable exchange of ideas.

But there were practical problems which intervened. The immigrants from Netherlands were looking for a church home. And they were interested in considering our Churches too. But they did not agree with our view of the covenant by any means. They were interested, therefore, in the question of whether they could be members of our Churches and still maintain their own view of the covenant. They had to know this. Honesty compelled them to inquire into this. And so they sought out what precisely the view of the covenant was as it was held in our Churches, and whether they would be compelled to forsake their own views if they should join. Rev. Hoeksema writes about this in the January 15, 1949 issue of the **Standard bearer.** A certain Rev. Van Raalte had written to the Dutch immigrants concerning seeking a church home. In this advice which he offered, no mention was made of our churches. Rev. Hoeksema writes:

> "That hurts.
>
> The reason why this hurts is not because we are so eager to increase the membership of our churches and to become a large denomination. We are not looking for anything like that at all. We strive rather to keep our churches as pure as possible, both in regard to doctrine and life. And as a result we cannot expect a remarkable growth, especially not in the miserable age in which we live. There are not many that will accept the pure Reformed truth, and very few in our age will live from the principle of the antithesis and keep their garments clean. And as far as increasing our membership from the immigrants in Canada is concerned, I have stated before, and I say it again, that we detest Heynsianism; and if the Liberated Church members in Canada believe the Heynsian view of the covenant, they cannot be received as members with us unless they are converted. For it is our conviction that Heynsianism is not Reformed but Arminian.
>
> But that does not mean that we like to be contemptuously ignored. . . ."

So these very practical problems forced the issue in a way. Those who were interested in gaining the immigrants from the Liberated Churches without any change in their covenant conception now began open agitation for these covenant views.

In the May 1, 1949 issue of the **Standard Bearer**, Rev. Ophoff for the first time begins to attack these views. I want to quote rather at length from this article because, in a way it is important. It shows what other ministers in our Churches were writing concerning this question of the covenant. It demonstrates the seriousness of the issues involved. It gives us a glimpse into Rev. Ophoff's polemical writings -- of which there are many throughout the **Standard Bearer**. And it proves the deep concern which our leaders had for the truth of God's Word.

But our quote from this article will have to wait to our next issue.

Leaving Father and Mother(6)

by Rev. C. Hanko

Wedding Plans

John and Mary have set the date for their marriage, about six months away. This half year seemed to be a sensible interval, giving them ample time to make the necessary arrangements for the big event. They never realized that so much was involved in preparing for one short evening. This preparation involves trips to the photographer, to the florist, to the printer, and on and on. Dresses have to be obtained, suits ordered, colors picked out, and again, on and on, **ad infinitum**. The bridal party has to be planned, the ceremony arranged, the reception worked out, invitations chosen and sent... Will they ever get so much done in such a short time? This is all strange to John, who had never given it a thought that it took weeks of planning, shopping, and what-not, just to get married. Secretly he asks himself, "Why not just go to the minister?" For Mary this is different. I once asked a very thorough young lady at her rehearsal, "Did you start planning this already when you were twelve years old?" For an answer she gave me a big, knowing smile.

There have been some very definite improvements in our weddings and in our receptions over the years. It appears to me that getting married is taken much more seriously by our young people today than it was forty or fifty years ago. Then, weddings took place at home. All the large pieces of furniture were moved out of the living room and out of the "family room". This family room, by the way, was a sort of luxury in most homes. It had furniture, but it was not heated in the winter. In fact, it was rarely used, except for weddings and funerals, and, very occasionally, for family visitation. Chairs were brought into these rooms, placed as closely together as possible to accommodate all the invited guests. Usually an arch of some sort was arranged between the two rooms, where the ceremony would take place. If there was a house organ, someone would play an appropriate piece of music while the minister and the couple marched in. The Marriage Form was read, the couple answered their "Yes" and their "I do", followed by a prayer and the completion of the Form, and the ceremony was over. There was something warm and intimate about this kind of ceremony, but the trouble was that when the ceremony

was finished also the solemnity of the occasion evaporated instantly. Soon, amid a great hubbub, congradulations were extended, a lunch was served, the married couple were made the butt of a series of jokes, not always in good taste, and often a hilarious program followed. Skits and humorous dialogues were interspersed with serious poems and well-meant congradulations. Gradually, the older people decided that it was time to leave, and the evening was given over to the young people, who played games, sometimes far into the morning. I have also attended weddings in other communities that began at eleven o'clock in the morning. Lunch and supper were served to the guests that were able to spend the afternoon with the bridal couple and their families. In the evening, the young people came to have their jokes and games. In the meantime, boys and girls, and some older people of the neighborhood as well, came to chivaree, that is, to announce their arrival with shouts, beating on pots and pans, and gun shots fired onto the air. They came frequently in groups, each demanding to see the bride, to share some of the food and to receive a hand-out. These "fun" makers did not always leave without doing some damage to the property, to the horses and buggies and later to the automobiles parked around the home. There has been, however, marked improvement in our weddings throughout the years. The ceremony is far more solemn and impressive, the reception far more sober, as befits the awesomeness of the occasion.

There are other improvements that can be mentioned. Our choice of music at the ceremony has improved. Songs like "O Promise Me" and "Because" and the like have been replaced by songs with more spiritual content. The long familiar "Here Comes the Bride" has had its day, for which I am not sorry. Songs with real spiritual content and depth make the ceremony richer, and fit far better with the occasion. The use of renditions of the chorale-style psalms with their dignity and deep joy is on the increase, as well as the participation of the audience with an appropriate Psalter number. These both add beauty, historical perspective and spiritual depth to an occasion which should be as rich and as solemn as possible, particularly since our weddings are most often now held in the church auditorium. (The Dutch psalms make lovely processionals and dignified recessionals as well as song music, and there is a greater variety there than most people realize.)

Shall I tell you what I think would make an ideal wedding, both in harmony with Scripture and the Church Order, and in harmony with the significance and symbolism of marriage? A proper, Christian wedding should be a church wedding. By that I do not mean a wedding in church, but very really a church wedding. The entire congregation should be present, there should be a regular worship service with a sermon, and the wedding integrated into the service.

Attempts have been made in the past to have church services during the week, but these efforts have failed. The consistory was present, and the entire congregation was called to worship, but only a few members of the congregation made their appearance. If the congregation is not present, the mere presence of the consistory does not make it a church wedding. Therefore the only possibility of having a church wedding is to have the ceremony in the Sunday evening service.

Already I hear a storm of protest. First of all, would it be possible to have such a large number in the wedding party on a Sunday evening? How about the dresses of the bride and of her attendants after sitting through a service and then appearing before the whole congregation? These and other details would have to be worked out by the couple, but should hardly present imsurmountable problems.

I am sure that many fathers and mothers would give a sigh of relief if much of the superfluous and expensive pomp and fanfare were eliminated from our ceremony. Many others would consider it a healthy sign if the emphasis would fall upon the vows that are spoken rather than on all these distracting outward displays. I know and I agree whole-heartedly that this event is the big thing in the life of the bridal couple, especially of the bride. The bride has dreamed for years of this great occasion, and years later she likes to reminisce with keen delight, even telling her children what that great event meant to her. But if we learn to lay the emphasis where it belongs, our weddings will become more meaningful than they are now.

The second objection bound to come up pertains to the reception. Having a wedding ceremony on Sunday evening would require that a large reception be held later, possibly on Monday or Tuesday evening. That also creates problems. Young people are accustomed to getting married and leaving on their honeymoon during the latter part of the week. Instead of the whole affair being finished in one night, it is spread over two nights. Instead of relatives and friends coming once, the more interested ones must come twice. This involves a bit more work, a bit more planning. Yet, as a general rule, a person gets married only once in a lifetime. This is a big, if not the biggest event in his life. The occasion is of utmost importance, both for the couples and the families involved. Those who wish to give their blessing upon the marriage will be willing to put forth a bit more effort to make this wedding the very best, as it should be.

A third objection follows out of the second. The bridal couple almost always leave on their trip immediately after the wedding. If the ceremony is held on Sunday evening, they would be compelled to stay until after the reception. But that is not all bad either. We are such creatures of habit and custom that no one wants to break with it. I hope that sometime there will arise a couple who have the courage to be the first ones to attempt getting married on Sunday, thus breaking the ice for those who see the good of it.

A bit of serious thought will help us to realize that the advantages of a Sabbath wedding far outweigh the disadvantages. Whatever we can do to emphasize the importance of this great occasion must certainly be advantageous. A church service, with the entire congregation participating in song and in prayer, a fitting sermon that is not cut down as much as possible, would add to the spiritual benefit derived from the wedding. You and I are baptized in the church, we grow up in the church, we make our public confession of faith in the church, later we have our children baptized in the church, and we encourage our children to put the church in the center of their lives. Why then should our wedding be relegated to a mere weekly occasion, without the congregation present? Think about it.

That brings us back to the planning of the wedding. These plans must include some sober moments, some serious reflection. Amid all the turmoil of all the other preparations, you must realize the importance of the step you are taking. May I suggest, that when you order your napkins and other printed matter, that you avoid the custom of the world to mention the bride first? This may seem like a very small item at the moment, yet there is more involved than meets the eye. We know, as God's covenant people, that marriage is a symbol of the union of Christ and His Church. You, as the Bridegroom, are a picture of Christ. Would you mention Christ last? You, as the Bride, are a picture of Christ's Church, which He has purchased with His own blood. You want to assume your God-given place already at your wedding. Did you every notice that in the parable of the wedding

feast in Matthew 22, the cry does not arise, "Behold the Bride cometh!", but, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!"? Gradually but surely we have fallen into the pattern of the world to put the bride on the foreground and virtually to classify the bridegroom as among the also present.

I spoke of moments of sober reflection. You are leaving father and mother to enter into an entirely new relationship, to establish a new home and family, to walk life's pathway together until death parts you. Yours will be an exclusive relationship, actually excluding all others. It will be the most intimate relationship conceivable, more intimate than the relationship between parents and child. Your life will be a symbol of Christ, Who joins His Church to Him by the mystical bond of faith, uniting us to Him in most intimate fellowship. We become flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone. We are one with Him as intimately as the head and the body are one, living one life of love and fellowship. How wonderful that our lives may be a picture of that eternal union, and that our marriages may symbolize the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb! We not only see it, we live it. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31,32)

You can best prepare yourselves by taking time to read the Marriage Form. Read it alone; read and discuss it together. Know what it teaches us, so that your wedding will be more meaningful. Take note of the fact that you are hand-picked for each other by no less than God. In God's eternal plan, you were God's choice for each other, even as God brought you together by His providence. Notice the responsibilities that you as husband take upon yourself, and the duties that you as wife take upon yourself. Make special note of the vows you are about to take, so that when the time comes you will be deeply aware of the promises you are making to each other before God and those present. All the excitement of the occasion must not blur from your minds the seriousness of your vows. Therefore it is a **must**, a must for every sincere young couple, to prepare themselves individually and together with honest talks with God in prayer, open talks with both sets of parents and sincere talks with one another. You owe it not only to yourselves, but to each other that you are fully aware of the fact that your marriage is a holy institution of God for your happiness and blessedness, but above all, to the glory of God's Name.

"But as many as truly believe, and are delivered and saved from sin and destruction through the death of Christ, are indebted for this benefit solely to the grace of God, given them in Christ from everlasting, and not to any merit of their own."

Canons of Dordt
Second Head,
Article 7

THE TRAINING OF THE CHILD

by Rev. G. Van Baren

Often we have heard the Word of God found in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The passage has raised questions in the minds of some. It does not always seem true that properly trained children do not depart from the right way.

This Word of God does remind us of the truth that God created all things in such a way that the young must be trained. That is seen even in the animal world. Animals need not go to school. They don't receive any sort of formal instruction from the mother. Yet animals in many way rely upon the instruction or training of their parents. They may be taught how to hunt. They must learn how to hide from enemies. Perhaps they must be taught what to eat--and how.

That is more true with the human child. The babe is born helpless. It cannot feed itself. It cannot protect itself. It cannot clothe itself. The parents must see to it that the child is cared for and taught--and this instruction covers quite a number of years.

But especially, for that is the concern of God's Word, Christian parents are called to instruct their children in the truth of God's Word. Parents must see to it that they receive a sound foundation, understanding the morality, the laws, of God's Scripture. Children, of course, must understand as well that all of this is the responsibility of their parents.

Training is particularly important in our own day. Children are being trained in many ways--even apart from that which parents provide. Far too much, our children are being trained by the world. One does not have to go to a public school in order to be trained by the world. The world gives much training on television -- beginning with **Sesame Street** to the programs of violence and indulgences of every sort. The advertizing is designed to promote greed and envy. It instills even into the minds of the very young the desire to have many things. It promotes products by suggesting a certain sex appeal in them. It suggests the desirability of drinking and dancing. The programs are filled with violence, with sex, with the misuse of God's Name. And our children often spend as many hours in front of a T.V. as they do in school.

Magazines, books, even newspapers provide much instruction. Nothing is left to the imagination. The world is open in its presentation of all of its wickedness -- and tries to induce the child of God to enjoy all of these things too.

Therefore, parents have the calling to keep their children from worldly instructors by giving good guidance and providing necessary restraints. Parents who train their children, do not allow the world to take over the task -- even for an hour.

Parents train their children by instructing them. There are the regular opportunities of assisting them with catechism instruction, or Sunday school materials, or school work. But also, families need their regular devotions when children can also ask questions and be questioned. They need Scripture read to them and explained. Children must be taught of the history of the church -- and of our churches. They must learn doctrines of the church and should be aware of the teaching of the creeds of the

church. Surely the parents have a calling to provide this for them.

But very much of parental instruction comes by way of example. Perhaps our parents do not fully realize this. Parents who might smoke or drink regularly, see their children imitate these things as they grow up. Parents who are not always honest in all their dealings with others, see their children doing many of the same things. Parents who are swearing on occasion, find that their children are likely to do the same sort of thing. Parents whose marriage relationship is poor, see children grow up who are often also unstable in their ways. But where faithfulness is seen in parents in daily activities, the same is impressed upon children. Parents who place a high regard upon Scripture and the study of Scripture, who emphasize the need and place of prayer, who show sincere interest and concern in the church -- see their children also learning from their good example.

This training in the proper way also takes place in church and school. Parents have the responsibility of seeing to it that their children are properly instructed in the church. The school too is that place where parents will send their children to receive the kind of instruction that can not be given within the home. Yet parents will see that this instruction will be in harmony with the truths of Scripture as maintained within their church. They want instruction given as they would have given it if they were able to do so.

Such proper and regular instruction has also the result that these spiritual seed do maintain what they have learned and confessed through all of their days. God works in such a way that, usually, parents who are most faithful in this regard, also see their children grow up to be diligent and faithful themselves. I say: this is usually the case, but not always.

And therein lies the problem. At times faithful parents see their children depart from the good instruction given. And such parents are heartbroken. They feel themselves to be failures. They seek to examine past instruction to see wherein lies the defect. It is true, of course, that instruction was not always as it ought to be.

But then some think that God's Word has failed. These gave good instruction, but the child departed therefrom when he became old. What happened?

Some say that this passage means that God promises only that when these **become old** they will not depart from God's Word. The child may be wayward and disobedient. He may depart from the church for a time. But God promises that when he is old, he will come back. He won't depart when he is old.

Such reasoning is not true. There are those who return after having forsaken God's Word for a time. And that is always a cause of joy for the church. But more often than not, one who departs from God's Word does not return. Remember Esau.

Still, the promise of God is true. Here we must remember what is true in all of Scripture. God's promises are particular. They are promises to and about His elect people. When He gives promise, He speaks of His elect and their **spiritual** seed. These do not depart from their good instruction when they become old. God's promise is the incentive for Godly parents to continue to instruct with great diligence.

Parents must understand that God uses the way of proper instruction to continue to gather His people on this earth. Since we do not usually know whom God has chosen of our own children, but knowing that He gathers His people in the line of generation, parents diligently give good instruction. And God will use that to serve the purpose of gathering and finishing His church. Parents, then, must be faithful. Children must be ready to receive good instruction. And know that God blesses that to His glory and our spiritual profit.

1978 CONVENTION

AUGUST 21-25, 1978

What is the reason we travel hundreds of miles to attend a Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Convention? Why do we assemble together? What is the purpose behind such an activity? What profit is there in it?

As young people we need friends and we thrive on a good time. But, as Christian young people, we desire Godly friends and a good time that is pleasing to our Lord. Often we are tempted to forget that we are different from the young people of the world, and we go along with what is promoted as a "good time". Many times the reason we do this is because we don't want to be different from the world. We want to be acceptable in the eyes of the world. By assembling with Godly friends, we are more inclined to have a good time that is also pleasing to God and acceptable in His sight, leaving the world and her opinion behind.

At a convention, our Young People can (and do) have a good time. Most of those that attend come because they know that their spirit will be refreshed by attending. They know that the mass meetings and Bible discussions will serve to help them grow spiritually; and that through the healthful recreational activities that they participate in, they will be brought closer to the other young people of our denomination as well! They go because they are looking for a truly good time!

Why do we assemble together? What profit is there in it? Why should you be planning to come to the 1978 P.R.Y.P. Convention?

The basic and most important purpose behind our conventions is to help us serve God. We come together to learn more about Him, to sing His praises and to strengthen the bond which we have with fellow members of His church as manifested in our fellowship of churches.

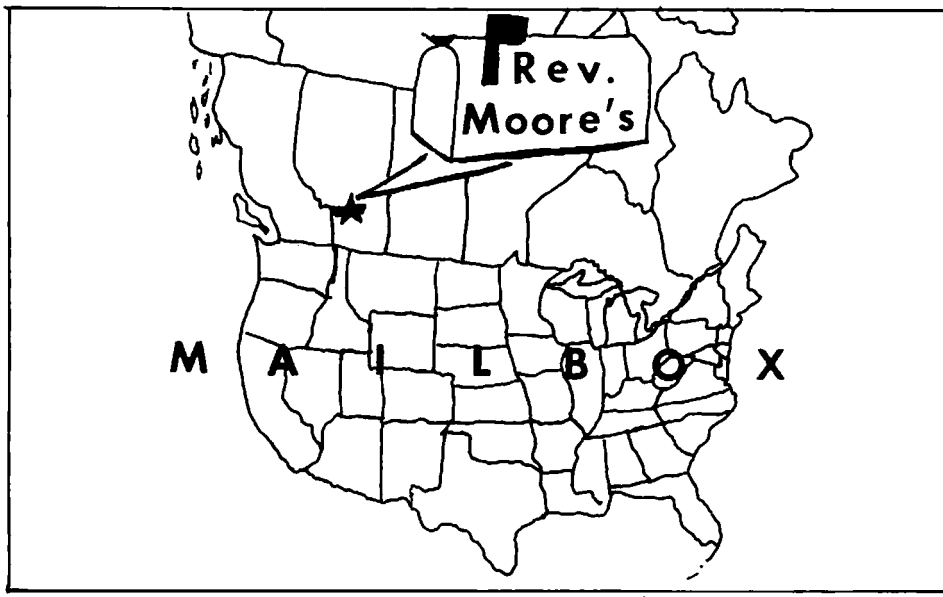
A few of the plans for this year's convention are definite enough so that we are now able to inform you of them. Our speakers for our Mass Meetings each have accepted our invitation to come and speak for us on our theme: "REMEMBER THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH!" Rev. Jason L. Kortering (minister of our Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California) will be addressing us on our theme from the aspect of our calling to "Remember Thy Creator in the Home." Rev. Herman Veldman (Southwest P. R. Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan) will speak to us on his topic "Remember Thy Creator in the Church." "Remember Thy Creator in Society," will be the subject of our third speaker, Rev. Arie den Hartog (from Covenant P. R. Church, Prospect Park, New Jersey).

Our convention setting should prove to be interesting and enjoyable. The first part of the week we have decided to return to the "old-fashioned" style of past conventions! You've heard about those conventions where the conventioneers were able to meet and get to know some of the people of the congregation and how enjoyable that was?! Well, it was about six years ago since we've experienced that, and so we will be lodging in the homes of the members of our congregation! The fellowship and closeness which

we have found rewarding at past conventions will not be lost however, because the **last** part of our convention week will be spent in Southern Wisconsin at Lake Geneva Youth Camp which (as its name tells you) is a camp on beautiful Lake Geneva!

As hosts of this summer's convention, we urge you to make every effort to attend! We are busy planning, and we want **you** to begin making plans now so that you are sure to come! Also, we ask you to pray that our convention will serve the purpose of edifying us as Protestant Reformed Young People as we come together to "Remember our Creator."

THE SOUTH HOLLAND P.R.Y.P.S.
Convention Promotional Committee



QUESTIONS ON DEATH (Continued)

The next question given to this writer concerning death was the following:

Does our soul go to heaven immediately when we die, and if so, when such a death occurs, as mentioned in the last question of the last article, are we taken from heaven and put back on earth? The death refered to was the death of one who was brought back to life on this earth.

In our last article, we pointed out that the only cases of one truly suffering death and being given again an earthly life are those recorded in Scripture. Thus we limit our response to these cases. It is obvious that we have already answered the first part of this question in our last article.

The soul passes immediately on to the wondrous state of conscious glory upon death. (see our last article-the first answer). Upon death, our soul life is taken to glory and we experience the fulness of salvation-communion with our God in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. There all sins are forever past and put away and there shall be no tears.

In light of the above, we must remember that the Scriptural examples of the miraculous raising from the dead were types. These types served the special purpose of God to reveal the life-giving power of our Lord and Savior. And thus, too, were typical of the saint's resurrection in the Lord Jesus Christ. But then as types, their resurrection was not the final resurrection, but a resurrection to their former life in the midst of this sin cursed world, and was a restoration to this life which is a vale of tears. Hence, this was not the end, and those so raised must yet die again to be raised to the new and heavenly life.

Thus, our only conclusion can be that God provided a special dispensation for these cases (such as Lazarus) whereby their soul did not pass on to heaven, but was kept in a special state of (for lack of a better term) unconsciousness. For surely God would not take those who had passed on to glory and cause them again to walk in this life of sin!

The next question given me has to do with death from a different perspective:

What will it be like on judgment day: that is, will there be babies in heaven? Will there be retarded people in heaven? Will there be old and young or will everyone be around the same age? Finally: What about abortions and miscarriages-these human beings that have been barely conceived and die-will they be a formed person on the last day?

It is best that we treat these questions together, and a proper understanding of resurrection life will give us the basic answer to these individual questions.

We begin with the understanding that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." In this life, we are sown a natural body; but we are raised a spiritual body. cf. I Corinthians 15:46. The characteristics mentioned in the questions above are natural characteristics and are distinctions of the flesh. These are put away with death and resurrection unto glory. Read Jesus' answer to the Sadducees concerning earthly relationships in Luke 20:27ff. Further, we read in I Corinthians 15:42ff," So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruction: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: in is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." Thus, all of the elect shall receive glorified bodies with the above spiritual characteristics. And the earthly distinction of age, or souls who have been but conceived, or the retarded, fall away. We shall receive perfect and glorified resurrection bodies.

However, this is not to say that there is no distinction between saints in glory. We receive distinct and personal resurrection bodies in heaven. This is shown by the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mount of Transfiguration. Further, while all the members of Christ's church are members of His body, we are not all hands, or arms, etc. Each has his special place determined by the counsel of God in that body. There is a distinction of spiritual talents which God has bestowed upon the members of the body of Christ. The aged saint has different talents honed by life, than the unborn elect. But, each receives to his full measure the riches of glory in heaven, and is perfectly satisfied.

The final question is closely related to this last one:

When we arise in the last day will we raise with a whole body? What if we were blown apart-different parts of our body here and there-will our bodies be whole?

The grave is the end of all flesh. It is the place of decay and corruption. And whether our bodies return to the dust in one place or many, it but reveals the corruption and mortality of our natural bodies. Indeed they are sown in corruption! But they are raised in incorruption: glorified, new, spiritual! Each elect is given his resurrection body, and not in parts; but it is perfect as he is raised to perfection! Thus the child of God, a stranger and pilgrim here, dwelling in the valley of the shadow of death, surrounded by all the effects of sin, looks with certain hope to the day when he knows, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Corinthians 5:1.

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"But when once the light of Divine Providence has illumined the believer's soul, he is relieved and set free, not only from the extreme fear and anxiety which formerly oppressed him, but from all care. For as he justly shudders at the idea of chance, so he can confidently commit himself to God. This, I say, is his comfort, that his heavenly Father so embraces all things under his power — so governs them at will by his nod — so regulates them by his wisdom, that nothing takes place save according to his appointment; that received into his favour, and intrusted to the care of his angels, neither fire, nor water, nor sword, can do him harm, except in so far as God their master is pleased to permit."

Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin · Volume I

REFORMED POINT OF VIEW

by David Harbach

"A first question in the Catechism is 'What is the chief end of man?' The response is, 'to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.' There are individuals who believe that the ultimate way of glorifying God is to win souls for Jesus Christ." These are the first two sentences that appeared in a section entitled, "The Presidents Corner," Vol. IV, February 1978, Number 3 issue of the SC View. The SC View is the official College publication for Sterling College. There is not room enough to include all that President Charles Schoenherr had to write, so I will only include those parts that give the basic meaning of his article.

Before going any further, I want to say that it is not my intention in this article to criticize Mr. Schoenherr personally. The purpose of this article will be to bring to our minds a serious problem which is occuring in many colleges and universities that call themselves Reformed or which hold to a Reformed point of view.

To begin, the Catechism that is quoted from is the Westminster Larger Catechism. It would be to the advantage of our people to read this Catechism so that we may know more clearly what others believe in regards to their confession of faith. We hold to the Heidelberg Catechism because it is a rich part of our Reformed heritage and looks at reformed doctrine from the experience of the child of God in this life and death.

The article in mention goes on to analyze the second sentence concluding that "the role of man in this system of thought becomes all significant." I agree, and it is exactly that fact which makes me disgusted with such heretical ideas. When we get down to the real meaning of such a sentence it shows that God, in order to save His elect, must use the means of man persuading or winning an individual to Jesus Christ. We who are truly reformed know that Christ alone saves His people from their sins, never man who is sinful. The Son of God died on the cross for His people. We cannot win any man to Christ because we cannot even win ourselves to believe in Christ. And, too, man fails completely to glorify God in any way. Consider the fact that the elect child of God does perform good works as a means to glorify God and all his works are corrupted, tainted with sin. Therefore, we cannot pat ourselves on the back in pride for any good work, because all good works are as a result of that wonder work of God's grace within our hearts. God glorifies Himself through us even though He has no need to do so. How truly amazing is the grace of God when we realize that He uses us at all to glorify Himself. To Him be all the glory.

The second paragraph of the article in mention reads, "On the other hand, the Calvinists, in Reformed Tradition, believe that God is glorified by knowing Him, by giving due honor to Him, and by being of service to Him." I agree completely with that thought. However, the sentence that follows reads, "Vocation become channels for service to God and fellowman." This statement and ones similar in thought

reveal a serious problem.

Some of our covenant youth, when they graduate from high school, will go on to seek a higher education in a college or university. Sometimes these centers of learning profess to be Reformed. They profess to hold to the Reformed truths in their instruction. They emphasize the truth of glorifying God in a godly walk in life. They place the emphasis on the way we live as being a witness to those around us of our beliefs. Now there is nothing wrong with those goals, as long as they are soley for the purpose of instructing the covenant youth so that he or she may be prepared to serve God in a particular calling. However, these same centers of learning that profess to be Reformed also profess a need of a service to man.

Perhaps a few more sentences will bring the problem clearly to our minds. They are as follows: "Education is seen as a means by which man better prepares himself to serve his fellowman and God as he penetrates and reforms society."; "We see our mission as one of equipping young people to penetrate all aspects of con temporary society with a Christian "Weltanschauung,"; "It is our desire that our graduates become immersed in the mainstream of our world to provide the "light" for a society that is in darkness."; "If our graduates are to be shapers of the world-life view must penetrate all of their life."; and finally, "We believe it is our duty to equip our students intellectually the best we can so that when they infiltrate society to be the "light," they will have the mental tools to perform their services as 'unto God'." In short, the meaning is to make this world a better place to live in.

The problem then is serving God and man at the same time. How one who is reformed can agree with such modernistic thought is obviously incredible. Jesus Christ Himself in the Sermon on the Mount says Matthew 6:24, "NO man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Education is a means to prepare ones self to serve God only. Never is it our calling to reform society, but to reform ourselves by God's grace. It is true that we are the light of the world, but not in the sense that we provide a light so that man may thereby do some good. Nor do we go about trying to shape the world so as to make it a better place for all men to live. And finally, we seek to equip our youth spiritually and intellectually to serve God.

These modernistic thoughts are the foundation upon which many of our colleges are based. That means that we as youth must be very aware of that fact and use the time spent in our high school years to prepare ourselves for entrance into a system of education that is not Reformed. We must indeed be the light, but only because we follow The Light.

Perhaps then it is the calling of our denomination to consider the necessity of starting a college of our own. That means, too, that many who seek a college education may also consider preparing themselve to teach in our own college. Truthfully, I hope, D.V., that some day we do have our own college.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Credit where credit is due! The article titled "God's Time" which appeared in the April issue was authored by Gretine Meelker of Hope Prot. Ref. Church of Redlands, California and *not* Barry Gritters as was indicated.

I'M O.K. YOU'RE O.K.?

By Carolyn Van Baren

Today's churches are very tolerant of error. The problem did not begin yesterday and cannot be cured tomorrow. It is a slow process over many years. For a child, it is easy to pick up attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge from those about him. By the time one becomes a young person he should be able to express his views. For this to be possible the early training from parents, ministers, and teachers must be thorough and complete.

Today so many teenagers in high school and college are enthusiastic Christians. But in reality they are being tossed about. One man tells them one thing and the next day a person can give an opposite impression. Yet because both are sincere they both are accepted. But this causes a problem. Is it possible to accept views of men who profess to be Christians when the views are not scriptural? No, even if the teacher insists we just interpret scripture a little different, errors must not be accepted.

Scripture is our guide. We must evaluate the ideas brought before us and accept or discard the teachings. It is not our duty to judge the man who teaches. God is the judge of all and that is important for each of us to remember. Not only should our doctrine be pure but also our walk. Somebody may say he doesn't see what makes you a better Christian **just** because you go to church each sunday twice and live just like him the rest of the week. We are all equally dead in sin. But when we go to church it should be with a desire to learn and be blessed. Each day we should live our belief. James says in chapter 2:1 "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and not works? Can faith save him?"

Because tomorrow's church is built on today's foundation, we had better be strong. Be examples in life and walk to those about us. Be instructed as parents, children, students, and teachers. Let us be able to tell our children as Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 3:14-17 "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The reason for the mysterious depths of marriage is that in marriage God is at work. It is not the case that in marriage a man joins himself to his wife. Rather, he is joined to his wife by another. That other is God. The glue of marriage is God's glue, as the act of applying it is God's act. This is why, as we will see, only God can, and only God may, dissolve the marriage bond.

p. 14, *Marriage* by Rev. D. Engelsma

Seducers Revealed and Reproved

by Agatha Lubbers

We live in evil days when the foundations are destroyed and when it seems that "...the heathen are come into God's inheritance." The temple and the holy oracles have been defiled. (cf. Psalm 79:1)

We live in days when "...the prophets make God's people to err." These prophets are the false prophets of Matthew 7:15, who are ravening wolves. They cry "Peace!" to those who feed them well. They do not teach the commandments of the Lord, and they prepare war against those who do not support them.

We live in days which were similar to the days of Micah, the prophet, who prophesied in Judah in days contemporary with the captivity by Assyria of the ten tribes of Israel. Those in Israel and Judah who claimed to know the truth have no knowledge of the truth. They are like those described in Micah 3:6ff. "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall cover their lips; for there is no answer of God."

The religious situation was terrible in Israel and Judah prior to the captivities of Israel in 722 B.C. and Judah in 600 B.C. The prophets prophesied lies and deceit to the people. There was ease in Zion (cf. Amos 6:1) and the prophets did not testify the truth to the people. They permitted them to sin. In fact the prophets seduced the people and exclaimed "Peace!"-but there was no peace.

These false prophets were mercenaries. They preached for hire. They distorted and suppressed the truth. These ecclesiastical and political leaders desired only one thing and that was money. They believed falsely that God would be pleased with them because they were such respectable persons, But the ultimatum and judgment of the Lord comes in the words of Micah 3:12, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake (the prophets) be plowed as a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps..."

The false prophets are in our land too. They are in the whole world. Liberal preachers, who prate about their religion, preach sermons with themes like, "The Cross—Fact or Symbol." They deny the Christ of the Scriptures. They mock the

Christ of the Scriptures. They deny the crucified Christ of Good Friday and the risen Christ of Easter.

Those who ought to preach repentance towards God, and reconciliation with him through faith in Christ, deny the Christ of the Scriptures. They join the jeering crowds around the cross. They demand the crucifixion of Christ and then deny His deity.

Those who ought to be busy refuting with the Holy Scripture all schisms and heresies which are repugnant to the pure doctrine are busy insidiously developing heresies that have been denied by the Church of all the ages. The faith of our fathers, which still lives, they will deny.

One of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian church has been the complete deity and complete humanity of Christ. Our confessions proclaim Jesus Christ to be truly God and truly man. The Heidelberg Catechism in describing our Mediator and Deliverer says that he is "very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is also very God."

Not only has this been the Reformed and Orthodox Christian doctrine concerning the complete deity and humanity of Christ, but this doctrine has been the bedrock of Roman Catholic orthodoxy. In this matter the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches which have not adopted the heresies of Modernism are in agreement.

In recent years scholars have arisen within the Roman Catholic Church who deny the doctrine of the complete divinity of Christ. At the University of Tubingen in Germany (a country which has spawned Modernists in the Protestant Churches) is Hans Kung, who has been accused by his country's bishops of disseminating "dangerous views about Christ." These dangerous views are his tacit denial of the divinity of Christ.

Anticipating the Lenten season, **Time**, February 27, 1978, described Kung as a part of an international group of theologians, who are demanding that the Roman Catholic Church take a new look at the traditional doctrines concerning the divinity of Christ. Having been influenced by liberal Protestants these Roman Catholics will destroy that which has been hammered out on the anvils of the church councils of the past. These deniers of the faith say that Jesus did not proclaim himself as the eternal Son of God, nor did the early Christians proclaim Christ as the eternal Son of God. They say that Christ gradually fashioned himself into the Son of God. They say that Jesus revealed the way to the Father, but does not reveal the Father himself.

In these days when we are reminded especially of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, it is important for us to be able to give an answer to every man for the hope that is in us. (cf. I Peter 3:15) In these days which are so similar to days in the church 1600 years ago, we must be prepared to defend the faith of our fathers and if need be die for the faith.

Are the allegations of liberal Roman Catholic scholars and liberal Protestant scholars true? They say that Jesus did not proclaim himself as the eternal Son of God. What do the Scriptures say? "...thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." (John 6:69) Modernists say that Christ Jesus reveals the way to the Father and does not reveal the Father himself. What do the Scriptures say? "No man hath seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18)

Sabellians, other ancient heretics and contemporary Modernists deny the eternal Son of God who became sin for us. Some say he became the Son of God by degrees. Such a doctrine denies the eternal existence of the Son of God. However, the doctrine of the eternal deity of Christ is asserted by the Church in the Belgic Confession as one which has "always

been defended and maintained by the true Church, since the time of the apostles, to this very day, against Jews, Mohammedans, and some false christians and heretics ..." (cf. Art. IX) Christ did not become divine by degrees, therefore, but he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and was declared designated to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. (Romans 1:3-4)

Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and seminaries in every country of the world today are staffed by men who are intent in destroying the gospel. These are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (II Timothy 3:7 ff) Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse. They deceive and they are deceived. Germany's Hans Kung, Holland's Piet Schoonenberg, and El Salvador's Jon Sobrino are all Roman Catholics who deny the real divinity of Christ. They write and teach in the same tradition as Schlieiermacher and other Modernists of the nineteenth century. These men are deceived and they are deceivers.

Because of such deceivers the church becomes a harlot and is not the faithful bride of Christ. Concerning men of this kind the apostle John says, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (II John 7 and 9)

The apostle John adds the following admonition. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought (worked for as God works in us) but that we receive a full reward." (II John 7) The message of the admonition is obvious. We must not boast. It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy. We must take heed lest we fall. "Only those who hold the catholic faith will be saved; which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." (cf. Athanasian Creed, one of the ecumenical creeds referred to in Article IX of the Belgic Confession.)

The apostle John urges in another place as follows: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come into the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (I John 4:1-3)

Do you recognize the spirit of anti-christ? It is in the world. Believe it not!

But sing with the psalmist in Psalm 79.

Let Thy foes no longer scorn Thee,
Now avenge Thy servants slain;
Loose the prisner, save the dying,
All Thy enemies restrain;
Then Thy flock, Thy chosen people,
Unto Thee their thanks shall raise,
And to every generation
We will sing Thy glorious praise.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

DISCIPLES INDEED!

"Then said Jesus unto the Jews which believed in him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." **John 8:31, 32**

Jesus had an inner circle of disciples, called the twelve. They were not all real, spiritual learners. Even here there was one who is called the son of perdition by Christ. He was Judas Iscariot. He did not abide in the word of Jesus. He claimed to believe in Jesus, followed Him, even cast out devils in Christ's Name once. But he could not rejoice that his name was written in heaven in the Book of Life.

There have been many who "believed" in Jesus, made profession of His name, but who did not continue in Jesus' Word.

Jesus had been preaching in Jerusalem; He taught in the temple in the treasury building. He boldly proclaims Himself as the Son of God, the One who will be lifted up. And He encounters solid and confirmed unbelief. These people could not possibly believe Jesus, because they did not know the heavenly Father, who had sent Jesus to speak. If anyone knows the Father he will also know Jesus. He had done many wonderful works in the Father's name. But all is to no avail in these unbelieving Jews. Hence, they will die in their sins. The only Savior they will not know. They will be their own Savior. Yes, when Jesus is lifted up on the tree, and when He is set down on the Father's right hand, and will perform from heaven His great and might acts by the preaching of the Gospel, then these Jews will know that a prophet has been in their midst, who spoke nothing of Himself, but who

spoke what He was told to say. The Word which Jesus has spoken will judge them!

Such will die in their sin. And they will die in their sin by which they add sin to sin. To the sin of their depravity in Adam they now will add the sins of total unbelief, and the rejection of the Christ, be ever more disobedient to His word, and perish everlasting in hell in their sins! These are not disciples at all! These are children of their father, the devil. He was the murderer of man from the beginning. To this liar, and murderer, these unbelieving Jews listen. They do the will of Satan, they are in bondage of sin, death and hell forever!

Now, there was some positive fruit on Jesus preaching here in the temple. The positive fruit was evident in those who heard Jesus preach to these unbelieving Jews and denounce them for their unbelief. They believed in Jesus. There were many who believed. However, their faith needs strengthening. And they need the warnings, threatenings, of the Word of Jesus. They must make their calling and election sure. They must know whether they are disciples **indeed**. They must know whether they are ingrafted into Christ Himself by a true and saving faith. It must be more than what is called temporary faith. They must not be like seed that is sown in shallow ground, and which springs up quickly, but, which, when the sun and heat arise, withers and dries because it has no depth of earth. And, therefore, Jesus immediately warns these many who professed faith in His Word that the proof of true discipleship is known from this earmark: Continuing in my word!

You have, dear reader, gone through another year of Catechism, Society and Bible Study. You have needed this study and this prayerful reading of the Scriptures. You have needed to do this believingly and not merely as some intellectual exercise. You have needed to eat and drink this word by faith and hear that it was Christ's Word, which He speaks in the name of the Father who sent Him. You must have heard your heavenly Father speak to you, His children, His son and daughter. You must also have remembered what you studied and cherish it in your heart as a great treasure, the pearl of great price. Jesus says to you and me in the Bible: if ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

It is His warning finger!

But Jesus says more. He also says that those who continue in His Word shall "know the truth". What truth? Any truth about some news event in history? The actual facts about a certain court case and the procedures of the courts? To have a head full of intellectual knowledge about the Bible? To be able to recite many passages of Scripture from memory? Jesus uses a verb in the Greek here translated "shall know" which means; experiential knowledge. It is the knowledge of God in Christ which spells eternal life, joy, peace, hope, victory. It means to know Christ who is **the** truth ! He is all that He says He is, as the one who speaks in name of the Father. He is the very effulgence of God's glory, the expressed image of His being. And to know the truth means that, when the gospel is preached, we experience by the operation of the Holy Spirit that we lay hold on this Christ consciously by faith.

That is to know the truth. Let us never allow this to be deluded into a mere motto to advocate our own pet peaves of what we consider to be the truth of a certain matter. That is not abiding in the Word of Jesus, who speaks what He hears the Father tell Him. We must bow to the word of the Gospel and good exegesis to abide in the Word and to be Christ's disciples indeed and to know the truth!

Yes, the truth of the gospel makes the believer who abides in the Word free. It does not simply allow one to be free, or open the avenues to us of freedom. No, this knowing the truth in Christ by a true

faith makes us free: it **liberates** us. We who are in the bondage of sin, and guilt, and evil desires are set free. We are liberated from the doing of sin. He that doeth sin is a slave of sin. Oh, the terrible slavery of sin. What bondage! But the Gospel by the Spirit liberates us. It liberates us legally. It sets us in the status of sons of God, who have the right to eternal life. But it also liberates us in that the actual shackles of sin are taken from our eyes, ears, hands and feet. It liberates us from the power of Satan.

Yes, this is an assuring word to us. It gives no comfort to those who reject the gospel, the Reformed faith which teaches the sovereign grace which is operative by the Spirit in the Gospel. It is only comforting to those who continue in the Word. These are beckoned on in the battle of faith against all unbelief, against Satan and all his demonic hosts. To these Jesus says: hold that thou hast, that no man take your crown!

Did you enjoy Catechism this year? Did you know that Jesus was teaching you the gospel there in that class by His minister - and elder-servants? Did you go to God's house to listen to God's Word with joy and gladness in your soul? Did you read **Beacon Lights** as the setting forth of the Word of God as a lamp to your feet and as a light upon your path?

You are a disciple indeed?

A disciple of Jesus Christ, a learner of the Gospel at Jesus' feet?

Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear!

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. Where was the house of the Lord when Samuel was a child? I Samuel 1:24
2. Who said, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God?" Matthew 16:16
3. How many men did Gideon keep in his army? Judges 7:7-8
4. Who are believers not to be yoked with? II Corinthians 6:14
5. What shall the just live by? Romans 1:17
6. The first two verses of which book are the same as the last verses of the preaching book?
7. Who had a dream about a ladder? Genesis 28:10-12
8. Who was Jacob's favorite wife? Genesis 29:28-30
9. Who told a riddle at his wedding feast? Judges 14:10-12
10. Name a begger who sat at a rich man's gate? Luke 16:20

(Bible Baseball NO. 2, Howard A. Fischer, Moody Press)

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Joel Kooima of Hull were blessed with the birth of Jared Lee on Feb. 10.

Mr. and Mrs. Terry Kooienga of Faith rejoice in the birth of Jared Lee on Feb. 19.

Rev. and Mrs. M. Joostens of Faith (First by the time you read this!) rejoice at the birth of Joy Christine on March 12.

Mr. and Mrs. Egbert Holleman of South Holland were blessed with the birth of Joel Edward.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Bruinsma of South Holland rejoice in the birth of Jennifer Ann.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Schipper of Hope are thankful to God for the gift of a healthy daughter, Christine Joy, born on April 4.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Hope Church has sent Dave Buiter's membership papers to Hope in Redlands.

Loveland has received the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. G. Joostens from Redlands and the membership by baptism of Laurie Kregel from First. Jeanne Lanting's papers have been sent to Hope in Grand Rapids.

First Church has received from Faith Chr. Ref. the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kaiser and their daughter Linda as confessing members and their 3 baptized sons Daniel, Douglas, and Timothy; and those of Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Mulder and 3 baptized children Laurel, James, and Lynda; and those of Mr. and Mrs. James Swart.

Faith has granted Sheryl Pierson's request to become a baptized member of the congregation. They have also received the membership papers of Mrs. Johanna Schmidt and those of Mrs. Hildrene Smith and 4 baptized children from First Church

First Church has received the membership papers of Mrs. Ronald Timmer from Oakview Ref. Church.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Ronald Timmer made public confession of his faith in First Church on March 19.

Esther and Louie DeJong publicly confessed their faith on April 2 in South Holland.

Beth Huber publicly confessed her faith on April 2 in Faith.

MARRIAGES

Gerlof VanderBaan and Tillie Sietstra were united in marriage on March 16.

Richard Talsma and Sharon Nelson were united in marriage on March 30 in Loveland.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

Hull's Young People sponsored a Soup Supper and Family Night on Feb. 27 in Hull's Community Building.

Faith's Young Peoplr sponsored a Barbecue and Hotdog Supper on March 14 in Meijer's Community Room. Proceeds were for the Convention.

The Fed. Board sponsored a basketball game at Grandville Jr. High on March 31.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Hull P. R. School presented an Easter program on March 10.

Loveland's Choir presented a program "Hallalujah, What a Savior" on Easter Sunday, March 26.

Hope School's Choirs presented a Spring Program in Hudsonville Church on April 14.

First Church has purchased a new parsonage.

To every thing there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born,
and a time to die;
a time to plant,
and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill,
and a time to heal;
a time to break down,
and a time to build up;
A time to weep,
and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn,
and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones,
and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace,
and a time to refrain from embracing:
A time to get,
and a time to lose;
a time to keep,
and a time to cast away;
A time to rend,
and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence,
and a time to speak;
A time to love,
and a time to hate;
a time of war,
and a time of peace.
What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?
I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.
He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.
I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.
And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.
I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.
That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

PLAN NOW!

to attend!

THE 38th ANNUAL P.R.Y.P. CONVENTION

August 21-25, '78

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

(HOSTS)