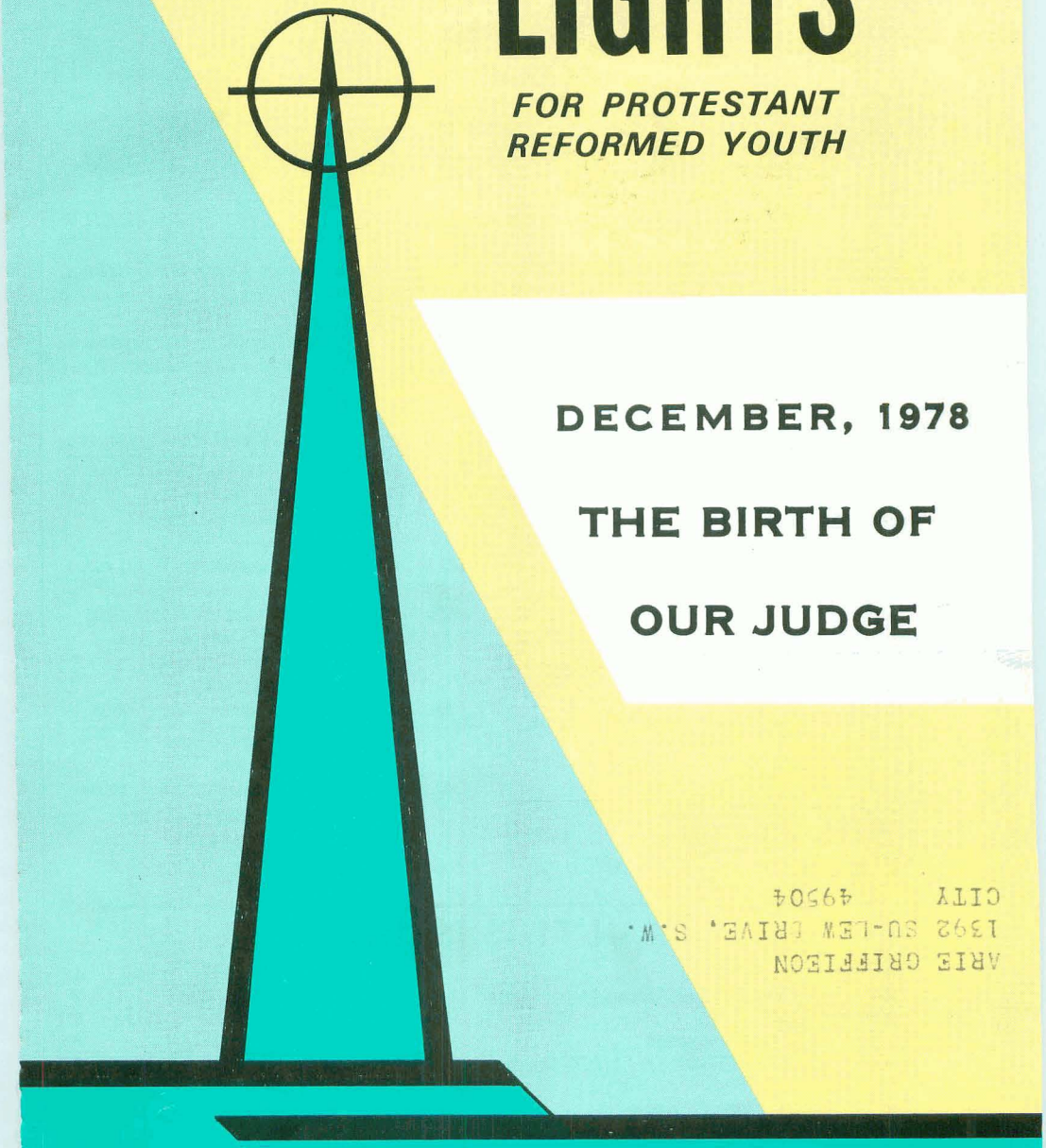
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



DECEMBER, 1978

THE BIRTH OF OUR JUDGE

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

As this year draws to a close, we would like to look back and ahead with you at your magazine.

It has been a year of hard work for staff and Federation Board as activities were planned and each issue of *Beacon Lights* was produced. We have seen that God is good to us and has again blessed us with fine material to read and good activities in which to take part.

We see, especially as *Beacon Lights* staff, that God has seen to it that we have good, sound material to print each month. This is something for which we should be very thankful both as staff and readers. In an age of watered-down theology, we see this as God's covenant faithfulness to us.

You have supported us with your interest through your gifts, and with your prayers. Especially through the means of prayer we have experienced the blessing of our covenant God. We covet your continued support in the future.

Ahead, the Lord willing, we see a magazine geared even more to the needs of our youthful readers. We hope to see more of our own young people supporting and taking part in each of our endeavors. Whether that support comes through subscribing to this magazine, letters to the editor, unsolicited material sent to us for publication, questions to Rev. Moore, or attending Federation sponsored activities, all this is done by young people through the Federation Board *for* young people. *Beacon Lights* is your periodical as Protestant Reformed youth. If your interest disappears, so will *Beacon Lights*, and that will be a sad day for you and for our churches.

We urge you to continue your support in the coming new year.

In this issue of *Beacon Lights*, Rev. Ken Koole of our Randolph Protestant Reformed Chruch, submits a guest article entitled "The Devil's Moment". Is the "Devil's Moment" more like several hours for some of us? Can we withstand a moment of the Devil's temptation?

Rev. John Heys, who is presently laboring in Christchurch, New Zealand, asks, "What shall we sing?" Do we really know what truly good music is? Is all music that is called religious music good music? Why is much so called "good" religious music promoted and sung in so many churches? Will we be ready to defend good music when the time comes?

Terry Gleason, of our Southeast Protestant Reformed Church, has drawn a Cristmas greeting to you from the *Beacon Lights* staff and the Federation Board whose wish for you is that the peace of the Prince of Peace will be yours this Christmas and for the coming New Year.

There is still time for those of you who received a complimentary copy of *Beacon Lights* last month to subscribe. The sooner you send us your address the sooner you will receive the best Protestant Reformed young people's magazine money can buy.

Also submitted for this issue was an examination of the motives and reasons behind our gift giving at this time of year. There is also offered an interesting alternative for this yearly event. At their wish we have withheld their names.

Give Beacon Lights for a Christmas gift. Give a gift that lasts all year! Use the subscription blank on the back cover.

Everywhere Scripture comforts and encourages those that must suffer for righteousness' sake by holding before them the glorious eternal reward. Thus the Lord Jesus Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, declares: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12) *The Triple Knowledge*, Vol. 2, p. 369.

Editorial

THE BIRTH OF OUR JUDGE

by Harry Langerak

The birth of Jesus is one of the most universally celebrated days of the Christian world today. Believers and unbelievers alike appear to celebrate with equal fervor. The Babe of Bethlehem seems to offer this wretched world a certain hope if only man will follow the example of the good man. Believer and unbeliever alike see many of the same features in the birth of Jesus. The difference is the believer has on the spectacles of faith; while the unbeliever, though he sees, is blinded to the reality of Christmas. With his spectacles, the believer sees that Jesus is his Lord and Redeemer who will someday return on the clouds of heaven in judgment. Jesus himself says: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see and that they which see might be made blind." Yes, indeed, the Babe of Bethlehem is coming in judgment to take unto Himself His sheep and cast the goats into outer darkness.

In this season of celebration, I would like to address a few sobering words to you on the implication of Jesus' return in judgment, particularly as we find them in Matthew 25:31-46.

Jesus' judgment is a terrible thing. As the risen Lord, He is given the power to judge in the name of God. In His judgment, the elect (sheep) are separated from the reprobate (goats). The elect He takes to reign eternally with Him while the reprobate He sends to hell. The irony of Christmas is that the reprobate celebrate the birth of their Judge who will condemn them to hell.

This judgment of Christ is based on what man has done with Christ. In verse 40, Christ says "in as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The point is that Christ is in heaven. Therefore, what we do to the **Saints** of **Christ** on this earth we do to **Christ**. We must see that Christ and His Church are one unified body with Christ as Head. Therefore, what is done to the saints as they are members of the body is done to Christ.

Christ, the righteous Judge, judges according to strictest justice. He will judge everyone on the basis of their sin. The sentence of Christ will be beyond appeal because man will know on the basis of his works that he deserves precisely what he receives at the Judgment.

In this Christmas season, we must remember that the Babe of Bethlehem is our Judge and as Judge He has determined who are His sheep. We must also remember that those who are the sheep of Christ are characterized by what they have done with Christ, particularly as He is reflected in each of the saints. This is a very sobering thought for each of us. As the sheep of Christ, we must show care and concern for our fellow saints. Each has the responsibility before our covenant God to serve our fellow saints whether that saint be in our eyes the least or the greatest. As brothers and sisters in

Christ, we have a spiritual equality because all are necessary to the Body. One part cannot say to another part, "I have no need of you". All are necessary because all make up an important part of that spiritual Body of Christ. Some times, it is the least comely parts that are the most important members in this Body. As the sheep of Christ, we must conduct ourselves as if we realize this important fact.

I have had, as a teacher, the opportunity to observe some behavior which frightens me. This is partly my reason for writing my article. We confess with lip, but it appears the heart is far from God. I see fellow saints being deliberately ostracized because they do not happen to fit into our mode of behavior or social status. I hear students maliciously talked about as "goodie-goodies" because they do not want to join in our wicked "fun". Those who have less talents, both physical or mental, are excluded from activities as not being good enough. The turned back, the stopped conversation, the stinging rebuke, the snicker at a mistake, the heavy sigh are many ways we serve notice that a fellow saint is not wanted. Who of us is immune to any of these actions? "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The important point for us to see is that when we treat our fellow saints in this manner, we are really sinning against Christ. Unless we repent of this terrible sin, we will be judged as if we committed the very act against Christ. Let us not console ourselves in that we are members of Christ's Church and, therefore, will not be judged as goats. God is not mocked. We must remember that judgment begins at the house of God where those who know better will be given the greater condemnation.

In this Christmas season, let us go by faith to Bethlehem and behold our Savior who so loved His sheep given Him of the Father that in His mercy He died the accursed death of the cross that they might have eternal life. Then we, too, will have the grace of God to show mercy and love to our fellow saint realizing they all are of the Body that Christ has redeemed.

In closing, I would like to quote from an article written by Rev. Vos on this subject.

"Minister then, beloved!

Minister to the saints of God. Christ dwells in them.

You may put it this way: Christ Jesus, the Son of God is very miserable in His people. Jesus is hungry and thirsty, naked and sick, a stranger and in jail—in his people!

Love them then, and in the Divine love, reach out to them and alleviate the suffering of Christ in His body, that is, the church!

And the righteous Judge shall reward such mercy in His just Judgment."

O Lord, how shall a youth preserve his way,
  At every turn by vanity surrounded?
In truth, if he Thy statutes will obey,
  If on Thy Word his attitudes are founded.
Thou whom I've sought, O let me never stray
  From Thy commandments, lest I be confounded.
Psalter No. 428

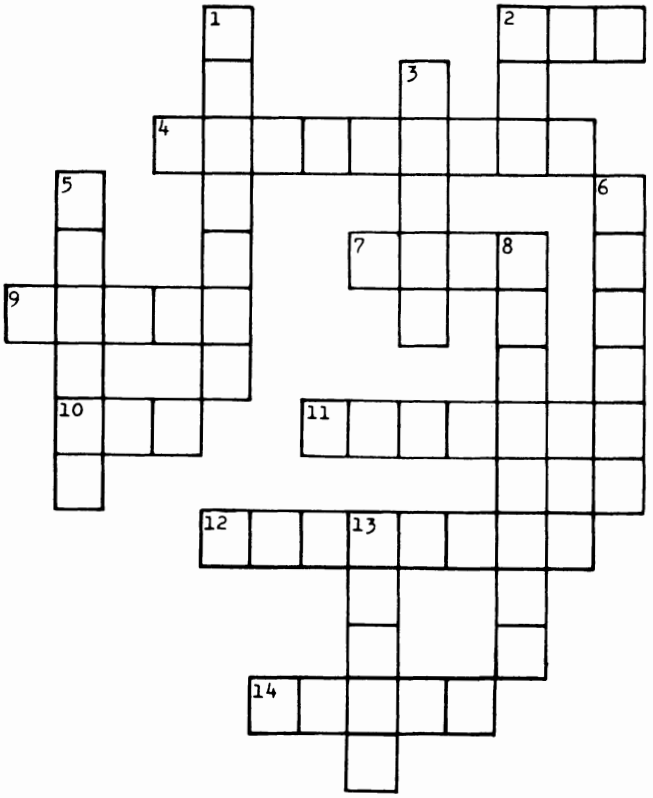
BIBLE TREES

ACROSS

2. Tree Solomon used for the doors in the temple. (1 Kings 6:34)
4. Tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden. (Gen. 2:9)
7. The branches of this tree were carried in a triumphal procession. (John 12:13)
9. A famous hill overlooking Jerusalem was named for what tree? (Acts 1:12)
10. Tree that caught Absalom's hair. (2 Sam. 18:9)
11. King of trees in the fable in Judges. (Judg. 9:14)
12. Tree Zacchaeus climbed to see Jesus. (Luke 19:4)

DOWN

1. The tree under which Elijah sat. (1 Kings 19:4)
2. The tree Christ caused to wither away. (Matt. 21:19)
3. The name of the tree Solomon used to build the temple. (1 Kings 5:6)
5. The tree the exiled Jews hung their harps on. (Ps. 137:1-4)
6. The tree Noah used to build the ark. (Gen. 6:14)
8. The name of the tree that helped David beat the Philistines. (2 Sam 5:24)
13. The tree Solomon used to make harps and psalteries for singers in the temple. (2 Chron. 9:11)



SONG OF CHRISTMAS

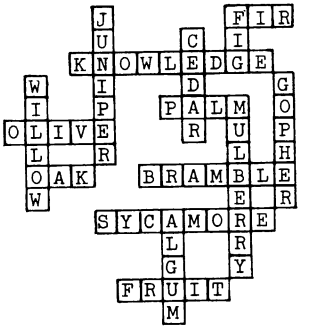
O, Jesus, Word made flesh to dwell among us,
How can I thank Thee for Thy Gift? What way
Can I in human frailty find to praise Thee best,
Who came the price for my dread sins to pay?
Thou wert despised, rejected for Thine Own,
A man of sorrows from Thy day of birth.
And grief, it was Thy closest of companions.
Who was there found to love Thee on this earth?

My sorrows Thou hast borne, though I, ashamed, turned from Thee.
For my transgressions Thou wert wounded sore.
My peace, it brought to Thee chastisement.
Thy stripes did heal me. Who could have loved me more?
I was a wandering sheep turned to his own way,
But Thou hast carried me within Thy arms.
To feed in pastures green, beside still waters,
And here I rest, safe from all earthly harms.

My cup now overfloweth with Thy goodness!
What can I render to Thee in my thankfulness?
I'll take this cup of Thy salvation, calling on Thee,
The greatness of this wondrous love confess.

Sue Looyenga
1978

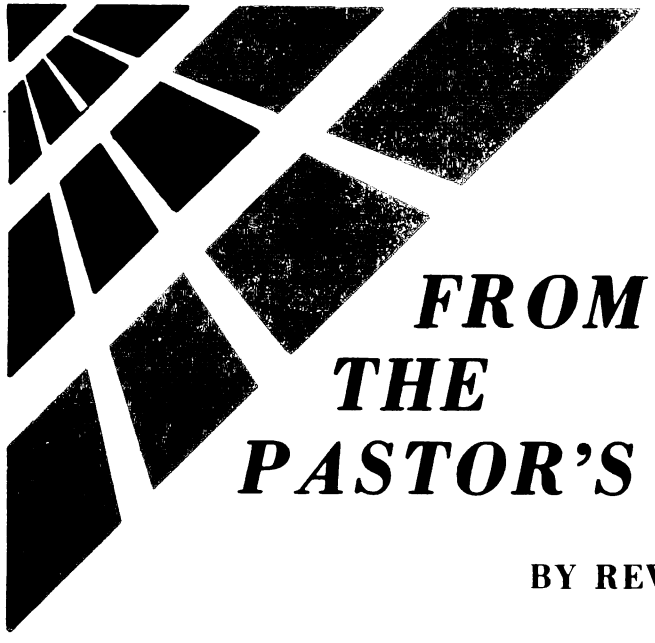
BIBLE TREES



XXXIX LORD'S DAY

Q. 104 What doth God require in the fifth commandment?

A. That I show all honor, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. M. KAMPS

A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

Are you a faithful disciple of our Lord? Is it possible to be faithful and only be a disciple outwardly? is discipleship related to the whole matter of one's church membership? Is church reformation only possible where men and women of faith clearly perceive the meaning and requirements of a disciple of Christ? Is faithfulness to biblical doctrine important to a conscientious disciple or immaterial? Are the precepts which Christ taught His people through the apostles and prophets of the Old and New Testaments still governing principles for the lives of His disciples today?

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? What is discipleship? In the great mission mandate to the Church, Jesus said: "Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father..." The term translated in the text "teach" can also be translated "to make disciples." Through the process of teaching various spiritual disciplines the Church would make disciples of all nations.

Exactly what were the apostles to teach? What was to be the contents of the various spiritual disciplines to which the nations would be exposed? Jesus defines the content of this instruction by adding: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:20) The term "disciple" is by itself a purely formal term. The heathen and pagan religious teachers have their disciples. Modernists teachers have their disciples. The term disciple, therefore, is something like the term "religious". Everyone is religious; but the content of one's discipleship and religion varies from one to another. Therefore, Christ commanded His Church to teach all nations "to observe whatsoever I have commanded you."

We believe that the Bible is a

revelation of our covenant God and Father through Christ Jesus. The infallibly inspired Word must be and is the content of all the teaching and preaching whereby Christ would make disciples. The Scriptures are the "Things" which Christ commanded us to observe. Therefore, the Word of God alone must be the content of our teaching that it may be personally appropriated by the disciples of Christ Jesus.

What specifically, then, does it mean to be a disciple of our Lord? Many times we think of a disciple as a follower. This is a true conception, but we would warn against all superficial thinking in this regard. A disciple of Christ is not a mindless follower or mere traditionalist. A disciple faithful to Christ is one who follows His specific precepts and doctrines or teachings. A faithful disciple is one whose life is governed by these precepts and doctrines. These precepts and doctrines of Christ rule the disciple's will, guide his thinking, direct his feet. The Master rules and directs His followers through the Word!

Nothing less is discipleship before Christ. Mere traditionalism is not discipleship, nor is outward religious formalism with its spiritually destruction rituals and ostentatious ceremonies. The Word of God must be preached and lived in every sphere of life. God's people often forget this truth. Before God's people realize what is happening to them the institution of the Church often has substituted for the lively preaching of the Word mere formalism of rituals and ceremonies. Knowledge of the Word is gradually lost and many rejoice to have it so. The result? Sensitivity to one's sin is lost, all fear of hell is gone, and the way of sanctification or holy living in dedication and consecration to Jehovah God is abandoned for the roads of worldlimindedness.

But a faithful disciple lives out of the Word. He keeps or observes all things whatsoever Christ commanded. (Matthew 28:20) This implies, of course, that a disciple knows the Word. To be a disciple of Christ is to be a student of the Word. A faithful disciple carefully listens to the Word. He is not judge who proudly exalts himself above the word, but he submits to the Word in childlike humility.

We should note that discipleship is an exclusive relationship. That fact should be readily apparant when we note the words that qualify the expression disciple. One is a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ. A believer is not a disciple of Christ and the philosophers and false prophets of our day. He is a disciple of Christ alone. He heeds the Word of God alone. To be a disciple of Christ is to be exclusively committed to Him and His Word. If one is a disciple of Christ he follows Christ at all times. In John 10:5 the word of Christ concerning the faithful exclusive comment of His own is found. Jesus said: "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him:" A disciple of Christ does not follow those who fail to bring the Master's Words. Rather a disciple of Christ will flee from those who bring the lie instead of the truth, false doctrine rather than the truth of the Word, stones instead of bread. The disciple clings to Christ and to His Word alone.

The exclusive character of the relationship of a disciple to Christ is rooted in the reality of love. A disciple not only knows Christ but he loves Him and His Father. Love is an exclusive relationship. The love of Christ and His Word does not permit the love of this world nor the things of this world. (I John 2:15) This love relationship between the Master and His disciples is a bond of fellowship in righteousness. In that bond of fellowship not only does Christ seek His redeemed people, but His redeemed people seek Him and find their joy and delight in His service and fellowship.

In this connection it would be good to point out the great importance of biblical doctrine to a disciple of Christ. Many

so-called christians today have little use for doctrine. The moment one begins to speak of "doctrine" people "tune out." Doctrine is repulsive to many and despised as unnecessary for a loving relationship with Jesus. But, we ask, can one be a disciple of Christ without a strong commitment to doctrine? Further, can one even know Christ and God our Father apart from doctrine? Obviously not! Discipleship implies the appropriation of doctrine. The doctrines of the Trinity, of Christ's deity, the doctrines of redeemption and atonement, justification, sanctification and of the creation and fall of mankind are all inseparably related to the relationship of discipleship in Christ Jesus. Only the truth leads to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The lie always obscures Chrst and precludes fellowship with Him. A disciple flees from false doctrine brought by strangers. But the disciple holds fast that which is good and called in Scripture "sound doctrine." (I Thessalonians 5:21 and Titus 2:1)

The Church of our day must once again learn to do what the saints of Berea did when Paul and Silas preached in that city on their second missionary journey. We read of these disciples in Berea that they "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11) The Word, doctrine, and truth were important to these saints of Berea; today, many account biblical doctrine of little or no importance. Besides in Berea the preaching of the great apostle Paul was subjected to an examination of its faithfulness in the light of scripture; but today many account this examination unnecessary and as possibly offensive to the preacher. But by what other measure will the disciple of Christ distinguish Christ's voice from that of strangers? (John 10:5)

Doctrine is very important to a disciple's life is governed by the Word. Through this Word Christ, The Master, dictates legal requirements for our walk in the world. What we are to confess is taught us in the Word. Disciples cling to the doctrine of the Word and *through* them to Christ. It can not be any other way, for apart from the doctrines of the Word we cannot know the Christ whom the Scriptures declare. Unless the Church would lose itself in subjectivism and mysticism she must demand that the pulpit bring the Word alone.

Discipleship in Christ is difficult! Many picture the Christian life as free of all tension, trouble, struggle, fighting and disappointments; instead the life of a disciple is supposedly only happiness, joy and roses. But this view of the life of a disciple is not true. The Bible teaches that the disciple of Christ must expect trouble, persecution, a great spiritual battle, and affliction. The Bible teaches that the believer must fight against the old man of sin in himself and crucify his own sinful nature. True discipleship is contrary to our flesh. Further, the disciples of Christ as children of light are always opposed by those who are children of darkness. Scripture warns the disciples of Christ that we must put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11) If there was no battle against the forces of sin, why then the armor? Disciples are called daily to a spiritual battle. Besides our Master warned that ever as he was hated by wicked men even so would His disciples be hated and despised by the world. We should remember that he who refused to bear the scorn of the apostatizing church and the hatred of the world is unfaithful to Christ.

This truth is not meant to deny that the Christian also experiences happiness, blessedness and the joy of his salvation. But the attainment of the later is only through the way of obedience to the former. The disciples of Christ only enjoy this blessed fellowship with Him in and through the spiritual struggle against the lie and sin. Disciples are soldiers of

Christ's cross, as he was scorned so we. The life of faithful obedience to God's Word is the life of victory.

"Then said Jesus unto the Jews which believed in Him, If we continue in my work, then are ye my disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31 & 32)

WHAT SHALL WE SING?

by Rev. J. A. Heys

You young people for whom "Beacon Lights is published will determine what we shall sing in the worship services of our churches in the years to come. Whether our churches will continue to use the **Psalter** exclusively and limit ourselves to these versifications of the Psalms and a few Scriptural passages from other books of the Bible, or whether we will introduce a number of hymns, will be a determination that you will make.

Our Classis and Synod in the past have consistently rejected the introduction of as much as one hymn. The generation that now has the say in these matters is content to abide by these decisions. Soon your generation will provide the elders, deacons, ministers of the Word and professors of theology in our churches who will be in a position to make changes in our denomination and end the long reign of the **Psalter** in our midst.

Therefore, when the request came to me to write about **Psalter** revision in "Beacon Lights", my thoughts led me first to this matter of the inclusion of or exclusion from the **Psalter** of a few "choice hymns. **Psalter** revision is by no means merely a matter of discarding unsingable tunes, or substituting new tunes that fit the words of the versification better than the one we now find in the **Psalter**. We now have gay lilting tunes whereby we sing serious, deep, soul-burdened prayers. There should be a change. Not infrequently do the tunes make a mockery of the words. But you may be sure that a great deal of the clamor for a revision of the **Psalter** does not concern itself with this aspect. Rather, through the years there has been a growing cry to add a few synodically approved hymns. And I would like to give you some advice with a view to the day when you will have something to say about the matter, and as fathers and mothers, elders and deacons will be caught up in the argumentation of that day.

Let it be understood, first of all, that before one hymn can properly be added to our **Psalter**, the Church Order must be changed. And that is no little thing or thing of little consequence. Article 69 forbids in our churches the introduction of as much as one hymn. We have no right at the moment to add Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God". And to

change the Church Order in order even to introduce Luther's hymn requires some pretty solid ground from Scripture itself. It must not be a change of the **Psalter** for change's sake. It must be a change for improvement, and an improvement which the Scriptures dictate to us. It must be a change that will enrich our spiritual lives and supply us with truths (not tunes) that cannot be found in the Psalms, and are not in our **Psalter** versifications of these Psalms. Scripture demands that we preach the whole counsel of God. We must also sing the whole counsel of God and not have a one-sided presentation that lauds God's love but speaks nothing of His wrath, that leaves the impression (if indeed it does not literally state it) that God loves everybody, and there is no such thing as reprobation or rejection.

If I am wrong please show me, but on my part I am convinced that the reason why there is such a clamor for hymns lies in the music and not in the words. Let us test that once and try it out. Suppose that the matter would come to Synod that we add those beautiful hymns, which I too love to sing, "How Great Thou Art", "Great Is Thy Faithfulness", and "He Lives". But the Synod sensing that it is the music that is wanted and not the words, would amend the motion to read that these could be added in a **Psalter** revision but not with the present tunes. Would you be as interested in adding them? Would you not want to know first of all what those new tunes would be? I agree, the tunes and the words belong together in these hymns; and it would be hard to find tunes for these hymns that we would prefer, partly because we know them with the words so well. But the point is still there: Would your interest in adding the words of these hymns still be there if it could, by synodical decision, be done only with new tunes? Would not your interest in the whole thing begin to disappear? Would you not say, "O let's forget it then"?

These are matters to consider. It is not like choosing a suit of clothes or a dress. It is not like changing an article in the constitution of your society, or an outdated traffic regulation. It is a matter of the worship of an holy God. It is a matter of praising Him and not of entertaining ourselves. It is a matter of singing the truth richly and not of singing with rich harmony.

Yes, I will agree that there are hymns that express the truth beautifully and are free from heresy. I will also concede that we may sing these in our homes. But introducing them into our worship services is quite a different matter. And the reason you must resist introducing them into our worship services is that they will take away the Word of God which He gives us in the Psalms. Not only will one hymn mean that in the service in which it is sung one versification of the Psalms will have to be dropped, but one will open the door for two, and two will soon make way for four until we find services in which all four songs are hymns.

If you do not believe that just investigate these churches that have song books that contain both. Take note of how the hymns have pushed the Psalms and their versifications out of the services to an extremely great extent. Once inside, hymns have power to take over the dominate the scene. And when the church gets weary of these, it brings out a new song book with even less desirable hymns.

No, young people, to be sure that we keep the versifications of God's Word, and sing His whole counsel, do not introduce one hymn. Do not open the door widely enough for one to slip through, because your children will throw it wide open. And how sure are you that the next generation, which will live in a more evil world than you will know, will have the spiritual strength and power of spiritual sensitivity and discernment to choose hymns that are free from error? You may not make it possible for them to corrupt our **Psalter**. And before you take one step to change

Article 69 of the Church Order or introduce one hymn into our Psalter, read Jeremiah 6:16, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." And let it not be said of you what God adds in that verse, "But they said, We will not walk therein." When an object is old and worn out, throw it away. But the Word of God, though old, abideth forever, and it alone can give your souls rest. It never wears out because it is the Word of the unchangeable God.

And instead of complaining that God's Word does not state things clearly and richly enough for you, and that God did not give the Old Testament saints enough wherewith to praise Him, study those Psalms and their versifications. Make an honest effort to understand the words of the Psalms in the greater light you and I have in the New Testament instead of looking for new tunes, rich harmonies and lilting rhythms. And instead of envying those who have hymns appreciate what you have which is far better.

THE DEVIL'S MOMENT

by Rev. Ken Koole

"In a moment".

Do you recognize this as a quote from Scripture?

If you recognize this familiar phrase, do you also have an idea of what these words in Scripture refer to?

If your first reaction is that it has to do with the resurrection, you would be right. This phrase refers to how long it will take for our earthly bodies to be raised and transformed into heavenly glorious bodies. It will be instantaneous. The phrase is found in I Corinthians 15:52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," and so on.

Now, this "moment" just mentioned we will, for convenience sake, call Christ's moment (the moment in which His resurrection power is revealed.) But Scripture also makes mention of another moment, the Devil's moment. In connection with a revelation of the Devil's power, the phrase "In a moment", is used also. Do you know where and in what connection? It would not be surprising if you did not. This phrase when used in connection with the Tempter is not so familiar. If you are curious, you will find it used in Luke 4:5. You find the phrase used in connection with the last temptation of Christ by Satan in the wilderness. Only the last temptation did not take place in the wilderness, it took place on a high mountain. And from that vantage point, the Devil showed Christ all the kingdoms of the world and their glory "in a moment of time". The Devil's moment is the moment of temptation.

As tempter, the Devil has been given great power. He took Jesus into a high mountain. There he was able to show Christ all the mighty kingdoms of man and their glory in one stupendous vision. The Devil's purpose was to overwhelm Christ by the sheer impact of it all. Thrones, principalities, powers, kings, and princes, honor and glory, crown jewels dazzling in their beauty, wealth beyond compare, science and learning, art and culture, music, songs of praise, armies and warlike

steeds; all this confronted Jesus in a moment. Satan sought to take Christ's breath away, to stun Him with the magnificence of it all. Who would not be impressed and attracted by it all? The Devil was preparing Christ for the temptation, namely, all this could be Christ's for the small price of bowing down before Satan. All Christ had to do was touch His knees to the ground and do obeisance, and Satan promised "all shall be thine". To think, all this could be Christ's without His having to go to that terrible cross. That way meant self-denial and impoverishment. What a bitter way. Christ would not have a place to lay His head. Satan could change all that in a moment. Men would stumble over each other in their haste to offer him their palaces and luxuries. God's way meant that Christ had to be a servant on the earth. The Devil's way meant that he could be the one all would call "Your Majesty". How appealing.

For this reason the Devil brought Christ into a high mountain. Which mountain this was, we know not. It makes little difference. There is of course no mountain on earth high enough anyway from which to see all the Kingdoms of the earth - not even among the mighty Himalayas. My own opinion is that this was a special mountain fabricated by the Devil especially for this temptation. Whatever, the Devil takes Christ into a high mountain to support his temptation. Mountains represent power and majesty. They are creation at its most magnificant. So the mountain location fit the temptation. The Devil was suggesting that this majestic creation with all its glory and wealth and fame and magnificance could be Christ's **now**! Why endure the shame of the cross in order to receive the rule of creation, when he could attain the same goal so much more quickly and easily in the mountain? Such is the temptation. The way of the cross would be bitter. The Devil's way seemed sweet and pleasant in comparison, did it not? He did not succeed with the Son of God, but one failure does not prevent him from using the same strategy when he deals with those Christ redeemed.

The manner in which we are tempted today is becoming more like unto Jesus' temptation all the time. It may not seem that way at first glance. The Devil is not permitted to whisk us up into a high mountain to tempt us, but do not forget that does not prevent him from taking his mountain to us. For at this, the end of the ages, great power is delivered into his hands once again. More and more the Devil is able to "show us all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them". The 'moment" in which the Devil flashed everything before Christ was a marvel of instantaneous communication by an audible, visual means. And the "moment" was what made the temptation such as powerful one. The Devil strives to attain that power once again. He is a communications expert and is delighted with man's progress in the field of communications - especially in the last fifty years. Of course, the Devil is not interested in means of communication simply because discovery of ways to send and receive electronic impulses is in itself exciting. We had better believe there is a whole lot more involved than that. Ultimately, the Devil is always concerned with himself - with avoiding his own destruction. To avoid destruction, he must defeat God by defeating the cause of God. And he seeks to do that by leading the church astray. To that end, he uses every channel of communication for the purpose of temptation. He delights in every technical advance that makes his temptation more powerful and effective. What he is seeking is the means to bring to us more and more of the glory of the world in a briefer and briefer segment of time. He seeks to approximate more closely the "moment" of temptation on the mountain. Thus he hopes to overwhelm us and to cause us to

stagger and fall under the impact of all the world's glory.

You sense by now what I am pointing to, the Devil's mountain of the modern day - television. With this he brings to us the whole world of man's glory. He displays before our dazzled eyes the power and glory and wealth of this world in living color and in stereo. And I have an idea that the Devil is more concerned with the impact of the commercials than the actual entertainment. The entertainment is bad enough - deadening our spiritual moral sensitivities, hardening our spiritual consciences to the evils of sin. But never forget that Television is deadly sixty minutes to the hour. The Devil having our attention is not going to give us six to eight minutes of rest per hour. In fact, I am more and more of the opinion that he entertains us for fifty minutes exactly to display the glorious trinkets of this world before our eyes the other ten minutes.

A few months ago, I was listening to an interview on the University of Wisconsin Broadcasting Station. Being interviewed was a Television Producer. The interviewer asked why the quality of T.V. programs was getting so bad - both as to the plot and the moral standard. The answer was most enlightening. One ought always keep in mind, said this producer, that Television was primarily a **sales medium**, not an entertainment medium. That, he said, is what he was required to keep in mind when producing a show. It's the world's manufacturers that sponsor Television. Whatever attracts audiences to view the goods they have to offer in a few minutes, is what they want on the screen. The whole of Television is pointed toward its commercials and that includes everything from soap operas to sport spectaculars.

You understand then that the Devil intends Television to be lethal sixty minutes in the hour. The commercials themselves are dangerous. Their whole intent is to make you earthly-minded. Your prestige in the society is determined by your order, complexion, muscle tone, hair style, car, clothing styles, etc. The Devil is suggesting that all this can be purchased at a price. The temptation is: sacrifice a few principles - (bow down to Satan and mammon), and purchase all the glory and power money can buy. Why live a life of self denial, servitude, and repentance? That's not what life is all about. LIFE is self-gratification or if you will; carnal pleasures. If you forget about supporting the Kingdom causes, then you will have that much more money to buy yourself a high place in society. Such is the Devil's temptation through that mountain of iniquity - television. How convenient for him to have us bring his "mountain" into our homes, rather than him having to take us to his mountain. In a few moments, he flashes before us all that the world has to offer. How impressive! You say you're not affected? How many commercial ditties can you recite at the drop of a hat? Do not kid yourself - the Devil knows you and I better than that. There is only one way to oppose temptation - that is by fleeing it - not be challanging the Devil, imagining we will not be influenced. Do I have to remind you that the Devil's moments of temptations through advertisement steps up around the Christmas season? Leave it to the Devil to turn our thoughts to earthly luxuries when we should be contemplating the poverty of the babe born in Bethlehem.

Is this all an insignificant thing? Hardly. Remember, the Tempter's moment is directly opposed to Christ's final "moment". Satan uses his "moment" in hope of preventing the Church's grand and glorious moment, namely the resurrection, which will fulfill all our hopes and fervent expectations. In the end, he who yields to Satan's temptation, and does not repent and turn, will have no part in Christ's "moment". What are you doing about the Devil's temptations at the moment?

GIFT GIVING

It is that time of year again. Thanksgiving is over and December is upon us. The Christmas season is now here. In fact, it has been here for a couple of weeks already. Even before Thanksgiving has been "celebrated", all the stores were hanging up Christmas decorations and advertising Christmas specials. They make it hard for you not to get caught up in the Christmas spirit.

What does this Christmas spirit mean for us? Does it mean celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, or the exchanging of gifts? By now, you are probably thinking that this is another article about the proper observance of Christmas. I would have to admit that this would be very appropriate for this time of year, but there have been many articles written about this already. In this article, I would like to take a look at the idea of exchanging gifts.

It has been tradition in our family to pick names out of a hat and exchange gifts on Christmas Day. This was done in mid to late-November to allow everyone enough time to do their shopping. Everyone would put a list with his or her name, giving suggestions of what he needed or wanted. In past years, this year is no exception, I have had a hard time coming up with a list. I didn't need anything. The things I wanted I really didn't need, but I needed a list so I put them on. I would have to page through the catalogues just to find ideas. I think this is true of many of us. We have such a great abundance of material possessions, we can't even think of things we want for Christmas. Why, then, do we insist on exchanging gifts every year?

The day our family gathered to pick names, we discussed this. We realized there were many others who could put the money to better use than we could. To name just a few, there are churches, schools, and families in our own denomination who are in need of help. Now, instead of putting names in the hat, we put in the money we would have spent on Christmas presents, and voted on which cause of God's kingdom we would send the money to. We hope to start a new tradition in our family. Although the tradition may already be an old one to some of you, it was a new one for our family, and we thought we would share the idea with you.

In closing, let us not forget that our great abundance of possessions are not our own, but are God's, who gives us all things. Let us remember the words of Paul in Acts 20:35, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive".

R.F.P.A. books. They're for YOUth.

For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. I Corinthians 1:18

THE HULL
YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

Our meetings start at 7:15 on Sunday evenings. We begin by singing Psalter numbers, followed by prayer led by our President, Rev. M. Hoeksema. Following this the minutes were read and business was taken care of. This past year we continued to discuss the book of Revelation. Being this book is hard to understand, Rev. Hoeksema led the discussions each week.

The last Sunday of each month was reserved for a special topic discussion. We discussed such topics as movies, Reformed Doctrine differences, and mercy killing.

After Bible discussions, an appointed song-leader led us in singing and in closing prayer.

For outings during the year, we had a hayride, and skating party with our Doon and Edgerton Young People's Societies. We also sponsored an annual Spring Banquet. Each year we sponsor a fund-raising Soup Supper for the convention. We also held a Singspiration for the cause of this year's convention.

Our society meetings adjourned in April so we held three outings to keep our society active during the summer months.

We thank God that we have the opportunity to meet as Christian Young People to study His Word. We pray that He will continue to bless us as a society so we may praise Him in all that we do.

Janice Westra, Brenda Gritters, Darla Jansma, Rachel Jansma, Sheri Driesen, Jeri Westra, Diane Hoekstra, Sandy Brunsting, Judy Driesen, Lorna Hoksbergen, Roxanne Gritters, Linda Hoekstra, Darlene Brunsting, Pauline Hoekstra, Marlys Van Maanen, Gary Westra, Steve Kooima, Brian Gritters, Ron Hoksbergen, Michael Kooiker, Nick Kooiker, Dennis Hoksbergen, Harlan Van Maanen, Rev. Mark Hoeksema

PERSECUTION?

by Ben Wigger

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." II Timothy 3:12.

Pause for a moment with me and consider that verse from God's Holy Word. It is quite a statement to read, and it leaves very little doubt in the heart of the Child of God. We will without question, if we life godly lives in Christ Jesus, suffer persecution.

When one considers the whole area of the church and persecution, it is so easy to let our minds think of the past, and the future, but very little time is spent considering the present.

Perhaps you remember the history of the early church, and how it was continuously persecuted by the Caesar's of the Roman Empire. Or perhaps your mind wanders to the future and you dwell for a few minutes on the final suffering the church will have to suffer at the hands of the world through the reign of the anti-christ.

The Word of God, once more speaks of the church and persecution. Read for example, Revelation 6:9-11. Now by reading these verses, and other in Scripture, it becomes clear that the church always must contend with persecution. Not in the past or future only, but also right now.

The point I wish to make is simply this. Do we, you and I, suffer persecution now at the hands of the world? If we confess that we belong to Christ and are His church, then we should.

But in a recent sermon, it was pointed out to me that we are not always so eager to bear the brunt of the persecution that this world can dish out.

All of us quite honestly would make the confession that by God's grace, if we were found with a choice between forsaking the Word of God or forsaking the world, that we would leave the world behind. If we would, for example, come to our church next Sunday, and find the local police force there telling us that we could no longer worship there, and if we continued to do so we would face death, then as Christians our choice would be to serve and worship God even though we would die for it. And looking off into the future we can see such a situation arising as the reign of anti-christ looms ever closer on the horizon.

But doesn't it strike you as strange, that we can make that kind of confession and yet today we are not so eager to stand up and be ridiculed for Jesus' sake.

You may be ready to die for Jesus in the future, but what about a classmate taking God's name in vain today. Do you tell him that what he has done is sin? It's so easy to keep silent when we know that the consequence may be scorn or ridicule from our friends.

Perhaps you are faced with the problem of material gain, as opposed to spiritual. Does a job in this world have to be the best paying, or one with plenty of room for advancement? Even if that particular job means forsaking God's church in order to gain a few dollars. Or are we willing to suffer economically for Christ's sake. Perhaps that means a job with not quite as much money as you could get somewhere else.

By now we have all matured enough to know that life is always a struggle for the spiritually sensitive believer. Looking into our own hearts we realize the weakness and sin that is there. Ideally we would jump at any chance to bear the persecution of this world. But in reality we know that it is just not so.

When we look at the whole of Scripture, a very clear picture of the church's persecution unfolds before us. In the Old Testament, such heroes of faith as Abel, Lot, Job, and Daniel stand out. Such is also true in the New Testament, as men like the Apostles and the church of Smyrna come before our minds.

These men were all without a doubt children of God, and they endured. They labored for the reward of eternal life. And we as the church of today are in the same situation.

God has placed before us the responsibility of letting our faith show itself before the church and the world. And that calling is no small task, as we all are so very well aware.

There is always a danger that we as the church, will be afraid to stand before the world and declare that we are indeed Children of the Light. This fear can often lead to a compromise with the world. Instead of maintaining the Christian position, we befriend the world, and we tend to unite with the world. This attitude says we must try to make Christianity attractive to the world by making Christianity like the world, and the result is that the world soon takes over. However, we must be distinct from the world.

The warning is obvious, we must be ready, not in the future, but now, to face the world for Christ's sake. It is our blessed heritage. The church of all ages has had to endure persecution and as the end fast approaches, we know that the same is true of the church today. Remember the words of Rev. 2:10 - "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

Sins of youth remember not,
Nor my trespasses record;
let not mercy be forgot,
for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.
Psalter No. 67

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Hank Zandstra of Randolph were blessed in the birth of Laura Beth on Aug. 30.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Moerman of Kalamazoo were blessed with the birth of a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Bodbyl of Southwest rejoice in the birth of a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Glen Griess of Loveland rejoice in the birth of a daughter on Oct. 10.

"Mr. and Mrs. Dave Groeneweg of Hull were blessed in the birth of a son on Oct. 13.

We rejoice with Mr. and Mrs. Gerb De Jong of Hull who became adoptive parents of a son, Todd Matthew.

Mr. and Mrs. Greg Engelsma of Hope rejoice in the birth of a daughter Shannon Rae on Nov. 7.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

South Holland has sent the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. William Clason and one baptized son to Faith.

First has transferred the membership of Rev. and Mrs. R. Flikkema and one baptized child to Isabel.

Hull has received the membership of Miss Jan Hanko from Faith.

Hope has received the membership of Miss Sharon Kooima from Hull.

South Holland has transferred the membership of Mr. and Mrs. Ken Kuiper and two baptized children to Southwest.

First has transferred the membership of Mrs. Henry Renkema and one baptized child to Southwest.

Hull has sent the membership of Mrs. Henry VanDenTop (nee Marlene Fisher) to Doon.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Paul Scholten and Deb Elzinga publicly confessed their faith in Holland on Sept. 3 and 24 respectively.

Brian Gritters, Linda Hoekstra, Pauline Hoekstra, Darla Jansma, Rachel Jansma, Steve Kooima, Gary Westra and Jeri Westra made public confession of their faith in Hull on Oct. 8.

Lynne Hunter publicly confessed his faith in Hope on Oct. 29.

Sue Besselsen and Sandra Kamps publicly confessed their faith in Hope on Nov. 12.

MARRIAGES

Larry Burgess and Ruth Huizinga were united in marriage on Oct. 27 in Hope Church.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

The Fed. Board sponsored a volleyball tournament for area Young People's Societies in Covenant's gym on Oct. 27. Pictures taken at the 1978 convention were shown also.

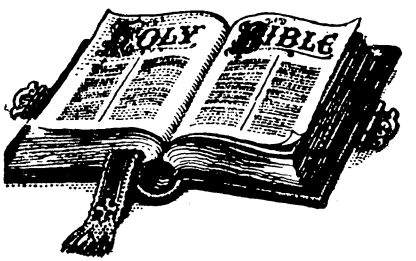
Redland's Young People sponsored a Reformation Day Singspiration on Oct. 29 Proceeds were for the 1979 convention.

Hull's Young People also sponsored a Reformation Day Singspiration on Oct. 29. Rev. Slopsema gave a speech. Proceeds were for the Beacon Lights.

Loveland's Young People sponsored an evening of basketball and volleyball on Nov. 13 in the Bell Reed Jr. High

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Our congregation in Loveland commemorated the Reformation on Nov. 1 with a lecture given by Rev. Lanting on "Preserving Our Reformed Heritage."



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