BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XLIX NUMBER 3

March 1990

Contentment . . . Under Authority

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

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Second Class Postage paid at Jenison, MI (USPS046-840)

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EDITOR'S NOTES: MARCH 1990

by David Harbach

Prof. H. Hanko continues "THE History of the Case," chapter 1 of the Janssen case. What is of particular interest in this article is the God guided effort of Rev. Herman Hoeksema to investigate Janssen's teachings privately. At first Rev. Hoeksema was in favor of the decision of the Theological School but then changed his mind. Find out what changed his mind by reading this exciting issue.

On the way to and from work there is an eye catching billboard advertising a certain brand of liquor. I remembered this billboard when I read Rev. Heys' article on "Remembering Lot's Wife." Lot's wife misled her daughters and so the world of men wants to mislead us by eyecatching billboards that degrade women. Rev. Heys covers a lot of ground in exposing the evils of forgetting your Creator as did Lot's wife.

Did you ever wish that you could change your home, parents, teachers, and elders because you hated them? I shudder at the thought, but sometimes we harbor these wishes. "But God has other plans," Rev. Van Overloop writes in his convention speech "Contentment . . . Under Authority." This is the last of the convention speeches and will prove to be very encouraging to you as young people and to all of God's people as we read to learn about contentment under authority.

Mrs. Carol Brands continues with her third letter to a young friend. In "Letter #3: The Idea of Ecclesiastes," Carol directs our attention to the fact that Solomon in his later years as the King of Israel fell into gross sins because of pride. The question then can be asked, "When did Solomon write the book of Ecclesiastes? Before or after these sins?"

We thank Jane de Boer from Lynden, WA, for her poem, "A Lesson Learned." This poem is somewhat different in content. I'll let Jane explain by quoting from the letter that accompanied her poem.

Dear Editor,

Here is a poem I wrote that was recommended to be sent in to the Beacon Lights by my minister. Even though there is no direct reference to God I think there is a good message concerning the commandment to 'Honor your father and your mother.'

We appreciate your poem, Jane, and hope that others will send in their writings too.

To keep informed about the availability of Reformed literature that the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People Societies has published, read the information below.

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From the Pastor's Study
REMEMBERING LOT'S WIFE

by Rev. John A. Heys

In the preceding article I called the attention of you young people to the fact that, when you seek an husband or wife, you must remember your Creator. For, in the wisdom which God gave him, Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:1, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." This does not mean that only in the days of your youth you are to remember your Creator. No, but in the days of our youth, we need to be trained and must grow in the truth of God's Word and in love to Him. And in the days of your youth Satan uses so many devices and temptations to turn you away from your Creator. There are so many earthly things that appeal to your flesh, and these he uses to get you to forget, not remember, the God Who created you, and Whom you must serve with all your heart and mind and soul

and strength.

Even then, remember that in the days of our youth we do not yet have the spiritual strength that God gives us in later life. We must, and in His grace do, grow spiritually as well as physically. And that is why in I John 2:1 the apostle, as he is writing to adults in the church, calls them "My little children" and writes further, "These thing write I unto you that ye sin not." Likewise, this spiritually wise Solomon wrote 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." If he is truly trained, he will walk in a way that reveals that he does remember his Creator. For that reason I would like to call your attention to the great importance that there is for you now to remember your Creator, Who made you and demands of you that you walk in love to Him.

The truth that I would like to hold before you this time is the fact that already, or soon, you will be thinking of getting an husband or wife. At least, this thinking and seeking is just ahead of you, if you do not already live in its consciousness. To do this I would like to hold before you what Jesus said and is written in Luke 17:32. There He said, "Remember Lot's wife." And there is an awesome truth here for you to consider, and a calling which you may not ignore any more that adults may even for a minute brush aside.

It is true that we do not know Lot's wife's name: and for that matter, we are not told what the names of his two daughters that left Sodom and Gomorrah were. As unbelievers they were not even worth having their names made known to us. What we can be sure of is that they, all three of them, walked openly in gross sins. They were unbelievers, women who did not remember their Creator and trampled His law under their feet, instead of using it as the place where they should walk.

As far as Lot's wife is concerned, we do not know either from what nation she came. She did not come out of Ur of the Chaldees with Abraham as Lot did. She did not come out of Haran, as Abraham did from Ur of the Chaldees, and then went from there into Canaan. We read not one word of her, or of Lot being married before he left Abraham and went toward Sodom, and soon lived right in that desperately wicked city. Lot did not remember his Creator when Abraham told him to choose where he wanted to live. His mind was on earthly things, not on his Creator. Lot was selfish and greedy. What was in the region around Sodom appealed to him, rather than his Creator, Whom he knew as Him Who had promised Abraham that whole land of Canaan. Lot was ready to leave Abraham and God's promise in order to please his flesh. He was an elect child of God, but one very weak in his faith, as we shall see. For he married a woman of Sodom.

It is also very revealing that Lot's wife let Lot and her daughters go forward while she slowed her pace and fell behind them as they, in obedience to God, fled from Sodom. And then she looked back to see whether Sodom really would be destroyed; because she wanted to go back into it, and to be with her ungodly neighbours, whose company and fellowship she enjoyed. In Genesis 19:26 we read that she looked back from behind him, that is behind Lot.

The two daughters brought up by Lot's wife revealed their unbelief and their refusal to remember their Crea-

tor. They got their father drunken by wine, so that they could commit fornication, harlotry and denial of the truth that God is their Creator and therefore has the right to tell them how to behave and conduct themselves. Of this we read in Genesis 19:30-38. Doing this they revealed how sinful they really were. Deceptively they said that they would help their father, even though what they did was to hurt him and to fight against their Creator.

There was no reason for them to preserve seed for their father, as they agreed to do. There never is, young people, an honest reason for sinning against our Creator. If it is not remembering our Creator and His law, unto us—His law according to which He created us—it is sin! To remember their Creator they had to remember what He did to Sodom because of all of its adultery, fornication and lewdness. They were interested in getting seed for their father, but not in getting covenant seed for God's church. Even after God had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, because of breaking the seventh commandment, they were walking like their mother, in sin. For they were also concerned with material things that appeal to man's sinful flesh. Yes, they did remember their father; but they were not remembering their Creator, as we must do every step of our way in this life.

And, young people, can we not see in this incident how their unbelieving mother brought them up and had instructed them to remember what appeals to the flesh, rather than to remember their Creator? Their Creator took away their father's wife, and his other daughters with their Sodomite husbands. Their Creator gave Lot no son, but these two unmarried daughters are going to fight against him and get a son for him through fighting against their Creator.

There is, therefore, a very important truth concerning our Creator and sovereign God that you must bear in mind, in order that you may continue to remember Him when now, or in the years that lie ahead, you seek an husband or a wife. The simple but undeniable truth is that you must seek one who remembers our Creator, and remembers Lot's wife, who led her daughters into sin rather than into a righteous walk. The question is not whether the one you seek will be one that satisfies your flesh as one who is handsome or pretty, and gives you a good time in the worldly sense. The question is whether he or she will help you remember your Creator and train your children to do so.

If that ever was true, it is true today. Not only has Satan very successfully gotten the world to deny rather than remember our Creator; but he has also gotten the world to approve of the murder of abortion. He has gotten the world to desecrate the Sabbath day in many gross ways, with stores open in cities that formerly forbade it; and so that unbelievers—let us pray that this is not true of church members—have to sit glued to their TV sets on Sunday to watch unbelievers in baseball, football and basketball, pushing their Creator out of existence as far as their hearts and minds are concerned. And as already has happened in some countries, they close church buildings and do not allow worshipping of God on the Sabbath day.

Far more for you to remember, young people, is that Satan is getting such an awful hold on the church today, so that there are so many

doctrines and sermons that insult and deny our Creator rather than praise and glorify Him. Men who are called ministers of the gospel can even be sentenced by our worldly courts for breaking the second table of God's law! The world can correctly find gross sins in their lives. Then, too—I know by experience, when I taught catechism classes fifty years ago—there were then already and are Christian schools that have, for all those years already taught theistic evolution, which implies that God is a liar when He moved Moses to write the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis the way he did. He, Satan, also moved the churches to teach that God loves the world, even though God Himself, through John wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Note: The love of God is not in them that love the world, God says here! I John 2:15. The devil has also gotten churches to hold on to and maintain, and even to fight to defend, the lie that God can be stopped by man, and fail to get done what He wants. He, they claim, offers salvation, pleads and begs sinners and patiently waits as He invites them to accept Christ and be saved by performing the work of faith, which He asks them, yea pleads with them, to produce. And how can He Who created the whole universe with all its amazing creatures be frustrated by a creature whose every heartbeat depends upon this almighty Creator? How dare men preach that man can frustrate God? How can they teach that the unchangeable God can change, and in fact can be changed by man who depends entirely upon Him? His name is Jehovah, which means I AM. But He changes—*in* fact is changed by man—if He invites incapable men to become saved, and then casts them into hell for not fulfilling the condition that He has presented to them. He then stops being Savior to them.

By all means, young people, do not seek an husband or wife who believes tha. our Creator has that weakness and is not the I Am, but is an I Can By Man Be Changed! By all means do not marry someone who will teach your children that lie! Seek an husband or wife who takes firm hold of Ephesians 2:8-10, which Our Creator moved Paul to write, because it is the truth. We are saved by **grace**, not by our work of accepting Christ. The faith through which we are saved is **God's gift** to us, not what we give Him. We are **His** workmanship and are saved by works of **God**. As He says through Paul, "Not of works lest any man should boast". This conditional theology teaches that man can keep God from getting what He wants. He has control over God.

Remember Lot's wife. She misled her daughters, and doing so led them into sin. Do not seek an husband or wife whom Satan will use to get you and your coming children into his camp and away from the sovereign Creator Whom you must remember in all that you seek and do. Remember what happens when one gets an husband or wife who insists on false doctrines and on evil practices. God made Eve to be an help meet for Adam. The wife or husband must help in spiritual things, not in getting you to fail to remember your Creator.. The word meet in the statement "help meet" means suitable, fit for Adam in his calling to remember his Creator. Man and wife must work **together** in the truth and in serving their Creator.

A LESSON LEARNED

by Jane de Boer

A man was sitting on a bench,
Reading his evening news.
He looked up an' saw an old man
Who offered him one of his chews.

"Well, my boy," said the old man,
"I'm getting old and gray.
It's time for me to go away
But first I have somethin' to say.

"When I was young I often rebelled,
And disobeyed almost every law.
My da' had died and left all debts
And I deserted my ma.

"After that whatever I done
I did without permission.
Whatever I wanted I could get
But to me there was somethin' missin'.

"When I a-married I had a son,
A fine boy I thought was he.
But when I tried to force my will
He acted just like me.

"He left me and I felt real bad
Just like my ma had felt.
At least he left me with no debts
I had my money belt.

"After some years of bitter regret
My boy came back to me.
He asked for forgiveness and I said,
'My son - no - please forgive me.

"I realize how my ma had felt
When we was dirt poor.
I found her grave and pa's too
Out on the lonely moor.

Do you believe that the discipline of your school or of your parents is horribly harsh and unjust?

Do some of you have fathers who are very demanding, who present themselves as someone with whom you cannot talk because it seems that they are not interested in you, or do not show any concern for you? Do you believe that you are justified in not talking with your father because you cannot see his love and concern for you? Do you smirk cynically when we sing, "The tender love a father has for all his children dear"? Or do you find your father gone from home a lot, and when he is home he still is so busy that he appears to have no conern for you? Or do you see him fighting frequently with your mother, and the house constantly filled with tension between them?

Do some of you have a mother who is so possessive and nosey, always asking about what you do and even looking into your drawers? Does she ask so many questions after you come home from going away - questions about what you did and with whom you went? Is she always disapproving of your clothes and friends?

Do you sometimes look at your home as a jail and your parents as prison guards, always depriving you of your liberties, making rules to cover every conceivable situation? Can you have fun with your classmates, but do you believe that no one in your home understands you? Do you find that your parents sin against you, but they never apologize? Do you find yourself becoming bitter because they make you apologize, but they never do? Or is it worse (which may God forbid): are you the object of abuse physically, psychologically, or sexually?

Do you look at the homes of others and conclude that they are much better than yours? Parents in those homes allow their children to go places and do things that you are not allowed to do? Would you rather have those parents than your own?

Every single one of us, whether we are young or older, have had some of these experiences at one time or another, to one degree or another. We looked at our homes, parents, teachers, elders, steering committees and said that we hate it and wish it were changed.

• • • •

But God has other ideas. The God, Who you wish would make some changes in your life, is the God Who loves you to such an extent that He bought you from sin's dominion at the cost of His own Son's life. And He is the God Who is so deeply concerned with the whole of life that He knows each of the hairs of your head and each detail of your life.

God is pleased, as a part of His perfect plan for your life, to have you live under authority, whether it be your father or your mother, the convention's steering committee or your consistory, or your teachers in school.

Not only is God pleased to place us under authority, but it is also the will of His good pleasure that we be content under that authority.

• • • •

What is authority?

We learn much about authority by clearing up some wrong conceptions and learning what is not authority.

Authority has nothing to do with might or power. Authority is not necessarily in the hands of those who are the strongest. Authority has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that

"I stood by the graves lookin' down
And asked them to forgive me.
I know in my heart they did forgive
But my guilt remains in me.

"So I'm telling you this, young man,
So that you this deed not do
Stay with your folks and take care of them
And your children will take care of you."

The old man left and when he was gone
The young man too went home.
When he thought of the story the old man told
Vowed never to leave his parents alone.

Convention Speech
CONTENTMENT . . . under authority

by Rev. Ron Van Overloop

I do not believe that this subject has been chosen because specifically young people or Protestant Reformed people need to learn about contentment under authority. During this week of the convention I have watched you and you have exhibited both a consciousness of authority and a respect for that authority. You do not need to be "blasted" for your lack of respect for authority.

Rather I believe that this subject was chosen because it is a vital part of our Christian life. It is something about which you, and I, always need encouragement. We always can use some reminders as to how our God would have us live.

• • • •

It cannot be denied that we are always under authority. It begins with the authority of our parents. Later we become conscious of the presence of the authority of the church, of school, and of the state.

Often there are times when we believe that those who exercise this authority are unjust and not worthy of respect.

This past week, as you heard some of the rules for the convention and some of the decisions of the steering committee, did you conclude that the steering committee was tough and rigid, especially about the curfew? Did you think that the steering committee was improper in forbidding you the use of your cars?

There may be other times that you heard your parents, while talking about a decision of the consistory or synod, express strong disagreement and dissatisfaction; and your reaction was that you wondered whether that decision should be followed.

your parents or teachers are stronger than you are.

Nor does authority have anything to do with the majority. Because your parents are two and you are one, you are always outvoted. In my house it may be seven (children) to one (their father), but that does not change a thing. The majority of the citizens of the United States may believe that abortion is legitimate, but that majority vote does not make it right.

Authority, rather, consists of three things. First, it is the right to determine for others what is right and wrong, to set the standard. Second, it is the right to demand obedience to the determined standard of right and wrong. And third, it is the right to punish those who do not meet that standard along with the right to reward those who do meet that standard.

All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to God. Authority is His because He is the Creator. He not only creates us, but also He creates the relationships in which we are to live. As the Creator He has the right to determine what is right and what is wrong for His creatures.

God conferred all this authority on Christ (Matt. 28:18), and Christ, in turn, delegates authority to certain positions among mankind (John 19:11), while retaining to Himself the final authority. When He dispenses authority to some of the positions He created among men, He does not give it away completely. The authority remains His always. All those to whom He gives that authority must, in the judgment day, answer to Him for their use of His authority. Those to whom authority has been delegated by God must exercise it in God's name, to His glory, and as those who must render a final accounting to Him.

While you young people may think it is difficult to obey the authority put over you, but I would contend that, from a certain perspective, it is more difficult to exercise authority. Those in positions of authority will have to answer to God for how they represented Him. I would rather be in the position of doing what someone else tells me to do, because if they tell me to do something wrong, then they also bear the blame. Sometimes you think that you cannot wait until you are the "boss"; but I say to you, "Don't be so quick."

The authority which God delegates (to your parents, for example) is so authoritative that they have the right to determine whether you will go somewhere or not, whether you will do something or not. And when you question their judgment, they might find it wise to explain their judgment, but they do not have to explain why. Their authority gives to them the right to determine what is right and wrong for you, regardless whether "everybody else" is doing it, or whether you understand and agree with them.

* * * *

Those under authority must submit and obey to those in authority over them - **for God's** sake. This submission and obedience must be willingly and not grudgingly. This implies three things.

First, those under authority must show honor and respect. When you look at your mother, father, teacher, or elder, you must respect God, the office He established, and the persons He places in those offices. Whatever their character, it is by the appointment of Divine providence that they are there. On account of their station, the

Supreme Legislator commands that they be honored.

Second, those under authority must obey. They must do what the authority demands. They must yield themselves to do as the authority wishes.

And thirdly, those under authority must submit. If they find themselves in a position when they cannot obey because something contrary to God's law is demanded, then they must submit, that is, willingly bear the consequences.

• • • •

Now we come to the heart of my speech. You must be content with the authority that God has been pleased to place over you.

The God Who is far beyond the universe, Who created all things and holds it all in the palm of His hand, Who gave you life and breath, strength and beauty, that God loves you. He loves you for Jesus' sake. He loves you so much that He gave His only and beloved Son for you. I might die for someone, but I would not want to give my son to die for them; I would rather give myself. God gave His Son, because He loves you. He does not love you only when you are old; He loves you now. He loves you with the tenderness that characterizes a father holding his just born child. He loves you every moment of your life. His love never lets you go. You cannot escape God's love. Never.

This love of God for you is that which determines the whole of His plan for your life. Every little detail of your life is included in His plan of love. Nothing escapes His control. Everything that happens to you, your strength or lack of it, your kind of beauty or the lack of what you think is beauty - everything, including your pimples, is a part of the plan of the God Who loves you.

God wants you to know this and to be happy in this knowledge. He wants you to rejoice in what He is doing in your life.

Part of God's plan for you is that He gave to you just the right kind of parents that you need. Someday (if it is God's will that you marry) He will give you just the right kind of husband or wife. It will be a perfect match, because it will be a match made in heaven. No mistakes are ever made in your life.

The dad that you have is exactly the right one for you. God makes no mistakes. He makes no mistakes when He gives the reprobate their fathers. But when God gave you your father, He gave you the father you need, because He loves you. And your mother is just the right mother. Someone else's mother would not do. She would not do, because God, in His perfect wisdom, is molding you to be just the right kind of person (not the kind that you want yourself to be) He wants you to be.

In our lifetime He is molding and shaping us for the place that He has determined for us in heaven, and all of this molding is because of His love. God carries you every step of the way, with every blink of your eyes, every nod of your head, every movement of your mind. Every part of your whole being is a part of His perfect, love-filled, caring plan.

Therefore, accept and trust His wisdom. Do not set yourself up as a judge of God, your Father.

When someone is unhappy about and not content with any part of His perfectly wise, love-filled plan, then

they are the first and the most hurt. When we work against God's plan, then we lose our joy and happiness. When we fight and resist God's will for us, then we are the ones who are hurt the most. When you run into your bedroom and cry into your pillow, then the devil is using one of his most powerful tools: self-pity. We love ourselves so much that we judge God to be foolish and wrong in putting us under the people He has placed in authority over us.

God wants you to be content. He commands you to be content! He wants you to look at His plan for you and conclude with Him that it is right and perfect.

The way to achieve this contentment is not by considering the persons in authority over you, but by looking at God. Look at God as He sits upon His throne of glorious majesty, which makes the sun become a candle in comparison. Look at God Who is perfect. Look at God Whom you nailed to the cross, and hear Jesus' agonizing cry when He experienced hell for your sins. This is the God Who says that this is the right mother and this is the right father for you. Do not look at them, but look at God.

When we are rebellious, then we are not first rebelling against our parents, but against God. When you begin to become frustrated at what you perceive to be a lack of understanding on the part of your parents, then remember that God put them there. They may be wrong; they may be improper; they may be nosey; they may be disapproving; and they may be misunderstanding you. But what difference does that make for you? Do you think that God will accept that as a legitimate excuse? God knows better. Isaiah says that His ways are higher than our ways.

Contentment becomes our experience when we remember that God knows what is best for us. Think of His love. Remember what the Scriptures say about His love. Live in the tranquil assurance that all this is working out just right, that no mistakes are being made in any part of your life. Honor your parents. Honor them, even when you see their sins and weaknesses, for God's sake. Honor them because you love God. Honor them because of the huge debt you owe to God for His love for you. Thank God for your parents!

* * * *

Contentment is a gift of God's grace.

And contentment is a lesson to be learned in the tough school of experience (Phil. 4:11). Often when we learn this lesson in God's school, it is hard. It is hard because God does not tell us why, and give us a reason. His ways are often in the dark, as well as being rough.

But learn contentment we must and learn it we can. You have already learned contentment. You can learn contentment and be content because you are the recipients of the constant praise of God. In your own strength you cannot. But you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you (Phil. 4:13).

You can be content, when you remember what the Bible says of God's love for you. And you learn contentment when you pray. Sometimes you might pray, somewhat like Paul, that God remove these parents from you. But God answers every time, "My child, My grace if sufficient for you. In every step of your life, My grace is sufficient for you."

• • • •

You are able to play a big role in the tranquility and happiness of the Christian home.

Return to your homes and look at your father and mother differently. Begin to understand why your mother is so possessive at times. For nine months you were a part of her very body. She experienced tremendous discomfort and pain for you. She lost sleep in order to nurse you. She missed innumerable opportunities to advance herself personally, because she loved you and gave herself for you. She was a great means that God used to make you to be who and what you are. You carry part of her nature and personality with you wherever you go. .

You say that you do not see the tender love a father is supposed to have? Maybe there is a reason why YOU, at this time, do not see his tender love - maybe it is because of the way you have been acting. But there is tender love. When your dad first held you and his chin quivered, or the tears rolled silently down his cheeks, then there was tender love. In your father is the tender love that works long and hard, in order to clothe you. In your father is tender love: He cares so much for you that He will sacrifice much so that you can obtain a Christian, though expensive, education. There is tender love.

Return home and see your parents as human beings. You want to be treated in a certain way. Treat your parents in the manner you wish to be treated. Think of your parents as having their own personal interests, instead of only considering your own interests. Rather than criticizing, try to understand them. Understand why they get frustrated. Look at them as God's gifts to you. Instead of blaming them, encourage them by being cheerful and helpful. School is not the only place to be cheerful; it is legitimate at home too!

Do not be quickly discouraged. It is going to be difficult to change things at home, because patterns have been set. But the situation at your home and your relationship to your parents can be changed. It is not in cement. Though all things are impossible with men, all things are possible with God. By God's grace you can change your relationship with your parents, because you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you.

Return home with a renewed commitment to be content. You can make your home a happier place, not by changing others, but by changing yourselves. Do not be discouraged, even if your parents keep the old patterns.

• • • •

Are you willing to be content?

Because God wants you to be content, are you willing to change the way you conduct yourself in suffering, in self-denial, and while under those in authority over you?

Are you willing, for God's sake?

When you consider yourself mistreated, then remember that God's Word says that you are receiving just the right kind of treatment, for all things are working together for your spiritual good. When you think you are not understood, then remember God, your Father, understands you perfectly and He is doing everything right.

Return to your homes believing that God is planning all things well for you.

Be content!

To Lose The Battle and Win The War
The Janssen Case
Chapter I [cont.]
THE HISTORY OF THE CASE

by Prof. H. Hanko

(In the last article, we discussed the early history of the Janssen case and ended with the decision of the Theological School Committee to clear Janssen of all blame.)

What is of particular interest to us is the fact that Rev. Hoeksema was a member of the Theological School Committee at the time that Janssen's teachings were being examined. He was sitting in on the meetings.

In later years Rev. Hoeksema reflected on these events in an article you can find in an old **Standard Bearer**. It is Vol. XXX, May 1, 1954, pp. 340-341.

Rev. Hoeksema had studied for one year under Prof. Janssen while he was in the Seminary. He, after he was ordained to the ministry in 14th St. Christian Reformed Church in Holland, had been appointed as a member of the Theological School Committee. After he moved from 14th St. Christian Reformed Church to Eastern Ave. Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Prof. Janssen was a member of his congregation. He became a strong opponent of Prof. Janssen after the Synod of 1920.

In the article in the **Standard Bearer**, to which I referred above, Rev. Hoeksema speaks of the fact that he favored the decisions of the Theological School Committee, but that he also had a long private conversation with Prof. Janssen during the recess time. Among other things about which they talked, Prof. Janssen spoke to Rev. Hoeksema about a lack of harmony among the faculty, and complained that this made his work difficult. In addition to this part of the conversation, Rev. Hoeksema also became a bit suspicious of Janssen's honesty. You will recall that Janssen had originally spoken to the Theological School Committee about some letters of apology he had received from the students. When Rev. Hoeksema quizzed Janssen about these letters, it turned out that Janssen did not have all the letters which he had claimed to have, but that he had only some notes he had taken.

At any rate, the four professors were not satisfied with the decision of the Theological School Committee and they informed the Committee that they were going to appeal this decision to the Synod of 1920. In those days, the Synod of the Christian Reformed

Church met only every two years, so that, while the committee met in 1919, an appeal would have to wait until the following year.

When the four professors informed the Committee that they planned to appeal, the Committee asked the four professors to delay their appeal until they could submit the whole matter to the Theological School Committee once again. The four professors were also told that this time they had to submit a written document in which all their objections to Prof. Janssen's teachings were listed. This document was to be submitted to the Committee at their next meeting in June of 1920, just prior to the meeting of Synod.

Once again, when this document was submitted, the Committee conducted a lengthy investigation in which Janssen was once again cleared of all charges, although he was also admonished to "strive to evade anything that might give cause to misconception, and that he express himself so clearly in his instruction, that misconception is excluded."

Once again, the four professors notified the Committee that they were going to appeal to the Synod which was due to meet in a few days.

Throughout this whole period, Rev. Hoeksema voted along with the Committee in favor of Janssen. Nevertheless, while he did this, he was uneasy with the whole matter. He was uneasy partly because Janssen did not seem to be completely honest, and partly because the Committee had exonerated Janssen, not on the basis of an investigation of Janssen's teachings in the classroom, but on the basis of Janssen's own personal testimony. He resolved, when he had the time, to conduct his own personal investigation of what Janssen actually was teaching.

The specific charges which the professors brought against their colleague were four in number. They are rather interesting because they indicate some of the wrong teachings of Janssen which were later to be formal charges. The four professors claimed that Janssen taught: 1) that there are exaggerations and inaccuracies in Scripture; 2) that the miracles could be explained in large measure from natural causes; 3) that Moses did not write most of the Pentateuch; 4) that the Song of Solomon was nothing but an Oriental love song.

The Synod of 1920 also conducted a lengthy investigation. The Synod did not investigate Janssen's teachings as the professors had asked, but they did listen to what the professors had to say and they gave Janssen an opportunity to defend himself against all the charges brought against him.

The Synod, after considering the whole matter, also decided in favor of Dr. Janssen. They cleared him of all charges brought against him and only urged him to be careful to express himself in such a way that he could not possibly be misunderstood.

One would think that this would have been the end of the matter. Three different times Janssen had been exonerated - twice by the Theological School Committee and once by the Synod itself. In fact, even the president of the Synod thought that this would be the end of the matter and that harmony would once again be restored to the church. In his concluding remarks, and referring to the Janssen controversy, the president spoke of the Synod as a "unity synod."

But this was not to be.

Very soon after Synod adjourned it

became obvious that the decisions of the Synod had accomplished nothing.

The uproar in the churches was great and widespread.

There were three events which brought about this uproar.

The first was some writings of Rev. Hoeksema.

Rev. Hoeksema had been appointed as an editor of **The Banner** by the Synod of 1918. He was responsible for a column which was entitled, "Our Doctrine." Shortly after the Synod of 1920 finished its meetings, Rev. Hoeksema began his own private investigation of Janssen's teachings. He succeeded in obtaining a set of Student Notes, which he studied privately and which formed the basis for a series of articles in his column in which he began to criticize Janssen's teachings. He had personally become persuaded that, after all, Janssen was teaching false doctrine. Rev. Hoeksema offered Janssen room in his column to answer any charges which Hoeksema made, and Janssen took up the offer and wrote a series of replies.

The second cause of the uproar was articles that began to appear in other papers of the Christian Reformed Church in which some men defended Janssen and others attacked him.

The third cause of the uproar was a pamphlet which was published by the four professors who had brought the original charge. This pamphlet, written in Dutch, had the title: **Further Light On The Janssen Case**. In it the professors did three things. 1) They defended themselves against the charge that they were motivated by jealousy in their attacks against Janssen. 2) They reviewed the history of the case from the beginning. 3) They explained their objections against Janssen's teachings and attempted to show why these teachings were contrary to God's Word and the Confessions.

The uproar was so great in the churches that at the meeting of the Theological School Committee in June of 1921 they faced overtures from eight of the thirteen classes, all of which asked for an investigation of Janssen's teachings.

The Theological School Committee decided that they had better conduct such an investigation; and so they appointed a committee of six ministers and one professor to conduct the investigation. The committee was: J. Manni, Chairman, Herman Hoeksema, Henry Danhof, Henry J. Kuiper, Gerrit Hoeksema, Dr. J. Van Lonkhuyzen, and Prof. D. H. Kromminga. The last three were supporters of Janssen; Revs. Hoeksema, Danhof and Kuiper were opponents; and no one knew what Rev. Manni's position was.

The Theological School Committee also asked that all discussion of the case would be stopped until the committee had done its work. And they gave Janssen a year off from teaching with pay, although Janssen did not want this forced vacation because he considered it an indication that he was already under a cloud of suspicion, if not condemned.

"We are to live here like strangers and make the world not a house but an inn, in which we sup and lodge, expecting to be on our journey tomorrow."

- Charles Suprgeon

Letter #3: Author of Ecclesiastes

by Mrs. Carol Brands

I think that today and next time will still be sort of introductory to Ecclesiastes, not yet getting into the book itself for a real study. Today I will try to look briefly at the author of the book, Solomon, as I believe. Next time, I will look at my simple outline of the book, that is, my basic, overall, simple outline, which we can fill in in more detail as we study the sections of the book.

First of all, let's look at the author. I won't go into all the other ideas that commentators have about the author. To me, it is self-evident that Solomon is the author and no argument I have read to the contrary can shake that conviction. In fact, each time I have found the arguments against Solomon as author to be futile.

Solomon was in the prime of his life. He had become king in Israel following David's death. He had married his first wife and built her a palace all to herself. He had built the Temple of God. He had made Jerusalem so beautiful that it was the envy and confusion of all who visited there. He had acquired innumerable servants and built a host of projects in industry and in architecture and in agriculture. He had invaded the fine arts' arena by acquiring musicians and singers, the finest of that day. He had traveled enough and conversed with enough people so that he felt that his experience covered the whole range of all human experiences everywhere, both their joys and aspirations and also their frustrations and sorrows.

While Solomon **may** have begun also to multiply wives by this time, it is my conviction that he had not yet been dragged down by them to the spiritual poverty that marked the end of his life. This book is written after much and varied experience but also while he was at the apex of spiritual understanding, before he departed from God and ruined his reputation.

The fact that Solomon had all this experience and all this understanding and still fell into sin later is a strong warning for us as God's people. We can see that often Christians can have things straight, can be well used of God, but can stand so in their own strength that at length they fall - not from grace, for they are still God's children, but - into great and grievous sin that destroys their future usefulness in God's kingdom. This happened to David, the "man after God's own heart" who found himself in constant chastisement after the great sin near the end of his life. And it happened also to Solomon, who did so many wonderful things for God's people, who even wrote three books of Scripture besides several Psalms, but who then found himself falling into gross sins near the end of his life which resulted

Letter To A Young Friend On The Book Of Ecclesiastes

Letter #2: The Idea Of Ecclesiastes

by Mrs. Carol Brands

I have no idea whether you have ever studied the book of Ecclesiastes, which I have chosen for our first study. If you have, you won't need much introduction. I know, however, that at your age I knew exactly nothing of the book and so I shall assume that you know as little as I did at your age and begin from scratch.

I think I shall begin by mentioning why I am interested in this book. When I was a freshman in college (I went to Trinity), our very first assignment in philosophy was to use any resources we wished, including our ministers, but to study this book of Ecclesiastes and then retell the book as if we were explaining it to a six-year-old. I was always interested in teaching and so this was just a sort of assignment to spark my interest.

The book came alive to me through this study and I have always had an extra interest in it ever since. Six years later, as a fledgling teacher, I had to take my turn in leading chapel exercises for the entire school, grades one through nine, and I chose to restudy Ecclesiastes and speak on it for the chapel. And now, this past year in Ladies' Society it was decided to study the book in depth, my first time of studying it so carefully, and so I am right now again immersed in the book and enjoying the study thoroughly.

Like all three of Solomon's books (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon), this book has a host of interpreters and interpretations. Some of the interpreters - even some good ones - do not even consider Solomon to be the author. Some consider him the author but have varying interpretations as to when in his life he wrote this book. So this is a book which is not clear-cut even though the central message is clear.

The purpose of the book is clear. Solomon, as the King-Preacher in Jerusalem, feels responsible for the lives of his people. As a king who meets people of fame from all over the world, he encounters every sort of motive for living and every sort of reasoning as to which is the best way of living, the way to find meaning in life. So he seeks to investigate this matter very thoroughly, to study life from every single viewpoint and to answer the question: where is meaning in life to be found? Is there any value to our work in this life?

Solomon studies work from various aspects of unbelief and consistently draws one conclusion: apart from God, there is no meaning in life. Apart from Him, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. The only meaning in life is to be found

separate dwelling place. The problems and difficulties arise when faced with the question of what actually should occasion the reason for any other move.

At first reading of your letter, I was ready to say that you have answered your own question when you state that "I feel the Lord has led me to live a life apart from my family." If the Lord leads you to do this, you have no other choice. But then you write you also have a "guilty feeling" going against your family. It shouldn't be both, that is, God leading you and you having a guilty feeling.

You do not indicate why your parents are opposed to your leaving their home. If they are anxious about your spiritual welfare, they are to be commended. This should be the innate desire of all Christian parents who are faced with decisions such as this, concerning their covenant children. Parents should also be concerned about the physical safety of their children who leave home, for we live in a violent and dangerous world that is filled with sin and corruption.

With respect to those who move from home to seek employment and/or marriage partners and determine to settle in an area where a Protestant Reformed congregation is located, we extend to them our blessing. Not a few have done this to their joy and contentment.

But we have also observed and have worked with young people who have left their homes solely to escape the godly supervision of their parents. Such action is always in violation of the fifth commandment to "honor thy father and mother", and is disobedient to the instruction found in Ephesians 6:1, 2. To leave home for this reason is sinful rebellion and since it does not have God's blessing, there have been disastrous consequences.

There can be existing abnormal circumstances in a home that discourage and even prohibit growth in sanctified living. In such a case I could advise one to seek other living quarters.

One other factor that has some bearing on your decision is your age. You have been out of high school only two short years and perhaps this is your first full-time job. Are you mature enough at this young age to handle all the temptations and responsibilities in living on your own?

So, to conclude our answer, dear Miss/Mr., my advice comes down to this. Be sure that it is really God's will that you live apart from your family. Obedience to Him is better than sacrifice.

Sincerely,
Dewey Engelsma

The Young Peoples' Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, CA welcomes you to the 50th Anniversary Young Peoples' Convention to be held August 6 - 10.

in great chastisement and loss of influence. . .in fact, a whole chapter of KINGS is devoted to discussing how great his departure and sins were!

The warning for us is the warning against spiritual pride. For those of us who do seek the will of God, who try by grace to walk in His ways, it is possible for us at length to begin to see that God has indeed been working in us and using us. . .and then to fall into the pride of comparing ourselves with others. Following this, God may chasten us by allowing us to fall into serious sin so that we again must give Him all the glory and praise for our salvation instead of exalting ourselves.

The truth, of course, is that any good found in any Christian is only of grace, is only the work of God. If He gives us dedicated Christian parents . . .that is His work, His gift to us, nothing of ourselves. If He gives us insight into His Word, that is His gift, nothing of which to be proud but only something to cultivate. If He gives us the ability to make friends, it is a gift, and we may not exult in that but use it carefully for Him. Whatever we have, it is all of Him and must be used unto Him.

P.S. I must add yet that there is no PROOF one way or the other whether Solomon wrote this book before or after his fall into sin. My minister believes it was after his fall into sin! I believe it was **before** his fall into sin because: (1) nowhere else does Scripture picture a repentance on Solomon's part following his fall, while it talks much about the fall itself; and (2) in his fall he lost his "wisdom" which in Ecclesiastes was still with him. Yes, he remained a child of God despite his fall, so there must have been a private repentance before God, but publicly there was no open repentance and he was strongly indicted. Even after the Captivity nearly 1000 years later, he was cited as an example of what the people should not do!

Questions:

1. What are some reasons why others believe Solomon is **not** the author of Ecclesiastes? Can you refute their arguments?
2. What arguments are there for Solomon writing this **after** his fall into sin?
3. What arguments are there for Solomon's writing this **before** his fall into sin?

"Nothing is more formidable than to be rejected from God's flock. For no safety is to be hoped for, except as God collects us into one body under one head. First, all safety resides in Christ alone; and then we cannot be separated from Christ without falling away from all hope of safety; but Christ will not and cannot be torn from His Church with which He is joined in an indissoluble knot, as the head to the body. Hence, unless we cultivate unity with the faithful, we see that we are cut off from Christ."

- John Calvin (on Ezel. 13)

WHAT'S HAPPENED

by Joan Buiter

BYRON CENTER (Michigan)
Mrs. Arla Mulder and daughter Lynda were received as members from First PRC - Grand Rapids.
Mr. and Mrs. David (Marilyn) Drew from Jamestown CRC were received as members.
Also from Jamestown CRC, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin (Christie) Hassevoort with their four children were received as members.
Mr. and Mrs. Brian (Regina) Hitchcock and daughter Jennifer were received as members from the Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of La Mirada, CA.
The Secret Pal party was held on January 11.
The Church had a sliding party on January 20.

COVENANT (Wycoff, N.J.)
The annual Thanksgiving - Christmas dinner was held on December 9 at the church.
A singspiration was held in the home of August and Margaret Hollema on December 3.
Christian sympathy is expressed to Mr. and Mrs. Charles De Groot in the passing of Maria's grandmother.
The congregation was invited to the parsonage for a singspiration and refreshments the evening of December 31.

FAITH (Jenison, MI)
The sacrament of baptism was administered to Brianna Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Don Van Dyke on December 24.
The sacrament of baptism was administered to Gerard Edward, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arlen Ter Avest.
The membership papers of Rev. & Mrs. Koole and family have been received from Redlands Church.
The membership papers of Mrs. Winifred Kuiper and Miss Hulda Kuiper have been received from Southwest Church.
The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Tim Orme and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Koning and family have been delivered to their homes.
The baptism papers of Miss Lisa Huber have been sent to her home at her request.
Suzanne Ondersma and Randy Dykstra were united in marriage on October 7.
Jan Dykstra and Tim Talsma were united in marriage on September 27.
The Young People's mass meeting was held December 17.
The combined Mr. and Mrs. Christmas Party was held on December 19 at Heritage School.
The Faith Choral Society presented a Christmas program on December 24.

FIRST (Grand Rapids)
Congratulations are extended to Mr. Ralph Pastoor who celebrated his 86th birthday on December 18, and to Mrs. George Lubbers who turned 84 on December 23.
Christian sympathy is extended to the friends and family of Mr. Harold

Glupker who died on December 31.

The Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society held its Christmas Social on December 19.

The Ladies Aid Christmas Social was held on December 20.

The secret Pal Party was held on January 11 in the church.

A singspiration was held on February 21.

Advance Notice: A conference with Sister Churches is scheduled for June 12-14, 1990. Speeches will be given by delegates from sister churches in Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, North Ireland and England.

GRANDVILLE

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to Jordan Ashley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Andy Peterson on January 7.

The membership papers of Anita De Jong were received from Doon PRC in Iowa.

A church choir was organized for the purpose of presenting a few numbers for the new church building dedication.

HOPE (Redlands, CA)

Congratulations are extended to Roger and Hilda Gritters on the birth of a baby boy, Jordan Wayne, on January 24.

Mrs. Jennie Jabaay celebrated her 82nd birthday on January 26.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. John Jabaay who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on January 30.

The Young People's Society held a submarine sandwich sale as a fund raiser for the 1990 Young People's Convention.

The Young People will be holding a dinner on March 2 with proceeds going for the Convention.

The Ladies Society sponsored a Soup Supper on January 23.

HOPE (Walker, MI)

Mike Mastbergen made public confession of his faith and the sacrament of baptism was administered to Teresa Mastbergen on January 21.

Baptism was administered to Luke Anthony, infant son of Tim and Brenda Bomers, Amanda Nichole, infant daughter of Mike and Teresa Mastbergen, and Michelle Lynn, infant daughter of Bob and Carey Van Den Top on January 21.

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Caleb David, son of Larry and Judy Meulenberg and Michelle Elaine, daughter of Dave and Nancy Van Baren.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Engelsma rejoice in the birth of a son, Seth Alan.

Mr. James Daling has requested his membership papers be transferred to Faith Church.

The membership papers of Mrs. Jon Langerak (Lisa Van Koevering) were received from First PRC of Holland.

Congratulations to Mrs. Dick Kooienga who celebrated her 86th birthday December 31.

Sympathy is extended to the friends and family of Mr. Jacob Kuiper who died on December 31.

The Hope Church Choral Society will present its spring program on March 4.

Classis East was held on January 9 at Hope Church.

A special program for Discussion Group Members was held on December 10.

The Young People went carolling on December 21.

HUDSONVILLE (MI)

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Alex Jonathan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Dykstra: Bradley James, son of Mr. and Mrs. Brian Kamminga; and Nathan Todd, son of

Mr. and Mrs. Todd Lubbers.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Verstrate rejoice in the birth of a son, Andrew Lee on January 5; Mr. and Mrs. Dave Miedema in the birth of a son, Eric David on January 6; and Mr. and Mrs. Mike Van Overloop in the birth of their son, Keith Alan on January 18.

A dismissal statement was sent to Mr. and Mrs. Todd Boer and their baptized child at their request.

The baptismal statement of Mr. Bernard Holstege was sent to his home at his request.

Congratulations to Mr. Ted Miedema who celebrated his 86th birthday on December 11.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. S. Ondersma who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 1.

The Choral Society's Christmas program was presented December 10.

The Christmas Singspiration was held on December 17.

The Young People's Society sponsored a casserole supper on January 18.

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society sponsored an outing at Pizza Ranch and bowling at Hudsonville Lanes on January 19.

IMMANUEL (Lacombe, AB Canada)

Christian sympathy to the Brian Tolsma family in the passing of her grandmother.

The Christmas program was given on December 24 after the congregation shared a meal in the social hall.

LOVELAND (CO)

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to Kayla Beth, the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Schwarz on January 28.

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Kooienga rejoice in the birth of a baby boy, Dale James.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Griess were blessed with the birth of a son, Joshua Alan.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Koole were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Kerri Lynn.

Congratulations are extended to Mrs. Esther Griess, who celebrated her 90th birthday.

The Choir Christmas Program was presented December 17.

The young adults Christmas Party was December 15 at the church, and the young adults went carolling before the party.

The All-School Christmas Program was held December 21 in the church.

The Christmas Singspiration, sponsored by the choir, was held December 24.

A Father-Son Banquet was sponsored by the Ladies Circle on January 26.

The Young People's Society sponsored a Sweetheart Banquet on February 15.

PEACE (IL)

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Randy Poortinga.

Reverend Houck accepted the call to labor at Peace PRC. He was installed as pastor on January 30.

The Young People went Christmas carolling with the South Holland Young People's Society on December 31.

A gym night was planned for the young people and young adults on January 2.

RANDOLPH (WI)

The membership papers of Mrs. J. Ennema were received from the Houston, TX PRC.

The membership papers of Wayne Buiter have been transferred to the Redlands, CA PRC.

Christian sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Mr. Dewey Alsum who passed away December 4.

The Christmas program by the Sunday School children was presented the evening of December 24.

The Randolph PRC conducted the chapel service at the Continental Manor December 31.

SOUTH HOLLAND (IL)

Tom Medema and Brenda Scheeringa were united in marriage on January 12.

An office bearers' conference will be held on March 6. The subject of the conference will be "Preaching."

The Men's, Ladies', and Mr. and Mrs. Societies voted to disband as separate societies and form an Adult Bible Society.

There was a roller skating party at the Lynwood Roller Skating Rink on January 31.

SOUTHEAST (Grand Rapids, MI)

Charles Pastoor made public confession of his faith February 4.

The membership papers of Mr. Craig Glupker were received from the First CRC of Byron Center, as well as those of Miss Thea Kluitenberg.

Gregory Velting and Barbara Vroon were united in marriage December 8.

The Sunday School Christmas program was presented the evening of December 24.

Congratulations to Mr. Gerlof Vander Baan who celebrated his 88th birthday on December 17, and to Mr. Gary Korhorn who celebrated his 82nd birthday on January 13.

The Young People's Society went carolling the evening of December 20.

SOUTHWEST (Grand Rapids, MI)

Congratulations to Mr. Al Bleyenberg who celebrated his 85th birthday on January 7.

The Southwest Church Potluck was held on February 23.

FEDERATION BOARD

A sliding party was scheduled for January 20.

A ski weekend at Suger Loaf in Traverse City for young people was scheduled for February 9 and 10.

ADAMS STREET SCHOOL

A roller skating party for grades 7 - 9 from Adams, Heritage and Hope was held on December 7.

The Band and Choir Concert was December 15 at First Church.

The Annual Soup Supper was held on February 8 at First Church.

Cookbooks (Kitchen Kaleidoscope) are available for sale.

COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH

Covenant's Band and Choir Christmas Concert was held in Hudsonville Church on December 14.

HERITAGE SCHOOL

Heritage presented its band/choir concert on January 11 at Heritage School.

A band Solo/Ensemble Festival was held on January 13 at Heritage.

The children sold subs, mini-subs, croissants, pizzas, and wet burritos again this year as a fund raiser.

HOPE PROT. REF. CHR. SCHOOL

The fall band concert of grades 6-9 was held at Sunset Manor in Jenison on December 13.

NOTE: If there are news items you feel should be in the **Beacon Lights**, please feel free to send that information to: Joan Buiter, 1501 Maderia SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

The Pastor is called to feed the sheep, even if the sheep do not want to be fed. He is certainly not to become an entertainer of goats. Let goats entertain goats, and let them do it out in goatland."

William Still

Singspiration Schedule

May 20 Hope

August Pre-Convention 1st Jenison CRC

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