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Deceitful Days
Christian Liberty
Why Not Sing Hymns
Darkness at Noonday
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DECEITFUL DAYS

"WOE to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." Amos 6:1-6.

This was uttered by the prophet in days much like our own when compared to our day of wealth and prosperity. These words were uttered in the days of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. The latter king of Israel and the former king of Judah.

Jeroboam II was raised by the Lord for an express purpose of which we read in II Kings 14:26, 27. "For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash." Yet we have the witness of Scripture that this man was not a good king but one who did evil in the sight of the Lord (II Kings 14:24). On the other hand King Uzziah from Judah did no better for he became so bold that he tried to offer incense for the Levites, yet the Lord struck him with leprosy and the Levites took him out of the temple (II Chron. 26:16-21). Such were these kings spiritually.

In contrast to their spiritual condition Jeroboam II reigned when Israel had great strength and wealth, Samaria being the center of their power. Meanwhile, Uzziah and Judah were no worse off, the account given in II Chron. 26 indicates that there was not only great wealth, but also they had an army which took care that that state of affairs would not cease.

It was in such a situation that Amos comes in the above cited text, WOE to those that are at ease in Zion and trust in the mountain of Samaria. The picture is plain, Israel and Judah were as great in that day as the greatest cities of the wicked world, i.e. Hamath, Calneh, Gath. In contradiction to the great material wealth, however, they were poverty stricken spiritually, yes, more than that, they were so apostate that the Lord pronounces WOE to those that are so carnally secure.

And a picture is given of those carnally secure sons of Jacob and Abraham according to the flesh. They eat only the best meat, they drink wine out of sacrificial bowls in honor of their god — the belly. While they eat they lie on fine beds and couches, just see them draped all over their instruments for inclination, will you? Fat men, men who feel they can say and do say, “My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth” (Deut. 8:17). Men who do not hesitate to take a ‘fast buck’. Men who like to chant to the sound of the viol and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David, only David made them to honor his God. These men use them to prattle with to their god — their belly. Yes, and while they are feasting and being surfeited with the wine and being rubbed in with the ointments of fine quality — THEY FORCOT GOD, THE LORD. And they proved it for the Lord says, “But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not. Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” (2:12,13) And again, “Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink” (4:1). It is a day such as the prophet Micah speaks to with these words, “And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgement? Who hate the good, and love the evil, who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; Who also eat the
flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.” (3:1-3)

BUT, they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. That is the trouble with these workers of iniquity. The real people of God are oppressed and despised and God chastens them from morning to evening but their oppressors take no note of the Lord Jehovah who vindicates the apple of His eye. They blithely walk as if there is no end to their power and so they fill the cup of iniquity. AND it is being filled with certainty.

For we live in a day that is just like the above cited except that even the poor seem to be rich in our day. It is in this day that people cannot walk in faith anymore with any real spiritual strength for after all they say (Yes, the people of God say this) “The Lord wants us to have Christian schools and to have them we must have money.” And more, “Come on, you know that a man with only average income cannot send his children to our schools and pay the tuition!” Yet there are those who point out with a good deal of truth that we as an organization would have money left over if people gave what they should. Yet imagine my amazement when a fellow churchgoer says when you speak of these things, “Man there ain’t any honor in being poor.” Further banquets for 4 to 6 dollars are considered not only to be nice but almost a necessity for relaxation.

And the people become fat and look for more ways to make money at the same time becoming ignorant of doctrine and the proper walk of life. Yes, this is indeed happening in our Protestant Reformed churches, we do not have to worry about the denomination next door, not even the Christian Reformed Church. They after all have been apostate for over 40 years, and we know that “by their fruits shall we know them.” But what about our churches? Is that power of the Spirit within us working so that we bear proper witness before all men? Or is the salt losing its savor so that antithesis is scarcely noticeable anymore? These are questions which we do well not only to ask but also to give occasion to examine ourselves to the Scriptures and Confession to see what we really are going to manifest as churches for the coming years.

We live through history whether we like it or not and each generation MUST GIVE AN ANSWER OF THE HOPE THAT IS WITHIN US. Yet never scarcely do we find in history that two generations in succession give the powerful answer of a living faith. And we do not like to see and hear always what we come into contact with today. Even though we know that this is the Providence of God.

In a recent article we read this, “When God removes the preaching of His Word from his church, it is a tragic day indeed. We may well ask whether in our day there is any great preaching, or whether we have relegated preaching to a subordinate position, and allowed the trivialities of life to usurp its place. Has God given to us today a famine of hearing the Word of God?”

Along with such things we hear the children of the Protestant Reformed fathers of 1924 uttering these astounding statements, “You must always be very careful with what you say,” this in response to the observation that a man walks in a very wicked way. Or, “we must be very careful of how we speak the truth.” The trouble with all this is of course that underlying this speech is a very carnal minded idea of the church. The idea that the church of God is built well when men become very nice and well-mannered. Men who avoid speaking the truth in the name of Jesus Christ. Men who to get ahead in the business world cannot step on toes without a loss of money and prestige. Men who when they sit in the church councils want to apply the principles of Dale Carnegie to the Church of Jesus Christ. Yet we realize that when faith becomes weak it is hard to speak the things that must be spoken, yet that should not drive us to despair but conversely it should drive us to the Lord so that strength, the strength that is necessary is obtained in the way of prayer. For Reformations do not come without that strength.

From the prophets above cited it is plain also that when men become carnal they make the mistake of avoiding the Lord and substituting man that is, they go to Assyria, Egypt, and Syria for help, that is, they go to obtain the help of the wicked. And these men cannot stand the sight of the true prophet, they cannot bear the Word of the Lord. Cf. Amos 7:10-15, I Kings 22:26, 27.
Yet there is more hope given by the word of God also and that is this, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this." (Amos 9:11, 12) This is fulfilled in principle by Christ, yet not fully until the last day. That is the day we look to, BY FAITH.

1. Torch and Trumpet, March, 1938, pg. 25. NOTE: This article was written by Edward J. Young. Both it and the book he is reviewing there are worth reading. A.N.

FEATURES

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY
DONNA VAN UFSELEN

The following article was written by a member of the Redlands Young People’s Society which was considered worth publishing in the magazine. The author is Miss Donna Van Uffelen.

What is Christian liberty?
Is it the liberty of the Christian to have a right “for an occasion to the flesh”? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? Is it the freedom of the Christian to hurt others?
No, indeed!
Christian liberty is the teaching that Christ has freed us from the bondage of the Old Testament law and the teachings of men. It is our liberty to worship God as filled with His Spirit. We have no right whatsoever to return to that bondage and we are not in bondage to anyone but Christ. We must also be careful of false brethren who try to bring us back into that bondage. Jesus also verified this when He said in the temple, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John 8:32, 36)

It must also be remembered that Christian liberty must be exercised in love. All the law is fulfilled in one word, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” If we love God, we will desire to deal with the neighbor in the love of God. We will want to obey the neighbor when God invests him with authority over us. We will not want to injure him, steal his goods, defile him, speak evil of him or even covet his goods. We will know that the best way to serve God with the neighbor’s goods is to leave them in his possession. If a neighbor performs acts of hatred against God, we cannot love him. For man was made to live antithetically opposed to evil.

The third and final point to be remembered is to live a life led by the Holy Spirit. Paul says in his second epistle to the Corinthians, “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Corinthians 3:17). If we follow this point we will truly be following Christ, we will keep our freedom, and we will use that freedom properly. Christian liberty is not the liberty to sin, but the liberty to follow Christ and Christ alone.

As Paul said in his first letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 8:9), we must take heed lest by any means this liberty of ours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. In this case, the word liberty can also refer to power. If we sit at meat in the temple of an idol, we can set a bad example for a weaker Christian. The conscience of him can be encouraged to eat of those things offered to idols. If we use our liberty this way, “that through our knowledge, the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died,” then we sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, then we also sin against Christ.

In our Christian liberty we must be careful not to turn to license. License, here, refers to the disregard of that which is right and proper. Another name for license is havoc. We must constantly be aware of the dangers of the wrong use of this liberty, given to us by Christ.

An example of liberty and license would be that of a train. As long as the train travels down the tracks with no hindrance, it has liberty. But as soon as something happens to throw the train off its
track, it has license; it runs wild and destroys itself.
So in our daily lives, we should always be careful of following those three points of Christian liberty, and never be tempted to turn to license.

WHY NOT SING HYMNS?
DOUG MIEDEMA

The following is an article written by Doug Miedema for the after-recess program of the Hudsonville Young People's Society.

This question has come up before our Churches and Synod some time ago and they found that many people would be in favor of singing hymns approved by Synod in our Churches. A committee was appointed to study this question and they found that nothing can be found in our Psalter that fits the Resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday, nothing for Pentecost, nothing for Christmas and nothing for the Ascension of Christ like some of the hymns. There are hymns that are a true versification of the New Testament Scriptures on these — advent, lent, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, Christmas, Communion and Baptism.

But, the Synodical Study Committee in its report to the 1960 Synod on the hymn matter reached the conclusion that hymns ought not to be introduced into our churches. It said that history teaches that hymns were introduced either when the Church was in decline or when heretics assailed her with man-made songs. They also said “The hymn does not give us the knowledge of God such as Psalms do.” However, they did say, “Faithful versifications of Scripture, other than the Psalms may be sung.”

Many against the singing of hymns in our Churches say that there is sufficient material for almost every occasion in our present Psalter. It is also said that Churches that depart from the truth and the introduction of hymns go hand in hand and that the introduction of hymns in our Churches would have a detrimental effect upon generations to come. Also, the singing of Psalms by our Churches is one of the marks of distinctiveness and this should be preserved.

However, the singing of hymns based on Scripture cannot possibly cause a church to deteriorate. When sound doctrine is no longer desired it follows that sound hymns are no longer desired but Arminian hymns. There can be nothing principally wrong in singing Scriptural hymns. We should only have hymns that exalt God and make man very small, such as “How Great Thou Art,” “Great is Thy Faithfulness” and “The Love of God.”

Our Psalter is not without error either. There are Arminian connotations such as Psalter No. 244:4, 188:3 and 138:4. The Psalms view the life of Christ especially his suffering, death, resurrection and ascension and his second coming from the Old Testament standpoint and therefore are incomplete.

Also, the Psalms found in our Psalter are a type of hymn, for the definition of a hymn is “an ode or psalm of praise, especially a religious ode or song.”

To say that our Churches will depart from the truth if hymns are introduced is not proven in the fact that in our own Protestant Reformed Christian Schools some hymns are sung and they have not departed from the truth. What possible objection can there be to singing hymns based on Scripture. Hymns are sung in our homes, our Programs and Singspirations and if we can sing them to the Glory of God why must they be excluded from divine worship.

The New Testament contains frequent references to the Holy Spirit and nothing of this is found in our Psalter which are the psalms of David. This is another reason why we should have hymns that are versifications of all Scripture. In Ephesians 5:19 we read “Speaking to yourselves one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” This seems direct proof that the Churches in the new dispensation may sing hymns that are versifications of Scripture.

Some who do not favor hymns in our Churches seem to think the Psalms would be done away with, but this should never happen. Also some say that a hymn singing church becomes more and more a hymn singing church and less and less a psalter singing church. Young people and
children seem to understand hymns better so the desire would be to sing songs which are understood, but the Psalms should never be done away with because they have been our guide and comfort through all life’s journey.

"FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY"

SHIRLEY GRITTERS

"Money isn’t everything, but it sure beats whatever comes in second place.”

Light-hearted as this statement seems, it is really the feeling of most people today. Rising costs of living and the desire to “beat the Joneses” result in an increasing demand for higher-paying jobs, while positions such as teaching and nursing are passed by. Young people are choosing occupations which are easier and which bring in more pay, less working hours, and thus more time for fun and leisure.

Why the frantic scramble for more money? Why do people place such a high value on material things? Many wish to climb the “ladder of success,” to gain an enviable position in society, a place of importance in the eyes of the world. Others, thinking that money is the key to happiness, shower expensive gifts on their children, hoping this will settle their problems and misunderstandings. Still others wish for money in order to wallow in luxury and live a life of ease.

Money is usually defined as “anything that passes freely from hand to hand as a medium of exchange.” In terms of money we count our past gains, measure our present incomes, and store up value for future needs. The term “need” is often misinterpreted. What many people consider necessities are things they could easily live without. Television, dish-washers, and boats are only a few examples.

We ourselves are in no way exempt from these remarks. Don’t we also long for many of these luxuries? Don’t we often “forget” our catechism or Sunday collection, while the money always seems to be handy at other times when we need it? Don’t we often spend our money hastily and foolishly, and then turn right around and complain how high the school tuition is?

Concerning the advantages of being poor, James says in his epistle, “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” This does not mean that the poor man is promised salvation on account of his poverty; nor does it mean that poverty in any way merits eternal life, any more than the wealth of the rich is a sin. However, the Bible doesn’t hesitate to point out the many advantages which the poor have over the rich. The poor man has fewer temptations and is more apt to live according to God’s will. He is constantly reminded of his dependence upon God and is spared the danger of trusting in riches. “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

The perils of the rich are continuously repeated throughout the Scriptures. “For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways” (James 1:11). “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you” (Isa. 33:1). In James 5, James addresses the wealthy. They heaped up treasures and seized money they would never have an opportunity to use. These riches were neither a blessing to themselves nor to others, but were simply deteriorating by being hoarded. Imagining themselves to be rich, they were really most poor and miserable!

What a marked contrast between those who are rich in terms of this present age and those rich in terms of that age to come! Paul warns in I Timothy 6:17-19, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” The wealth of this earth is only transient, un-
certain, and will soon pass away. Therefore we must put our trust in God, who provides us with all things necessary for body and soul, for time and for eternity. With our hope fixed on God, we can be confident and unafraid, knowing that our real treasure is in heaven. God is ever true to His promise. He is the God of love. He richly provides!

“TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

“LIGHT” and “DAY”

“And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5).

Are the days of the creation week natural days of twenty-four hours each? Or are they long periods of time? Shall we agree with one Bible commentator that because of the wide usage of the word “day” we do not know the answer to this question, and furthermore that there is evidence in Scripture that we cannot know? Why do some consider these days as periods which are each ages long? They do this out of deference to the findings of geology and of modern science, and not as a result of biblical exegesis. But if biblical exegesis conflicts with not merely scientific theories, but with well established “facts,” shall we revise our biblical exegesis to conform to the disclosures of science? Or isn’t it the better part of spiritual wisdom to seek ways to conform scientific theories to biblical exegesis? As to true, objective scientific fact, no believer fears its conflict with the Bible and its exegetical interpretation.

Let us now consider the Hebrew usage of the word “day,” yom. Yom is translated “day” some 1181 times, and covers several different meanings. It is 67 times translated “time” (as in Gn. 4:3; 26:7; Nu. 29:15); 30 times it is translated “today” (Heb., “the day,” as in Gn. 30:32); 18 times it is rendered “forever” (Heb., “all the days, as in Gn. 43:9); 10 times as “continually,” (Heb., “all the days,” as in Gn. 6:5); 6 times as “age” (18:11); 4 times as “life” (Heb., “days,” as in 1 K. 3:11); and two times as “perpetually,” (Heb., “all the days,” as in 1 K. 9:3).

Sometimes yom, “day,” has definite reference to a solar day, a 24-hour day (1:5; Ex. 20:11). It also refers to the whole six-day week (Gn. 2:4); yom in this instance embracing all the days of creation. Once it refers to a period of time (40 days, actually): Dt. 10:10. In fact, in just this one verse, yom means: 1) a solar day, 2) a period of forty days, and 3) also an occasion. In Gn. 1:5 it means the “light” of day; in 1:13 it means the period of nighttime and daytime; and in Ps. 50:15 it denotes an indefinite period. You may be regularly sure that whenever a definite number precedes or accompanies the word yom, a solar day is denoted, e.g., the 17th yom of the month, (7:11). The implication of all this is that the meaning of the word yom is always determined by the context, and by whether accompanied with cardinal or ordinal numbers.

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We must, therefore, regard these days as solar days. For the plainest sense of the text is always the best sense. Each one of the days has just one evening and one morning, something that would hardly apply to a period of thousands of years. Why should we believe that the last three days were solar days, but that the first three days were ages long? Why, if each creative day was an age, would such a long period be required for the separation of light from darkness (cp. 1:14)? Furthermore, the Fourth Commandment teaches that that day was a solar day (Ex. 20:11). (Note the cardinal number connected with you: “seventh day.”)

It may be contended that the first three days could not have been solar days, inasmuch as the sun was not made until the fourth day. True, the sun was not formed until the fourth day. There was light, as created on the first day, but it was cosmic light (1:3), not solar light (1:14). From the first day, light and darkness came and went in the same successive periods as in the following days. But if each of these days was a separate geological age, thousands of years long, then the plant life, from the third day onward, must have had thousands of years of light and thousands of years of darkness. Then how could the world of botany live half a geological day without the light of the sun? To understand these days in the plain sense of 24-hour days is perfectly consistent with science and reason.

Another argument in favor of the solar day is that if Adam were created on the sixth day in the age-theory sense, then he must have been thousands of years old on his “birthday”! His life on the very next (Sabbath) day would make him an additional thousands of years older. Still another argument: This theory throws the whole of time out of balance. The first six days of the creation week, God’s first step in time toward the realization of His eternal purpose to tabernacle among men in the New Creation, took millions and millions of years, while the earth itself since that time is only a little over 6,000 years old. This is like building a tool-shack on the foundation of a sky-scraper. God is not so unwise. We have every reason to believe that at the center of time stands the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The geological ages hoax throws that center off balance. Contrary to this folly, Scripture reveals the wonderful wisdom of God!

“And God called the light Day.” What is light? We do not know what the essential nature of light is, but there are many interesting things we may predicate of light. There is the discarded (Newtonian) theory that light is the emission of luminous particles or substances which pass through space and strike the retina of the eye. But a later theory is that the sun does not emit any material particle, but rather that the sun causes the surrounding environment to vibrate, and this vibration is disseminated through space, which space consists of a certain extremely thin fluid called ether. We can observe the vibration of water in circular waves when a stone is thrown into a pool. A tuning fork when struck vibrates the air about it in spherical waves. So the ethereal fluid, space, vibrates with spherical waves of light succeeding each other all around the luminous sphere of the sun. The waves of water undulate so slowly that the eye easily observes the motion. Sound vibrations travel through the air with a much faster velocity, 1,100 feet per second (750 mph), approximately, varying according to temperature and density of atmosphere. Light waves, however, pass through space with the velocity of 186,000 miles per second.

If this theory is true, then the movement of light is not now instantaneous (it probably was at the beginning), but takes a certain time to travel from its source outward. At this speed, known now for nearly 300 years, it takes the light of our sun 8 minutes to reach the earth. Therefore, when we look at the sun, we do not see it as it is, but as it was 8 minutes ago. Observe Neptune, visible only by telescope, and it is seen as it was four hours ago. When we look at a star (a sun), we see it not as it is, but as it was at the moment the light left it. The star nearest our earth we see as it was four years (and four months) ago. Some stars, then, according to this theory are seen as 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, 100, 1000, 10,000 years ago, according to their distance. The star Arcturus, within the kite-shaped constellation Bootes (cp. Job 9:9; 38:32) is then seen as it is in the past, forty years ago! You apparently observe it in the present, now. The past of Arcturus is strictly and positively the present of the observer. What we see now in the stars is already.
past; and the condition on those orbs as of now we do not yet see. We do not see any one of the stars as it is, but as it was at the moment the ray of light which reaches us left it. When we look at the starry sky (and such a privilege is the gift of God) it is not the present condition of the sky which we see, but its past history. This theory has its attractions, but it implies that the universe is so vast that it just has to be many, many times 10,000 years old.

On the fourth day God made "Arcturus, Orion and Pleiades" (Job 9:9). Pleiades (Heb. Khîmâh) means "cluster." According to the ancient Jewish Talmud the word implies 100 stars. That is quite a cluster. Of course, it is an open cluster, not a globular cluster, and is no longer regarded as a constellation. To weak eye sight it appears as a nebulous, indistinct cluster. To ordinary sight there are six stars distinguished. To good sight seven stars are visible. From ancient times the cluster has been called The Seven Sisters. A steadied pair of opera glasses will reveal at least nine stars in the cluster. The Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary says there are more than 400 stars in the cluster. To a telescope of small power there are 600 stars visible. Through such an instrument this is a terrific sight! By means of large telescope (one that requires a permanent stand), 2,000 stars are visible in the cluster of Pleiades!

The cosmic light of v. 4 is not the same as the solar light of v. 14. In fact, the words used are entirely different. In v. 4 the word is Or, and refers to the original creation and first production of light. In v. 14 the word is Ma’or, which means light-bearer, and refers to the permanent appointment of light-holders to be the places and centers of radiation and reflection of light. All the stars (suns), planets, moons, comets and nebulae are light-bearers (Ma’oroth). But Or is the creature, light, itself. "I form (shape) the light" (Isa. 45:7).

Darkness too is a creature. It did not exist before "the beginning." What is darkness? We may say that 1) darkness is invisible light; and 2) light is darkness made visible (II Cor. 4:6). There is no contradiction in this idea. Infra-red light is invisible light. This has been demonstrated with an electronic telescope synchronized with a powerful infra-red searchlight beam. This is used to make objects in the darkest night visible, which objects appear in the shade of green regardless of color. That darkness consists of invisible light has also been demonstrated with the use of the ultra-violet light. Some creatures so tiny that they may be seen only by the aid of a microscope are transparent. Visible light therefore passes through them without casting any shadow, and so they are invisible creatures even under the microscope. But let the ultra-violet light illumine them, and their bodies become opaque, causing them to suddenly leap into visibility. Ultra-violet light is darkness made visible. This reminds us that we "were sometimes darkness" but are "now light in the Lord"; for "The Lord is my Light" (Ps. 27:1), and "in Thy light shall we see light" (36:9).

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CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

TEACHING THE SCIENCES (5)

During the past four months I have been considering the teaching of science in the classroom of the Protestant Reformed Christian School. I have done this from the point of view of one who is convinced the instruction in the sciences must be given in
such a way that no contradiction exists between the instruction given by the classroom teacher and his belief in the infallible Scriptures. The Christian teacher is very much aware of the fact that the truth of God, especially the doctrine of Creation is opposed by unbelieving scientists and educators. In the mind of the unbeliever God must be dethroned and the truth of the Scriptural account of Creation must be denied. Ungodly man serves the Creature and does not serve the Creator.

In order to make you and myself completely aware of the need for a basic emphasis in our instruction I took the time in my writing to say some things about the theory of evolution which I believe needed to be said. The theory of evolution is not a dead issue. It is a very live issue and must be considered by the one who wishes to teach in the Christian classroom and teach from an antithetical point of view. More than once, it seems to me, I have emphasized that one either believes unreservedly the Scriptural account of the origin of all things or else he turns to his own investigation and observation of reality and speculates concerning the origin of that which one can observe through sensory perception. Reliance on this type of observation for an answer to the ultimate question of where did life come from ultimately leads one to an adoption of the evolutionary theories which have been developed by the unbelieving and ungodly thinkers of all the ages of this world. This is serious business.

What is more serious is that Christian young people — our young people — who are going to college often ask the question: “What does it matter whether one believes the Scriptural account of the creation of the world?” “Believing some modified form of the theory of evolution or believing some modified form of the doctrine of creation certainly does not mean that one is going to deny Christ?” I have heard young people ask these questions. Maybe someone who reads this article has asked this question or is asking the question at this very moment. Our young people will undoubtedly wrestle with this question when they hear teachers who are professedly Christian and who teach in Christian schools attempt to make excuses for the doctrine of evolution and call it theistic evolution.

Darwinism and its predecessors have had an influence on the thinking of men in this western “Christian” era. Darwinism has had its converts in the Reformed church world among the intellectually elite. Darwinism, which is a basic philosophy of life, which denies the truth of the Word of God, has specifically challenged the Biblical doctrine of Creation. Darwinism has made inroads through the medium of higher criticism into the church. Much of nominal Christendom has denied the cardinal truths of the Bible and one of these is the doctrine of Creation. When one can deny the infallibility of the Scriptures and that this doctrine implies then the foundations are destroyed. God grant that our witness may remain constant over against this departure from the truth.

The theory of evolution is a world and life view which is diametrically opposed to the Christian world and life view. Evolution or Darwinism can be said to be absolutely opposed to the Christian world and life view because:

1. Evolution denies sin — original and actual sin.
2. Evolution denies the fall and the curse on all creation.
3. Evolution denies the need for redemption.

In short evolution is the Devil’s lie. It comes straight out of hell. It is intellectual and spiritual heresy. Evolution is a denial of the truth of the Word of God; it denies the Scriptures.

Evolution is not a new heresy. Solomon says that there is no new thing under the sun. I have emphasized this fact in previous articles which I have written on this topic. Even though it is not new it does not become less powerful in its influence. It is an increasingly dangerous heresy. In this age of scientific advancement and of increasing materialism the theory of evolution becomes more influential. Evolutionism finds a warm spot close to the heart of every child of the Devil and it is alluring to the flesh of the child of God.

Evolution is related to the theory of the "eternal" betterment of all things. This "eternal" betterment theory is also called the theory of "progress." It is the postmillennial dream of false Christianity. Evolution and the theory of progress seem to go hand in hand with the "Social Gospeller." Darwinism held a strong appeal for the man in the Social Gospel movement. The Social Gospel
advocate who was convinced that the discoveries of Darwin were correct was also convinced that it was impossible for honest scholarship to hold to the doctrine of creation, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the fall as these truths had always been presented by the church.

Not every man of science, however, has been swept along with this movement. There are many students of science who are Bible believers and who will not accept the Darwinian philosophy of earth history. We who are unsophisticated scientists must listen to the men of science for information concerning the facts of science. It is much better when we can listen to men of science who are committed to a literal interpretation of the Word of God with respect to the doctrine of Creation. Such a man is Dr. H. M. Morris who believes that God created the world in six literal twenty-four hour days. Dr. Morris has shown that men of science who believe in evolution and the theory of inevitable betterment through the operation of the laws of nature have also to reckon with the two laws of thermodynamics. These physical laws held by all men of science demonstrate that the theory of evolution is nothing more than a theory. Evolution teaches innovation, improvement and integration. Science itself has shown that things do not improve and that all things tend toward disintegration rather than integration. The two laws of thermodynamics teach conservation of matter and disintegration. Add to this the fact that as far as present-day biological change is concerned there is no evidence whatever that any real evolutionary changes are taking place. Even in the field of nuclear radiation none of the physical changes which have been produced in the bodies of animals have been passed on to future generations by the parents of those animals in which such changes have been effected.

The Christian teacher is called to cling to a basic commitment—a basic world-and-life view which is based upon a Biblical framework of earth history. The Biblical framework of earth history is emphatically rejected and denied in every part by ancient and modern intellectualism. This flat denial is based upon an adherence to uniformitarianism and a steady-state theory of nature. This adherence to uniformitarianism is described by the apostle Peter as being the doctrine of the scoffer who said that “all things continue as they were from the beginning.” These are the words of him who says “Where is God?” and who ultimately says “God is dead.”

Those who would cling to a uniformitarian interpretation of earth history would lay claim to such an interpretation on the basis of a rational and empirical approach to the study of reality. In itself this approach may have many features which are useful but when this approach is used to give an explanation for the origin of all the phenomena which are observable through the human senses then we must cast our dissenting vote along with all other Bible believing students of earth history.

This rationalistic and empirical approach to the study of earth history is sometimes referred to as the scientific method. As I have suggested this scientific method is not per se bad in every detail. It is a legitimate tool to discover facts about the observable universe. The following limitations should be considered.

1. It can only determine formal truth. It cannot determine the truth in Christ Jesus. One cannot move from the brute facts to a knowledge of God who reveals himself in Christ Jesus. Christ is the wisdom of God.

2. It is never used without a basic prejudice. In fact the scientific method suffers per se because it is a method which is basically prejudicial. The fundamental bias of the method is that “all truth can be ascertained by means of this method.” All truth can be empirically proved because all truth is empirical. There is nothing existent besides that which can be empirically proved to be true. Only that which can be proved to be true by the scientific method is true.

When one makes statements concerning the ultimate reliability of the scientific method then one begins to deny some of the cardinal truths of the Word of God. To say this denies the need for Divine revelation. This method means that one must be enamoured with gross materialism which denies the spiritual side of man and denies the fact that God who is a Spirit reveals to man that which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard.

An acceptance of the scientific method as
the only means of ascertaining that which is true would mean that one must deny the validity of the Scriptures as a means of arriving at truth. This would be a denial of one’s Christian commitment.

Protestant Reformed Christian Schools, yes, all Christian Schools must be based squarely on an adherence to the Word of God. The study of Creation and the interpretation of the facts of the Creation must in no way conflict with the clear teaching of the Word of God. The Biblical framework of earth history implies an adherence to the following:

1. A real and special Creation of all things, in six days, by God the Father. When God ceased creating no new species could spontaneously spring from the earth nor could any new creature evolve in an organic way.

2. An introduction of rebellion, disharmony, and the curse because of the fall and disobedience of our first parent Adam.

3. A belief in the Universal Flood. All that God created was destroyed except what was saved in the ark and God renovated and changed the earth for the post-diluvian period of earth history.

4. A belief in the work of redemption accomplished upon the cross, whereby the Word made flesh reconciles the world unto himself. Colossians 1:17.

5. A belief in the final judgment by fire and brimstone and the return of Christ upon the clouds of heaven when a new heavens and a new earth will be ushered in as the dwelling place for the redeemed of all ages.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

FROM THE PASTOR’S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

Luke 23:44, 45a — “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour; and the sun was darkened.”

DARKNESS AT NOONDAY

Rapidly the climax was reached! On the cross of Calvary was hung the Savior of His people. Hung there He was by wicked man. The cross represented a climax of man’s wickedness. Always had man rebelled against God—from the time of the fall on. Man would replace God. And when the Son is in their grasp, they will kill Him and (so they imagine in their foolish pride) themselves inherit His kingdom. The awful wickedness of man becomes exposed at the cross.

But also there was a climax for Christ Himself in His suffering. He was born in the manger in order to suffer and die for His own. All His life-long He had His mind fixed upon the work which He must do. Now that work reaches a climax as He receives the last dregs of the wrath of God for the sins of His own.

During the first three hours of crucifixion there was much noise about the cross: noise made especially by those mocking the Lamb. The high priests led the others. They urged Him to come down from the cross—thus proving that He was the King of the Jews.

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One thief joined them and the passersby who mocked. For three hours there on the cross Christ must endure such scorn.

Christ too was speaking while He hung on the cross. During those first three hours He spake three times — thus also preparing Himself for the agonies of the suffering the last three hours.

At 12 o’clock noon the sun was darkened. This was no ordinary darkness nor did it arise because of some “natural” phenomena. Very little is said of this darkness in the gospel accounts. Only one verse in each of the first three accounts mentions it. Three hours of darkness are compressed in a one-verse description! Evidently there was nothing which could be reported more. Christ did not speak during this time until He cries out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” The multitude was evidently silenced in great fear. And human description would prove inadequate to describe what must have taken place on the cross during this time.

But what caused this great darkness? Some have suggested an eclipse of the sun (though others have sought to prove the impossibility of this). Some have said that darkness was caused by a cloud cover which suddenly appeared. But none of these explanations are adequate. God could indeed have directed any of the above happenings. Yet the darkness which now appears must be directly associated with the work on the cross. The darkness may not have any “natural” explanation. It must be a miracle related to that miracle of redemption.

God caused the sun to hide his face. God directed creation itself, in a miraculous way, to provide the proper “lighting effect” for the “drama” of the cross. At the proper time all light is blotted out. Almost one would say that God causes creation itself to hide its face from that awful reality of the cross. Darkness covers the earth.

The darkness is a sign. Originally, God created the darkness as well as the light; both were good. Even now one can go outside at night and behold the handiwork of God in the heavens. There is beauty in the night.

Yet, after the fall of man the darkness has another meaning. It is that which is contrasted with the light. Light indicates revelation, fellowship and communion. God is the Light and in Him is no darkness whatever. That light of God is revealed through Jesus Christ (John 1). In that light is seen the grace, love, mercy of our God.

But over against that light is the darkness. The darkness serves as a sign of sin. In the darkness man plots his evil deeds — thinking that none will see. In the darkness he carries out his evil designs. Natural man is of darkness and not of the light.

But also that darkness is the sign of the wrath of God. He took away the light for three days in the land of Egypt. This was God’s judgment upon the wicked Egyptians who would keep God’s people in cruel bondage. It is a sign of that separation from the light of God. Darkness is the separation from His face and favor. Therefore also hell is called “outer darkness.”

Now let’s go back to that cross. The darkness for three hours indicates God’s judgment upon wicked men who carry out their evil design of crucifying the Son of God in the flesh. Even as the light is shut off, so too these evil men will have to face the terrors of outer darkness in the day of judgment.

But the darkness is to be related especially to the work of Christ. One sees here the paradox of Calvary. The Light appears to be swallowed up in the darkness. Can one ever explain that? How is it possible that the Light should be enveloped so completely in darkness? Yet this is necessary in order that His people might be saved.

The darkness also indicates the terrible wrath of God which is being poured upon the Christ. Now is the climax of His suffering. All His life-time was spent with this moment in view. He must endure the dregs of God’s wrath to its last drop. He must suffer under that wrath which all of the elect would otherwise have had to endure in hell itself. The darkness indicates this awfulness of hell into which the Christ descends. And from it He can not escape until the last farthing has been paid. Christ must be separated from the face of God. Thus would He deliver us.

One might add that the darkness serves as a curtain before our eyes. That Christ must suffer and die under the wrath of God we do confess. But that we can fully understand what is involved in that suffering, we must deny. During the three last hours
Christ must descend into the depths of hell by enduring hellish agonies on the cross. He now bears the infinite wrath of God for our sakes. Such suffering is too terrible for the sight of human eyes. God places a curtain between Him and the bystanders and us. We can but stand before that cross, now: blotted out in the darkness, and confess together the amazing love of God which so provided for the deliverance of His own.

That darkness of the cross is for our comfort too. It is a terrible darkness without doubt. But there is comfort for us. He who entered into it, did so as our representative Head. He entered that not because of His transgressions, but because of ours. That is what we particularly ought to recall during this season of the year when His suffering, death, and resurrection again are commemorated. Our sins, almost without number, are now resting upon His shoulders. Willingly He will assume the punishment of God for them. And He can bear that, for He is the Son of God and very righteous man.

We know too that He went through the darkness. The darkness did not and could not hold Him. Had He been unsuccessful in delivering His own, then the darkness would have remained. Then He would not have come forth out of the grave. Then darkness would yet be our portion—the outer darkness of hell. But Christ was victorious. After three hours, after uttering that agonizing fourth cross-word, He speaks again. Now He declares triumphantly, "It is finished." What is finished? The wrath of God had been borne away. The sentence of death has been removed. The Light has entered the darkness—and has removed it completely. Therefore triumphantly does the last book of the Bible declare concerning the new heavens and earth, "There shall be no night there." Christ took it away. And He eternally shines as the Light in the heavenly Canaan. Makes one want to sing, doesn't it?

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**OPEN FORUM**

Dear Young People,

As I was helping to index the *Beacon Lights* this past summer, I began to think of ways in which we could improve this magazine. The *Beacon Lights* of the past had varied and interesting articles. The young people of our churches contributed to help make the *Beacon Lights*, in my opinion, an outstanding magazine, not only for young people, but for everybody.

But what has happened? Our young people seem as if they are not as interested in their magazine as young people in former years were. Certainly, opinions are voiced and the articles are discussed. But why not write an article giving your opinions? For example, there was an article written in a quite recent issue that discouraged popular music. Several young people who had read the article bluntly stated that they disagreed with the stand of the writer. But on the other hand many young people said that, in their opinion it was a well-written article and that they agreed with the writer. But did any of these young people write an article giving an opinion? No. Are they afraid to give their views? Are they lazy? Don't they care? Are they too busy with other things?

But possibly the young people feel that they don’t have an excellent ability to put their thoughts into words. The result is that the article goes unwritten and the *Beacon Lights* becomes a magazine for a few contributors rather than all of the young people. How would you solve a problem of this sort? Couldn’t you get help from your parents or ask a friend, possibly a classmate, to help you? I am sure that both would be glad to help if they are truly interested.

But another problem might be, What would the young people write about? As already implied, the young people might give opinions on articles. Possibly a literature contest could be arranged by the Federation Board for those interested in literature. Or, perhaps two or more young people could engage in a written debate. In the first issue, the person taking the affirmative side could give his views. In the second issue, the debater on the negative side could give his views. Then in the third and fourth issues the negative and the affirmative teams could give the rebuttals. This would not only serve as good reading material but also the reader would begin to get his own ideas and would write an article.

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*Thirteen*
sharing his ideas or possibly he would like to engage in another debate.

Young people, let’s show some interest in the Beacon Lights. You certainly have your own ideas about the various articles that have been written. This is your magazine, so let’s make it as worthwhile as we can, even if we have to spend an hour of our valued time. It would be an hour well spent. Let’s not limit the Beacon Lights to a few faithful writers. But faithful writers, don’t be discouraged. We need you. If it weren’t for you we wouldn’t have a Beacon Lights at all.

Our calling as Protestant Reformed young people is to be a light in a dark world. Are we fulfilling our calling by letting the paper and pen just lie in the drawer? Are we helping the cause of the Beacon Lights by procrastinating or taking the “let-somebody-else-do-it” attitude?

Don’t procrastinate any longer. Take that pen and start writing. It’s your privilege as covenant young people.

Yours in Christ,
LOIS HOEKSEMA

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY LUBBERS

Miscellaneous
On March 17 the Beacon Lights sponsored a singspiration at the Hudsonville Church. As usual, the church auditorium was filled and the large audience was led in singing by Clare Kuiper.

On April 7 the Choral Societies of Hudsonville gave their Spring program, while the Hope Choral Society presented theirs on Easter Sunday, April 14.

The Hope School presented its annual all-school program in First Church on April 11. The theme was: REJOICE, THE LAMB REIGNETH.

Membership
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Velthouse and son have transferred from First to Hope.

Mr. Andrew Brummel has transferred from Hull to Hope.

Holland received the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Wolter and five daughters from the Haven Christian Reformed Church of Zeeland.

On March 3 Miss Lois Bruinsma of South Holland made public confession of faith.

On March 17 Mr. Jim Lanning of Hope made public confession of faith.

Marriage
On March 12 Miss Sharon Kuiper and Mr. Allen Brummel were married in Hope Church.

Servicemen
On February 26 Sp-4 Robert Poortenga of South Holland underwent surgery. His address is:

Sp-4 Robert Poortenga 54814473
Co. A 82nd AVN Bn.
82nd Air Borne
Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28307

The current address of Neal Buiter from Oak Lawn is:

Sp 4 Cornelius Buiter
U.S. 548-14-592
4th N.I. Detachment (Data Link)
A.P.O. San Francisco, California 96262

ANNOUNCEMENTS
The Free Christian School of Edgerton will need a TEACHER for the lower room grades 1-4. If interested in filling this position please contact,

MR. ALLEN HENDRIKS
R.R. II, Box 87
Jasper, Minn. 56144

The deadline for receiving applications for the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund is May 1, 1968. Applications can be obtained from your Young People’s Society secretary and must be mailed to

MISS WILMA HAVEMAN
2731 N. 112th St.
Holland, Mich.

Before May 1, 1968.

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