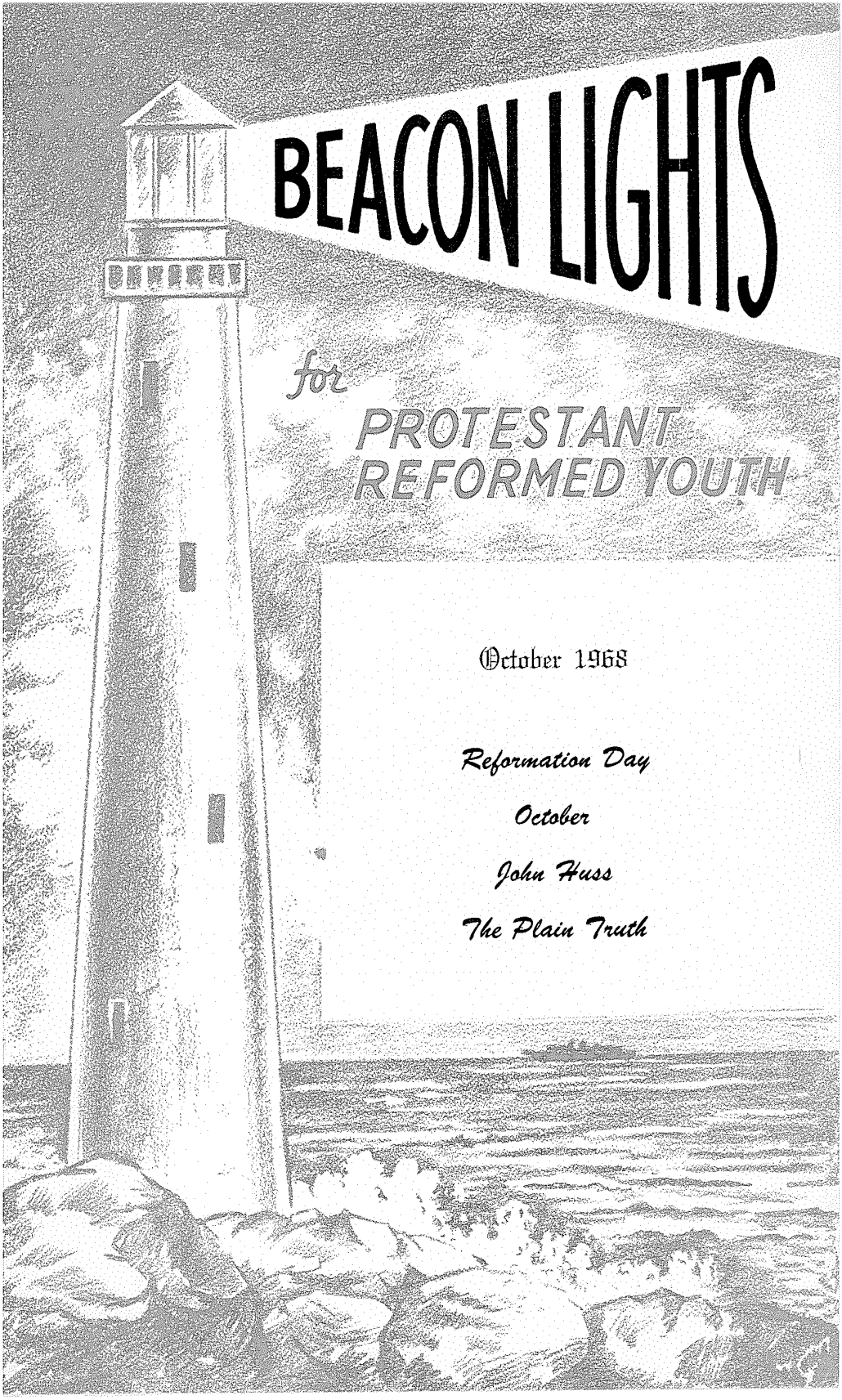

BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

October 1968

Reformation Day

October

John Huss

The Plain Truth

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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REFORMATION DAY

Each year at about this time Reformation Day is called to your attention, covenant youth. However, has it become so natural that you cease to consider its importance to you? This could become a rather easy thing to let happen, for by nature we are so inclined to take things for granted. Perhaps this has happened to you.

Whether this be the case or not, let us consider why we should not let such an attitude form. What does the Reformation mean to you? It is not hard to answer this question properly. We may say that it is one of the most important events that has ever affected our lives. But, you ask: how could something that happened so long ago affect my life today? This is a very important question, for today there is always the clamor for the making of everything relevant. Are the principles of the Reformation relevant? I am afraid that most people outside of our circle would think not. This is the evidence of the ever increasing attempt to do away with the creeds of the church.

The Reformation, indeed, affects our lives today. The principles of the Reformation are relevant. For take note, beloved young people, that at the time of the reformation the true manifestation was almost non existent. The truth of God's Word was no longer maintained in the church of Rome. Church government had become a hierarchy with an "infallible" pope as dictator. Salvation was granted by the Romish Church, not by God. The pope forgave sin. Thus, it was taught that all one had to do was trust in the clergy and all would be well.

This stand by the church, as then manifest, led to ignorance among the people. There was an ignorance in the knowledge of God's Word. Hence, salvation was presented more and more boldly as the work of man. However, such doctrine left God's children cold, for there was no comfort and assurance for the sinner. We are sinners and cannot save ourselves!

But the Reformation wrought by God's grace through Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin changed all of this. These men maintained steadfastly that: First, the Word of God was the sole authority for life and doctrine. Hence, the Scriptures were returned to the laity, and the preaching became central once again in the church; Secondly, they held to the Scriptural truth that justification is by faith alone, not by works.

We have the truth to guide us in life and doctrine, because of this work of God through these men and others, whom the Spirit led to develop the principles of the Reformation. Thus we are able to face the world in which we live. And doing this, young people, you need not act as the hippies or yippies, nor need you find consolation in drugs. For you have the comfort of the truth which the Reformation has given us.

All things work together for good to God's elect children! Understanding our depravity, we don't have the insecurity of trusting in ourselves for salvation, but God sent His Son to atone fully for our sins. Further, God preserves us to the very end, even unto glory! Many do not hold to these truths that the reformers preserved and emphasized, but beloved young people where is there comfort outside of these Scriptural truths. There is none! Daily thank your Father in heaven for the Reformation which returned the true church to His Word.

Rev. R. G. Moore

FEATURE

OCTOBER

KAREN LUBBERS

A soft breeze gently played with the dead leaves. Far away, in the darkness of night, a dog howled sadly, the rustling leaves answering him with a sad call of death.

Under this dark, murky sky and within this realm of death, were people, you and I. Where were we that night as nature was sadly sinking into the white death of winter? The theaters were crowded with teenagers, the living rooms of our homes were occupied by parents who discussed the possibility of a new house, and grade school children sat around television sets, entranced by the developing plot of a murder. Everywhere that night, we were clinging to things we could touch, see, and feel. This particular Sunday night we again sought to put meaning in our lives by discussing and searching for those things which had become so important in our lives, the tangible. Ironically, it was Sunday, God's day. We had given Him His three hours of worship in our church services and declared to Him that we had worshiped. Indeed, we had worshiped but what was the object of our worship and why did we worship? Perhaps we were just thankful for our $25,000 houses, for that avacado Mustang parked in the parking lot outside of the church, and for that wardrobe back home.

Had we forgotten our young people in Vietnam who lay screaming in agony from gunshot wounds? We no longer even turn our eyes to the death in nature and to the silent, sad night to whisper "Dear God, thank-you for life."

Every week we allow our lives to slip back into the mold we have created for ourselves. We go about our jobs, earning and saving money. Constantly we push our souls into those things which rust and decay and soon all we have left is a self-centered person of unconcern and apathy.

When, at the end of this day, the silent night falls over the dying earth, when the animal's howl is the only sound breaking the deathly silence, will we again fall asleep planning for the tomorrow that may never come? Or will we be able to turn and walk into the night alone and with tear-stained faces say, "O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God who giveth the victory!" Will the world be able to see us in that night as a light on a hilltop? Will we be able to turn again to life with *spiritual* life?

The world stands over against you and I. It stands before us as a reality, challenging us to find reality in an apparently unrealistic God. Gradually we are losing our souls to "our" possessions. Who will or even can answer the cry, "God is dead"? Perhaps we must first enter the night where all of nature is slowly dying, where we are challenged to evaluate in the presence of death our lives and our conception of God. For, ultimately, God is our only and final reality. Even though the leaves fall from their branches and slowly decay in the earth, even though the whole creation reminds us of the awful reality of death, and even though our wealth seeks to destroy our souls, we, turning to God alone under the skies, will NOT be a dying people.

SPECIAL FEATURE

The following article is the first of two installments taken from a paper written by the Reverend Dale H. Kuiper. It was originally written as a seminary paper, but is particularly appropriate at this time of year, and at this time in history, when the Reformation is so overshadowed by Halloween. Rev. Kuiper has graciously granted us permission to print this paper in two installments, the second of which will be followed by the Bibliography.

ED.

FOREWORD

History is necessity. Therefore we may ask the question "why?" concerning historical facts and expect pertinent answers. If history is decreed and necessitated, then

events happen at certain places and at certain times for good reason; nor could they happen any other way.

The study of John Huss of Bohemia presents several such historical whys. Why did these events occur in Bohemia? Why did Huss appear in history? These questions are legitimate, and in the answering of them much concerning the man John Huss is clarified.

A study on so recent a personage as Huss presents no difficulty as far as research material is concerned. The great difficulty is to tear one's self away from the numerous interesting events which surround his life. The vast amount of material in the English language demands a limiting of scope. This paper will deal only with the life, death, and work of John Huss. The fascinating wars waged by his followers and the dominant position of nationalism in Bohemian religion will needs lack full treatment.

JOHN HUSS: *Reformation Forerunner?*

Great events do not burst upon the scene of history but are the fruit of many year's ferment; they are a long time preparing. That activities of a reformatory nature should occur in Bohemia implies a definite background. God does not accomplish His divine will supernaturally, but he uses men and institutions to bring His plan about. John Huss was born into a certain set of circumstances, prepared for him, and in which he would act. To understand his work, therefore, we must understand the background of Bohemia.

Bohemian history became intimately connected to that of Germany in 1310. Up to that time Bohemia was ruled by native kings. However, the male line died out, and a royal sister married John of Luxembourg. Thus a German potentate sat on the Bohemian throne. In 1346 Charles IV became king of Bohemia, and by later becoming emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, drew Bohemia into imperial politics (3, p. 25).

Under Charles IV, Bohemia was lifted to high levels of culture, industry, and learning. He founded the University of Prague in 1348. To this university flocked students from all of northern Europe, including the British Isles. Kuhns gives the enrollment at Prague as 30,000 students with 200 doctors and 500 bachelors of art. However, most other writers say that this is a greatly exaggerated number. The university was founded with four faculties, theology, law, philosophy, and medicine, and was divided into four nations, Bohemian, Bavarian, Polish, and Saxon. This university and its structure play an important part in the life of John Huss.

Secondly, Bohemia was converted to Christianity much later than other European nations. She was not forced to adopt Christianity under force of violence as were the Franks and the Saxons. We may say that she greatly desired conversion, and therefore became better acquainted with the Christian Faith.

Then too, Bohemia was converted by missionaries, not from Rome, but from Constantinople. According to Nestor, a king of Moravia in 863 requested the following of the Greek emperor: "Our land is baptised, but we have no teachers to instruct us, and we have no translation of the Holy Scriptures. Send to us teachers who may explain to us the Bible" (9, p. 131). Cyril and Method were sent from Constantinople, and were instrumental in the Bohemian and Moravian conversion. Due to this, and also to its rather remote location, the church in Bohemia did not have strict Romish rules imposed upon it. She conducted her services in Bohemian rather than Latin, and priests were allowed to marry.

Two other factors complete the description of the setting into which Huss is born. Bohemia came under the influence of three preachers in the years immediately before Huss' birth. Militz of Kremsier, Matthias of Janow, and Conrad of Waldhausen, during the years 1360-1375, openly preached against the iniquities of the church, even calling the pope anti-christ (9, p.132). The Bohemian population heard and accepted preaching which criticized the pope, advocated a weak sort of Scriptural authority, and taught that the cup should be granted to the laity.

The last factor to be considered here is the influence of the philosophical writings of John Wycliffe. (It appears that his

theological works did not appear in Bohemia until the time of Jerome.) In 1367, the University of Prague ordered the philosophy department to augment its teaching with the notebooks of the Paris and Oxford doctors. Late in 1411, Huss himself says that members of the university have been reading Wycliffe for more than twenty years (7, p. 359). Also, the marriage of King Wenceslaus' sister Anne to Richard II of England allowed for a ready transfer of Wycliffism. The philosophy thus translated to Bohemia from England may be best termed realism in distinction from the nominalism which prevailed during the fourteenth century, especially in Germany.

This then is the condition of Bohemia at the time of the birth of Huss. It can readily be seen that the seeds of a great struggle had been planted for a period of centuries. Upon this scene comes a fearless preacher who, already from his youth, possessed a martyr complex.

Little or nothing is known concerning the early life of Huss. Wylie gives his birthdate as July 6, 1373, but the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia lists it as July 6, 1369. It is likely the later date, according to David Schaff, because then his age at the time of entering the priesthood would be more in line with canonical age for that event (6, p. 19). Also, many writers say that the July 6 date is used only because it is the day remembered in Bohemia as the day he died in Constance. Whatever the case, historians agree that he was born at Husinecy, a small town on the Moldau River about seventy five miles from Prague. He took his name from this village, or possibly from a nearby castle.

In 1389 Huss began his studies at the University of Prague. Studying the arts, philosophy, and theology, Huss received the B.A. in 1393, the B.D. in 1394, and the M.A. in 1396. He never studied for the doctorate, and referred to himself as bachelor of sacred theology.

Biographers disagree as to the character and abilities of student Huss. Generally he is described as very average, graduating near the middle of his class. He is said to have led a spotless youth; later his accusers could lay nothing to his charge concerning his private life. He greatly admired the martyrs of the early church, and once thrust his hand into a fire to see if he possessed the constancy demonstrated by St. Lawrence. Not only did he possess ascetic tendencies, but it was his desire that he might take a place in history beside those who adorned church history with their stedfastness (1, p. 54).

Having received the M.A., Huss begins lecturing at the Prague University. It is during these first few years of his work that he gains wide popularity with the faculty, students, and common people. Even Aeneas Sylvius, who later curses Huss as a heretic, describes him as "a powerful speaker and distinguished for the reputation of a life of purity" (1, p. 48). Honors now begin to come to Huss in a flurry. Ordained to the priesthood in 1400, he becomes dean of the philosophical faculty the following year. In 1402 he served for six months as rector of the University, following a re-organization of the university due to difficulty in the student "nations." Also in this year he is appointed as the pastor of the Bethlehem Chapel. This chapel was so named — House of Bread — so the preaching of the Word might be refreshment to the common and faithful people of Christ.

The Bohemian historian Palacky (6, p. 42) judges Huss' sermons to be contrived to arouse reflection, to persuade, and to create a lasting impression. In this respect he was less stormy than his predecessors Militz and Konrad. Palacky also characterizes Huss as bold and obstinate, and as having as his highest earthly goal the wearing of a martyr's crown.

Before a year of preaching had passed, Huss became identified with Wycliffism. Had not this been the case, we may safely say that he would not have been a martyr. We make bold to say that all events subsequent to his pastorate at Bethlehem Chapel were determined by the fact that he embraced the teachings of Wycliffe. To better understand Huss from 1402 to his death in 1415, it is necessary to briefly discuss the views propagated by Wycliffe at Oxford. To understand these views is to understand Huss.

John Wycliffe (1324-1384) wrote prolifically in several fields: as a schoolman, political reformer, pastor, and doctrinal re-

former. To understand his impact on Huss, we need examine only his doctrinal tenets. These writings are divided by Schaff (7, p. 330) into five headings: the nature of the church, the papacy, the priesthood, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the use of Scripture.

Wycliffe believed the church to be the body of all the elect in distinction from the prevailing thought that the church was composed of friars, priests, monks, and prelates. He said that Christ was the head of the church, not the pope. Concerning the papacy, he had only words of scorn. The pope was synonymous with anti-christ in Wycliffe's writings. He called the papal office poisonous and unnecessary. Nor could any Biblical grounds be found for it. He attacks the priests and monks by saying they would rather curse than bless. Nor is the practice of man confessing sin to another man anywhere taught in the Scriptures. He calls to task especially friars, those slavish agents of the pope's will who spread false views of the eucharist.

Wycliffe showed the greatest courage when he attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation. He referred to this doctrine as a lying fable and a pronounced idolatry (7, p. 336). Over against it he asserted that Christ's body was present in the bread and wine symbolically; they are the effectual signs of Him. He proves these points with Scripture and reason.

Certainly no other doctrine was as clearly developed by Wycliffe as was the authority of the Scriptures. In a thousand paged work, *De veritate Scripturae,* he maintains the absolute authority of Scripture for all things from salvation to logic. Further he believed in an open Bible, that is, all people should have the Bible to study in private. That this belief might be practiced, he translated the Latin Vulgate in 1382.

These are, briefly, the teachings of Wycliffe, teachings which were so clearly written that they could be grasped by a superficial reading. In 1382 at the Earthquake Synod in London, the teachings of Wycliffe were condemned. In 1413 a Lateran decree ordered his books burned, and the Council of Constance in 1414 exhumed his bones and burned them.

ALONE

A man sore troubled within,
And looking for the way of light,
Meditated unceasingly,
To find peace amidst impiety.

Diligently seeking peace, he
Searched God's Word,
And did not fail, for God says,
"Seek and ye shall find."

This man struggled all alone
For his dear Lord,
Bringing upon him great opposition
From the church he loved.

He was called a heretic,
Because men he would not obey,
Yet he had inner peace, for God says,
"My sheep hear My voice."

His teachings were rejected by
Leaders of his Church.
In an attempt to squelch his
Writings, they even burned his books.

They gave him no peace, this
Man of great faith.
But God gave him comfort;
"The just shall live by faith."

The Church sought his life,
But God, his shield,
Gave grace without measure
And fruit to his work.

The Church, unable to refute with
Scripture, forced him to testify,
"Here I stand, I cannot
Do otherwise."

Sally Elzinga

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please send all contributions, letters, and articles to the new editor of *Beacon Lights*

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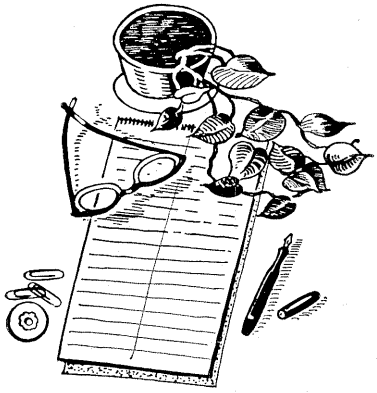


CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

The Truth About THE PLAIN TRUTH

These are the days when many false teachers and false preachers have something to say to those who are seeking a way out of the morass in which they find themselves. These false teachers and false preachers can easily find their way into the homes of Bible-believing Christians. The methods of distribution of their false teaching have been perfected to a degree which would have been unheard of in the early history of the world. Our technological age has brought with it many advances in the spread of false doctrines. I refer especially to magazines and radio broadcasts which so easily find their way into our family rooms and our libraries. Often the doctrines which are taught in these magazines and are preached on the air-waves are so subtle and so deceitful that even we who are founded in the truth of the Word of God are deceived. The Scriptures warn that the days will be shortened for even the very elect are in danger of being deceived. "Therefore if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 22:23-24.

I am writing about what seems to me to be a very serious problem. This is not only a serious problem for those people who are outside the Protestant Reformed Churches but it is a serious problem for us who are members of these churches. Furthermore, this is a significant problem for the young people in our churches. Our young people must be alerted to the basic beliefs and teachings of those men who would subvert the truth and who would flood our homes and lives with the bewitching siren's call.

Not all roads that lead to God are good. This is the false teaching of those who would say that it matters not what a man believes or what he teaches as long as he is sincere. Christ said: "I am the way the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." John 14:6. This means that we must properly understand this *way* and we must cling to the straight and tried paths.

The basic question that confronts us in our whole life is: "What think ye of Christ, whose son is He?" Matthew 22:42.

We must not in this respect listen to the cries of the false church, which clamours for union at any cost. These false preachers are not interested in unity. We must beware of those who use the synchretistic approach in religion. This is a kind of homogenization process which breaks everything down to a kind of lowest common denominator. A man like Arnold Toynbee, noted English historian, has advocated this in all of his writings on religion. (Possibly C. S. Lewis would speak of his work as "historicism.")

We live in a day when many are rejecting Christ and are attempting to subvert Christians by a subtle changing of the message of the gospel. These heretics must be refuted. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as minis-

ters of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." II Corinthians 11:13-15.

It is my intention to write, D.V., several articles about a cult which is generally known for its monthly periodical *THE PLAIN TRUTH*. This magazine has found its way into several of our homes in the Grand Rapids area and I am certain that there must be other homes in our community of churches and in the homes of others, who might receive the *Beacon Lights*, that receive monthly, free of charge, this pernicious literature. An abundance of falsehood is disseminated in the garb of "Plain Truth."

It is my intention to write some of the facts that underlie the publication of this periodical.

There are undoubtedly those who know about the radio broadcast, The World Tomorrow. This broadcast is sponsored by the same organization that publishes *THE PLAIN TRUTH*.

The church should be challenged to investigate the cults and to be familiar with these aberrations of the truth. The cults are claimed by some commentators to be growing percentage-wise faster than the combined growth of the Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations.

I know that orthodox Christians (those who maintain the truths of the Reformation which have been developed by the true church through all the centuries of the New Dispensation) have the spiritual and dogmatic equipment to evaluate these cults. We have the equipment and yet the lie is always garbed in deceitful accouterements. We must be fully grounded in the truth to perspicuously perceive that which is false.

The American Banking Association is said to have a training program which involves several hundred tellers a year. The purpose of this program is to train the tellers to distinguish counterfeit money from real money. They have found that the best method for giving this ability to tellers is to have tellers work only with genuine bills for two weeks. This produces such a familiarity with the genuine bill that the teller is easily able to detect the "fools gold" from that which is truly gold. (I would suppose that all types of applications could be made.)

He that is thoroughly familiar with the truths of Scriptures as they are embodied in our Reformed Creeds should easily detect the false from that which is true but the lie is carefully concealed in the verbiage of seeming orthodoxy.

There are many cults which the orthodox Christian must know. They are: Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Mormons, Sweden-borgianism, Black Muslims, The Unity School, and a host of others. Among these cults that the Christian must beware is the cult which we have chosen to study. This is the cult which is most notably represented today by Herbert W. Armstrong. This cult is Anglo-Israelism.

The cult of Anglo-Israelism is more than a century old in the United States. It was brought to the United States from England. Anglo-Israelism gained adherents in England many years ago. Shortly after the Elizabethan Era (1558-1603) adherents were being drawn to the theories that are embodied by this Anglo-Israel cult.

Today the most vocal proponents of the Anglo-Israelic system of Biblical interpretation in North America and Canada are James Lovell, Howard Rand, and Herbert W. Armstrong.

James Lovell makes his home in Fort Worth, Texas, and he has spoken on sixty radio stations in the United States and Canada. He is the editor of a monthly magazine entitled *Kingdom Digest*. More than 50,000 tracts, pamphlets, and magazines are distributed each month by the James Lovell organization.

Howard Rand heads up one of the organizers of the Anglo-Saxon Federation founded in 1930, called "Destiny Publishers." Rand has his headquarters in Haverhill, Massachusetts. A magazine with more than 23,000 subscribers is circulated each month.

The third and most well-known of these proponents of Anglo-Israelism is Herbert W. Armstrong. Herbert Armstrong makes his home and headquarters in the city of the Rose Bowl, Pasadena, California. He is the founder of the RADIO CHURCH OF GOD and THE WORLD TOMORROW radio program. This is a half-hour program which is heard coast to coast and is aired by 101 domestic stations and by 48 foreign stations via short wave radio. Armstrong is also the founder of AMBASSADOR COLLEGE which is committed to the

tenants of Anglo-Israelism and is located in Pasadena, California. He is founder and editor of *THE PLAIN TRUTH,* a monthly magazine which circulates more than 430,000 copies.

Walter R. Martin, author of *The Kingdom of the Cults,* claims that the Radio Church of God is the most deadly of all forms of Anglo-Israelism. It denies foundational Christian truth because there is not even a guarded orthodoxy in the areas of the nature of God nor in the areas of personal redemption and the Person and work of Christ.

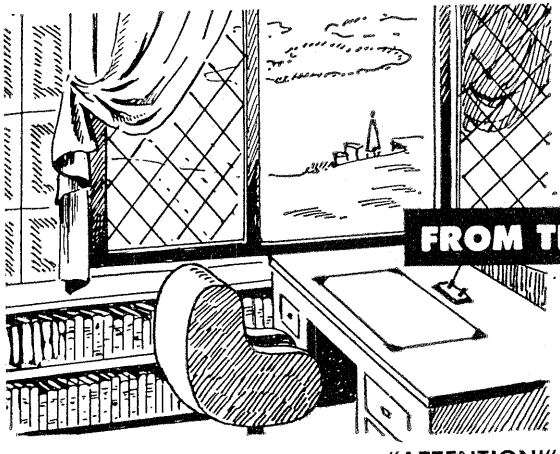
The basic premise of Anglo-Israelite theory is:

a. The ten tribes were lost (Israelites) when the Jews were captured by the Assyrians under King Sargon.

b. These so-called "lost" tribes are in reality, the Saxae, or Scythians who surged westward through Northern Europe and eventually became the ancestors of the Saxons who later invaded England.

c. Anglo-Saxons are the "lost ten tribes of Israel, and are substituted, in Anglo-Israel interpretation and exegesis, for the Israel of the Bible.

(to be continued)



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

"ATTENTION!"

"For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." — Matthew 6:21

There are but two kinds of treasures possible; treasures on earth and treasures in heaven. Treasures deal with what is valuable to us and dear. A mother calls her infant child her little treasure. All her heart is wrapped up in this child whom she loves. The entire wicked world also loves treasures. They are treasures of gold, silver, wealth — power! The young man of the world has his treasures in sports, hunting, fishing, the world series! The young worldly woman has her treasures in fancy dresses, alluring clothing, enticing perfumes, sex-appeal! However, there is another treasure. This treasure is the kingdom of heaven with all the spiritual riches of joy, peace, hope, the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

Where your treasure is shall your heart be!

Now the heart is a very subtle thing, young people. As one's heart is so are his works. And there is an infallible rule to gauge your own heart. You simply ask: where is my treasure? What things are precious to me? Are the things of heaven precious to me, or do I mind things on the earth? What is your "attention span" for the things which are heavenly? Teachers and instructors know that a very small child has a very brief attention span. This means that a small child can give its attention to any object or lesson for a very little while and then grows very weary of it, or disinterested. The very small child can play a very short time with its toys, dolls and

tractors. It has a short attention span! However, there are some toys which intrigue a given child no end! A little boy can play for hours with his toy trucks and tractors, if he has interest in them. They arrest his *attention;* they hold his attention for a long time. His little boy-heart has found a little treasure. And how he pays attention to them by the hour!

Where your treasure is shall your heart be!

Where is your attention, young people? What do you desire as the values in your life? How is your attention span in Young Peoples Society? In Catechism? Is the Word of God a treasure for you? Then your heart will be in it. You will not have any difficulty in diligent attendance of the church services and the young people's society meetings. You will then diligently prepare for the Bible discussion and for the after-recess program. No, this will then not, on Sunday evening, simply mean that the evening service or the society meeting is the preliminary bout before the main event! It will be the high-light of the week which claims all your attention! Your place will not be empty then when it is *your* turn to give the introductory remarks for the Bible discussion. You will then have given this your *sanctified attention* already before the meeting, and have prepared yourself to go up to God's house with joy and gladness in your soul!

For where your heart is there shall your treasure be!

The Bible does not know the abstract term "attention." Even in the army the cry "Attention" is not abstract, but it is a command, which must be followed with prompt obedience, and with an instant giving heed to what is said. Those who did not give attention to the command in the army wish they had!

We often do not live in that deep consciousness that God says to us in His Word: Attention! Where your treasure is there shall your heart be. Therefore let your attention and heart be directed toward the treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness. Be not as the world which seeks the things below: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Set your affections on the things above where Christ is in heaven.

Sanctified attention is really only possible by grace! This is very evident from the clear teaching of Scripture that our flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and that there is none, by nature, that seeketh out God. This ought to be evident also from the record concerning Lydia. Of her we read "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she *attended* unto the things which were spoken by Paul." Yes, that is it. Her heart was opened by the Lord. She listened, she heard and heard again; she kept right on hearing, she had a long attention-span! Why? This was her treasure, and her heart was in it. Her heart was opened, like the petals of the flower to the dew and sun!

Has the Lord opened your heart?

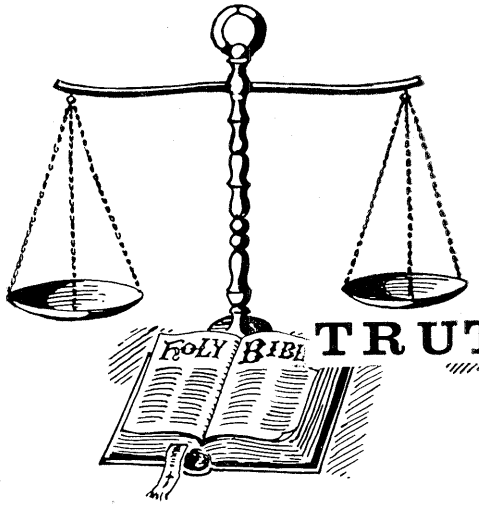
Where your treasure is there will your heart be!

Then your attention will be a response to God's attentiveness to you. His eye is upon the righteous, and his ear is directed to their cry, even as his face is against those who do evil to cut off their very remembrance from the earth.

Do you pray: "Attend unto my cry, O, Lord!"

Then your life will be to stand in attention to God. The Bible calls this: walking with God!

Do you?



TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

THE STARS OF LIGHT

"Praise Him, sun and moon! Praise Him, all ye stars of light! Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created" (Ps. 148:3-5).

The word for star (chochabh) is a general term which includes all the bodies in the heavens, including the planets, satellites, suns, nebulae, galaxies, meteors, bolides and comets. The word literally means, "something rolled up into a ball." Their creation came about as follows.

"And said Elohim, Let the lightbearers in the expanse of the heavens to cause to divide between the day and between the night; and let them be for signs, and for times, and for days, and years. And let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to cause light upon the earth; and it was so. And made Elohim two of the lightbearers, the great; the light, the great, for dominion of the day; and the light, the small, for dominion of the night; and the stars! And gave them, Elohim, in the expanse of the heavens to cause light upon the earth, and to rule in the day and in the night, and to cause to divide between the light and between the darkness; and saw, Elohim, that, good! And was evening, and was morning, day fourth!" (Gen. 1:14-19).

The purpose of the stellar bodies is, 1) to divide the light from the darkness, continuing and rendering permanent the distinction established on the first day, when the light of day was divided from the darkness of night by the earth rotating on its axis and revolving in its orbit; 2) to give light upon the earth. Light travels through space invisibly. Mere space, without the particles of our atmosphere, or *an* atmosphere, is as dark as our midnight. Light passes through this with no apparent visibility until it meets with an obstacle, such as the atmosphere, which then makes the obstacle and the light apparent to the eye. A magnifying glass will prove this. Focus the light to a very tiny point on an object. The point of light is visible on the object, but the ray of light as it is bent through the lens, is invisible. The conical shape of this beam of light may be seen by sprinkling it with chalk dust. But then that which is visible is illuminated particles of dust. 3) To rule the day by the sun, and the night by the moon. The sun can illumine the earth because of the atmosphere which catches and diffuses the light. For the same reason, the moon is able to illumine the earth at night, at times with enough brightness as to enable one to read easily. 4) To be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, for calculating time, for marking out the four seasons, the time of animal breeding, the migration of birds (Jer. 8:7), the time of worship services and religious observances (Zech. 8:19). They are for symbols. There is the single star (Mercury or Venus), the

stars in groups of three (Triangula), and four (Libra), and seven (Ursa Minor). They symbolize, respectively, the Triune God, one in Being, Three in Person; the world, and God's covenant.

All creatures reflect God's glory, and tell us something of the heavenly kingdom. Our Confession makes this clear: "We know Him by two means: first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely His power and divinity, as the Apostle Paul saith, Rom. 1:20" (Belgic, II). Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." All creatures in the universe, great and small, whether telescopical or microscopical, are so many characters, signs, letters or words which lead us to contemplate God. God and the things of God are understood by the things that are made. Whether it be the sun or the infinitesimal creatures in a drop of water, each one is the embodiment of a divine thought. A flower is a word of God; the moon is a word of God. Every creature in the universe is the incorporation of a word of God. Every creature in the universe as to its being and essence is a symbol — of something heavenly and spiritual. It is a signature or a footprint of God. The word "signs" (othoth) means an engraving, a mark, an instruction. God could not create or make a creature without it expressing a divine thought. For God could not make a mute word; He cannot make a "brute fact," He cannot make a mere abstraction. A vacuous, meaningless creature is unthinkable and impossible. For all things were made by the Logos, the Word, the Divine Thought of the Triune God. All things declare the glory of God; they are all expressions which sing His praise! "Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood be joyful. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 96:12, 11).

It was Dr. C. I. Scofield's opinion that the sun, moon and stars were not made on the fourth day. "Neither here nor in vv. 14-18 is an original *creative* act implied. A different word is used (asah, "to make"). The sense is 'made to *appear;* made *visible.*' The sun and the moon were *created* 'in the beginning.' The light, of course, came from the sun, but the vapor diffused the light. Later the sun appeared in an unclouded sky." But against this it is simply a fact that the Hebrew *asah,* "to make," by no stretch of the imagination can be translated "made to appear," or "made visible." And although there is nothing principally wrong with the opinion that these heavenly bodies were created in the beginning at least as to their material and mass, they nevertheless did not have light centered in them until the fourth day. Light, therefore, on the first three days did not come from the sun, but from the original creature light itself. What then do you think of those "scientific" opinions that the sun is older than the earth? that the earth comes from the sun? and that the sun holds the earth in its orbit about the sun?

The stars are among the great marvels of the creative power of God, and the Bible speaks of them as the noblest work of the Creator, "when I consider Thy heavens . . . the moon and the stars . . . what is man!" (Ps. 8:3f). Emphasized is their height above the earth. "Behold the height of the stars, how high they are!" (Job 22:12). Their number is also prominent. "The host of heaven cannot be numbered" (Jer. 33:22), but God numbers them and calls them all by their names (Ps. 147:4). Besides the stars mentioned in Job 9:9, the Bible is said also to refer to Saturn in the name Chiun (Amos 5:26). Amos may have, in 8:9, referred to an eclipse of the sun: "I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." There is probably no mention made in the Bible of an eclipse of the moon. More than any other science, astronomy enables us to realize the omnipotence and glory of God!

Our Bible looks at the stellar heavens from the viewpoint of the earth, and from the viewpoint of the solar system, which is but an infinitesimal sector of our galaxy. The moon is a little over 238,000 miles from Earth. The Earth is about 8,000 miles in diameter, while the moon is 2,160 miles in diameter. This seems rather enormous, until you consider the solar system. The sun's light reaches throughout this expanse to

Pluto, 3,666,000,000 miles away, while the Earth and Moon are tiny infinitesimal specks in this sea of stars. The solar system seems gigantic, until you consider our galaxy. This is said to be a vast spiral nebula, looking at it edge-wise shaped much like a flying saucer, and being about 100,000 light years in length and about 10,000 light years in thickness. A light year is about 5.8 trillion miles! The solar system looked at edge-wise in the galaxy would appear like a *minus* sign! But our galaxy, though it seems colossal, when you consider the entire Universe, seems in comparison itself no longer than a *minus* sign! But let us have a look, a moment, at our Earth.

The Earth inclined on its axis at an angle of 23½ degrees turns upon itself from W. to E. in 24 hours with a velocity of about 1,039 m.p.h.; and this motion creates the impression of the whole sky turning around us. (The same impression is obtained while sitting on a spinning merry-go-round, and facing and looking at the center. The scenery all about appears to turn around that center.) The earth is distant from the sun about 93,000,000 miles, and moves in a path around the sun with a speed of 66,600 m.p.h., continuing at this rate for one year, when a complete revolution around the sun is accomplished, and a distance of 584,000,000 miles traveled. Because of these motions, there is always a side of the earth which is illuminated by the sun, and the opposite side which is in shadow, the shadow conical in shape, extends into space for over 850,000 miles where it terminates in a point. Here please read Job 38:19, 20, 24. The earth moving in its orbit, and the inclination of its axis cause the four seasons and the difference in temperature between each of them.

The moon is earth's satellite, 238,854 miles away. It follows the earth round the sun at the same time revolving around the earth in a period of 29½ days. Circling the earth, it slowly turns on its axis taking about the same length of time to do so, and that is the reason the same side of the moon is always turned toward us. The moon is an amazing sight as viewed through even a weak telescope. The strongest telescope in the world at Mount Palomar brings the moon to within 200 miles from us. It consists of rugged mountain peaks, higher than the mountains of earth (measured by the length of their shadow), flat, desolate plains and many craters caused by meteorites crashing into its surface. It is said to be a dry, dead world, with no noticeable moisture or atmosphere, and no organic life. The absence of an atmosphere places the moon in a black void surrounded by an infinite number of stars which shine during the day as well as night. The day on the moon lasts 354 hours, and the night as long. There is not a single cloud to moderate the 250 degree F. heat of the sun during the day, nor a thing to prevent the 200 degree below temperature at night! "The precious things of heaven! . . . the precious things put forth by the moon!" (Deut. 33:14).

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY LUBBERS

Miscellaneous

Covenant Christian High School Dedication and Open House was held on September 19. A short program was held, followed by tours of the building and refreshments.

The *Beacon Lights* sponsored another singspiration on September 22 in Hope Church. Mr. Gerald Kuiper led a large audience in singing and several special numbers were given.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cook of Hope, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Langerak of Hope, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. C. DeKorne of Hope, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Van Egdem of Doon, a daughter.

Membership

Mr. and Mrs. Dale Mensch and family have transferred from First to Hope.

Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Miersma have transferred from Doon to First.

Mr. and Mrs. Vern Huber have transferred from Hope in Redlands to Hope in Walker.

Mr. and Mrs. Milo DeWaald and family have transferred from the Ebenezer Church in North Dakota to Hope.

Mr. and Mrs. David Hop have transferred from First to Hope.

Hope has also received the membership papers of Mr. James Eldersveld from the Shawnee Park Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

Additional News

"And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith."

Servicemen

Mr. Howard Boonestroo has been released from military service. Mr. and Mrs. Boonestroo are now making their home in Doon.

ATTENTION

Reserve December 15

For The Next

BEACON LIGHTS

SINGSPIRATION

Special numbers will be presented by our Young People

★

Collection will be for BEACON LIGHTS and the Redlands Convention Expenses

★

Your presence and support are urgently needed!

CLARE KUIPER
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WYOMING, MICHIGAN 49509