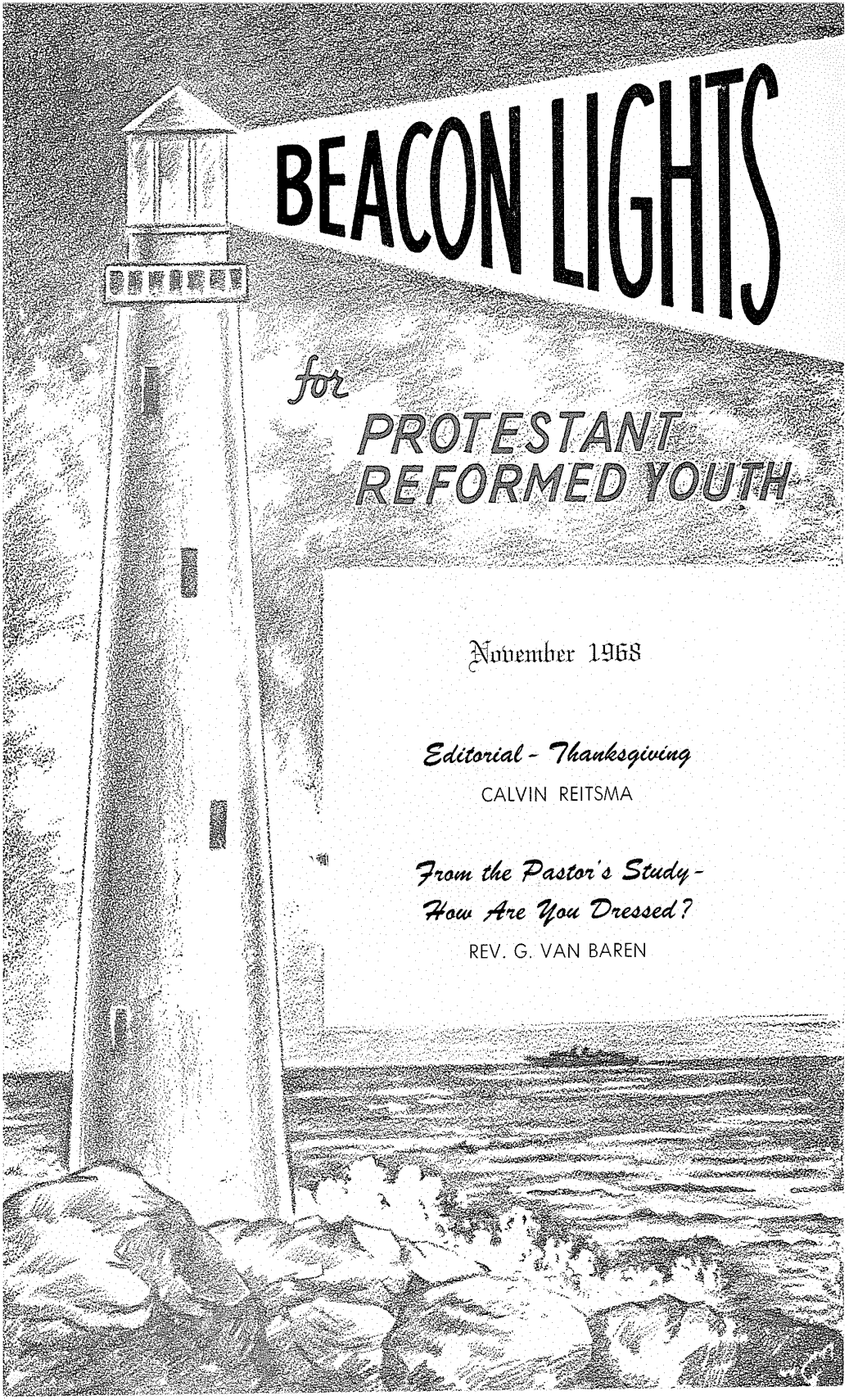

BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

November 1968

Editorial - Thanksgiving

CALVIN REITSMA

From the Pastor's Study - How Are You Dressed?

REV. G. VAN BAREN

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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In This Issue

EDITORIAL — Thanksgiving 1
Calvin Reitsma

CRITIQUE — The Truth About THE PLAIN TRUTH 2
Agatha Lubbers

FEATURE — A Proper Attitude of Thanksgiving 4
Louis Engelsma

TRUTH vs. ERROR — The Day and the Name of God 5
Rev. Robert C. Harbach

SPECIAL FEATURE — JOHN HUSS: Reformation Forerunner? 8
Rev. D. Kuiper

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS 11
J. Lanting

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY — How Are You Dressed? 12
Rev. G. Van Baren

NEWS FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES 14
Judy Lubbers

Editorial

THANKSGIVING

"Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

Psalm 100:3, 4

As the pleasures of the Thanksgiving holidays settle upon us, it is fitting that we consider the reasons underlying the celebration of this special day.

The National Day of Thanksgiving has traditionally been set aside to thank the Almighty Ruler of the universe for abundant crops, good wages, advancements in science and medicine, and for the many other fulfilled desires of our flesh. How ironic it is that our nation can thank the Almighty God for good things and turn around and question his existence.

Along with and often in place of God, we honor our forefathers, the pilgrims. Consider how much of our time is devoted to talking about the early settlers and their heroism, turkeys, and the feasts built around them.

Certainly our celebration of Thanksgiving Day must be more than this. It must in fact be distinctly Christian. It is a day in which we must be reminded of our calling to thank our covenant God for all things – both the good and also the things which we in our lust consider to be evil. Further, it is a day in which we may be instructed during worship services to rightly thank God every moment of our lives in all paths through which He leads us.

What then ought to be the form of our thanksgiving to God? We are instructed in the catechism that prayer is the chiefest part of thankfulness (See Lord's Day 45). Certainly we must agree that prayer – both public and private – must comprise a major portion of our thoughts and time. We of all people have much to be thankful for. Not only should we be thankful for physical gifts of God which nourish and strengthen our bodies, but we can be thankful that we by His grace and Holy Spirit know our sin, our misery, and our salvation in Him.

Young people: "Do YOU find time to thank your God as you ought?"

We pray after each meal and thank God in prayer at various other set times of the day, often concluding that we have performed all that we are called to do.

Yet again I ask, "Do YOU really thank God as you are called?"

Certainly we are not expected to pray formally all day. Yet we can and must thank God continuously. To do this, we must, by God's grace, develop the ability to thank God in all that we do. Paul exhorts us to do exactly this in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, and again in Colossians 3:16–4:6. We are commanded to submit to those in authority and to perform our various callings in thanksgiving. What are some of the applications which we can make?

The applications of the rule of perpetual thanksgiving are myriad.

Thanksgiving is obedience to those God has placed in authority. That means the obeying of the laws of the land; that means love and respectful obedience of parents, and those they have placed in authority over us. Obedience is not blind, it is a mature, aware submission in love to God, because of God.

Thanksgiving is love. Love of God, love of our fellow Christian for God's sake. He who walks in thanksgiving walks in love.

Walking in thanksgiving is still more. It is working. It is functioning at full capacity. We must always give our all in all things. Thanksgiving means that every minute of every day we serve God in this world by using the talents He has given us.

Thanksgiving is, must be, a constant obedience, a constant love, a constant effort; in effect, a constant living prayer.

Young people, let not your thanksgiving be a periodic affair. Let your thanks shine forth every moment of your life in everything you do. Live the command of God: "In every thing give thanks: For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thess. 5:18).

C.R.

CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

The Truth About THE PLAIN TRUTH (cont.)

The zenith in the history of the British Empire was during the days of Queen Victoria. The colonies of the British Empire spanned the globe. Anglo-Israelites were exultant because it seemed that their view of the history of the world was actually being fulfilled. God seemed to be honoring His promises and was exalting His children in the latter days.

The rise of a nation seems inevitably to result in a decadence and comparative fall. According to the will and determinate counsel of God this happened to the British Empire. Britain lost most of her colonial possessions and the Anglo-Israelites were hard-pressed to reformulate their theories of historical interpretation to fit the actual situation. Anglo-Israelites were forced therefore to transfer the blessings of the "covenant" from Great Britain to the United States. They maintained that Ephraim the son of Joseph in the Scriptures is Great Britain and that Manasseh, the older son of the Hebrew ruler of Egypt, is the United States. Ephraim, "the exalted one" and Manasseh, who was the inferior of the two sons, now exchange places. Ephraim looses his place of exaltation and Manasseh becomes the exalted one. Even though this creates exegetical and historical problems for the Anglo-Israelite, he is not prevented from clinging to this interpretation.

The relationship between Israel and Judah in the Scriptures also has significance in the Anglo-Israelite scheme of thinking. The Anglo-Israelite maintains that Judah represents the Jews. These Jews are still under the divine curse and not to be identified with Israel. The promises which are recorded in the Scriptures are applied to a nation called Israel. In the system of Anglo-Israel these promises are to be identified with Great Britain and with the United States.

Herbert W. Armstrong who is the editor of *The Plain Truth* also maintains that the House of Judah means Jew. Israel is to be distinguished from the term Jew as it is used in the Scriptures. Herbert W. Armstrong in his work *Where are the Ten Lost Tribes?*° writes:

> We want to impress here that Israel and Judah are not two names for the same nation. They were and still are and shall be until the Second Coming of Christ, two separate nations. The House of Judah always means Jew.
>
> This distinction is vital if we are to understand prophecy. Because most so-called Bible students are ignorant of this basic distinction; they are unable rightly to understand prophecy!
>
> The next place where the term "Jew" is mentioned in the Bible, the House of Israel had been driven out in captivity, lost from view, and the term only applies to those of the House of Judah. There are no exceptions in the Bible.

Anglo-Israelites maintain that the "lost" tribes migrated from the Mediterranean area across Europe to the British Isles. To substantiate this assertion this sect points to the fact that the migrating lost tribes left behind them landmarks bearing names of the tribes. The Danube River is in the

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°Quotes are taken from *The Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter R. Martin. Zondervan Publishing Company.

scheme of Anglo-Israelism a clear indication of the tribe of Dan. The name Danzig is another of these indications. The term Saxon is derived from the Hebrew which means Isaac-son or "the son of Isaac!" *Berith* is the Hebrew term for covenant, and *ish* is the Hebrew term for man. Anglo-Israelism insists that when translated the term would mean "the man of the covenant."

Armstrong, who is reported as not being a student of the Hebrew language, states with authority in *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy.*°

> The House of Israel is the covenant people. The Hebrew word for covenant is *beriyth*, or *berith*. . . . The Hebrew word for man is *iysh*, or *ish*. In the original Hebrew language, vowels were never given in the spellings, so omitting the vowel *e* from *berith*, but retaining the *i* in its Anglicized form to preserve the *y* sound, and you have the Anglicized Hebrew word for covenant, *brith*. The Hebrews, however, never pronounced their h's. The Jew, even today, in pronouncing the name Shem will call it Sem. Incidentally, this ancient Hebrew trait, is also a modern British trait, so the Hebrew word for covenant would be pronounced, in its Anglicized form as Brit.
>
> And the word covenant man or covenant people would therefore be British. So the true covenant people today are called the British. And they reside in the British Isles. . . .
>
> To Abraham God said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and this name is repeated in Romans 9:7, Hebrews 11:18. In Amos 7:16 they are called the "house of Isaac."
>
> They were descended from Isaac, and therefore are Isaac's sons. Drop the "i" from Isaac, vowels are not used in Hebrew spelling, and we have the modern name, Saac's sons, or, as we have it spelled in shorter manner, Saxons.

You can read here black on white in bold terms Armstrong, the arch-advocate of Anglo-Israelite theory propound his theories. In order to maintain this position of Anglo-Israelism, Armstrong must pervert the Scriptures and thereby becomes a heretic. His theories are ludicrous and preposterous as he perverts the Scriptures.

The Hebrew words *Berith* and *ish* certainly mean "covenant" and "man" but they most assuredly do not mean nor can they be construed to mean "men of the covenant." I have never known that there is a relationship between the Anglo-Saxon tongue and the Hebrew language and the *Oxford Dictionary of the English Language* certainly gives no support to the contention of Armstrong.

Anglo-Israelism maintains that the throne of England is the throne of David. When the lost ten tribes came to England they restored in England the throne of David. Anglo-Israelite theory also maintains that the "Stone of Scone" which is lodged in Westminster Abbey is the stone which Jacob used for a pillow at Bethel when he was escaping the wrath of his brother Esau. This stone was taken with him and later it came under the care of Jeremiah. This is, therefore, the coronation stone for the British or Davidic dynasty.

The "Stone of Scone" has been examined and it has been found to be "calcareous, a sandstone of reddish or purplish color, with heterogeneous pebbles of Scottish origin." In order to avoid problems the Anglo-Israelites have made Jacob a native of Scotland and have said that Bethel was a suburb of London. They have done all this to maintain the fiction that the Stone of Scone is of Asiatic origin.

The school of thought under consideration has more than 3,000,000 adherents in England, Canada, the British Commonwealth throughout the world, and the United States. Followers of this theory are found in many already established denominations in the "Christian" churches. These adherents do not constitute separate denominations but they work through all groups with propaganda and with a fierce emphasis on racial pride. It should be completely evident that they use a creditless method of scholarship and linguistic analysis. They are subverters of the Scriptures.

Armstrong has capitalized on Anglo-Israelism to inculcate his own interpretation of the Bible for a half million readers and millions of listeners. Armstrong has also revived a gradually dying theological body.

We must not be deceived.

(to be continued)

FEATURE

A Proper Attitude of Thanksgiving

LOIS ENGELSMA

When God lead Israel from their bondage in Egypt, they were quite sure that God would give them everything that they needed, and also safely lead them to Canaan.

Nevertheless, Moses had to warn them that they were not to forget God "lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy silver and gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt . . ." (Deuteronomy 8:12-14)

Do you think that such a change is predominate in America today where there is more wealth than the wildest dreams that a pilgrim ever imagined? There is more corn and wheat rotting in storage today than the pilgrim's top farmer ever thought there would be in the whole world. A pilgrim would stand aghast at the sight of the luxuries and modern conveniences in our homes. Americans live in a land of milk and honey. They have money to waste. America has eaten its full, but has forgotten to give true thanks.

H. W. Prentis is quoted in the November, 1965, issue of Eternity magazine. He says that "history runs in a cycle from bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to courage, from courage to freedom, from freedom to a measure of physical abundance, from abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to complacency, from complacency to apathy, from apathy to fear, from fear to dependency, from dependency back again into bondage." It certainly isn't difficult to trace our own country's history around that cycle and see that it is in the lower swing.

However, no nation in the world today has had a stronger religious background under God than that set forth by the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock on November 11, 1620.

Just as the Israelites fled into the wilderness to escape the hands of wicked men, so did the Pilgrims put themselves on the treacherous high seas. The Israelites and the Pilgrims could rely only on the mercies of God to take them to a new land. When they did reach this land, they worshipped and thanked God for everything He had done for them.

Incredibly, however, people forgot God. One generation prays for seed and good soil wherein to plant this seed. The next generation discovers how to produce more and better yields by rotating crops and by using fertilizers. The third generation reaps a bountiful crop and then tells God that it doesn't need Him any longer because it now has everything under control.

So often Israel too decided that she didn't need God. But when her enemies were the victors in battles, then she repented and prayed for God's deliverance. What then is a proper attitude of thankfulness? Since thanksgiving is a spiritual aspiration, it stands to reason that the attitude receives emphasis. This attitude is the very essence of thankfulness. True thankfulness consists of prayer to God, obeying His law, and living in all good works. We must be thankful at all times; even when adversity is our lot.

The Heidelberg Catechism teaches us that prayer is the chief part of thankfulness. This prayer must be genuine for God will not give us His grace or accept our thanks if we do not sincerely desire them. Real thankfulness is achieved only through prayer. In our prayers we must present our needs to God and thank Him for everything that comes or may come from His hand.

Again we show our thankfulness to God by obeying His law. We must obey this law out of gratitude for the salvation of Christ for us. When we look at thankfulness from that point of view, we see that it is not just one day of giving thanks, but a whole life for giving thanks to God.

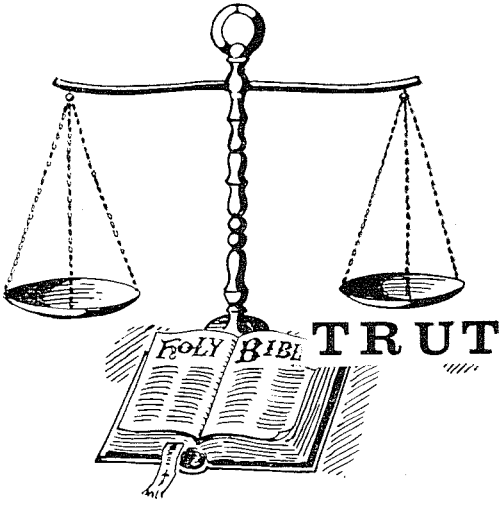
You may ask why we have or even need a Thanksgiving Day when we must give thanks every day. The purpose of this one special day, however, is to awaken us

spiritually to the fact that all too often we take the blessings of God for granted. This day makes us aware of our need to thank God continually.

Not only must the child of God give thanks to God in prayer and obeying His law, but he must also walk in all good works. Only the child of God can do good works, not of himself, but by the grace of God. For only those works that proceed from a true faith testify of our love and thankfulness to God. We show before godless people how a child of God thanks his Creator. We can testify that the worldly conception of thankfulness is based on material, earthly, selfish gains.

We should be thankful for everything God has given us. We should give thanks for the salvation of Christ for us; for God-fearing homes, parents, teachers, and ministers. The climax of our thankfulness is a gratitude for the wonderful grace which God has given us.

Thankfulness shows itself in the way we act, talk; in our friends and desires. If we give true thankfulness to God then all our thanksgiving days will be blessed. So let us say with the Psalmist, "Give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for his mercy endureth forever" (Psalm 136:1).



TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

THE DAY AND THE NAME OF GOD

"And were perfected the heavens and the earth and all the host of them. And completed Elohim in the day the seventh His work which He had made, and rested in the day the seventh from all His work which He had made. And blessed Elohim the seventh day and sanctified it, for in it He rested from all His work which Elohim created to make" (Gen. 2:1-3, Heb.).

"The heavens and the earth" together are regarded as one armed *host* (the singular). The word *host* presents the picture of a military division mustered in marching array, and means, "to go forth as a soldier." Sometimes it is used of the host of angels (1 K. 22:19), of the stars (Is. 34:4; 40:26; Dn. 8:10), and of the inhabitants of the earth (Is. 34:2). The heavens and the earth are viewed as a well-disciplined army. The word has reference to orderly arrangement, beauty of design, and is the Hebrew word (tsabha') for the Greek N.T. *kosmos*. It expresses the glory of God as King. "The Lord of hosts (the God of the whole kosmos), He is the King of glory" (Ps. 24:10).

". . . and He rested . . ." Rest in Scripture is, 1) cessation from work. But the "all" in verse 3 is not absolute, for true rest is not expressive of total inaction, or doing nothing. God is active every moment in the work of Providence: "My Father worketh

hitherto" (Jn. 5:17). Even the human mind finds rest, not in unconsciousness, nor in sleep, but in change of occupation. So God now becomes occupied with, 2) delight in a finished work. God is satisfied with His completed work. It is all, indeed, very good! "God is eternally active; yet His activity is perfect and eternal rest, because His work is always perfectly finished in Himself. Rest is no idleness, but the entering into the enjoyment of a perfect work. Of this eternal rest in God, the seventh day is a revelation" (Rev. H. Hoeksema).

God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The seventh day following six days of labor is thus invested with a permanence. The other (working) days pass away, and give place to a successor. To sanctify has two basic ideas, 1) God set apart the Sabbath from the rest of the week, consecrating it to a special purpose. 2) God blessed the day for Adam with the blessing of rest. It becomes an emblem of God's creative rest. So Adam had to work (be fruitful, multiply, rule, cultivate and keep the Garden) in order to enter into the creative rest. This rest was the entering into the enjoyment of the perfect development and subjection of the whole earthly creation under his feet. In effect, God said on the sixth day (the creative "Friday"), "It is finished!" On the Friday of redemption, Christ died saying, "It is finished!" On the creative Sabbath God entered into the enjoyment of His finished work. On the redemptive Sabbath Christ came from the rest of the grave and entered into the Eternal Rest. On the creative first day God said, "Let there be light!" On the redemptive first day, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!"

Why is the first day of the week our Sabbath? In general, because this is the day on which Christ arose from the dead, the early church observing this day as the Sabbath (I Cor. 16:2). More particularly, the creation Sabbath was failed. It is therefore impossible to keep it. Adam never entered into the rest of it. He failed. So God ordained a change in the Sabbath *day*. In strictest accuracy we notice that the Decalog does not say, "Remember the *seventh* day to keep it holy," but "the *sabbath* day." We do not read there that the Lord "blessed the *seventh* day," but that He "blessed the *sabbath* day." There is not the slightest intimation that we are to keep the seventh day of the *week*. But we are to keep the day which follows six working days.

There is Scripture proof that neither the creation Sabbath, nor the Jewish Sabbath is of force any more. At the beginning, the Sabbath was instituted to commemorate the rest of creation. Later the Jews celebrated the Sabbath in memory of their redemption from Egypt. All this was on the seventh day of the *week*.

Hebrews 4 tells us definitely what day we should keep for the Sabbath. Verse 3 speaks of "that rest" which believers *do* enter now. This is the rest which the generation under Moses had not yet attained unto. As all rest presupposes labor, each several rest had some work preceding it. 1) The rest in Gen. 2:2 was preceded by the six days of creation (4:4). 2) The rest in the wilderness (Ps. 95:8) was preceded by the bondage in Egypt (4:5). 3) Psalm 95 also prophetically intimated a *third* rest of God, a rest preceded by the work of Christ. Hebrews 4:6 tells us that this rest day "remaineth" to the present time. This means that it is a day already here, and now fulfilled, not "awaiteth" fulfilment. It remains in force that some may enter therein. Verse 7 further explains that God designates a certain day "after so long a time." According to David, not only a certain rest, but a *day*, a *certain day, another* day (v. 8) was to come. This day did not come in the time of Moses, or Joshua (it was not Canaan rest), for David prophesied of this day 500 years after Moses. It was to David a day still future, and a day *other* (cp. v. 7 with v. 8) than the day observed under Moses. Verse 9f bring us to this day which David foresaw, the Christian Sabbath. Not the Sabbath as such, but the Sabbath *day* was changed, because on that day Christ entered into His rest. The first Sabbath was *Edenic* (4:3, 4). The second was *Mosaic* (v. 5), and the final is *Messianic* (vv. 7, 9, 10). This we maintain in opposition to the Jews and Seventh Day Adventists who still keep the Sabbath of Creation (which is actually impossible because failed), and the Sabbath of Moses (which was only typical). They ignore God's purpose in redemption, failing

to understand God's great end, and the means He ordained to that end.

"These are the generations of the heavens and the earth in their being created, in the day when Jehovah Elohim made the earth and heavens" (Gen. 2:4, Heb.). This is not a subscription following 1:1–2:3, but a superscription introducing the section following. This is plain from the word "generation" which ten times introduces a division of the book. (See 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 32; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2). "Generations" in Genesis refers not to what precedes, but to what follows. "The generations of Noah" (6:9) are not the list of his ancestors, but the register of his posterity. So "the generations of the heavens and of the earth" refer not to their origin, but to their continuance and productivity onward to the end. There is also the additional evident fact that the use of the name "Lord God" here and through the chapter belongs to what follows.

What is the meaning of this term "generations" *(tholedhoth)*? It does not mean "beginning," as there is an Old Testament word for that (*rêshith*). But it means genealogies, or, more properly, generations, posterity, history. See Matt. 1:1. Then you read of "the generations (history) of the heavens and the earth" (2:4–4:26), "the generations of Adam" (5:1–6:8); of Noah (6:9–9:29), of the sons of Noah (10:1–11:9), of Shem (11:10-26); of Terah (11:27–25:11); of Ishmael (25:12-18), of Isaac (25:19–35:29), of Esau (36:1–37:1) and of Jacob (37:2–50:26).

The God of history revealed here is the LORD God, Jehovah Elohim. Wherever the word LORD appears in small capitals, there is the name Jehovah. Wherever the name appears in lower case letters thus, Lord, you have the name Adonai. Wherever the word *God* appears in lower case letters, the name means Elohim, and where it appears in small capitals, GOD, it is again the name Jehovah. Jehovah is the name taken from the Hebrew verb "to be" in all its tenses, past, present and future. This verb "to be" (hayah) in its imperfect form (yihyeh), does not, paradoxically enough, express imperfection, but fulness of perfection. It therefore expresses, "I am that I am" (Ex. 3:14), "I was what I was," and "I shall be what I shall be." Jehovah, then, is the Eternal Am, the Self-Existent One. The name suggests God's essential and absolute being. It is not a class name, as Jehovah cannot be classified. The Old Testament language speaks of *the* Elohim, indicating the true God in opposition to all false gods; but never *the* Jehovah, for Jehovah is the name of the true God alone. The Hebrew frequently says "my God" (my Elohim), but never "*my* Jehovah," for "my God" means Jehovah. We do find "the God of Israel," but never "the Jehovah of Israel," for there is no other Jehovah. There is the expression "the living God," but never "the living Jehovah," for the Old Testament writers cannot conceive of Jehovah as other than living!

Jehovah is the distinctive name of God in covenant relation with His people (Ex. 19:2, 20:1, 2; Jr. 31:31-34). This is also revealed in connection with the redemption of the covenant people out of Egypt (Ex. 3:13-17). This covenant idea is further brought out in the compound names which are revealingly coupled with the name *Jehovah*. For example, there is Jehovah-jireh, which means "the Lord will provide" (Gn. 22:13f) a sacrifice, or more literally, "Jehovah is providing." Then there is Jehovah-rapha, which means "Jehovah heals" (Ex. 15:26), and Jehovah-nissi, which means, as close as we can render it, "the Lord our banner," (Ex. 17:8-15); Jehovah-shalom, or "Jehovah peace" (Jud. 6:24); Jehovah-ra-ah, "The Lord my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1). There is also Jehovah-tsidkenu, "The Lord our Righteousness," which is both a name given to the Church and to its head (Jer. 23:6, refs.), and Jehovah-shammah, "the Lord is there" (Ezek. 48:35). There are other names of God compounded with *El* as in El Elyon, "God Most High" (Gn. 14:18), El Shaddai, "God Almighty" (17:1) and El Olam, "God Everlasting" (21:33). This is the true God. This is the God of Creation, the covenant God of the Sabbath. His work is perfect. His rest is glorious.

JOHN HUSS: *Reformation Forerunner?*

EDITOR'S NOTE –

This is the second and last installment of the article on John Huss written by Rev. D. Kuiper.

It is important to notice here that Wycliffism died out in England shortly after Wycliffe's death. The Lollards were soon stamped out by an inquisition-type suppression. His condemned writings no man dared print. However, the truths he developed were not to die out completely. By various means they were carried to Bohemia. We saw how his philosophical works were brought to Prague. In 1401, Jerome, inseparable friend of Huss, copied Wycliffe's *Dialogus* and *Trialogus* and carried them to Prague. Therefore Huss had access to all the definitive works of Wycliffe. He studied them carefully, and with one exception, embraced them all. Huss could not break with transubstantiation, even though his accusers at Constance later seek to lay this to this charge as well.

As we said, Huss immediately becomes identified with the condemned Wycliffistic views. And due to this his life becomes stormy and short. Andrew of Broda said in 1414, "Because he was the advocate and defender of Wycliffe he went to the stake" (6, p. 44). Also some of Huss' enemies in Prague call him "a son of iniquity, a Wycliffite" (6, p. 48).

Huss' difficulties begin with Zbynak, archbishop of Prague. After Zbynak changed his allegiance to Pope Alexander V, recently appointed by the Council of Pisa, he receives a bull to root out the Wycliffe heresy in Bohemia. Zbynak burns Wycliffe's books and bans Huss from preaching. However, Zbynak soon dies and Huss continues preaching, teaching, and writing. The newest pope, Pope John XXIII, had commanded a crusade against Ladislaus, king of Naples, because he refused to acknowledge him. Huss held a debate on the ethics of papal-inspired use of the sword. He also published a pamphlet, *Questio magistri Johannis Hus de indulgentiis,* in which he treats the same evil. (The material for this pamphlet was taken literally from Wycliffe's *de Ecclesia.*) Informed by anti-Hussites, Pope John responds by placing all of Prague under interdict.

With the entire city suffering from the lack of church services and facilities, friendly king Wenceslaus persuades Huss to go into exile in December of 1412. This lifts the interdict and allows Huss time to produce a Bohemian translation of the Bible and to write his *de Ecclesia* which W. Walker terms "essentially a reproduction of Wycliffe" (8, p. 304). Huss also busies himself by preaching in wood and field to the peasants. These peasants will later become the army of Ziska which fight the Hussite wars.

The Council of Constance is now fast approaching. Called jointly by Emperor Sigismund and Pope John, the council convened on Nov. 1, 1414. It had as its purpose the healing of the papal breach and the matter of church reform. As a secondary goal, it would also seek to end the Bohemian confusion. This was especially important to Sigismund, for as the brother of Wenceslaus, he stood heir to Bohemia and desired her to be purged of the blemish of heresy (2, p. 417). Accordingly, Huss is summoned to Constance.

Having secured the promise of a *salvus conductus* from Sigismund, Huss set out for Constance on Oct. 11, 1414. He did not actually receive the safe conduct document until after he arrived at Constance. Huss took up lodging at the house of an elderly widow. Soon his enemies spread the rumor that he had attempted escape, upon which he is arrested and held prisoner in three foul cells. Huss' accusers had convinced Sigismund that he did not have to keep faith with anyone accused of heresy. Much later at Worms, Charles V is encouraged to violate the safe conduct he gave Luther. He replies, "I do not wish to blush as Sigismund did," alluding to the behavior of Sigismund when confronted by Huss on the last day of his life (3, p. 106).

Huss has come to Constance willingly.

He based all his hope on an open discussion of the issues. He felt that if this would come about he would be absolved. Once imprisoned, however, his chances for a fair trial became nil. His teachings were obnoxious to his age. Even such men as Gerson and d'Ailly of Paris, severe critics of papal abuses as they were, became Huss' persecutors. They had only correction of administrative abuses in mind. To them, faith meant believing what the church taught. They would only be satisfied by a complete retraction by Huss.

The examination of Huss was conducted by commissioners or committees which visited him in his cells. It is interesting to note that the contents of these meetings were rarely doctrinal discussions, but usually attempts to gain a retraction. Huss consistently maintained that he could retract only if it were shown from Scripture that he was in error. D'Ailly once remarked that he should obey the decision of fifty church doctors and retract without question. This superficiality Huss deplored; he could hope for no justice from such men.

After many such attempts to persuade, threaten, and trick him into a retraction of thirty articles gleaned from his works, Huss is finally brought to the cathedral to meet the entire council. On July 6, 1415, after seven months of imprisonment, Huss obtains the meeting he looked forward to. But once inside he learns that this will never be. The meeting begins by sentencing Huss as a criminal and a heretic. When Huss attempts to reply, he is shouted down. His entire sentence reads, "The holy council, having God only before its eye, condemns John Huss to have been and to be a true, real, and open heretic, the disciple not of Christ, but of John Wycliffe, one who in the University of Prague and before the people declared Wycliffe to be a Catholic and an evangelical doctor" (7, p. 381). Thus he was persecuted because he upheld Wycliffe, not because of clerical criticisms. The council then took from him his priestly garments and bound him over to the secular powers for the burning, since the church could not go beyond her powers by executing the power of the sword!

Not one person dissented; it was a unanimous decision. Nor has any action been taken to this day that admits of the error of the Council of Constance!

His strong faith in God and the conviction that his cause was the cause of Christ were never more evident than in the last few hours of his life. As the bishops assigned his soul to the devil, Huss commits his soul to the gracious Lord Jesus. He sings hymns even as the wood and straw are piled neck-high around him. The flames choke him before he can sing the third time, "Christ, thou Son of God, have mercy upon me." All his possessions are burned and with his ashes, cast into the Rhine. Thus ends John Huss.

If we turn to the writings of Huss, we notice that he teaches nothing that Wycliffe does not teach, with the exception of denying transubstantiation. At his trial he was also accused of teaching that after the consecration of the bread and wine, the elements remained. This accusation had no basis in the works of Huss, and shows that the church was battling tooth and nail, not Huss finally, but Wycliffism. Huss vehemently denied the charge. In the few instances that Huss attempted development of doctrine beyond the point reached by Wycliffe, he becomes dull and falters. His writings are more polemic in favor of the Oxford scholar than reformatory (2, p. 418). Thus when considered from the Reformation point of view, he is a very inferior figure. His best sermons and most learned quotations are all directly from the English evangelist. Only in his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter the Lombard*, published for the first time in 1905, does he show originality and a knowledge of the whole of theology. More than anything else he is remembered as the advocate and example of the right of the individual conscience. Essentially then, there is no such thing as Hussism; rather it must be termed transplanted Wycliffism.

One question remains: what is the connection between the martyred John Huss and the reformation of the sixteenth century? He, along with Wycliffe, are often called forerunners of the reformation. Walker insists this is true only if we consider their general contributions to the unrest and dissatisfaction with the church which ultimately lead to reform. But they instituted

no doctrinal reforms. Rather they held to Middle Age doctrines. The important concept of faith was never understood or developed. The Scriptures were merely a law. Walker concludes by saying that the reformation actually owes little to Huss and Wycliffe (8, p. 306).

In the same vein, Harnack writes that "the Wycliffite and Hussite movement loosened the ground and prepared the way, yet it brought to expression no reformatory ideas" (6, p. 292).

Further, in class notes of Sept. 23, 1964, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema maintains that their is no gradual development between Huss and Luther. The Bohemian uprising ran dead, just as Wycliffism died in England.

The more common interpretation of the relationship and function of Wycliffe, Huss, and Luther, is expressed in three medallions which have been preserved in the Prague Library. The first medallion shows Wycliffe producing sparks from a stone. The second portrays Huss kindling a fire from the sparks. The third has Luther holding aloft the resulting torch. This clearly is *not* the correct interpretation. To fan flames from sparks certainly shows progress and development, something which Huss never did in relation to Wycliffe. Further, Luther's holding high this torch is not historically accurate either. Luther became acquainted with Huss' writings after he began his reformatory work, and he never read Wycliffe (7, p. 387). Thus both the function and relationship are erroneous.

If Huss had carried his ideas of the ultimate authority of the Bible and the real constitution of the church to their logical conclusions, we could say that he was fighting against the Roman Catholic hierarchy. But this he never did. He believed devoutly in the virgin Mary, the worship of saints, and the seven sacraments. Concerning grace, faith, and works, he was not a forerunner of Luther, but rather echoed Aquinas. Thus with the view of Walker, Harnak, and Hoeksema, we must concur.

Huss' place in history then comes into very clear focus. It is, very simply, to take the teachings of Wycliffe, which never took root in England, and spread them abroad in Bohemia and surrounding lands. Through his advocacy of these principles, they become the subject of discussion at councils, and thereby enjoy further dissemination, though infrequent acceptance. But especially in the minds of the peasants did these doctrines take root. This fact allows for a ready acceptance of the views of Luther in the next century. That these views form an essential part of the body of Luther's teachings is seen from a quote from Luther himself: "Shamelessly (unawares) I both taught and held all the teachings of Huss: in short, we are all Hussites without knowing it" (6, p. 305). (Notice that word *unawares.*)

Looking back over five centuries of time, we see that God's place and work for Huss were relatively small when considered against the broader and grander scene of the reformation. But we also see God preparing people and nations for the acceptance of true reformatory principles. This reformation will begin in Germany and culminate in Switzerland. This is God's Divine Purpose concerning John Huss.

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CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

J. LANTING

With the national elections over, a dramatic and tumultuous political year is rushing to a close. Its shocking assassinations, unruly conventions, and distasteful campaigns seen by everyone on T.V. and in newspapers, seem something like a bad nightmare, and are more subject to repression than reflection. But in the climax of this political year, one feels the necessity to make some sense out of it all, to get the total picture in focus, so to speak, in order to make a number of resolute yet plausible judgments – a genuine and thoughtful analysis of the frightening phenomena that have occured.

And surely this was a shocking year. As *Time* magazine put it:

> . . . indeed, one tragic, surprising and perplexing thing after another. During the first eight months of 1968, events have moved at the pace of an avantgarde movie edited by a mad cutter. The alarms, the assassinations, the political reversals and extremist cries have been so overwhelming that even the Czechoslovak tragedy may seem like only one more episode by Christmas. The common reaction is "What a year!", followed quickly by "What next?" Was there ever a year that could match this one for continued shocks, for a sense that "things fall apart, the center cannot hold"?[1]

One could dismiss that question by saying it is just another characteristic of our modern dynamic society. *Time* even suggests there is a historical precedent for it, and that the trouble with our nation is simply ". . . what isn't being done in a thousand little ways." But there is more to it than that, and that sense of uncertainty is only the symptom of the disease that penetrates modern life to its nucleus, and that is meaninglessness. Man is aware that he is going somewhere – he is engaged in a long trek through life – but where he is going, he no longer knows. No wonder people are forced to decide on and vote for the "better" alternative, and trust that the majority of the people will show the most common sense. Not only in the United States, but in the entire world, men have either lost or never seen any real norm and meaning for themselves and society. And now in the Twentieth Century man desperately turns to another pseudo-reality.

> . . . we live in a period when our view of the world is being politicized, in which . . . the political is replacing the metaphysical as the characteristic mode of grasping reality, . . .
>
> . . . in secular society politics does what metaphysics once did. It brings unity and meaning to human life and thought.[2]

Now, after the election of a new president, a renewed optimism pervades the national scene. Nixon promises to remove the "old, tired administration," end the war, abolish the draft, cut taxes, etc. Everyone's hopes are renewed, and the new election has again joined our great nation, all the parties pledging their support to the president-elect, because he received the "majority" of the people's support.

Majority rule is rested on a democratic faith. This is a faith in the long run prudence and wisdom of the greater number of voters. It translates into domestic politics Voltaire's assertion that "God is on the side of the big battalions." The higher mystery in our representative government is embodied in the sacrament of the ballot box. There, the many become one. On election day, the separate wills of millions of citizens become a single, clear mandate. "*Vox populi, vox dei*" – the voice of the people is the voice of God – simply expresses "the divinity that doth hedge a majority." Thus the weaknesses and indecisions and selfishnesses of all the people become purified and transformed.

Modern man has accepted the "fact" that the *ratio* or Reason of the majority of the people will pervade and hence can be accepted as the guiding principle of life. This is the cult of humanity; man recognizes no sovereign but himself, no light but his own reason. Things *are* that serious, and the modern Christian cannot correctly evaluate today's world without recognizing that grim fact.

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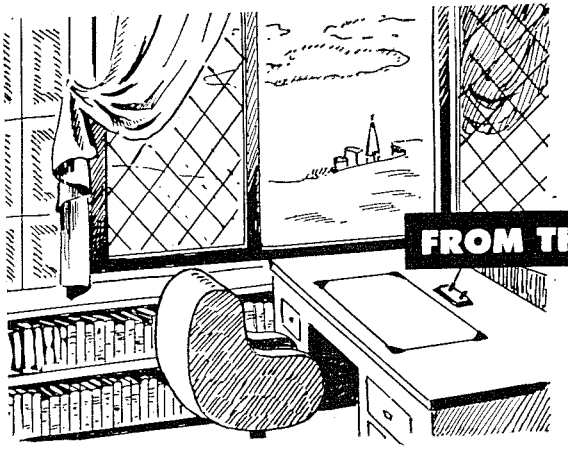
1. *Time* Essay, August 30, 1968.
2. H. Cox, *The Secular City*, p. 217.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

Nahum 3:5 – *"Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame."*

HOW ARE YOU DRESSED?

The subject for this article could appear to be a strange one in a magazine for young people. Yet I think it has a place. One can not but be impressed that nudity and semi-nudity is a way of life today and in our land. Movie advertisements emphasize the degree of nudity in the films showing in the local movie houses. The restraints upon television programs are loosening. And who has not heard of and joked about mini-skirts? I could mention other and similar examples. So a few thoughts concerning nudity might be in order.

The first thought on the subject proceeds out of Genesis 2:25: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." This was the situation in the first Paradise. Man and woman needed no coverings. They were holy, without sin. Evil and adulterous thoughts never entered their minds. They indeed beheld the beauty of God's creation within their own bodies – as well as in the universe about them. There was no need for covering, nor reason for shame.

But Adam's transgression changed this entirely. In their sin, they recognized their nakedness and sought to cover this with fig leaves sewed together. Adam and Eve were not seeking to hide their nakedness from each other – and there were no other moral, rational creatures from which they must hide their nakedness. No, they rather feared to stand naked before the righteous God. God knew them; He knew their thoughts; man stood before God literally and spiritually naked. And though Adam and Eve sought to hide themselves in the garden, there was no escape from the righteous and holy God.

Man could not hide from God – but God Himself then provided the only sort of covering which could properly hide the nakedness of man. God made coats of skins to cover them. Such covering could only be obtained through the shedding of the blood of an animal. The figure is plain. The nakedness of man is covered properly through the shed blood of the Lamb of God. Even man's covering today serves to remind the Christian of that glorious covering which belongs to him only by the free and rich grace of our God.

The covering which God provided for Adam was a covering meant to be for His own elect whom He had chosen. For wicked man, his curse would be that his nakedness would be revealed to all. Though man might try to hide his own corruption, God Himself would see to it that this was fully exposed. Many passages of Scripture point to this as a fact. There is the text quoted above this article. God speaks of the end of the wicked. Their spiritual exposure is portrayed in the figure of a physical uncovering. Jeremiah in chapter 22 declares essentially

the same thing: "For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare. . . . Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear. I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, and lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?" (vs. 22, 26, 27).

Revelation presents the judgment of God upon Babylon (the world) in the same terms. "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

It is an awful picture. The wicked world seeks to evade that certain condemnation by God. The world itself boasts in its own goodness. It seeks to make of this world a better place in which to live. Utopia will be established here on the earth. It boasts of its philanthropies. It seeks an earthly peace. It desires to overcome the torments of the sentence of death. And many are impressed by the actions of the world. It was also the Synod of 1924 of the Christian Reformed Church that expressed that the covering of the world was in many respects not too bad – in fact, even good. That Synod pointed to the "good" that sinners do. It began to admire the clothing of the world – and as a sad consequence, today has even made some use of that clothing for itself (cf. their recent decision on the "film arts").

But all of these filthy rags which the world admires, will be stripped from the wicked themselves. Their nakedness, their utter corruption, will be exposed finally for all to see. No fine talk, no twisted theology, will be able to hide that shame of the wicked. Their skirts will be lifted entirely above their heads. Their filthy corruption will be seen and condemned.

One of the most striking things in the judgment of God upon the wicked, is that they themselves, unaware of what they are doing, participate in carrying out the very judgment which God speaks against them – at least in part they do. A certain covering hides their shame – and yet in our day the world has been making efforts toward raising its own "skirts above its head." It unabashedly begins to uncover its own shame. God's judgment upon the world is seen when the world itself presents its movies filled with all manner of filth. Its uncovered bodies reveal man's lust and evil desires. Its openly-portrayed adulteries reveal the wickedness of the world to all. Its use of sex and the exposed body in advertisements is an uncovering of the shame of the world. The skirts of mankind are being raised higher and higher. Mini-skirts are only the beginning. "Topless" clothing reveal only the start of full exposure. Scripture declares that their skirts shall be upon their face. Formerly man sought to hide and to cover himself – as did Adam. But God in His judgment will reveal the utter wickedness of this world. And the world itself, as part of this judgment of God, is actively engaged to reveal more and more of its own nakedness.

What has this to do with covenant young people? Much, I believe. One sees the trend, under the guise of being fashionable, of members of the church imitating the world. What the world does, the church also considers fashionable. When the world seeks to expose its nakedness, many in the church think it is the proper and fashionable thing for them to do too. It is indeed a shame when the church wants to imitate that which itself is the judgment of God upon the wicked.

I have no intention to declare what is the necessary "length of skirt" or "tightness of pants." I only urge each to consider what is going on in the world in these last days. What are we imitating? We have the command of Scripture: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). And again, "To her (new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb) was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (Rev. 19:8). And you – how are you dressed?

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NEWS from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY LUBBERS

Miscellaneous

Rev. Engelsma spoke at the Loveland school on the morning of October 31 in observance of Reformation Day. His topic was "The Reformation's Reform Regarding the Forgiveness of Sins."

Hull and Doon held their annual Reformation Day program in the Hull church on October 27. Rev. Heys was the speaker and special numbers were given.

On October 29 Professor H. C. Hoeksema gave the Reformation Day Lecture at 8:00 in the First Protestant Reformed Church. His topic was "Heartbeat of the Reformation."

On October 30 at 8:00 Rev. Heys showed pictures of Jamaica in the Rock Rapids Community Building and spoke to his audience about the problems and potential of the Jamaican field. On October 31, the program was repeated for the Loveland congregation in their church.

Servicemen

Bob Miedema of Hope returned home on leave the week of October 6 after serving a year of duty in Vietnam.

Tom Graeser of Hope left Sunday, November 3 for six months of duty with the National Guard.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. James Huizinga of Hope, a daughter.