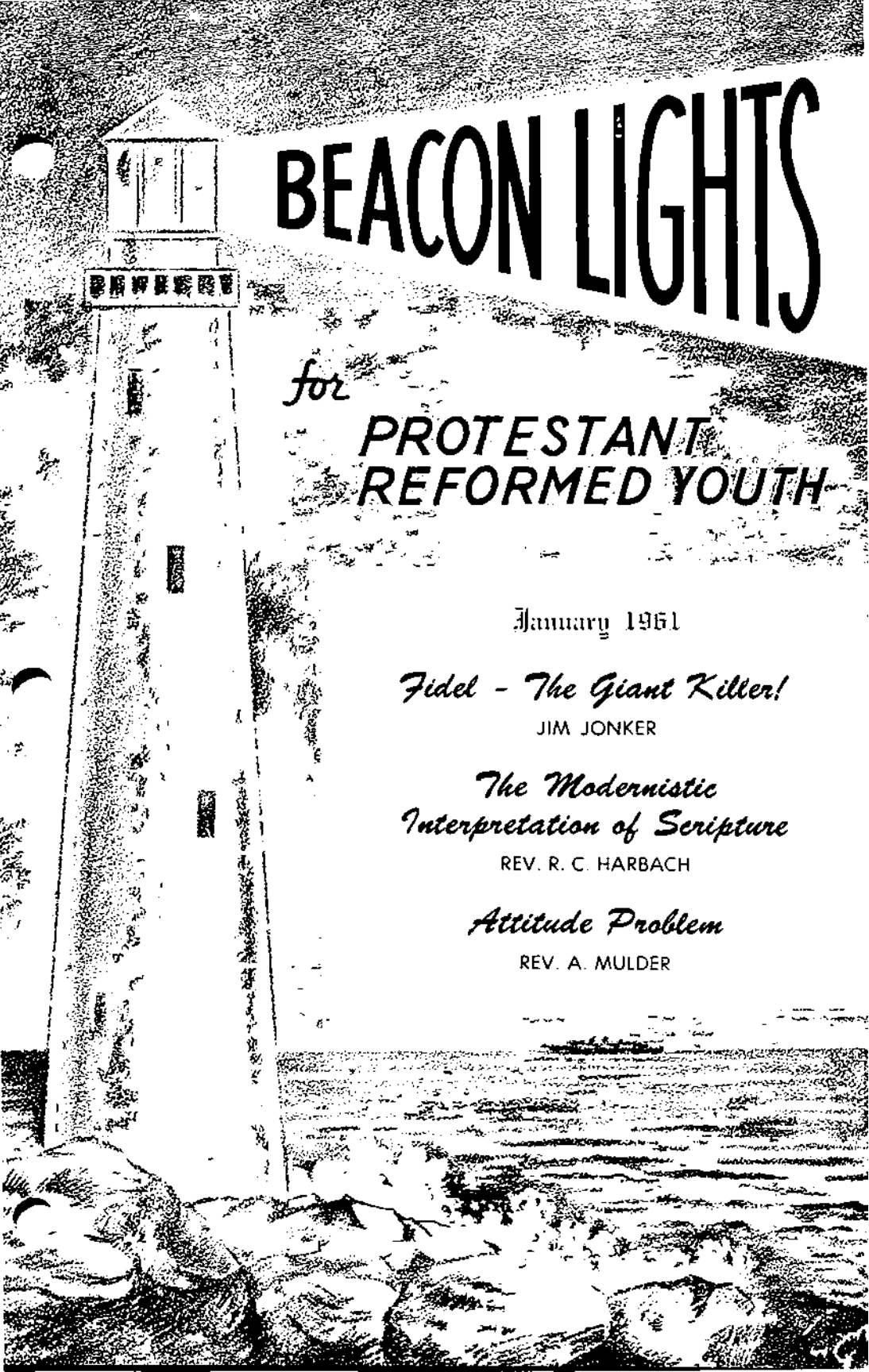
BEACON LIGHTS
for
PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH
January 1961
Fidel - The Giant Killer!
JIM JONKER
The Modernistic Interpretation of Scripture
REV. R. C. HARBACH
Attitude Problem
REV. A. MULDER

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XX | JANUARY, 1961 | NUMBER 11

Published monthly, except June and August by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

David Engelsma — Editor-in-Chief
Rev. Alvin Mulder — Associate Editor
Lam Lubbers — Managing Editor
Nancy Heemstra — Finance Manager

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Rev. Robert Harbach — Truth vs. Error
Agatha Lubbers — Critique
Rev. Herman Hoeksema — Bible Outlines
Rev. Richard Veldman — From the Pastor's Study
Mrs. C. H. Westra — News Editor
James Jonker — Current Comments

STAFF:
Marcia Newhof — Clerk
Mary Pastoor — Asst. Clerk

Roger Harbin, Chairman
Mary Pastoor
Marian Kunz
Edward Langerak
} Public Relations Staff

Jim Jonker
Judy Bouwkamp
} Proof Readers

Lam Lubbers
Bob Decker
} Photo and Art

Janet Kunz
Corraine Streyle
} Subscription Managers

All material for publication should be addressed to MR. DAVID ENGELSMA, 846 Thomas, S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.
Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to CORRAINE STREYLE, 1125 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan
Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area please forward subscription dues to JANET KUNZ, 1131 Arianna St., N. W., Grand Rapids 4, Mich.

All undeliverable material (Forms 3579) should be returned to CHRISTINE FABER, 1028 Temple S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Subscription price: $3.00
Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

In This Issue

QUIET TRUST — 1
Rev. R. Veldman
ATTITUDE PROBLEM — 3
Rev. A. Mulder
BOOKS —
WE WROTE THE GOSPELS, J. C. Reid — 4
TALL AGAINST THE SKY, O. Steggerda — 5
STAR EYE, W. Schmidt — 5
David Engelsma, reviewer
THE PROTESTANT CATHOLIC DIATRIBE — 6
Agatha Lubbers
SOCIALISM AND FALSE DOCTRINE — 7
Seymour Beiboer
ALPHA AND OMEGA — 8
Jim Jonker
NATURE STUDY IN THE PRIMARY GRADES — 9
Don Doezema
OUTLINES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 8 and 9)
Offering of the Prayer of All Saints (Revelation 8:1-6) — 11
The First Four Trumpets (Revelation 8:7-21) — 12
The Locusts out of the Abyss (Revelation 9:1-12) — 13
The Triple Monsters (Revelation 9:13-21) — 14
Rev. H. Hoeksema
FIDEL — GIANT KILLER? — 16
JIM JONKER
CONDITIONAL CONFESSION — 1
Wayne Lanning
THE MODERNISTIC INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE — 18
Rev. R. C. Harbach
NEWS FROM, FOR, AND ABOUT OUR CHURCHES — 20
Mrs. C. H. Westra

Quiet Trust

REV. R. VELDMAN

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."
Proverbs 3:5

"Another year is dawning!
Dear Father, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee!
Another year of leaning
Upon Thy loving breast,
Another year of trusting,
Of quiet, happy rest."

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." What a beautiful grace! How little we practice it! How much we need it also with a view to the year that lies ahead! How vital to our spiritual well-being, that we look away from ourselves and all our man-made supports and place our confidence, seek our strength, our "quiet, happy rest," in God alone.

Since our previous visit together our viewpoint has changed considerably. To be sure, the reality of life has not changed. "All these things shall be dissolved." In fact, that final dissolution of all present things is nearer now than it was then – by a whole month. However, our viewpoint is different.

December spoke of the end, the end of all present things. Then we were given to sober, solemn reflection on the way that lay behind. What a year it was with all its joys and sorrows, its births and deaths, mirth and fears, laughter and tears. Also, what a sins there were to stain each passing moment, to mar each thought and word and deed. Indeed, 1960, now only a memory, gave much food for earnest retrospection.

January speaks of a new beginning, in a sense, and though reality is still the same our viewpoint is different. We are standing on the threshold of a new year with all it has in store for us, and as we do, we are not given to reminiscence as much as to prayerful consideration of the uncharted road that lies ahead. Where are we going? What will we experience as individuals, families, churches? How shall we embark on this new phase of life's journey? What must we do?

Christian friends, who can give better advice than our Heavenly Father Himself, who knows and does all things, Who knows the future as well as the past because the one as well as the other is only the unfolding of His eternal purpose, Who is able to provide because He alone works all things according to the counsel of His sovereign will? And where does our Father give better counsel than in these words of Solomon, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

We do need some one on whom we may lean, however rugged the road and dark the night may be; some one who really knows the way and is strong to direct our paths. We are so ignorant and insufficient, such helpless babes-in-the-woods.

The year 1961 is dark in more than one respect. It is dark in the sense that it is so mysterious, so completely secret. We know nothing of what lies ahead. Before our eyes hangs an iron curtain, so impenetrable that even our very next step must be taken in complete darkness. As long as we are here we must go on; there's nothing we can do about that. "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, Bears all its sons away." Still, we don't know where. Countless questions, therefore, may arise in our hearts and minds with respect to ourselves and our loved ones, our church and nation and the world in gen-

eral. To all of them there is only one answer: We don't know.

The year 1961 is dark in still another sense. I need not tell you that. One must be extremely stupid not to sense the seriousness of the times wherein we are living today. True, we cannot know in detail what lies ahead. Yet, it is not so, that we know nothing about the future. Scripture and experience both tell us, that the future is ominous and for the flesh it promises little that is good. That was so for men of every age. "The days of our years," says Psalm 90, "are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." There is your answer. Labor and sorrow, sickness and pain, death and tears, all these and more await us in the future. That applies particularly to our day. Besides life's usual quota of misery and grief, there is so much today to fill the heart with fear and apprehension. The powers of the world are still eyeing one another with hatred and distrust. It's like living in the very crater of a volcano, that is ready to erupt any moment. Will there be war in the near future? If so, where, when, how? And what about all the other calamities predicted in the Book of Revelation? If and when all these things come upon us, what will we be able to do about them?

Hence, our constant need of one in whom we can place our confidence and who is mighty to control all things.

* * *

"Trust in *the Lord* with all thine heart."

What does this mean? What does one do who heeds this admonition?

It means, on the one hand, that we do not lean on our own understanding. How prone we sinful, obstinate, proud creatures are to do just this. Are we not strong and rich? Are we not the masters of our own fate? We have the horses and the chariots, the resources and wealth, the knowledge and wisdom, the prestige and the greatness, and these will see us through, come what may. They always have and they will in the future.

How evil and utterly detestable for the creature thus to exalt himself above the Lord of all!

Also, how foolish! Mere man will control the whole dreadful, tremendous future! We mortals shall lift ourselves by our own bootstraps out of the mire wherein we are sinking away! As the speck of dust that would maintain itself overagainst the raging hurricane that is sweeping it along, so we would maintain ourselves, we, creatures of time, whose breath is in our nostrils. How can such haughty self-reliance lead to anything but disillusionment and everlasting despair? God is not mocked!

To *trust* in the Lord means, that we cast ourselves upon Him with all we are and possess, lean entirely on Him. It implies that we look away from all that is of self and the creature, place all our hope in Him alone, commit our entire way to Him, let God do all our worrying for us, live by the day and let the Almighty take care of tomorrow. Trusting in the Lord means that we know and acknowledge Him, not in some, but in all our ways, and that we say with all our hearts:

"My soul in silence waits for God,
My Savior He has proved;
He only is my rock and tower;
I never shall be moved.
My honor is secure with God,
My Savior He is known:
My refuge and my rock of strength,
Are found in God alone."

"Trust in *the Lord.*" His is all dominion over all things. He has determined all things from eternity and He alone rules supreme over all that was and is and ever shall be. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, and He loves you from everlasting with all His heart.

Shall we then put our trust in Him alone, young people? Without one reservation?

Then we shall have nothing to fear. He will not fail us. He will direct our paths: make them right and straight. His is not only the end and destination, His are also the ways and means, and always the latter are perfectly adapted to the former. We may not be able to understand all His ways; often they may seem foolish and unnecessary. However, by faith we apprehend what eye cannot see, that God never once departs from the way of infinite wisdom and love that leads to our eternal salvation.

Trust, then, in the Lord with all your hearts, and yours, Christian pilgrim, is the

unfailing promise: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." The following lines we know so well. How about living them?

"Thy protector is the Lord,
Shade for thee He will afford;
Neither sun nor moon shall smite,
God shall guard by day or night.
He will ever keep thy soul;
What would harm He will control;
In the home and by the way
He will keep thee day by day."

Editorials . . .

ATTITUDE PROBLEM

There is an old but oft repeated saying which goes something like this: Actions speak louder than words. No one knows whether the framer of this undying remark either consciously or unconsciously had the Holy Scriptures in mind, but this makes little difference. Immediately we recognize that there is a striking similarity between it and what Christ Jesus once said. "Not everyone that *saith* unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father, which is in heaven." Consequently the prominence of our deeds, our actions, is not denied by anyone.

Still, the whole man is three: thought, words and deed: and that undeniably so! We think, we speak and we do.

The question is: what has man's attitude to do with him as a thinking, speaking and doing creature? The inquiry is not a simple one. Yet we would venture a reply: our attitude is the atmosphere of our actions, the climate, so to speak, of our deeds. It affects very much everything that we do. Very evidently our attitude gives taste to our thoughts, flavors our words, colors all of our deeds. In short, no thought, word or deed ever stands burlesque; they appear in the clothing of our attitude. So it stands to reason that our attitude is vitally important, worthy of examination and concern.

Ever since our lad and lass days the thought as such has been grooved into our consciousness. Father and Mother uttered it in the quiet of our humble home. The friendly instructor in grammar school talked much of it; besides, that report card issued every six weeks – well there it was every time, just below the word effort . . . above the word conduct. Still later we found everyone in authority, from parent to preacher, preaching on that one word (or didn't they?). Why all the concern? Simply because an improper attitude is sin, a very, very big sin! Simply because a proper attitude is good, a very wonderful feature of the Christian. The wholesome attitude is constructive while the ugly attitude is destructive, makes or breaks the home, cleanses or corrupts the church, the classroom or shop. And me, why I am responsible for one, my own.

Interestingly enough, it was Jonathan who by target practice disclosed to David the attitude of his father, Saul, while David was in hiding. Our attitude cannot be concealed; others see it and appraise it; it is so very revealing.

Quite naturally we must have an ugly attitude over against sin. The Bible speaks of loathing it. All of our thoughts, words and deeds must conclusively prove we cannot stand evil. Temptations must be pushed aside, ungodly pleasures must be coldly passed by, which things, when seen in our lives clearly portray our use of the expression, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

With our lot in life, however, things are fundamentally different. Contentment should adorn us as a precious stone. There is no room for grudging and grumping; chins

should never be dragging over the ground, faces should never be knotted up in a frown. To loathe the thought of the next moment of our life with its delicate and ever changing program, is sin. Only the quiet and contented spirit is well-pleasing to God. Oh, young people, let's be Christian in our disposition even though our tasks prove tedious, our residence enforces restrictions, or whatever there may be.

But have we ever given it serious thought that perhaps there is more, much more, to our attitude? How could we ever overlook it! Other people must live with, that is, put up with, our attitude. We have an attitude to them.

About these things I have certain fears. Self-examination is in order and certainly our greatest need for the day. For instance a good question to ask ourselves is: what is my attitude to my neighbor; the people next door, the people I encounter each day? How about people that attend other churches? From reports heard, I am inclined to think my (our) prestige is declining. But criticism is usually groundless, isn't it? No, not always! One report on my desk tells me we are so indifferent. Under this caption is found such strange adjectives as: cold, caloused.... STOP, I've heard enough! I am inclined to believe the reporter. Yet another report on my desk indicates that we are proud, which is usually defined as the esteeming of oneself better than others. The atmosphere about us tells others that we are always right and never wrong. What an evil attitude! This report I fear bears an element of truth. Finally the most alarming comment of all points out that our words are seldom savory but generally sarcastic; they are like sharp swords and piercing daggers. The reporter emphasizes that we ca others whatever we please, continuously crowning others with criticism.

May I put these reports in the waste paper basket and mark them as false accusations? No, I think I will keep them in mind and compare myself with a bit of Holy Writ. There I find that Paul would agree with John that we should love not the world nor the things of the world, but lest we misinterpret this as a license to evil he hastens to explain, "love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10. Our Savior put it beautifully when He said, "Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you." This includes my attitude.

There may be room for a major overhauling.

Sometimes I go to dreaming and it proves worth while. If only I could be like the aged Jacob who spoke so gently to Egypt's Pharaoh. Or there was Job, highly esteemed by all. I heard a martyr say, "Lay not this sin to their charge." Paul faced the monarch of Rome and Israel with remarkable posture (except once when he resorted to name-calling, remember? for which he quickly apologized).

Let us as young men and women pioneer a path for those that come after us. This we can only do by taking hold of this problem in prayer: Be merciful, O God, to me, a sinner. There will be fruit.

rev. a. mulder

BOOKS . . .

We Wrote the Gospels — John Calvin Reid — Eerdmans Publishing Co. — 61 pp.—$2.00.

This small, fascinating book presents the personal testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as to the origin and purpose of the gospel narratives. Each tells his own story, emphasizes his own viewpoint, and, anachronistically, applies his own message to the 20th century situation. For instance, Matthew the missionary-minded warns the reader that Jesus' promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days," applies to you only "if you are walking the path of dutiful, grateful response to this His Great Commission, 'Go . . . make disciples.'"

Dr. Reid evidences great knowledge of New Testament scholarship and affords, in simple language and ingenious style, a wealth of insight into the gospel accounts. One may, however, question Reid's vagueness when he deals with the writing of th gospel narratives. Statements such as ". never dreamed, of course, when I began

writing, that my book would be called a 'Gospel,' revered and read down through the centuries (Mark)," plus the fact that Reid describes at length the gospel writers collecting materials for their work, never mentioning that the authors were inspired, lead one to believe that there was no divine influence in the writing of Scripture. And one should question the Biblical soundness of "John's" view of faith (p. 59), "By faith you can lift yourself up and up until you are by the very side of Christ. Then by one definite act of commitment you may bind your soul to His until . . . His life begins to flow into you . . ." Reid should remember that he who speaks in the name of the apostle John is duty bound to advance John's thoughts. d.e.

Tall Against the Sky — Orville Steggerda — Zondervan Publishing House — 241 pp. — $2.95.

Walt Stolman is a girl's dream. Tall, handsome blondness combines with smooth power to make him the object of three beautiful girls' search for a marriage victim. This, the young, nature-loving settler properly resents. He is concerned with developing the settlement of Grand Rapids, newly founded on the banks of the fish and fur-filled Grand River.

The Grand Rapids area of the 1830's consists of uncleared forest, peopled by determined pioneers and waning redmen. Already, religion is an essential part of the community. The plain farmers earnestly impress upon their wilderness children that "If we know that the Lord is our Shepherd an' we trust him like sheep do their shepherd, there ain't nothin' we need to worry about." And Walt Stolman, having succumbed to the charm of demure Prue Dobey, is gently rebuked by the preacher for rebelling against the long suffering of his Indian-tortured wife: "He has His own purpose in this . . . If He doesn't cure Prue, it's because not curing her will be best for you and her."

Tall Against the Sky is Christian fiction which admirably avoids identifying Christianity with Prue-dism while weaving rugged action, credible romance, and painless history into a novel for all ages.

d. e.

Star Eye — William Schmidt — Eerdmans Publishing Company — 302 pp. — $2.50.

Oldsters are probably familiar with this novel. The acceptance it received in Christian circles on first publication resulted in its being recently republished in two forms. Eerdmans' publication of Star Eye is an exact copy of the original.

The setting is a German immigrant community during the Revolutionary War. Little Willie Diehl, Star Eye, falls victim to the traitorous Karl Schleicher and is handed over to the Indians. For over ten years Star Eye remains an "Indian." Since the English have employed the Indians in their fight against the American colonists, Star Eye goes out to battle his own kin. Pitted against the whooping redskins stand the sturdy Germans, led by Star Eye's uncle, Traugott Keller. The struggle between red and white resolves itself into a conflict within Star Eye's mind; once he decides, the end is in sight.

A deeper theme has the simple, but sincere, Christian settlers holding fast their faith despite the barbaric persecutions of rum-soaked Indians and the crueler mockery of money-loving Whites. The God that Karl Schleicher denies, "Oh, I doubt the existence of a God who leaves such pious people as you so miserably in the lurch, but lets such a wicked fellow as I am fare so well," is the God that keeps an outraged Henry Diehl from avenging himself on Karl. As his blacksmith's hands tighten around Schleicher's throat, Diehl recalls his faith, "as a Christian I will let God avenge my wrongs."

Children and teens will thrill to Star Eye till the last roar of Traugott's rifle fades into the confession of a dying penitent.

d. e.

the PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC diatribe

AGATHA LUBBERS

Nothing has aroused more discussion during the past few months than the nomination and election of John F. Kennedy as the first Roman Catholic president of the United States. The moot question today is whether the election of John F. Kennedy will initiate a further decline or an upgrading of democratic processes.

Carl F. H. Henry, editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today*, writes in the November 21, 1960, issue that because *Christianity Today* is a religious magazine the spiritual aspects of the political campaign this year held special interest because of Senator Kennedy's Roman Catholicism. *Time* magazine's editorial staff also recognized the importance of the Catholic-Protestant debate. It has caught to some extent the tenor and flavor of this debate in the 17th *Time* cover story by Douglas Auchinloss, *Time's* religious writer. Auchinloss interviewed John Courtney Murray, professor of Theology at Woodstock and member of the Jesuit organization, and penned the results of his interview in the December 12th issue of *Time*.

Carl F. H. Henry writing in *Christianity Today* makes a unique contribution to the understanding of this Protestant-Catholic debate when he says:

> The real significance of the religious development in American life is found not in a growing emergence of a Catholic bloc or party, nor even in a shift of the American political mood into the post-Protestant era, or into an era of pluralistic religious balances. The deeper fact is the widening of public judgment that *all religion is irrelevant* to political attitudes and acts. The American mentality is rapidly losing any distinction of true versus false religion, and is dismissing this contrast as based on unbrotherliness and intolerance. Religion is demeaned to merely a secondary or supplementary support in American life.

Carl F. H. Henry calls attention to the fact that Kennedy's showing was both a Catholic "breakthrough" and "compromise." It was a breakthrough in view of the fact that Kennedy is our nation's first Roman Catholic president but his showing was a necessarily psychological compromise on the following counts:

1. Kennedy's statements that Church-State separation is *ideal* in spite of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church traditionally viewed separation as tolerable until a Catholic majority can implement the state as the temporal arm of the Roman church.
2. Kennedy's opposition to Federal aid to parochial schools.
3. Kennedy's opposition to an envoy to the Vatican.
4. Kennedy's professed obligation to the Constitution rather than to the Pope in political affairs.

In his editorial, "Another Era Underway in the American Venture," Henry also notes that Evangelical Protestant forces made advances but also suffered setbacks. Evangelicals and Southern Baptists aware of church history warned against "Roman Catholicism's notorious incursion into political arenas for sectarian benefit." The Reformation promoted not only biblical faith but also "challenged Rome's theology of the state."

Evangelical Protestants also had to battle an antagonistic press which labelled all criticism on the religious level *bigotry*. Henry says: "Discussion of the *political* issue on the religious side was repressed by ballooning the religious issue with the ill wind of bigotry."

Henry also notes that not a few Protestants died with Kennedy under the "public umbrella of tolerance" and "others supported Kennedy in view of Catholicism's official antipathy to *communism* and sympathy with free enterprise."

Henry writes in conclusion that statistics reveal evangelical and Catholic strength to be numerical rivals but the Roman church has more aggressively planted Catholic Information Centers in the main cities of America while Protestants have lagged far behind in this area of aggressive attack against ideological and religious error.

° ° °

What must be the position and attitude of us as Protestant Reformed youth against such inroads made by the Roman Catholic Church? Is it our calling to sit lethargically by and see these events transpire?

We may certainly not take the attitude that all religions are to be tolerated. This is a free democratic society and therefore anyone may propound and defend any beliefs which he seems to think fit his whims and fancies. The Bible never takes this position but always actively takes the position that there is only one correct view and only that view is to be tolerated and defended. This we as Protestant Reformed youth also have a calling to do.

Our Reformation fathers were never afraid to denominate the errors of the Romish church as accursed heresy. Calvin pulled no punches when he spoke concerning the basic errors of the Roman church. We, too, must pull no punches and should also recognize that we once again may be entering perilous times in which the life of the true Christian church will be threatened as it was in the early days of the Christian church.

I do not feel that we as Protestant Reformed churches and believers have a calling to enter into the Protestant-Catholic diatribe as it is being waged today but we should certainly be aware of the controversy and be prepared to give a witness of the hope that is in us.

SOCIALISM AND FALSE DOCTRINE

SEYMOUR BEIBOER

Socialism and Communism are almost synonymous with each other. What are they about? They are not just the writings of Carl Marx and Lenin, not gross materialism. What they are about can be explained in a few simple words from Scripture in the first verse of Psalm 14. "The fool hath said in his heart, 'there is no god.'" They both believe in a godless government of the people, for the people, and by the people – a government that has complete control over the lives of its citizens – economically, physically, morally, and spiritually. They differ, however, mainly on one small point; that is, that Communism seeks to gain its ends by means of world-wide revolutions, wars, and massacres, while Socialism seeks to gain similar ends by resorting to more peaceful, educational, and constitutional methods.

The tie that binds Socialists and Communists across the frontiers of nations, across barriers of languages and differences of class and education in defiance of religion, the weakness of the body and the irresolution of the mind is a simple conviction which is not new. It was whispered already in the garden of Eden under the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: "Ye shall be as gods." It is the great alternative faith of mankind. Like all great faiths its force derives from a simple vision. Other ages have also had great visions. They always have been different versions of the same vision: the vision of God and man's relationship to God. The Communistic and the Socialistic version is the vision of man without God. It is the vision of man's mind, heart, and soul, displacing God as the Creator of the world. Yes, indeed, this vision of man's depraved mind and heart had its beginning when Satan, the instigator, was cast out of heaven as a fallen angel. It was

ALPHA AND OMEGA

JIM JONKER

In the beginning, the Eternal Word,
By might unmeasured and unknown to man,
Spoke, and the depths of nothingness were stirred,
And in that great beginning time began.
And in time's fulness, man by sin fast held,
That Word was flesh, time met eternity,
The finite and the Infinite were weld
And God and man was hanged upon a tree.
But in time's glass will drop the final sand,
The cloud-clothed angel, with a lion's roar,
Shall set his fiery feet on sea and land, . . .
God's end be reached, and time shall be no more.
Lord, strengthen Thou our failing sight, we pray,
Till with the eye of faith we see that day.

manifested at the time of Noah and the Flood. It was again manifested at the time of the building of the Tower of Babel and later on in the successive empires of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Socialism also manifested itself within the Church throughout the ages. Think of the children of Israel in the desert when they worshipped the golden calf, their frequent murmurings that delayed their entrance into Canaan. Think of their idolatry during the period of the judges and later on in the reign of their wicked kings. Think of how they shed the blood of the prophets and of the saints both in the Old and New Dispensations and even of God Himself when they nailed His Son to the cross. Going into our modern era, think of our modern ungodly labor unions, business associations, secret lodges, fraternities, in the light of the thirteenth chapter of Romans. Think of Roman Catholicism with all its image worship and its substitution of the Virgin Mary and the Pope, mere mortal beings, as its gods. Think of the ungodly Christ-rejecting Modernists of our day, who teach that God is man's higher self. 1 John 2:22-23 will settle this matter once and for all. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son: the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Socialism and false doctrine are one in essence. In short, false doctrine is what millions of modern minds think but do not dare to say: If man's mind is the decisive force in the world, what need is there for God? This is in principle expressed in bold print by all the various cults and the leading denominations of Christian churches throughout the whole world in a thousand and one variations of the above statement. This is also the essence of Arminianism, Pelagianism, and of the Common Grace theory. Oh they do not dethrone the triune God entirely as yet; but they rob God of some of His honor due to Him alone, and ascribe the same to totally depraved mankind. By degrees, a little bit at a time, false doctrine simply restores man to his sovereignty by the simple method of denying God's sovereign election. They make man the potter and reduce God to mere clay or nothingness. False doctrine does not only deny the Living God, but it puts up and exalts a counterfeit God, an imagination of man's evil, corrupt mind, and proclaims him as the God of the Scriptures, thus deceiving millions of ignorant people in believing the lie. The mischief of these false doctrines is that they profess to believe the Bible, sing the familiar songs of Zion, recite the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, call themselves by orthodox names; they look like lambs, but have Satan's voice. In order to be big in this world the adherents of false doctrines must also gradually think, live, and act like the ungodly world; join its numerous wicked organizations, participate in its pleasures and build and garnish the tombs of the righteous and compass land and sea to make

one proselyte. For all their pleasant appearances and the so-called good these counterfeit faiths do, they destroy the work of Christ as much as the antichristian governments do. The two work hand in hand. They are both tools in the hands of Satan.

Yes, young people, the time is rapidly approaching when all the advocates of the many false doctrines will join together with the antichristian governments of this world into one solid union against all of God's elect children that are still members of the denominations these false teachers represent, that will not bow down to the mental images that the false teachers have set up. Then that twofold antichristian beast of Revelation thirteen will be fully realized. Here we can see Socialism in action. Yes, indeed, as Christ was tempted by the devil forty days in the wilderness, so also the false teachers and the governments of that day, by the instigation of that same devil will also tempt us by giving us all the pleasures and treasures this world can provide if only we will deny the God of the Scriptures. But, if we by the grace of God confess with Christ and with Daniel and his three friends of old, that we shall worship the Lord our God and serve Him only, then we will be branded as narrow-minded, old fashioned, bigoted, fanatical, impractical, etc. We will be marked as social outcasts. We will not be able to buy nor sell because we do not wear the mark that shows that we have denied the God of the Scriptures. Eventually we will starve to death. There will be many so-called Christians in that day, who formerly were one with us, who will even refuse us a crust of bread or a drop of water for the simple reason that we refuse to work. Yes, indeed, the tribulation of that day will be so grievous, that if those days were not shortened for the elect's sake, no flesh could be saved. But, thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ who has from the beginning to the end of the world, elected, purchased with His blood, gathered, defended, and preserved to Himself by His Spirit and Word out of the whole human race a Church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that we, although we do not deserve to be, are and forever shall remain living members thereof, and no man shall ever be able to pluck us out of His hand.

PENCIL AND CHALK

Nature Study IN THE *Primary Grades*

DON DOEZEMA

This article might be called a continuation, believe it or not, of the article in "Pencils and Chalk" in the previous issue of *Beacon Lights*. That particular article was entitled "The Science of Teaching." This one could very well be called "The Teaching of Science."

You will probably remember that "The Science of Teaching" dealt with the generally accepted idea that a child's interest must be aroused in order for mastery to occur. If he is not genuinely interested in what he has to learn, he will go through the motions of learning but not really learn anything.

Now in the teaching of Biology, the matter of arousing interest is simplified to a large extent since biology has, you might say, a "built in" interest for the pupil. It takes very little effort on the part of the teacher to get children interested in nature. The fact of the matter is that nature simply fascinates children. As they grow older they become more and more interested in inanimate objects but, especially when they are still quite young, children love to study

about living organisms, whether they be flowers, trees, birds, fish, or turtles.

Now then, since interest is no real problem, the only task left for the teacher is to steer them in the right direction. Successful methods of teaching nature study in the primary grades are too numerous to mention. Story-telling, by teachers and pupils, is an important part of primary instruction. The book shelves should be well supplied with books full of pictures of animals in natural color, of course, and they often lead to discussions of pets or creatures noticed on the way to school or in the zoo, possibly. Every youngster knows something of some animal. In fact, it is surprising how well informed some really are. And if he is eager to tell others what he knows, then let him tell it!

Pictures from magazines or snapshots of house pets will undoubtedly find their way into the classroom. Here is a golden opportunity to bring in many lessons in biology. It might start a discussion of the methods of caring for animals. Or the teacher could direct their attention to details the children will miss at first, like the relative thickness of haircoat in summer and winter, the presence or absence of leaves on the trees in the background of the photograph, etc. Besides teaching them facts, this develops their powers of independent observation of nature.

Classroom projects for nature study are also like the sand along the seashore in multitude. A miniature garden in the classroom is, of course, a practical necessity. Here the pupils can observe plant growth first hand, as well as the conditions either favoring or hindering it. The teacher could direct attention to the effect of dry and rainy weather as well as snow and frost on the plants. The flowers that are grown can be examined as to their form, color, and odor and the purpose of these things in attracting insects. Just as in every garden, weeds are bound to pop up. Here is an opportunity to illustrate many methods of seed dispersal. Children should be taught the interdependence of flowering plants and flying insects, or water plants and goldfish in the aquarium.

Bird study should not be forgotten. An examination of the construction of various kinds of birds' nests is useful, and stories could be read which illustrate the patience of birds in selecting the site for the nest, in caring for the eggs, feeding the young and teaching them to fly.

Insects should by all means be included in primary nature topics. Butterflies, beautiful in form and color, the ceaseless activities of ants and bees, the music of crickets and cicadas, the jumping ability of the grasshopper, the many eyes of the fly, the web-spinning of the spider, all fascinate young children. Interest may be aroused by a pupil-made insect collection. It is of the utmost importance, of course, to be ready with the *correct* answer to the many questions put by the children. For example, if they ask "Why do bees buzz?" don't hesitate, come right out and tell them that "You would too if somebody stole your honey and nectar!"

Ideally, there can be no adequate substitute for field work in the study of biology. Observation of living plants in their natural environment is essential to the understanding of the interrelation of living things. An excursion to a museum, zoo, river, pond, or field is worth any expenditure of time and trouble.

Now then, as you can see, as a general rule, no definite periods need be set aside for nature study in kindergarten and primary work, biology being more or less incidental. This has one marked disadvantage, particularly with teachers poorly grounded in this field – that is, that it may not be done at all! So the teacher should formulate in advance some idea of what she will try to accomplish during the school year, how much time should be devoted to each phase of instruction, what projects could be carried out, etc., and then stick more or less to the schedule whether she sets apart a separate time for them or not. These lessons in biology may be correlated with reading, art, spelling, or almost any subject of the primary curriculum. The class in art will make charts showing plant parts, flowers, or butterflies. In reading, stories of plant and animal life may be selected. In English, themes may be composed about gardens or birds. But the point is that an elementary course in biology must be as elastic as possible. There can be little accomplishment without genuine self-interest on the part of the pupil. And to hold strictly to a given topic at a given time is to stifle the initiative naturally present in the child.

Book of REVELATION

by REV. H. HOEKSEMA

Lesson XVI (Revelation 8:1-6) *Offering of the Prayers of All the Saints*

1. Vs. 1: "And when he had opened the seventh seal" etc. a. Here the main line in the plan of the book of Revelation, which was interrupted in ch. VII, is resumed. b. At the opening of the seventh seal, however, not just one single vision occurs (as at the opening of each of the first six seals), but a series of visions (the trumpet-visions). c. When the seventh seal is opened "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour". (1) Hitherto heaven had been filled with song, music and praise (chs. 4:8-11; 5:8-14; 7:10-12. Even during the opening of the first six seals heaven was not silent (ch. 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12). Now silence. (2) As to this silence (a) It does not constitute the whole contents of the seventh seal. (b) Nor does it represent the silence of the enemies of Christ and His Church, or a period of tranquility for the Church on earth, or the millennium, or the beginning of eternal rest, etc. (c) Nor is it merely indicative of the intense anticipation of things to come at the opening of the seventh seal by the inhabitants of heaven: it occurs after the seal is opened. (d) But it simply expresses reverence in the hour of prayer and worship: the prayers of the saints are to be offered on the altar. Hence: the half hour; the time needed.

2. Vs. 2: "And I saw the seven angels", etc. a. John beholds these seven angels, not at the conclusion of the silence, but during the half hour. b. They are called: *the* seven angels which stood before God. The definite article would seem to indicate that these were angels that occupy always a foremost position in heaven (before God), like Gabriel (Luke 1:19), and that there are just seven of them. c. Seven trumpets were given unto them. This is mentioned here in anticipation of vs. 6ff. and to emphasize the idea that these angels, though they already received their trumpets, may not do their work until the prayers of the saints have been offered. (1) Trumpets were used: to sound the call for battle, to send forth the call for temple worship, to call a holy convocation. (2) Here they symbolize that God will come for judgment and in the way of judgment bring His kingdom to perfection. Think of the trumpet blasts at the fall of Jericho.

3. Vss. 3-5: a. "And another angel came and stood at the altar", etc. (1) This is "another angel" in distinction from the

seven just mentioned, but still an angel, not Christ. (2) He stood before the altar. The question: which altar? has been variously answered. According to some it is the altar of burnt-offering (fire is taken from it); according to others it is the altar of incense (the golden altar, incense is burnt on it); according to others the first part of vs. 3 refers to the altar of burnt-offering, the second to the altar of incense. We must remember that we are not in the temple with its different departments, but in heaven here. The altar that is mentioned here partakes of both: the altar of burnt-offering (from which the fire is taken) and the altar of incense (on which the prayers are offered with the incense). (3) The angel has a golden censer: he is ready for the service he is about to perform. b. "And there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne". Let us note: (1) That incense burnt before God symbolizes the acceptableness of the prayers of the saints to Him. They will surely be heard. (2) That much incense is given to the angel because it is to be added to the prayers of all *the* saints. (3) That instead of: "that he should offer it" the original reads literally: "that he should give it (add it, R.V.) to the prayers of the saints upon the altar which was before the throne". The idea, therefore is, that the prayers are on the altar and that the angel adds incense to them. (4) As to these prayers, it must be emphasized (a) That they are prayers of the saints, sent up by them in their capacity as saints, saintly prayers. (b) That they are the prayers of *all* saints, hence, expressing what all have in common: they pray for God's kingdom and the coming of the Lord. (c) That, therefore, by implication they also pray for the judgments of God upon an ungodly world. c. "And the smoke of the incense" etc. According to the original we may read here: "the smoke of the incense rose *in behalf of* the prayers of the saints" etc. The idea is: the prayers of the saints are well-pleasing to God and He hears them. d. "And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar" etc. Note (1) That the fire (symbol of wrath and judgment) is taken from *the* same altar on which were the prayers of the saints; there is a connection. (2) That its being cast on the earth results in signs of judgment: voices, lightnings, thunderings, an earthquake. God's coming for judgment is the answer to the prayers of the saints.

4. Vs. 6: "And the seven angels" etc. a. The hour of silence is past. b. The angels may now commence their work. They prepare themselves to blow their trumpets.

Lesson XVII (Revelation 8:7-12) *The First Four Trumpets*

1. As to these first four trumpets in general, note: a. That the trumpet-blasts by the angels are not merely signs of judgments, but that by them the judgments themselves are called forth. This they have in common with the seals. b. That these first four trumpets constitute a distinct group. Separated from the rest by vs. 13. And all four pertain to the physical universe: land, sea, waters, the firmament. Like the seals they fall into two groups of four and three.

2. Vs. 7: The first trumpet. a. "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth". The picture is that of a great hailstorm, masses of fire, mixed with showers of blood, caused by the trumpet blast and "cast on the earth". They represent destructive forces in nature such as always operate in a measure, but are now increased to an extraordinary degree. Their extraordinary character is especially indicated by the blood that is mixed with the hail and fire. b. The result: "and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up". (1) Trees and grass are not to be allegorized, so that the trees are great men or heretical teachers, and the grass represents ordinary men or common Christians. (2) They are representative of the whole world of vegetation. Cf. the plague of hail and fire in

Egypt. Ex. 9:24. ff. (3) Note here the fraction *one third*. The fourth seal revealed one fourth of men being killed. One third is just a little more than one fourth. If one fourth would represent the ordinary measure of destruction wrought, one third represents an increase in destruction and death. Note that this is true of all the first four trumpets. It will be evident that men and beasts are also affected by this plague.

3. Vss. 8, 9: The second trumpet. a. "And the second angel sounded", etc. By the second trumpet-blast a great burning mass *"as it were"* a great mountain (not an actual mountain or volcano, therefore), falling from heaven. Just what this burning mass will be in reality cannot be said. It was cast into the sea, so that it is upon the sea that this second judgment in distinction from the first, is upon the sea. b. The result is "one-third" destruction: one third of the sea is turned into a rotten pool of blood, one third of the living creatures in the sea dies. Not to be allegorized as referring to naval battles, submarines, etc., but to be taken in their literal sense. Of course, also this second trumpet affects the life of men and nations.

4. Vss. 10, 11: The third trumpet. a. "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp" etc. The picture is that of a comet or meteor. This may not represent a real star in reality, although this is not impossible. But it certainly is not to be interpreted allegorically as meaning the Church, or heresy, or Pelagius, or mighty rulers, or war, etc. The name of this star is "Wormwood". Wormwood is a plant noted for its bitter taste and poisonous oil. It presents some poisonous influence in the atmosphere. b. "And it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters". This is the sphere of the third judgment in distinction from the first (the land) and the second (the seas): the sweet waters, which men and beast drink. c. The result: "and the third part of the waters became wormwood", etc. The waters are poisoned and many men die.

5. Vs. 12: The fourth trumpet. a. "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten", etc. The fourth judgment affects the firmament and the heavenly luminaries: sun, moon and stars. They are "smitten", with the result that for a third part they are darkened. b. The significance of this will be evident, if we consider that all life (of plants, animals, and men) depends on light and heat. c. Also this trumpet is not to be explained allegorically (obscuration of the Church, Mohammedanism, etc.)

Note 1. That no allegorical interpretation is permitted, is evident from the text itself. Everything leaves the impression that judgments in the physical universe are meant here. This is also evident from the number four. Besides, the allegorical interpretation opens so many possibilities, that exegesis is guesswork.

Note 2. We must conceive of these first four trumpets as following one another in quick succession, so that their combined effects are upon the earth at the same time. They will inaugurate a period of great suffering, famine, pestilence, death. All human wisdom fails. And what confusion is wrought in the political and economic world!

Lesson XVIII (Revelation 9:1-12) *The Locusts Out of the Abyss*

1. Ch. 8:13 "And I beheld", etc. This verse does not belong to the trumpets. It is introductory to the blowing of the last three trumpets. a. John beholds an eagle (R. V. not an angel) in midheaven. The eagle is a harbinger of catastrophe (Deut. 28:49; Hab. 1:8). b. He flies in midheaven and cries with a loud voice in order that all that are on the earth may hear him. c. By a threefold "woe" the last three trumpets are characterized as especially dreadful and terrible. They are "the three woes" (ch. 9:12; 11:14; 15:1-16:21).

2. Ch. 9:1-3a: The source of the locusts: "And the fifth angel sounded", etc. a. John beheld a star fallen (he does not see it fall; the R.V. is correct) from

heaven to the earth. It is very clear from the text that no literal star is meant, but some personal being. (1) He had already fallen. (2) The key of the bottomless pit *is* given him. (3) He opens the pit. Hence, some evil angel, perhaps Satan. (Cf. ch. 12:4, 9, etc.). b. He receives the key, i.e. power to open the pit (from Christ!). Literally we read "the key of the pit (the shaft) of the abyss". The abyss is here the prison of evil angels. c. When the abyss is opened a thick smoke (symbolic of the darkness, corruption of the abyss) ascends out of the pit, obscuring sun and air. And out of the smoke locusts ascend upon the earth. They have their origin in the dark prison of demons.

3. Vss. 3a-6: The power of these locusts: "and unto them was given power", etc. It is very evident from their description as well as from their origin that no ordinary locusts are to be thought of. a. Their power is like that of the scorpions of the earth, suggesting that these locusts are not of the earth. (vss. 3, 5, 10). b. They are unlike ordinary locusts in that they do not hurt vegetation, vs. 4. c. Again, note that they hurt ungodly men only: (1) In that they hurt men they differ from locusts. (2) But the fact that they hurt only the wicked, and cannot hurt them that are sealed, is proof that they cannot represent men (armies, Mohammedans, etc.), or even evil doctrines, heresies, vs. 4. (For the meaning of those "that have the seal of God in their foreheads", see ch. 7:1 ff.). d. Further, that they are neither literal locusts nor men, is evident from the fact that they cannot kill but only cause terrible torment like that caused by the striking of a scorpion, vs. 5. e. So dreadful is the torment they cause that (1) Men prefer death to life: "In those days men shall seek death . . . and shall desire to die". (2) Yet, they shall "not find it . . . and death shall flee from them." vs. 6. f. They have power to torment men "five months", i.e. the full season in which locusts appear. vss. 5, 10.

4. Vss. 7-10: The description of these locusts. Also from the description, though in general derived from the form of locusts, it is evident that they represent other beings. Besides, the figurative description symbolically describes their character. a. Their general appearance is like that of horses (locusts resemble horses) prepared for battle: *the spirit of war and conquest*. b. On their heads they wear crowns of gold: *the spirit of ambition and power*. c. Their faces were like the faces of men: *human intelligence, wisdom, philosophy*. d. They have hair as the hair of women: *the spirit of lust, sensuality*. e. They had teeth like the teeth of lions: *the spirit of devouring appetite, greed, covetousness*. f. And they constitute a mighty and irresistible army: they had breastplates as it were the breastplates of iron. And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. g. It is significant, no doubt, that they hurt with their tails, in which are stings, vs. 10. For this signifies that the torment they cause is rather the result of their general operation and influence, the aftermath.

5. Vs. 11. The king of these locusts. a. They have a king over them. (1) We know from other parts of Scripture that also evil angels have their "principalities and powers". (2) So also here. These "locusts" have their king and he leads them to battle. b. The name of the king, who is the "angel of the bottomless pit" is (1) In Hebrew Abaddon, in Greek Apollyon. (2) Both mean: corruption, destruction.

Note: From the entire description it is evident that these locusts represent a host of evil spirits, demons, that are released at their own time to play upon the evil lusts of men, and to leave suffering and despair in their wake. God gives men over. See Rom. 1:24ff.

6. Vs. 12: The passage closes with an ominous announcement that one woe is past and that two more woes must be expected.

Lesson XIX (Revelation 9:13-21) *The Triple Monsters*

1. Vss 13-15: "And when the sixth angel sounded" etc. a. John heard a voice (literally we read in the original "one voice") from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God, vs. 13. Of the altar we read before: ch. 6:9 (the souls under the altar), 8:3, 5 (the prayers of the saints offered on the altar). (2) Here it is

definitely the altar of incense that is meant. (3) The voice proceeds from the four horns of the altar. On the horns the blood of atonement was sprinkled (Lev. 16:18, 19). The voice is therefore the voice of the blood of Christ! His blood is commanding an act of vengeance, because it has been trampled under foot (see vss. 20, 21). b. "Saying to the sixth angel," etc. The trumpet angel receives the command to loose the four angels that are bound in the great river Euphrates. (1) The four angels here are evidently wicked angels, for they are bound. (2) Their number (four) suggests that they have a work to perform that concerns all the earth. (3) That they are bound signifies that they cannot accomplish this work until Christ permits them and sends them out. They are preserved in chains until the very "hour and day and month and year". The work of Christ must be done in His own proper time. vs. 15. (4) The Scriptural meaning of the river Euphrates is that it was the boundary between Israel and the heathen world: symbolically: the line of separation between the Christian (outwardly) world and the "nations that are on the four corners of the earth". (5) The angels have power to kill one third of men (one third, as in the first four trumpets, and in distinction from the forth seal, signifying: more than usual, little more than one fourth). They do this, however, not directly, but by gathering the forces that are described in the following verses (see ch. 16:12-16; 20:1-10).

2. Vss. 16-19: The description of the triple monsters. "And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand" etc. a. John beholds a tremendous host of cavalry. He especially stresses that he heard their number: two hundred million. b. As to their appearance we may notice that their description is given in triplets of details: three sets of three: (1) They are a combination of horses (general appearance), lions (their heads) and serpents (their tails). vss. 17, 19. (2) The color of the breastplates: fire (red; think of the red horse of ch. 6); jacinth (very dark purple, like smoke; think of the black horse of ch. 6); and brimstone (lemon-yellow; cf. the pale green horse of ch. 6). (3) Accordingly, out of their mouth issues: fire, smoke, and brimstone. c. We may notice further: (1) That men were killed by the fire, smoke and brimstone that issues of their mouths, and that, therefore, it is said that their power is in their mouth. vss. 18, 19. (2) That their power, however, is also in their tails, for they were serpentlike and had serpent heads. vs. 19.

Note. The question is: what is represented by this infernal looking host? We may answer, negatively: (1) That they do not represent spirits, demons, as did the locusts of the fifth trumpet. They are, indeed, marshalled through the influence of the four angels that were bound in the river Euphrates, but they themselves are not spirits, for they kill men. (2) Neither do they represent armies of men as such, although the gathering of armies is certainly connected with this plague. The description of this host forbids to think of mere armies. And, positively, we may reply that they represent a combination and more terrible manifestation of the red, black and pale horses of ch. 6; that is: (1) War (the battle horse and the color of red symbolizing anger, jealously, vengeance: Ps. 39:3; 57:4; 78:2; 79:5; Jer. 12:1). (2) Famine and desolation (the devouring lion, the color of jacinth, the smoke (Isa. 34:10; Lam. 4:8; 5:8). (3) Pestilence and death (the serpent, the sulphur and the color of brimstone (Ez. 38:22). Hence: war, famine, pestilence on a great scale, worldwide in scope, kill the third part of men.

WITHOUT CHRIST

Apart from Christ, *youth* is a dream
Of castles in the air,
Which, when the builder fain would grasp,
He finds were never there.

Apart from Christ, *manhood's* a fight
Of battles never won,
A feverish haste to finish tasks
Which still remain undone.

Apart from Christ, *old age* is but
A disappointment keen,
Remorse at deeds done and undone,
And that which might have been.

KATHLEEN PAINE

FIDEL - *giant killer?*

JIM JONKER

There once was a little boy who did not like the neighborhood bully. This boy and a few of his friends began a fight with the bully and his gang. Surprisingly enough, they were successful. But, as is usually the case, the little boy, flushed with success, got a swelled head. The feeling of power was too much for him. He became a bully himself.

A giant, watching the little boy, at first was amused, then startled, then shocked, then disgusted and angry with such childish antics. The little boy at first let the giant alone. But as he began feeling stronger, he began to taunt the giant. Mistakenly taking the giant's tolerance for a sign of weakness, he grew bolder and bolder as each new prank gave him more fame and no retribution followed. The giant was in a dilemma. Should he let the pranks get worse and worse, or, should he seize the rascal between his thumb and forefinger and crush him to a lifeless blob? If he followed the first course, he could suffer himself. If he did the latter, he was certain to be proclaimed a bully and lose his already-fading reputation.

To make matters worse, the giant's rival came to support the little lad, took him under his wing, and warned the giant to keep hands off. The giant did not know what to do.

* * *

In a 20th century world, characterized by constant change, with many countries full of unrest and boiling with revolution, few incidents have drawn the attention of our country so forcefully as the change in the government of Cuba. The Americas, two continents officially untouched by Communism, were beginning to feel uncomfortable as their new neighbor proudly gave his house a coat of red paint.

This new neighbor was none other than Fidel Castro. The story of his rise to power and his shenanigans thereafter is an interesting story. With a small band of discontents, receiving a little support from various sources, Fidel set out to overthrow dictator Batista, proclaiming that he would bring liberty and freedom. Surprisingly, he was successful. Batista fled the country and left his mansion to a group of bearded, cigar-smoking men in dirty Army fatigues.

The United States kept out of the quarrel. It could not afford to support Batista if his doom was coming and it could hardly support a rebellion against an existing friendly government. Unofficially however, many Americans were very sympathetic toward Fidel, their patriotic blood being stirred each time they thought of freedom winning over a dictator. Many of them rejoiced when the rebels finally took control.

The first inkling that all was not as it was hoped came with Fidel's programs of reform. His ruthless killing of Batista's followers, often after a poor excuse for a trial, shocked many. His failure to call a promised election and his lame reason ("It wouldn't be fair; I'd win anyway") raised more wondering eyebrows. Soon there was no doubt where he was heading, as the government seized almost all the land to redistribute among the people and as multi-million dollar industries were taken over.

This led to his present conflict with the U. S.. America had invested heavily to build up Cuban industry. As their property was being stolen, the Americans protested. But Castro would listen to no one. He instead turned upon the United States and made it his scapegoat and the cause for all his trouble. If anything went wrong in Cuban affairs, Fidel would rant and rave for hours on T.V. and level fantastic charges against the U. S.. When it became apparent that Castro-inspired rebels were threatening othe Latin American countries and the U. S.

Navy began patrolling the Caribbean, more charges were hurled. The conflict had reached its widest point about a month ago as President Eisenhower, in order to be able to give federal aid to Cuban refugees, declared Cuba to be communist controlled.

Many, but their number is constantly diminishing, have predicted the downfall of Castro. Dictators, they say, have a habit of getting bounced down there. Undoubtedly, Fidel has problems. Financially, his tourist trade and export trade to the U. S. have fallen sharply. Cuban money and long-term bonds are practically worthless. Politically, he too is plagued by counter revolutionaries who, although at present scarcely a threat, seem to give him constant trouble. Religiously, he has difficulties with the powerful Roman Catholic church.

But as his problems are increasing, so is his strength. His trade with Russia and Red China is beginning to replace his former U. S. trade. He has been supplied with arms, so that the Cuban army is one of the most powerful in Latin America. Despite some discontent, most of the Cubans quite willingly put up with him and many who have gained under his regime hail him as their hero and saviour. The opposition of the church has so far proved quite ineffective. Dictators in Latin America have often been uprooted, but these did not have the support of the powerful communist system.

Suggestions regarding the handling of Castro have ranged from dropping an atom bomb and obliterating the country to merely torpedoing the island and watching it sink. While it is doubtful that our government will pursue any course such as this, the great problem remains and our new administration will have its hands full in dealing with the situation. Cuba is important in our defense set-up; we are by no means ready to give up our naval base located there. But the thorn in the giant's side is beginning to fester. What will he do?

Conditional Confession

WAYNE LANNING

Now that catechisms have started again, thoughts will be turned once more to the subject of confession of faith. Many young people now in their senior year in high school will be considering this "annual" occasion. They now feel that they have come of age and are *expected* to confess their faith. However, this is exactly what they should *not* be thinking. That attitude is based on a false idea of one's public confession and can be harmful to both the people and the occasion. It stems from tradition then, rather than from the heart. It also seems rather peculiar that all people should decide to confess at the same age. Are humans that uniform? Of course not! Therefore, an age variation in confession of faith also seems quite logical.

One of the reasons for this "trend" is because our catechism is so closely united with public profession. One is not expected to be ready for public confession until he has completely mastered the entire doctrine of our churches and this cannot be accomplished until he has completed his formal catechism. But just what does a person publicly confess, that he has now mastered the doctrines of our church or that he "believes on the Lord Jesus Christ" and him crucified? Confession should not depend upon how much knowledge a person has acquired, but simply on the operation of the Spirit in his heart. The catechism and confession should be entirely separate.

This separation then, does not mean that the learning of doctrine should be shunned or even minimized, but only that it should not be the basic requirement for public confession of faith. This then would also tend to destroy the idea of age groups. The Spirit does not work in the heart of any certain age group, but upon each person indi-

vidually. Confession will then become a desire of the heart and could take place at various ages.

If a set program of catechism were established, requiring all people to attend, with no chronological graduation date, the confession could be then made at any time with catechism continued even afterwards. This would also end the all too popular idea that catechism ends when public confession is made. Catechism is not only for children! No man is so holy that he no longer needs instruction in God's Word. Catechism is also the preaching of the Word, and no one would dare to say that he is no longer in need of the preaching — would he?

This separation of catechism and confession, therefore, would then tend to destroy the false concepts of catechism which have arisen and would also provide our covenant youth with the opportunity to publicly confess their faith, regardless of their age.

TRUTH vs. ERROR

the modernistic INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

REV. R. C. HARBACH

INTRODUCTION

The rationalistic school of Biblical criticism claims that in and after the Protestant Reformation the development of Biblical historical and literary studies was not possible because of the doctrinal intolerance of the Protestant Theologians. Romanism also hampered advance in this direction with its canons of the Council of Trent (1546), which prohibited not only other shades of interpretation, but other thinking. Both Romanism and Protestantism had contributed to intellectual stagnation. Protestants with their insistence on the doctrine of justification by faith, and their basic principle of an absolute predestinarian theology were really no better than the Romanists with their papistical condemnation of the Copernican theory of the universe (1616), and the Inquisition's denunciation of Galileo as "vehemently suspected of heresy," together with the suppression of his scientific findings. This unbearable condition in these two almost antipodal circles kept the churches for centuries in a bibliolatrous strait-jacket.

This attitude is still reflected against the investigator who stands in the line of the Reformation, regarding him as a serious hindrance to free thought, and a naive, surreptitious and half-baked would-be student as compared to the intelligent, logical, comprehensive and scholarly critic. This contention is not altogether without foundation in fact, as all too often the orthodox scholar has either ignored or underestimated the rationalistic principles of interpretation. Doing so, he errs, making it impossible for him to know the enemy position of "higher criticism," and consequently to understand the modified and subtler position of contemporary enemies. He is a poor soldier of Jesus Christ who neither knows nor cares where and how the enemies of Scripture truth are emplaced. While he withdraws to the snug (smug?) security of his "Maginot" (imagined invulnerability), the enemy out-flank by-passes and undermines his whole cause. He has made it easier for unbelief in its

innumerable forms to infiltrate the ranks of the church, and experiences a defeat without a battle. Truth is fallen in the street! Faith in the Word of God is lost; the Christian world and life view blown away by the confusing winds of philosophical inanities. Many a citadel may still stand, but the sentries are gone, the munitions plundered, the warriors dead,—a mere shell. The kernel of truth has been surrendered in the interest of conformity to the world. Taking the whole armor of God requires knowing your sword,—and your enemy!

At the outset we must distinguish between Biblical criticism and Biblical investigation. Critics of God's Word we are not; but investigators of it. Mere men cannot actually criticize His Word, but are the rather criticized by it, since it is "a discerner (critic) of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). We are commanded to investigate the Word, "Search the Scriptures ... for they are they which testify of Me." The purpose of such investigation is to apprehend the gift of eternal life (Jn. 5:39). Bible study, then, is not criticism; it is Biblical research.[1] The Christian researcher confesses, "I believe, therefore I investigate." The critic says, "I investigate in order to determine whether I shall want to believe." We shall examine Biblical criticism, how it operates, note its effort to determine whether the manuscripts of the Scriptures are historically objective and accurate, whether the various books were actually written by the alleged authors, whether the writings originated from the times they have been thought to have been originated, and to completely rationalize (humanize) the supernatural Christian faith. We do so under the following heads: A. Its History and Content, and B. Its Tendencies and Trends.

A. ITS HISTORY AND CONTENT

1. *Its Origins and Development*

The origin of this method of interpreting the Old Testament began with Astruc, a Paris physician to Louis XIV (1753), who assumed that Genesis was written by two different authors. He drew this conclusion from the intermittent use in the book of the two divine names, Elohim and Jehovah. Later, Eichhorn (1781), independently of Astruc, also thought there were two distinct manuscripts which composed Genesis, and supposed them to be distinguished not only by these names of God, but by two distinct, separate literary styles and vocabularies. This idea further advanced in De Wette, who added the contention that the Book of Deuteronomy was so different in style and vocabulary from the rest of the Pentateuch that it could not possibly have been written in the Pentateuchal period, in fact, no earlier than Josiah's reign, and so is a "pious fraud." Deuteronomy to this evolutionary critical school was too literarily advanced to be from the time of Moses.

In 1853, Hupfeld theorized that Genesis was composed in part by a priest-contributor, thus suggesting a third writer in addition to the aforementioned writer of the book. Astruc designated his writers as E and J, for the Elohistic writer and the Jehovistic writer, the former presumed to be the earlier,[2] dating, as was theorized, not from Moses' day, but near to the period of the Judges. Hupfeld designated this priestly section in the book P, and dated it as coming from the exile.

Graf, in 1856, claimed that the middle sections of the Pentateuch were written in the period of the exile. Wellhausen, agreeing with Kuenen and Riehm, adopted the hypothesis that all the Elohistic sections of the books of Moses came from the post-exilic period. This became the basis of the Graf-Wellhausen theory of German "higher" criticism.

Vater came up with the idea that the five books of Moses, and particularly Genesis, were constructed from some major documents not only, but also from many smaller, disconnected fragments. Not only did he conceive of such "writings" as E, J, P, etc., but also thought of E as not actually one sole contributor, but as at least four more of the same Elohistic school, so that we have E^1, E^2, E^3, and E^4 documents. Later scholars saw in the J sections not only the work of one single Jehovistic writer, but what they took to be evidence of multiple authorship, designated J^1, J^2, J^3, J^4. Other scholars also designated the P sections into different categories as, P, P^g, P^h, and P^s. All this hypothesis is ostensibly traceable through complicated fabrications running throughout the Pentateuch. This is the partitionist or fragmentary theory of Scripture. It was subsequently emphasized as the documentary theory. These fragments were pieced together, Chinese puzzle fashion, by a string of un-

known editors called redactors and designated R, which eventually came to represent a myriad of compilers of almost astronomical proportions . In this way, no part of the Bible has been left untouched by the rationalist critics, but has been so shredded that it is in that condition no longer recognizable, understandable or respectable.[3]

More recently, all these previous theories have given way to a certain extent to another which divides the books of the Old Testament into two basic parts, the one identified by the singular pronouns (thou, etc.), and the other by the plural pronouns (ye, etc.).

But does the employ of such grammatical construction point to two different documents (or authors, writers) of Scripture? May not the discourse, when in the plural, be directed to the entire organism of the church, and when using singular terminology be directed to the individual? There is no necessity in assuming double (multiple) authorship of the books of the Bible.

We may trace this dismembering of Scripture in the English 17th century naturalistic Deism, in French skepticism, in American 18th century rationalism, 19th century "scientific" liberalism, and 20th century pragmatic atheism. The destructive criticism, by whatever disguise it may wear, persists to this day, having never been entirel eradicated.

Still closer to our day some scholars have used the designations J, E, D (Deuteronomy code), and P, but by them do not intend the dusty Wellhausenianism. What is meant here is not early, middle, and later periods of religious development, but rather various circles of tradition which existed simultaneously, contemporaneously, each having its own particular emphasis. Thus none of these four bodies of tradition, although all ancient, are more ancient than the other. But this trend of the theory is not generally accepted.[4]

Next month, the higher critical method and result.

---

[1] *The Bible the Word of God.* F. Bettex, p. 215f. Jennings & Graham, N. Y., 1904.
[2] *The Interpreter's Bible,* Vol. I, pp. 127f, 134, Abingdon-Cokesbury, N. Y., 1952.
[3] *The Pulpit Commentary,* Genesis, ii-vii.
[4] *Revelation and the Bible,* Ed., C. F. H. Henry, p. 340, Baker, 1958.

NEWS

FROM FOR & ABOUT OUR CHURCHES

by MRS. C. H. WESTRA

Calls were recently extended to: Rev. R. Harbach by Randolph; Rev. G. Van Baren by Grand Haven; and Rev. G. Lubbers by our Forbes-Isabel churches. Rev. A. Mulder has declined the call from Creston.

° ° °

In Hope's bulletin we found the address of a new serviceman, which we would like to pass on to you, hoping that our young people at home are remembering the boys in service with cards and letters. Pvt. Donald Langerak, NG 27083651, Co. A, 5th Bn., 2nd Trng. Regt. Basic, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Here's a new address of one of First Church's servicemen: Pvt. Arthur Vander Meer, UE 55691420, Co. D, 7st Battle Group, 7th Inf., A.P.O. 162, New York, N. Y.

Arthur is now in Germany and expects to remain there for about eighteen month

° ° °

Rev. J. Kortering and family of Hull spent December 3 through 19 in South Dakota on a classical appointment.

° ° °

Joe Linhart made public confession of faith at Loveland on December 18th.

° ° °

Our Future Conventioneers for this month are as follows:

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Miersma of Edgerton.

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Van Den Top of Hope.

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. R. Schipper of First.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. James Dykstra of First.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. John Bodbyl of Hudsonville.

° ° °

Radio Hoyer, Julianaplein 21, Willemstad, Curacao, Netherlands West Indies — Each week the Program Committee of the Reformed Witness Hour mails a tape-recorded program to the above address. Just exactly where is this station? Young people, do you know? A geography book tells us that Curacao, one of the three Netherlands Windward Islands Group is situated in the Lesser Antilles, about 250 miles northeast of Caracas, Venezuela. The city of Willemstad is the seat of government. Oil Refining and the shipping of petroleum products are the only important industries of the Netherlands Antilles. Dutch is the official language. In addition, the natives speak English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Papiamento (a jargon made up of Dutch, English, Spanish, Portuguese, African, and Indian words). The area comprises 403 square miles and according to the 1951 census figures the population is 164,000. Indeed, a small part of our Lord's wonderful creation – only a "pinhead" on the map – yet the preaching of the truth of the Word of God goes forth and reaches these small islands by means of the radio! May God bless the broadcasts of our distinctively Reformed radio programs in these island – and wherever it is proclaimed!

Wedding Bells rang on December 12th for Mr. Max Moore and Miss Virginia Schwarz (Loveland), and on December 16th for Mr. Daryl Vander Kooi and Miss Maris Hager (Hudsonville). Congratulations and best wishes as together you walk the straight and narrow road that leads to Life Everlasting.

° ° °

Besides the Sunday School Christmas programs given in most of our churches, other Christmas programs included: the Hope Choral presentation on December 18th at Hope Church; a school program sponsored by the 9th grade of Adams St. School on December 22nd at First Church; the Men's Chorus Annual Christmas program on December 25th at First Church; a Christmas Singspiration sponsored by the Ladies' School Auxiliary on December 25th at South Holland.

° ° °

The baptism certificate of Mrs. Dennis Gleason was transferred to Hudsonville from Southwest Church. Mr. Stanley Dykstra was welcomed to Hope from the Jemison Christian Reformed Church. Miss M. Vermeulen was welcomed to Southeast from the American Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

° ° °

I'd like to end this month's column with a worth-while quotation from Lynden's bulletin:

"*That Ye May Attend Upon the Lord Without Distraction* (1 Cor. 7:35): Take heed of drowsiness in hearing. Drowsiness shows much irreverance. How lively are many when they are about the world, but in the worship of God drowsy, as if the devil had given them opium! A drowsy feeling here is very sinful. Are you not in prayer asking pardon of sin? Will the prisoner fall asleep when he is begging pardon? In the preaching of the Word, is not the bread of Life broken to you? And will a man fall asleep over his food? Which is worse – to *stay from* a sermon, or *sleep at* a sermon? – Thos. Watson."

REV. G. VAN BAREN
BOX 18
DOON, IOWA