



BEACON LIGHTS

for

**PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH**

February 1965

*Report of the Study Committee on
How to Improve Future Conventions*

*Parental Obligations with Respect to
Protestant Reformed
Secondary Education (2)*

PROF. H. C. HOEKSEMA



BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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Recently the undersigned was asked to serve as advisor to a study committee of the Federation Board. This committee's mandate was to determine ways in which the annual conventions of our young people might be improved. After the report was adopted by the Federation Board, the Board asked that it be published in *Beacon Lights* and the editor was requested to give his "opinion" of this report. However, since he is one of the authors of the report his opinions are embodied in the report itself. Therefore we would submit to our readers the following questions as a guide to reading the report. It is hoped that the questions will provoke some thought on the material contained in it.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that there is a problem? Is the problem correctly stated by the committee (cf. first paragraph of report)?
2. Do you think that the objectives as stated by the report are proper? Should there be more? Less? If you think there should be more or less, state why.
3. Are the committee's observations concerning the business meetings correct?
4. Does what the committee terms "edification through active discussion and participation" need improvement? Why or why not?
5. What part does the "social objective" play in our conventions?

The readers are invited to comment on the above or other questions. *Beacon Lights* has plenty of space in the column, Open Forum. Write and perhaps a beneficial discussion for all of our people, parents as well as young people, will result. All contributions will be published as soon as possible. All of our readers, of all ages are urged to send in their comments. Certainly the conventions of the young people are worth our attention.

R.D.D.

REPORT OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE ON HOW TO IMPROVE FUTURE CONVENTIONS

During the past six or seven conventions, a trend has begun to make itself evident. There seems to be a movement away from edifying

activities, and toward an increased interest on the social activities. This trend became especially apparent during the 1964 convention at Hope Church when of the more than one-hundred and fifty conventioners, only thirty-six felt the need to discuss matters pertinent to the kingdom of God in the discussion groups that had been set up. A further illustration of this trend is that in the last seven conventions, the committee could remember only two in which any group activities such as panel discussions, debates, etc., were a part of the program. Finally, this writer remembers of a time when his society offered as its special number to the convention, a panel discussion which was turned down by the host society; the reason given was that they could not fit it into the program. This therefore, is the problem which your committee has attempted to center upon, and we feel that it is the duty of the Federation Board to provide guidance in this matter. However, we do not favor a program which will take away the responsibilities and the initiative of the individual societies and their members. Therefore, we as committee feel that in order to correct this problem, the Federation Board, and the federation as a whole should co-operate in adopting and distributing among its members certain objectives for the conventions.

The committee suggests three basic objectives, the first dealing with the business meeting, the second, dealing with edification (this pertains in particular to activities other than the convention speeches), and the third deals with the social aspect of conventions. Now each will be looked into more thoroughly, and an objective should be stated for each.

First of all, then, the Business Meeting drew the committee's attention because this aspect of the convention concerns the welfare of the Federation. Here, all members of the federation are given the opportunity to decide, according to the rules of democracy, those things that pertain to the federation in the future. In the past we had experienced the problem of poor attendance; but, with the threat of with-holding travel expenses, this problem has been somewhat alleviated, at least in regard to the delegates. However, though we have attained a more proper attendance, we now experience the problem of poor participation; this is true both of the

delegates and of the visitors. Although a visitor has no right to vote, he does have the basic right to express his opinion on any given matter. And though much of the business may not be considered earthshaking, certainly all business is important, especially, the choice of which Bible Book to study for the next year, the matter concerning assessments, and, the election of the new officers. These may not be, at all times, major issues, but surely they are always important enough to demand discussion. For instance, in regard to the proposed Bible Book that the federation decides to study, surely all members of the federation should be prepared to study this book; and, if a society does not intend to do so, they should in all honesty give their reasons why not. In regard to nominations, do we offer a proper choice? Finally, as to assessments, should they remain the same, should they be lowered, should they be raised? Why? Certainly these matters demand discussion. As an objective regarding business meetings toward which all conventions should strive, let your committee offer you this: *All business matters should be considered serious enough to demand and encourage discussion by the delegates and by the visitors.* This implies that every conventioneer must know what is on the agenda and be prepared to give his reaction to any of the proposals, and then give it! In order to meet this requirement, the societies are urged to spend at least one after-recess program on the proposed agenda in discussion and comment. Furthermore, the Board feels that to help meet this requirement, it is essential that parents encourage their children in regard to these matters by showing interest and by attempting some sort of conversation and discussion. Parental concern and encouragement is essential if this and the following objectives are to succeed.

The second objective is also important, especially since this is the one that has been neglected in recent conventions; this one deals with edification. The importance of a second objective dealing with edification really need not be argued, surely its importance at a Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention is apparent to all. But, before getting too deeply involved at the moment in illustrating the problem, it is necessary to point out that we do, by means of our convention addresses, attain the possibility of some edification. However, your committee feels that we should distinguish between edification that is gained

passively through listening to a speech, and edification attained through active discussion and participation. It is the latter that especially needs to be improved. Surely, directed discussions by the young people concerning topics relevant to the kingdom of God should be a must at our conventions. Without such activities, conventions will indeed become nothing more than a form of entertainment that we could take or leave. Only when edifying and enlightening activities concerning that most interesting of all topics, our own glorious salvation can a conventioneer return home truly satisfied. This is not to say that social activities should be abolished — not at all — but only that we should have a correct amount of each.

The question might then be asked "but do we have time enough to include these extra activities?" In the first place, if we did not have time, it's about time we set aside some time. In the second place, your committee can provide a schedule which would permit at least eight hours of time in which such activities could be carried on — time that has not been utilized in the past.

Hopefully, the need of an objective dealing with edification is clearly seen by all. Now then, how can this objective be promoted, by what means? In answer to the above question there are many ways in which to do this, i.e. debates, panel discussions, speech contests, extemporaneous speeches, impromptu speeches, and reports are but a few that could be used. We, as committee, also discussed the possibility of assigning topics to volunteers a year ahead of time in which they cooperate with other young people in our churches, even with those outside their own society, in order to cross society boundaries. We feel that this has definite possibilities, but we are also aware of possible difficulties. Planning would be essential. As a definite objective, consider the following: *All conventions should attempt to promote, by means of debates, speeches, reports, etc., edifying activities and experiences among our Protestant Reformed Young People.*

In order for this to be brought to a successful conclusion a necessary prerequisite has to be the co-operation and enthusiasm of the young people. Here also the parents and societies are urged to lend a guiding hand.

Our final objective has to do with social activities. We as committee feel that the third important aspect of our conventions is to pro-

mote the making of new friends and acquaintances and to renew those made in past years. It is especially important to become familiar with those in our own denomination and to seek from these our future wives and husbands. Conventions do have a social objective, no one is about to deny it; but this objective must be promoted along with, not over and above the other objectives. The convention outing, the pancake breakfast, and the banquet are important social activities and the committee concedes this most heartily; nevertheless, they must be kept in their proper place. These must not become the primary goals of the conventions, as the committee fears has been the case in recent conventions. As an objective, therefore, consider this proposal: *All conventions should provide social activities such as a banquet, an outing, a breakfast, etc., in order to promote the mak-*

ing of new friends and acquaintances and further, to promote true Christian fellowship and enjoyment. If we keep in mind that this aspect is only one-third of the convention as a whole, then we will not be tempted to put too much emphasis on it.

Therefore, in conclusion, we have three objectives that should, if followed closely, help to improve our conventions. But these objectives in themselves are not enough; more important is the co-operation of all our societies and all the young people. All of us must support these objectives and promote them at all times in what ever way possible. Only by following these objectives will our conventions begin to reach their potential.

THE COMMITTEE

John Kalsbeek, Jr., Chairman
Robert Decker
Ed Langerak

FEATURE

PARENTAL OBLIGATIONS WITH RESPECT TO SECONDARY EDUCATION (2)

PROF. H. C. HOEKSEMA

The Importance of Secondary Education

What I have said earlier is true of all of the educational process. It may be applied along the entire gamut of education, from kindergarten to graduate school.

Our concern is at present with secondary, i.e., high school, education. This covers the years from the ninth or tenth through the twelfth grade. And indeed, this is a distinct area of education. It has its own peculiar characteristics and its own peculiar problems. All educators recognize this fact. We recognize it also. While we desire ideally an entire system of education, we want to give due attention to the distinct parts of that system. For that reason we have a separate board, and look forward to having a separate plant and a separate staff also.

The question is: what, in general, is the distinct position of the secondary school?

The answer is: the secondary school trains covenant youth in those extremely crucial years of adolescence. They are the years

when the pupil is no longer a child, but not yet an adult. Crucial these years are, because they are in a special sense *formative* years. Years they are when the pupil more and more begins to think for himself, to be concerned with the reasons for things, to be concerned with the truth behind the facts, to be concerned with principles. They are years when covenant youth very rapidly develops toward maturity in every respect, — physically, psychically, and spiritually. And because they are *formative* years in an emphatic sense, it is crucial that parents and educators take care that the seed of the covenant are properly *formed*, that is, instructed and trained.

From this point of view, there is something even more crucial, I dare say, about those high school years than about the grade school years. And as adherents of Protestant Reformed education, we do well to remember this.

Nor is a word of warning out of place in

this connection, as long as we do not have our own high school. The warning is: don't just let your high school children find their own way! Don't just let them grow wild, grow like weeds! Train them; guide them; counsel them; warn them of the pitfalls; keep a watchful eye for non-Reformed influences in their education; talk with them; help them!

But all this is not enough. We ought to have something positively Protestant Reformed for our Protestant Reformed youth in those crucial years of adolescence.

Concrete Implications of This Ideal

Now what do we need in order to realize the above ideal at the secondary level?

Of course, one of the first items we think about is the physical plant. We need land; we need a building; we need equipment. And this entails money, of course.

Nor would I ever deny this need. That physical plant is necessary; and the funds to build it are necessary.

But I want to emphasize tonight that *this is not the first item*. It is not first because it is not the most essential. You can very well have the plant and not have either a school or a Protestant Reformed school. You don't have to be able to count to ten to figure that one out. In fact, — although from a practical point of view this is not feasible today, — you can very well have a *school* without having the physical plant. It takes much more essential things to have a school, and especially a Protestant Reformed school.

Why do I emphasize this? Because when finally the money is there and the school is erected, I want to be sure that that school building is going to contain a definitely and thoroughly Protestant Reformed high school. And I emphasize it, too, because I believe that we must first have the essential things, and must first be devoted to the ideal and to the essential elements of the realization of that ideal. And when there is the clear conception of the ideal and the guarantee of the actual realization of that ideal, then our Protestant Reformed parents can and should and will give freely, from the heart, of their material goods in order that the necessary physical plant may also be erected to house a Protestant Reformed high school.

Well, what do we need in order to have a school?

First of all, we need *pupils*. And we have them: Protestant Reformed pupils! We surely

have a sufficient number of pupils, too, to have a high school of our own. We must view those pupils as a loan, a charge, a sacred trust from our covenant God. And we must never shirk our covenant duty with respect to them.

In the second place, we need *teachers*. They also are said to be available in sufficient numbers. I think I can believe this, in spite of the fact that our schools still face a shortage at the grade school level. But we need more than a number of teachers. We need more even than a number of teachers who are personally Protestant Reformed. We need *Protestant Reformed educators*, men and women able and willing to work, and to work hard, at developing educational materials at the secondary level from a thoroughly and positively Reformed, — and to me, that means Protestant Reformed, — point of view. And not only do we need these; but we need a *staff*. I mean we need a *staff* right now! That is a concrete suggestion I want to make. We ought to have a staff working long before a high school is opened. Call it a "shadow staff" if you will, just as they sometimes speak of a president-to-be having a "shadow cabinet" before he actually takes office. I am not concerned with what it would take to set up such a staff at present. I want to emphasize that we should have such a staff! Put them under contract or whatever is required. But put them to work!

And, thirdly, we need a curriculum and subject material. I mean that we need this not just formally. You could probably from a formal point of view set up a curriculum for a high school in a couple of hours. But again, I mean a *Protestant Reformed curriculum*. And I mean the latter not just in the sense that we should have some very general principles and a very broad outline. But we ought to have as much as possible the articulation and spelling out of these principles in every branch of learning at the secondary level.

My viewpoint, therefore, is that we must not just go blindly ahead with building plans and drives, etc., and trust that all the rest, — and that all the rest is the essentials, remember, — will come in due time.

No, when the school opens, these essentials must be there. And we have to provide them. We should be devoting primary attention to these essentials. These essentials should be

getting at least as much time and effort as the building and the finances. And I am confident that if we can show our people that these things are being done, then, "catching the vision," they will wholeheartedly go along with it and support it.

Parental Obligations

The above is, briefly, our obligation as Protestant Reformed parents.

By *parents* I mean all present and future users of such a high school, in the first place. And, in the broadest sense, I would include

all parents, even those who will not actually use the school, because they are organically concerned.

As surely as we are Protestant Reformed, so surely we will see this as our obligation. And in this area, we have the ability also from a practical point of view, — if only we have the will and the purpose of heart.

But, finally, I view this obligation not as a heavy and onerous task, a burden. I view it as a sacred trust from our covenant God.

And hence, I conclude by saying: Ours is the privilege!



FROM **Dort** TO **TODAY**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFORMED FAITH

Union and Separation

(16)

REV. HERMAN HANKO

With this article we shall conclude our discussion of the history of the Reformed faith in the Netherlands. It is about time to take our departure from our motherland and journey to the shores of our own country.

This rather abrupt departure from the Netherlands is not due to the fact that developments there during the last 100 years are not important. But the original intention of these articles we will try to preserve intact, namely to trace the history of the Reformed faith as it leads to our own Protestant Reformed Churches. And this requires that we leave the distant land of the Netherlands and concentrate upon developments within America.

Therefore, as we conclude the history of the Church in the Netherlands with this article, we do so somewhat sketchily.

In our last article we left the Churches of the Secession as they gradually consolidated their gains through reaching some agreements with the government and through solving their internal disputes. The two are not sepa-

rate. Reaching agreement with the government was, in part, the cause of dispute. (Cf. our last article where brief mention of this is made.) And these internal divisions were never completely healed with the result that there were several groups of Churches formed in the Netherlands as a result.

However, we must move to another separation in the State Church. We must remember that, on the one hand, the causes of the Secession were deep differences in doctrine. The State Church tolerated in her ecclesiastical house heretics who denied the very fundamentals of the truth: the doctrines of the trinity, the divinity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, etc. With the departure of the secessionists, things did not improve. While the secessionists had always acted as a sort of a brake on the development of heresy, the brake was gone. The State Church consequently rushed more speedily on the way of false doctrine.

On the other hand, not all the defenders of the Reformed faith left at the time of the

Secession. There were undoubtedly reasons for this, many different kinds of reasons, some good and some bad. But the fact was that the State Church still had Reformed men in it. As the denomination continued its way of error however, the situation became more and more intolerable for those who retained any orthodox convictions at all.

The result was another departure from the State Church. This migration took place in 1886, 52 years after the secession under De Cock, and was led by Dr. Abraham Kuyper. The issues were more pronounced this time; the movement, under the capable leadership of the gifted Kuyper, more organized.¹ The churches formed by Kuyper were called the "Dolerende Kerken", the "Aggrieved Churches."

It stands to reason that there would be close contact between the Churches of the Secession and the "Dolerende Kerken". They had common interests. They both had their background in the same denomination; they both were concerned about the preservation of the Reformed faith; they both had left the State Church because of doctrinal decay. It seemed rather natural therefore that some attempts to attain unity would be made between these two groups.

This was also done, and the two groups merged in 1892 under the name of "Gereformeerde Kerken" or "Reformed Churches". The moving influence behind the merger was Dr. Abraham Kuyper.

While indeed the union seemed a natural one and seemingly a happy marriage could be anticipated, this was really not the case. To a considerable extent the marriage was forced, and the two parties never got along very well. There were important differences of doctrine between them from the very beginning, and there was an abundance of strife constantly threatening the marriage.

We shall notice briefly these doctrinal differences, for they are important and they have had bearing on the history of the Reformed Churches in America.

Although there were many minor issues, the main issues were four in number.

The Churches of the Secession were chiefly

¹Dr. Kuyper was, in his early years, rather strongly committed to Modernism. He was, however, brought to strong convictions of the Reformed faith which he retained for many years. However, later in life, in part under the pressure of his participation in politics (he was prime minister of the Netherlands), he drifted into the errors of common grace, chiefly as expressed in the second and third points of 1924.

infralapsarian, maintained strongly justification in time, mediate regeneration and the promise of the covenant as the basis for the baptism of infants.

The Churches that were organized from the State Church under the leadership of Dr. Kuyper rather were committed to supralapsarianism, eternal justification, immediate regeneration and presupposed regeneration as the basis for infant baptism.

We shall make a few remarks about these points of difference so that they are somewhat understood. A thorough discussion would occupy many articles for many issues. Our young people are however, urged to pursue their individual study on these interesting and important questions.²

The question of supra and infra lapsarianism is basically a question of the order of decrees of the counsel of God. Infralapsarianism maintains that the decree of salvation in Christ *follows upon* the decree of the fall. Supralapsarianism maintains that the decree of the salvation of the elect in Christ *precedes* the decree of the fall. It is interesting to note that our Confessions are infralapsarian. This is especially true of the Canons of Dordt, although the supra position was argued on the Synod and was not condemned. Besides, although the issue was not as clearly defined at the time of the Reformation as in subsequent years, Calvin tended more strongly towards supralapsarianism than infra. This is admitted, e.g., by such a church historian as Schaff who while disagreeing with Calvin, writes: "Calvin was claimed by both schools. He must be classed rather with the Supralapsarians, like Beza, Gomarus, Twysse, and Emmons. He saw the inconsistency of exempting from the divine foreordination the most important event in history, which involved the whole race in ruin. . ." (Vol. VIII, p. 553.) Thus supralapsarianism has also strong support throughout history from the Calvin Reformation till today.³

The question of justification was also a question the involved the decrees of God. The emphasis of Kuyper and his followers was on the fact that God eternally justifies

²Additional material on these various points of doctrine can be found in appropriate chapters in Rev. H. Hoeksema's "Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism."

³Our Protestant Reformed Churches have no definite stand on either supra or infralapsarianism other than the position of our Confessions. Nevertheless, Rev. Hoeksema has always maintained his preference for supralapsarianism in that it is more Scripturally correct. Cf. Col. 1:15-19 and Prov. 8:22-31. With this I agree.

His people in Christ so that in His counsel the elect stand before God as an eternally righteous people. This question is closely connected with the question of supra and infralapsarianism. Undoubtedly, eternal justification is taught in Scripture.

The question of mediate or immediate regeneration is a question of whether God affects the work of regeneration in the hearts of His elect people *through the means of the preaching of the Word* (mediate regeneration) or without the means of the preaching of the Word, i.e., directly through the operation of the Spirit (immediate regeneration). Although this is an interesting and important question, it is sufficient for us to point out that the very first implanting of the life of Christ in the hearts of the elect as the first seed of the new life takes place directly and without the mediacy of the preaching of the gospel. The ability to hear the gospel and appropriate its truth presupposes the life of Christ already present. The growth of the new man of regeneration, dependent upon the food of the gospel, presupposes that that new man is already created.

The question of the basis for the baptism of infants is something else. We shall have opportunity to discuss this again in some future article. The view of Kuyper, that the baptism of infants rests upon the basis of presupposed regeneration, is wrong. His idea was that we must presuppose that all children born of believing parents are regenerated, and that therefore, on this presupposition we must baptize them. But this rests the truth of infant baptism upon a figment of the imagination which is obviously contrary to Scripture. The Churches of the Secession rather maintained that the basis for the baptism of infants is the promise of the covenant, namely that God will establish His covenant in the lines of continued generations. This is surely correct. Our Churches maintained this in the fury and strife of the controversy of 1953 and preceding years. Yet we must remember that these same Churches of the Secession later on came to the position that this promise of the covenant was for all that were baptized and was therefore also conditional. This is incorrect.

These differences in doctrine made the marriage a forced one and an unhappy union. The Secession Churches were known as the A-Churches; the Churches that left the State Church with Kuyper were called the B-

Churches. And although these churches often existed side by side, and formally belonged to the same denomination, ministers from one group were not allowed to preach for the other group. Nor would a member of a strong A-Church be seen for the life of him in a B-Church; and vice versa. The dispute between these opposing views was loud and long.⁴

A desperate effort was made to bring greater unity and harmony within the Reformed Church and remove these differences. The climax of this effort was reached at the Synod of Utrecht in 1905 where the Church adopted certain decisions that have become known as the "Conclusions of Utrecht". These decisions may be summarized as follows:

1. Our creedal standards are infralapsarian, but the Synod of Dort did not bar supralapsarianism. Accusations of heresy must be avoided, in preaching and catechetical instruction the Standards must be followed, and the deep problems involved in the disputes must not be obtruded upon the Church.

2. Justification from eternity is not mentioned in the Standards, but they and Scripture know of an objective justification sealed by Christ's resurrection next to justification by faith. Neither the eternal suretyship of Christ for His elect nor the demand of faith for justification in the court of conscience may be slighted.

3. Regeneration may properly be qualified as immediate in the sense that it is not wrought by the Word or the sacrament as such but by the omnipotent operation of the Holy Spirit. But these two are not to be separated since the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe. The Standards are silent on the manner in which regeneration is wrought in infants, and God's Word affords no basis for an answer to the question whether regeneration occurs also apart from preaching, particularly in the pagan world.

4. Covenant children are to be viewed as regenerate until the contrary appears. Their baptism, however, is not based on their regeneration but on God's command

⁴In a way, this was a splendid time to live — splendid at least from the point of view that these doctrinal questions were not only discussed in religious periodicals, but among the laymen. The common members of the Church took a real interest in them. Sad to say, today the lay people of the Church have lost their interest in doctrinal matters and often do not even know what these doctrines are all about, much less being interested in discussing and debating them.

and promise. Since not all who are of Israel are Israel, preachers must exhort to serious self-examination, since only they who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Nevertheless baptism signifies and seals the gifts of justification and renewal to our children, Elect infants the Holy Spirit regenerates as He pleases before, during, or after their baptism.⁵

In a sense these decisions were compromise decisions trying to hold on to both sides without offending either. Nor do they really get to the heart of the dispute. Nevertheless, in general, these Conclusions more strongly supported the historically Reformed position than anything else.

After these conclusions were adopted, every effort was made to squelch further debate.

But the dispute would not lie down and die.

In 1942 the B-Churches felt themselves strong enough to insist that the Conclusions of Utrecht had actually been in their favor. They interpreted these Conclusions to mean that their views were sustained by that Synod and the views of Kuyper and his followers condemned. Except with respect to point 4, in which point there is justification for their contention, this insistence required considerable imagination stretching and word twisting. But a struggle followed in which many ministers and consistories were unceremoniously and even improperly deposed from office. The result was the formation of the so-called "Liberated Churches" in the Netherlands under the leadership of Dr. K. Schilder who died a few years ago. This split produced two Reformed Churches in the Netherlands which exist till today. It was with the Liberated Churches that our Protestant Reformed Churches have had some contact.

An interesting footnote to this history may not be amiss. In recent issues of the Church papers in the Netherlands, there is evidence of the fact that the Liberated Churches stand on the brink of another split. One writer baldly states: "In the Netherlands another church split is at hand. In fact, it is already in the making. One must come to this sad conclusion when he has followed the recent happenings at the general synod of the Liberated Churches in Rotterdam-Delfshaven . . ."

⁵Quoted from Dr. H. Kromminga's book: "The Christian Reformed Tradition", pp. 128 and 129.

⁶Cf. my article in the Feb. 1 issue of "The Standard Bearer".

Although the issues are not yet clearly before me, it seems that the question is one of returning to (or at least seeking contact with) the Reformed Churches from which the Liberated split in 1942. Some want to have this contact; others do not. But more basically, the issue is evidently one of the true and the false church – an issue that has somewhat plagued the Liberated Churches from the beginning of their history. And the writer of the above article emphatically asserts that the issues can be traced back very clearly to the basic questions of the Secession and the split of the "Dolerende Kerken" under Dr. Kuyper.⁶

A few conclusions are in order.

In the first place, through reformation and secession the truth of God's Word was preserved in the Reformed Churches. Not the State Church any longer, but the Reformed Churches carried on the heritage of the Reformation.

Secondly, the defense of the truth produced many important developments in doctrine. Such truths as the doctrine of the covenant, of sovereign salvation, of infant baptism, were clarified and developed. This is always the fruit of controversy and Reformation. For God uses the struggles of the Church to produce greater insight into the truth of His Word. The history which we recorded is no exception.

Thirdly, the real stream of Reformed thought however soon left the Netherlands and came to America. This is not to say that there are not still today those in the Netherlands who are interested in maintaining the truth. But it is to say (and it must be said emphatically) that the denominations in the Netherlands which were once the main line of defense against error are, to a greater or lesser degree, no longer so.

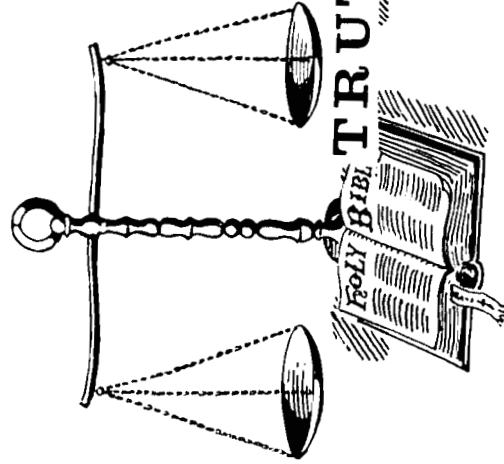
This is conclusively shown by recent history. The Liberated Churches have succumbed to the errors of a general and conditional promise – a view that was implicit in their stand from the time of the Secession onward; a view that was condemned by our own Churches in 1953; a view which is nothing but another way to introduce Arminianism into the Church by bringing it into the covenant.

The Reformed Churches on the other hand, have grown progressively worse with the passing of time. Barthianism has had tremendous influence. Evolutionism has a firm

and seemingly unbreakable grip on the Universities. Modernism has made extensive inroads into the preaching and into the teaching in the Universities and Seminaries. Worldliness and the decay of spiritual life have sapped the energies of the denomination.

And more vocal and persistent pleas are being made to join the World Council of Churches.

But God has brought over the line of the Church to these shores. With these Churches we continue our discussion.



TRUTH VS. ERROR

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

Introductory

(continued)

The doctrine of election is a distinguishing truth. The preaching of the sovereignty of God in foreordaining the eternal destiny of angels, men and the whole realm of nature, has the effect of winnowing and separating the chaff from the wheat. The effect of such preaching will then either be "He that is of God heareth God's word" or "ye hear them not because ye are not of God" (Jn. 8:47). We think of many in Fundamentalistic circles who do not believe this truth, some of them out of ignorance. They have never been exposed to nor instructed in the doctrine. Others do not believe it, in fact, oppose it, not in ignorance, but by choice and determined purpose. The former, more than the

latter, are more apt to receive a truth once they see that it is plainly taught in Scripture, even though it is not what they have been used to, nor in keeping with what they have always regarded as "sound reason." The former more than the latter will receive what is revealed to be Scripture truth. They will believe it, even if not another soul in the world will believe it. The unregenerate natural mind will not receive the truth of predestination, and in that connection, the following may fairly be applied to them. "They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (Jn. 4:5,6).

The modern evangelist with his inclusivist

approach, his compromising message, and bombastic delivery calculated to flatter the majority of his auditors, may gain followers for the liberal Protestant churches, or for the liberal Roman Catholic churches. For his and their Pelagianism are practically identical. But let a true minister of the Gospel, an advocate of election preaching, faithfully expound this doctrine, and he will discover that this is the preaching which separates the sheep from the goats. It had this effect when Jesus proclaimed this truth. For when He preached that "no man can come unto Me, except the Father . . . draw him" (Jn. 6:44), "many . . . when they had heard this, said, 'This is an hard saying! . . . From that time they went back and walked no more with him'" (6:60, 66). When He had preached that "many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet . . . none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian," His hearers were filled with wrath at such preaching, and attempted to murder Him by forcing Him over a precipice. The point we are endeavoring to make here is that although not all who profess to be "Calvinists" or "Reformed" in theology can be said to manifest in their conduct the life of regeneration, yet it is also true that they who continue to oppose or refuse the truth of predestination are not entitled to the name of Christian.

This is also one of the most neglected doctrines, not because it has no prominent place in the Scripture; the opposite is the fact. But there are "evangelicals" and "Bible believers," as they like to be known, who give this truth a wide berth, regard it with suspicion, and suppose it to be utterly inconsistent with "missionary zeal." This may be due to their inadequate training. The majority of seminaries do not teach it, the "Bible schools" never did, and few have ever appreciated its fundamental importance. Others, of the liberal camp, and their brain-washed following, detest the preaching which advances the glory of God and abases the pride of man. Many more, however, drop this truth, certainly not in the interest of being right, but in being popular. They know it, intellectually assent to it, or shrug it off with, "Why that's just a rehashing of the Canons of Dort!" They make no use of the truth, and do nothing to expound or spread it. They have one ear to the ground and one finger in the air. They know current opinion, even better than they know Scripture, and, accordingly, prefer to

give the people what they think they want. Still, neither ignorance, prejudice nor enmity shall ever prevail against this truth, or diminish its weightiness.

2. *Its Origin*

Broadly speaking, the truth before us is the doctrine of predestination, a more comprehensive term than election, for the former is in two parts, its positive branch being election itself, and its negative branch being reprobation. There is no election without reprobation, notwithstanding certain Primitive Baptists and Plymouth Brethren to the contrary. They put it this way: "An election of some to life does not imply an election of some to death," (The Bible Doctrine of Election, T. P. Simmons, Bapt. Bible & Bk. Hse, Ashland, Ky., p. 54). This is, for one thing, somewhat misleading. For election is unto *salvation*, never unto death. But election implies reprobation, as a choice suggests a refusal. In the eternal counsel of God, the Lord ordains some to eternal life (Ac. 13:48), and others He ordains to eternal condemnation (Jude 4). Further proof of this we have in Psalm 78, "He *refused* the tabernacle of Joseph, and *chose not* the tribe of Ephraim: but *chose* the tribe of Judah" (vv. 66, 67).

According to this doctrine, as well expressed in the Westminster Confession, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." (1 Tim. 5:21; Mt. 25:41; Ro. 9:22f; Eph. 1:5f; Prov. 16:4). This decree of God originated in His own sovereign will. There is no principle or power outside of God to rule Him. There is no law or cause to which He is subject, save His own will. There is no determining or moving power outside the will of God. In keeping with this truth, the elect have been "predestinated according to the (eternal) purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11).

This decree of God will be found to reveal especially two of the divine attributes. The decree itself, as seen above, is two-fold: it is unto life and unto death. It also has a two-fold effect: that of salvation, and that of condemnation. So the decree of God manifests His grace to some, and His justice to others. God decrees the salvation of the elect to the praise of the glory of His grace. God

ordains the condemnation of the reprobate for the glory of His justice. The latter is God's severity, which must never be perverted to cruelty. God is gracious; but that is not all He is. He is also just. God is characterized not by goodness alone, nor by severity alone, but by both. His attributes are inseparable. Abstract them and God is made to look monstrous. See all the facets of His being and it will be impossible to see in Him anything of injustice.

The purpose of God's decree is His own glory. It is not only the chief end of man, but the ultimate end which God has in mind. There is no higher end or purpose than the glory of God. When we say that this is the chief end of God and man, we do not mean that there are other, but subordinate, ends which God may have, or for which man may strive. There is only this one sole end. Some theologians think of certain lesser ends, such as, the earning of temporal support; the acquisition of knowledge (neither of which necessarily glorify God); the gratification of lawful tastes (but what are lawful tastes? only those which glorify God!); and the furtherance of the welfare of society (but what is the welfare of society? only that which glorifies God!). Therefore, we understand the expression "chief end" to mean "exclusive end," or as the metrical psalter has it, our "chief and only good." "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Pro. 16:4), for His own end. For from Him and through Him and unto Him are all things (Ro. 11:36). Even the good of God's people is not a secondary end, but their good is a true good when it is to the glory of God.

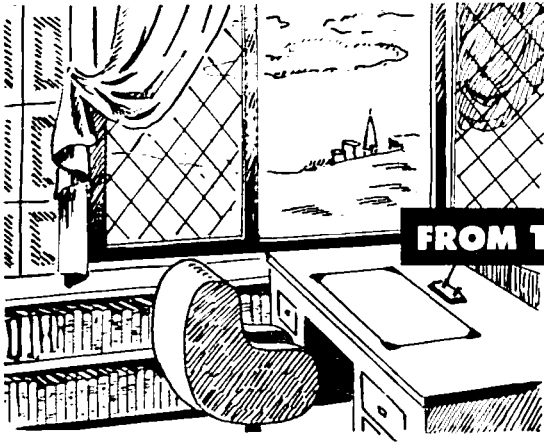
Election is the great fountain out of which flows every saving good. The source of that fountain is the sovereign will of the triune God. We say "triune God," because all three persons of the trinity are involved. They are of the same one divine essence, and have but one will. "He (the triune God) is in *one* mind, and who can turn Him? and whatsoever His soul desireth (wills) even that He doeth!" (Job 23:13). What God wills to do, He does do. The will of God is not a mere part of His divine nature, nor a mere objective effect of His determination, but "the will of God is the living God Himself willing."

What, then, we may say of God's will, we may say also of divine election. That is, God's will is immutable. So is election. God never changes His will, although He does will

change. His will is one, and none can divert Him from it. With Him, in His being, there is no variation, nor shadow cast by turning (Jas. 1:17). His will is eternal, for the Word speaks of "His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ" (Eph. 3:11). That His will and purpose are practically synonymous is plain from Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, where to be predestinated according to the good pleasure of His *will* is again expressed in these words, "being predestinated according to the *purpose* of Him." Also when we read of the revealing of His *will* according to His good pleasure which He has *purposed* in Himself, this is not fundamentally different from preordaining according to the *purpose* of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own *will*.

God's will is the only absolutely free will, sovereignly free. That must be quite evident from the passage just referred to, in Ephesians 1. God's will is absolutely free in the sphere of nature. He was not bound to create. He could do so, or not, as He chose. Since He chose to create, He was perfectly free to do so whenever He pleased, earlier or later than He did. But since what God did do was the very best of all possibilities, then there was no other time to create than when He did. He certainly may have made the earth smaller or larger than it is. That He made it the size it is, was only because that was the best. No other determination in this regard could have been better. But in making His determinations He was influenced by no considerations outside of Himself. That God should have made the whole universal order "very good," and then should have ordained sin to come into the world, was not only all settled by God's decree, but was also for the best of things. He could have made a world without sin, and it is difficult, if not impossible, for carnal eye to see that any other kind of world could possibly be for the best. But the reason why God created and then ordered sin into the world is only to be ascribed to His own indisputable will. Then divine election is sovereign and free. None was His counsellor (Rom. 11:34) to advise Him how to form His purpose according to election (9:11). In His determinate counsel and foreknowledge He decreed in absolute sovereignty. "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy! and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion!" (9:15). It all emerges from God's eternal good pleasure (Eph. 1:4, 5, 9, 11).

(To be continued, D.V.)



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

Daniel 1:8 *"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. . . ."*

DARE TO BE A DANIEL?

What an extremely sad occasion it was! Thousands of Judah were carried from their homes and friends to be taken to a foreign land. Sorrow must have filled their hearts. That old home might never be seen again! That familiar plot of ground in which work-worn hands had toiled for many years, was rudely taken from them. Friends, with whom they lived for their lifetimes, were separated — never to see each other again.

But, for the God-fearing Jew, the worst was to be taken from the land of promise and from the temple of God at Jerusalem. The temple was the place where worship and thanksgiving were offered to Jehovah. It was the sign of His presence. The ark was there with its mercy-seat covering the law of God. The temple was the place of blessings; of hope; of praise. To be separated from that was to be torn from the very place of God's favor. No wonder the faithful Jew grieved; no wonder he hung his harp upon a willow and refused the request of his rude captors to sing Zion's songs. How could he sing in separation from the favor of God? How could he sing with that awareness of heart that the very transgression of Judah culminated in this captivity because of the wrath of God?

Daniel and his three friends were among the captives taken from Judah. But they were

not treated as ordinary captives. Taken to the king's palace, they were taught all the learning of the Chaldeans. For the king had commanded that choice Jews, men well favored and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, would be taken and prepared to stand in his presence. Certainly their "lot" appeared to be a good one. The king commanded that they would be fed with the best of the land, of the meat of the king's table. For three years they would be taught in the language and knowledge of the Chaldeans. Who could complain about such "captivity?" One would appear to be the fool to endanger this "captivity" in any way. Why not enjoy one's self and make the best of the present opportunities?

But Daniel refused to defile himself. He remained faithful without fear of consequences. His name had already been changed to "Beltshazzar." Though we read nothing of Daniel's reaction to this, it could hardly have pleased this servant of the Lord. The name is a derivative of "Bel" the Chaldean god. That was a rather drastic change from his name Daniel (meaning: God will judge).

But Daniel refuses the food set before him. Politely he requests the eunuch to keep it from him. For Daniel had purposed in his

heart not to defile himself. What a strange young man, was he not? We might even chide Daniel for his rashness. Admittedly, there might be some irregularities according to the Jewish law in the preparation of the food set before Daniel. But after all, it was only food. To refuse the will of the king in such an apparently minor matter not only endangered Daniel's position but also his very life. Was it even right to endanger a potential influential position in the court of the king for a piece of meat? Surely, under the circumstances, God will also excuse Daniel and the three friends from such strict observance of His law.

But such reasoning would be false. We must understand first of all the intent of the king. He was not simply kindly providing education for poor boys who could not otherwise afford it. Rather, his intention was to separate these captives from their old connections and make of them Chaldeans. It was his very intent to lead them from the worship of the living God, from the laws of God as revealed to Moses, and make them into his own image. That becomes so very plain in his changing of the names of Daniel and his three friends. Why were not the old names acceptable? Simply because the young men who are being trained in the king's palace are henceforth to regard themselves as Chaldeans. They are to worship "Bel", no more the living God. This Daniel refused to do.

In that light one can understand why Daniel refused the king's meat and wine. He must show that he can not be submissive to the intent of the king and forget the promise of God. Much of the food from the king's table was doubtlessly "unclean". It would be meat that the Israelite was forbidden to eat. Besides, it was customary to serve food first offered in sacrifice to the idols of the Chaldeans. Surely that was true for all the meat of "the king's table." Refusal to partake of all this meant that Daniel, by God's grace, would maintain the law of God, though he was in a strange land. He indicated that he looked yet for the fulfillment of promise, for the coming of Christ — though humanly speaking that promise appeared impossible of fulfillment since the captivity. As did Moses of old, Daniel refused to be called the king's "son", choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Dare to be a Daniel? Dare to stand alone?

In many ways, our situation is similar to that in which Daniel found himself. We believe that our home-land is heaven — but we are presently separated from that promised land. Now we live on the earth. And every attempt is being made to have us become established here. And the drive to have us be more concerned with the earthly rather than the heavenly, is directed primarily towards the youth. There is the emphasis upon material things, earthly comforts. The goal of man is so very plainly set forth in his advertising. The attempt is made to have us desire all the new products which are on the market. We must become educated, we must work diligently — in order to obtain wealth, and that which wealth can buy. Union and fellowship with the world is encouraged, encouraged even by leaders within the church-world of our day.

One is urged to imitate the present world. Its type of dress must be that which we begin to wear too. A Beatle-mania becomes seen even among Christian young people. The current hit-tunes are hummed and sung. Movie attendance (whether in the theatre or on the home television screen) appears to become an acceptable form of entertainment. We live on the earth, don't we? Is there anything wrong with enjoying life? Everyone else does.

A vision arises in one's mind. Daniel sits about the table of the king. He stuffs his mouth with the king's defiled meat. The king's wine spills upon the cloth as he hastily grabs for more of that meat. His gay laughter joins that of all his companions as they enjoy their captivity. Let the old fogs hang their harps on the willows and mourn; youth must have its pleasure.

But what a horrible vision! How contrary to reality — as far as Daniel was concerned. How impossible, then, for us to "go along." The age is one of rapidly declining morality; spirituality, true spirituality, seems unknown anymore. But yet there are youthful Daniels. By God's grace these continue to renounce this world, though of necessity they live here for a time. Yet there are those (though how few) who would face the wrath of kings, the laughter of "friends", the mockery of the world, persecution and even death — for they will not be called "sons" of the world. They are sons of God for Jesus' sake. God so continues to preserve His Church from generation to generation. Dare to be a Daniel?

Open Forum

Dear Mr. H. W. Kuiper:

In answer to your last letter to me, I wish to submit the following.

First, concerning my objection to your use of the term, "group," you write: "What you say here is very inaccurate. The fact is that I spoke of group, not as identical with the Christian Reformed Church, but particularly the group that maintains the present day Christian High Schools (see my first answer to Mr. Thys Feenstra, wherein this very identification is made *as such!*—April issue, p. 6-7)."

However, I cannot harmonize this with your writings. In the February issue of Beacon Lights, Page 1, you speak of "group" as referring to the Christian Reformed Church. It is true that you begin that paragraph with a reference to the present day Christian high school (please note that you place the word "Christian" in quotation marks; do you mean that these schools are not Christian? I cannot endorse this position). But, later in the paragraph you speak of churches as a group, and you are referring to the Christian Reformed Church. Immediately upon that statement you speak of a group which claims the title of one whom they don't know, even Christ. And it seems to me that our readers have every right to assume that you are referring to the Christian Reformed Church when you use the term, "group," here. In the April issue of Beacon Lights, in your answer to T. Feenstra, you write, and I quote: "Confessionally' here means that the group referred to has, *officially as an institute*, expressed in and as its *credo*, i.e. its confessions, doctrines which are contrary to the Word of God." Brother, this group which has adopted doctrines that are contrary to the Word of God, must be the Christian Reformed Church. It is that "group" that has adopted these heresies. Hence, I cannot see any inaccuracy on my part. If you did not mean the Christian Reformed Church but particularly the group that maintains the present day Christian High Schools, then you certainly did not express yourself very clearly. Or, do you mean that we may not expect too much from the group that maintains the present day Christian High Schools because that group is the Christian

Reformed Church?

Secondly, you endorse my definition of "institute." May I conclude this from what you write, and I quote: "I follow your definition of the institute, and the five-fold manifestation. But, where does the consideration of its confession enter? The ministry of the word and its official confession are not identical, are they?" Do you believe that Christ is blessing His people in the Christian Reformed Church through this institute, which includes the preaching of the Word? You speak of sheep in that church, and write that they are fed within the institute. This must mean that they are fed, within the institute, through the preaching. So, Christ is blessing His sheep in the Christian Reformed Church through the preaching of the Word. It is for this reason that we cannot call the Christian Reformed Church the false church, and it is also for this reason why we may not deny that church the title to the name of Christ.

Thirdly, however, you write consistently in your writings that Christ does not bless the INSTITUTE of the Christian Reformed Church. I have capitalized the word "institute" because you have done so. Now, brother, I have attempted to understand your position. I believe it is your position that Christ does bless His sheep within the institute (He is surely blessing them when He feeds them), but He does not bless that INSTITUTE. I assume that you mean that the Christian Reformed Church, having adopted the heresy of the Three Points, if it repent not, is doomed to extinction as a church of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the history of the Church teaches us that churches do not repent. That is and always has been my position. Does this mean, however, that the Christian Reformed Church, as institute and Confessionally, is a group not entitled to the name of Christ and that it is therefore wholly false? This position is impossible. You write, and I quote: "For you evidently believe that the possibility exists for the Christian Reformed Church to utterly deny Christ in their "Three Points" and yet confess Him in truth elsewhere in their doctrine." Indeed, that is exactly my position. And I wish that it were or be also your position. Institutionally and confessionally, the Christian Reformed Church maintains the

Three Points plus the Reformed Confessions. That is simply their stand. O, I know, and we all agree, that the Three Points are a denial of the entire truth of the Word of God. Those Three Points surely affect every phase of the truth of Scripture. None among us denies that. None among us maintains that the Christian Reformed Church is confessionally pure. To teach that salvation is wholly of God and then to teach that the Lord offers His salvation to all is, strictly speaking, impossible. Of course it is! And, ultimately, the Christian Reformed Church will never continue to maintain both. And this for the simple reason that the one excludes the other. But it is simply a fact that both are maintained today in that church. They have, as yet, a "double-track-theology." Historically, this is always the case. When a church departs from the truth, such departure is always vital. But does this mean that such a church becomes, institutionally and confessionally, immediately false? This goes through a process of time. For a while they seek to maintain both tracks. But this attempt is doomed to failure, and this for the simple reason that the Lord will not be mocked. That is my position, and I do not hesitate to say that that is generally the position of our churches.

Fourthly, in your letter you write that I consider it strange that you, always having held me in high esteem, expose my writing for what it is. I do not understand how you dared to write this. Brother, you may criticize me at will. But this I consider strange that you, always having held me in high esteem, should immediately, upon my first letter to you, accuse me of poisoning your pen, and that you draw a mock caricature of me, advising our young people that, when dealing with me, they must not fail to go to earth's end.

And this brings me to my final remark. Brother, do you believe that I tried to poison your pen. I earnestly tried to purify it (opposite of "poison"), or, to correct it. I do not care to have our young people believe that the Christian Reformed Church is, as institute and confessionally, not entitled to the name of Christ. And, do you believe that I am such a person that our young people, when dealing with me, must not fail to go to earth's end? It may very well be that the staff of Beacon Lights may decide that this discussion has gone far enough. But, as long as you maintain these charges against me,

I assure you that these are my concluding remarks as far as this discussion is concerned. And, incidentally, where have I accused you of heresy?

Fraternally,
Rev. H. Veldman

MAINTAINING CONFESSIONS?

Dear Reverend Veldman:

Your reply to undersigned's "*As To Confessions*" (Dec. 1964 issue) has been received and should appear earlier in this issue. It is made manifest in this answer why you differ with me on the matter at hand. I believe that the *crux* of this variance is found in your affirmations found in your third point, to which I will address myself presently.

Concerning your first section, however, your statement that I referred to the Christian Reformed Church as a group in itself may not be inaccurate. Allow me to yield the palm. That was not, however, your thrust. Your thrust was that I spoke of them "simply as a group", and that in distinction from "as Church". The point is, then, that I have never maintained that we must call them a "group" and not "Church". That is plainly foreign to all that I have written. I ask again: to what purpose, to establish what, would this be done? I have never raised the point. And I have repeatedly referred to them as "Church". I do not follow your objection.

Concerning your second section, I point out that in the quote of my writing which you set forth here, there is a question concerning the confession of the institute. *That*, after all, is the pivotal point of this whole discussion and we will come to that in your third point. Yes, you may conclude that I endorse your definition of institute, in this case the Christian Reformed Churches. And concerning your following remarks in this section, you understand well enough that I have agreed that whenever and wherever God's people are fed, it is accomplished by or through the preaching of the Word. Such can be accomplished in no other way, while it is the privilege of the saint to have these things unhindered. But you will not now stay with my point. In the sphere of the Christian Reformed Church, it takes a minister who acts as a renegade to the Christian Reformed confessions to preach the gospel of salvation in truth! You may not like this, nor believe

it, but I invite you to disprove it. And why you then continue to write, using the above truth as basis (i.e. God feeds his sheep through the preaching of the Word), that therefore we cannot call the Christian Reformed Church the "false church" is utterly beyond my comprehension. You are set to prove something to me, remember! And so now I shall challenge you to show where, even in one instance, I have so denominated them. Away with your inferences!

Concerning your third section, I mentioned earlier that I believed that the *crux* of variance in this discussion is touched. Had I known that your position as set forth in this section of your answer was as it is, this discussion could have ended much earlier. I have long since given mine and you have commented against it. Allow me to reflect on yours.

First, I certainly agree with you that *it is the stand* of the Christian Reformed Church that they maintain both the three points and the Three Forms. That is a subjective *claim* which they have made from 1924 to the present.

Secondly, I certainly do agree with the following of your remarks:

1. "O, I know, and we all agree, that the Three Points are a denial of the entire truth of the Word of God."

2. "Those Three Points surely affect every phase of the truth of Scripture."

3. "To teach that salvation is wholly of God and then to teach that the Lord offers His salvation to all is, strictly speaking, impossible."

4. Further, you say that the "one excludes the other."

Thirdly, I am unable to comprehend your statement which follows the above. Here you do not say that "it is their *stand* that they maintain. . ."; rather, you state: "But it is simply a fact that both are maintained today in that church." Do you really mean this? Let me say that I disagree vehemently with what you assert here! *Claiming* to maintain and *actually* maintaining are two entirely different matters. And I do not believe that the Christian Reformed Church *maintains* the Three Forms! I believe, as I stated previously, that they have rather corrupted and polluted them by imposing a god as set forth in the Three Points upon them. Do not believe, Reverend, that God can look at the banner of the Christian Reformed Church and con-

sider that it confesses Him. when that very banner proclaims to the whole world that *man*, not God, is God!

Further, I do not believe that it is true that your position, as you stated, "is generally the position of our churches."

Brother Veldman, I maintain no charges against you. You know well enough how I used the phrase "poison the pen", namely that of injecting into my writings concepts foreign to what they carried in themselves. The matter of going to "earth's end" appeared to me as a consequence of my blunder of only giving one source. I maintain no charges, but I heart and soul disagree with your last expressed concept of the maintaining of their confession by the Christian Reformed Churches.

I used the term "heresy" as synonymous with error, and interchangeably with it. Or, as Webster has it: "an unorthodox doctrine or opinion, especially in religion." I believe that it was generally so taken that you thus characterized my position.

In conclusion, allow me to say that many of your remarks which I have quoted here and with which I agree concerning their confession, are in reality so many fundamental underscorings to the command which we have received of God to teach our youth, also our High School-aged youth, in accord with His Word. Which is what I was emphasizing from the beginning.

Fraternally in the Lord,
H. W. Kuiper

. . . all true religion is God-centered. And this is true only of that religion that has its ultimate source in God's election. For it alone confesses that God is all, and that man is absolutely nothing. There remains nothing for man to boast. All his own goodness, goodwill, works, religion, piety, is cast into the dust as having no value before God. For we are saved according as we are chosen. And we are chosen, not because of any goodness or willingness on our part, but solely because it pleased God to distinguish us, and only by grace. God is all! We bring nothing to Him. He gives all to us. We have nothing to boast. Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord!

Rev. H. Hoeksema

BOOK OF GENESIS

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON THE

PROF. H. C. HOEKSEMA

Genesis 33

Jacob and Esau Meet and Go Their Separate Ways

1. *The Meeting With Esau*, vss. 1-15.

A. The Parties Who Meet.

1. Who was Esau?

a. What had become of Esau while Jacob was with Laban?

b. What had been the last manifestation of Esau prior to Jacob's departure for Padan-Aram? cf. 27:41, ff.

c. Had Esau changed fundamentally during this time?

2. Who is the Jacob who now goes to meet Esau?

a. May we assume that it is only "Israel" who now meets Esau?

b. Was the old Jacob drowned, so to speak, in the Jabok, so that only Israel appeared on the other side? Or is Jacob's "hulking upon his thigh" perhaps also a sign that his conversion from his great life-sin was no perfection?

1) Was Jacob's old nature overcome completely?

2) Or was it subdued principally, crippled for life, but still with him?

3) Did that old nature still "hump along" with Jacob, often impeding his journey and causing him to reveal himself in his old appearance of Jacob?

B. The Meeting.

1. What is Jacob's attitude toward Esau at this time?

a. Does he demean himself before Esau, and act the part of a coward?

b. Does he attempt in all this to flatter Esau and to appease him?

c. Is Jacob's obedience to Esau wrong on his part?

d. Is Jacob's attitude one of humility of the younger before the elder, mixed with the consciousness, perhaps, of the fact that formerly he had sinned against his brother?

2. Does Esau evince a real change of attitude from that which he had assumed in chapter 27? Has his hatred toward Jacob left him? Was there genuine reconciliation between Esau and Jacob?

c. Is Esau's action one of genuine love, or is he at the moment overcome by natural feelings of brotherly affection?

3. In connection with the above, explain the following details:

a. Why does Jacob present his family in the order described? vss. 1, 2, 6, 7.

b. Why does Jacob bow to his brother seven times? vs. 3.

c. Why does Esau embrace and kiss Jacob? vs. 4.

d. Why does Esau show such an interest in Jacob's family?

e. Why does Jacob offer the present to Esau? vs. 8.

f. Why does Jacob express himself as in

- vs. 10, and what does this mean? Was it right for Jacob to say this?
- g. Why does Esau first decline and then after all accept Jacob's proffered gift?
 - h. Is there an evil motive on Esau's part in his offer to "go before" Jacob in their proposed combined travel?
 - i. Is there distrust and alibi on Jacob's part in his desire to travel separately?
4. How must this meeting be viewed from the point of view of God's attitude toward Jacob (and Esau)?
 - a. Do we read of any direct intervention of the Lord in connection with this event?
 - b. Does the explanation of Jacob's evidently successful meeting of Esau lie strictly on the level of the human, and is it probably to be attributed to Jacob's clever diplomacy?
 - c. Or is it to be explained from the fact that the Lord Who appeared to Jacob at Peniel blessed and cared for Jacob in this crisis, providentially directing events in Jacob's favor?
- II. *Esau and Jacob go their separate ways.* 33:16-20
- A. Esau.
 1. Where does Esau go?
 - a. Where was Seir?
 - b. Was Esau already settled there at this time?
 - c. Compare this brief statement with that in 36:6-8.
 - 1) What is the meaning of "went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob?" vs. 6
 - 2) Does this imply that Esau departed for Seir only *after* Jacob had actually settled in Canaan? Or is this to be understood in the light of the fact that Jacob was heir of the blessing?
 2. What became of Esau?
 - a. Apart from his meeting Jacob at the time of Isaac's death, do we ever hear of Esau personally again?
 - B. Jacob.
 1. Where did Jacob first go after the departure of Esau?
 - a. Where was Succoth? Was it in the land of Canaan?
 - b. Why did Jacob stop here?
 - c. What is the meaning of Succoth? Does this indicate anything about the length of Jacob's stay? About his attitude at this time?
 2. What is the significance of Jacob's arrival at Shechem?
 - a. Note. It would be better to translate
- b. What is the significance of the generations of Esau in chapter 36?
 - 1) Note: rather than make a separate and detailed study of chapter 36, I suggest that it be studied in connection with 33:16.
 - 2) Try to study the following matters in this connection:
 - a) Compare the record of Esau's marriages as given in chapter 36 with the earlier record.
 - b) Who are these "dukes?"
 - c) Who are the "sons of Seir the Horite?" Why are they mentioned here? vs. 20
 - d) When did these kings reign in Edom? vs. 31, ff.
 - e) Why are the dukes mentioned once more at the end of the chapter?
 - f) Compare this record with that in I Chronicles 1:35, ff. Are there differences? How are these differences to be explained?
 - g) What is the significance of the fact that kings reigned over Edom long before Israel was established as a nation?
 - h) When, after the death of Esau, do the descendants of Jacob next come into contact with Esau's descendants?
 - i) Why is the history of Esau's generations briefly traced here and then dropped?

vs. 18: "And Jacob came in safety (or: in peace) to the city of Shechem."

- b. Where was Shechem located?
- c. Of what should this coming "in peace" to Shechem have reminded Jacob? Do you think it *did* remind him of this? In that case, what should Jacob have done at this time? cf. 28:20.

d. What is the meaning of the name of Jacob's altar at Shechem?

- 1) Do you think it was a proper altar?
- 2) Does the Lord "appear" unto Jacob in connection with this altar? Why not? Was Jacob in the right way with relation to his covenant God at this time?

VOICES FROM THE PAST

Eight Ways to make you dread Society

1. Take your time about getting ready to go, if you wish you can even stop to read the paper; it doesn't make any difference if you are a little late, no one should mind the disturbance.
2. Be sure you have not looked at your Bible outlines before you come to Society, so that you will be thoroughly prepared to know nothing about the discussion.
3. Take no part in the discussion, leave that to others. Show no interest whatsoever and pay no attention to what goes on.
4. Be sure you look at your watch every few minutes to drag out the minutes as long as possible.
5. Never take your turn in the program. Either make the excuse that you were not told that it was your turn, or that you had no time. Both of these do much toward making things boring.
6. While others are taking their part you can be of great service by day-dreaming or having some innocent fun whispering with your neighbor. You might even stage-whisper your criticisms of those who are always pushing themselves to the fore and running things.
7. And all the while you can think of all the wonderfully exciting things you might be doing, and wonder why you are not doing them at that very moment.
8. As soon as the meeting is adjourned banish all thought of society until the next week. Ho, hum, those meetings can be such a bore.

Beacon Lights
March, 1941

The Four fold Purpose of Beacon Lights when it was first published.

1. To unite all Protestant Reformed Young

People's Societies so that they may work in close unity and secure a sense of solidarity.

2. To seek the mutual edification of the members of this Federation and to strive for the development of talents as becomes Christian young people.
3. To strive to maintain our specific Prot. Ref'd character with a united front.
4. To promote the welfare of the Prot. Ref'd Churches in which we have a name and a place.

Beacon Lights Vol. 1, No. 1

How To Be Perfectly Miserable

1. Think about yourself.
2. Talk about yourself.
3. Use "I" as often as possible.
4. Mirror yourself continually in the opinion of others.
5. Listen greedily to what people say about you.
6. Expect to be appreciated.
7. Be suspicious.
8. Be jealous and envious.
9. Be sensitive to slights.
10. Never forgive a criticism.
11. Trust nobody but yourself.
12. Insist on consideration and respect.
13. Demand agreement with your own views on everything.
14. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors shown.
15. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
16. Be on the look-out for a good time for yourself.
17. Shirk your duties if you can.
18. Do as little as possible for others.
19. Love yourself supremely.
20. Be selfish.

Vol. 1 No. 1 Beacon Lights

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

KARLENE OOMKES

Highlighting the past month's activities was the celebration of the birthday of our Lord. The children especially, took an active part as in many of the congregations of our denomination they prepared diligently for their presentations by song and speech of this great event. The Sunday School of First Church centered their theme on "The Star" and the children of Loveland's congregation told of Christ's birth under the theme: "The Coming of the King". Their program also included the congregational singing of a German hymn: "Die Hirten."

An interesting note: where the children of First Church receive an orange and a box of candy following the program, the children of Redlands congregation receive an apple, because this is more of a treat to them where the oranges are so plentiful.

Also, in connection with the celebration of Christmas, the Ladies' School Circle of Oaklawn and the Young Peoples' Society of Redlands sponsored a hymnsing on December 20; the Young Peoples' Society of Loveland went

carolling among the families of their congregation on December 23; and the churches in the Grand Rapids area joined in song on the evening of December 27.



Concerning our Servicemen:

Three of the servicemen of First Church, Arthur Bult, David Doezema, and Irvan Velt-house, were expected to return home in January.

There are yet two remaining in the service, Don Ezinga and Dale Bartelds; their addresses are as follows:

Donald Ezinga
Turgeson Trailer Park
Lot No. 4, Highway 247 S.
Warner Robins, Georgia

Dale Bartelds, BF7A 5918210
USS Buck DD761
c/o FPO
San Francisco, California

Future Conventioneers:

A son, Gary Lee, born to Mr. and Mrs. Boreas Dykstra (First).

A daughter, Janice Renee, born to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dempsey (First).

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. John Huizinga (Hope).

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Miedema (Hudsonville).

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lubbers (Hudsonville).

A son, Steven James, born to Mr. and Mrs. John Flikkema Jr. (Southeast).

A daughter, Twyla Jean, born to Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Bleyenberg (Hull).



Here and There:

Southeast Church welcomed Mr. Darrel Huisken from Edgerton, Mrs. Darrel Huisken from Allendale Christian Reformed Church, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry P. Meulenberg from First Church into their midst.



On December 14, the Men's Society of Southeast was host to Holland Men's Society. The subject of "Christian Marriage" was discussed after recess.



The Young People of Hull's Congregation gathered for an evening of fun on December 29 and the Young People's Society of Oaklawn sponsored a Progressive Dinner for their membership on December 30.



The Officebearer's Conference was held on January 5, at Hudsonville Church. Rev. G. Lubbers addressed the former and present elders and deacons on Article 81 of the Church Order.



On January 10, the Young Peoples' Societies in the Grand Rapids area visited one another. Hudsonville was host to the Junior Society of First Church, Southeast was host to Hope's Young People, and First Senior met with Southwest society at their church.



The Men's Society of First was host to Hudsonville's Society on January 11.



On January 12, the Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society met with Hope while Southeast was host to the Junior Mr. and Mrs. Society of First Church.



Finally, a quote from Randolph's bulletin: "The strongest believer of us all is like a glass without a foot, which cannot stand one moment longer than it is held."

- Unknown

WE ARE SORRY . . .
that no copy was received for **Critique** from Miss Lubbers. Next month D.V. (March issue) there will be an article by Miss H. G. Meelker.
R.D.D.

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