

BEACON LIGHTS

for

PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH

February 1968

The Tongue As a Powerful Member

*Student Power or
The Right of Dissent*

*Teaching the Sciences with Regard
to the Theory of Evolution*



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FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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A POWERFUL MEMBER

James in the third chapter of his epistle speaks of the tongue as the most powerful member of our body. In verse five we read: "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" James uses a figure of a ship at sea driven by fierce winds in verse four. This ship is of great size, yet if it is to reach its home port it must depend on a small rudder to direct it. Likewise the tongue is a small but powerful member.

One who with the new man controls the tongue by a living faith controls the whole body. In verse five James speaks of the evil power of the tongue, and by the contrast the positive power is emphasized.

The power of the tongue is all out of proportion with its size. The tongue boasts great things, and the prideful boast of the tongue can be backed up! It boasts and can do great evil.

The tongue can boast because of its unique position among the members of the body. The tongue refers to the entire power of speech. This is a tremendous power. It was a most important power given to Adam in Paradise. By it Adam was able to echo the Words of God which he saw in creation in a creaturely way. He was able to speak about God and to God. Because of this power Adam was able to enter into covenant fellowship with God. And through this power he could influence and have fellowship with the other creatures especially his wife.

When the fall came Adam did not lose this great power, but it now became subservient to sin. As a result of the fall man uses his tongue to blaspheme God, to curse Him, and to deny Him. Hence the tongue was turned into the most powerful instrument of sin in the world.

James uses another figure to illustrate the unbelievable capacity of the tongue for evil. He uses the figure of a forest fire. It takes only one small spark to kindle a whole forest. The forest is a place of life and beauty, but then comes a spark and the huge fire. All that remains is destruction, death, and the most depressing silence conceivable.

Covenant youth this is exactly what the tongue does! It starts wars and spreads destruction. It speaks worldly philosophies that are empty and vain. The tongue is the most powerful agent of temptation. It said, "God is dead," and carries the world into unbelief and destruction. The tongue is the member used for gossip, backbiting, and slander which spread like wildfire. Always in the wake of these fires started by the tongue is desolation, immorality, corruption, damnation, and death.

Does the above characterize the way we use our tongues? Do we say things about our peers that will cause them no end of grief? Even if what we say concerning another is the truth, but is meant to harm him, it is slander and backbiting. Do we talk back to our parents and teachers denying their God given authority? Do we lead others astray with the words: "O come on your parents won't find out," or the vain philosophy, "Its O. K. everyone is doing it?" Do we not control our tongues? If we must answer any of these questions in the affirmative we sin and spread destruction.

Answer these questions readers, and then remember the positive aspect of James' instruction which is emphasized by the contrast. To the child of God with a living faith what a power for good is the tongue. By this power the gospel is spread, and the covenant youth are instructed. Think, for example, of the encouragement of words to the sorrowful and the sick when the tongue is controlled by the new man in Christ. The

tongue is able to lift the weary soul brought low in the battle of faith.

It is a wonderful thing to see the tongue of youth being used as such a power for good. I have seen covenant youth anxious to speak of the wonders of God in the discussion of a catechism lesson. I have seen members of young peoples societies eager to discuss the antithetical walk the child of God must engage in. I have seen young people visiting the elderly, and seen them comfort them in their own wonderful way. I

have heard the voices of our P. R. young people singing God's praises with joy upon their faces. I have heard our young people defend the truth of God's Word over against error. This use of the tongue is a power for good; it is the opposite of apathy, and I have witnessed you, readers, use it as such. So we must strive always to use this great power. This is possible only when the new man controls our tongue. May God grant us the grace to use this powerful member for good.

R. G. MOORE

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

STUDENT POWER OR THE RIGHT OF DISSENT?

Since the student demonstration against the Board of Trustees' decision barring Dick Gregory from the Calvin College campus took place (cf. *Beacon Lights*, January, 1968), the Board has defended its decision by giving the rationale behind it.^o It said, "We do not question your (students') right to discuss varying points of view on the important social issues of the day. . . . However, the abrasively vulgar manner of his presentation and style, known to members of the executive Committee from having read his books, makes his presence at Calvin College inconsistent with the college's Christian profession and purpose. Knowingly consenting to the type of performance Mr. Gregory as a night-club entertainer is likely to give would constitute a dereliction of duty and conscience on our part."

This rationale is evidently quite unsatisfactory to some of the students, for an attempt to thoroughly demolish it is made in the *Chimes* editorial, entitled "We Got Trouble." First of all, the publicity "hurts the college's image, and therefore its ability to raise cash." Secondly, this decision will "handcuff the Speaker's policy," because

what speaker can be obtained who is not abrasively vulgar? There is also the element of racial prejudice. It seems that the Board members from the Cicero, Illinois area especially opposed Gregory's appearance because Gregory has disrupted that area in the past.

But the worst trouble is that this decision and rationale will serve to polarize the Calvin community, dividing liberals and conservatives and causing disunity. This polarization would be the result of the ambiguous nature of Gregory's rejection. So says *Chimes*.

The Board is right. Gregory has no place on Calvin's campus. He is not only "abrasively vulgar," he is positively wicked and profane, a rabble-rouser who would probably try to spread discord and upheaval at Calvin just as he did in Cicero.

But the real question deals not with Gregory's rejection, but with the right of dissent of students. It goes even farther than this, however. The students undoubtedly may disagree with some of the administration and Board policies. But do the students have the right to revolt and rebel against such policies. It comes down to student power. The president of the college, while emphasizing the unity of the

^oAll of the following information is taken from Calvin College *Chimes*, Jan. 12, 1968.

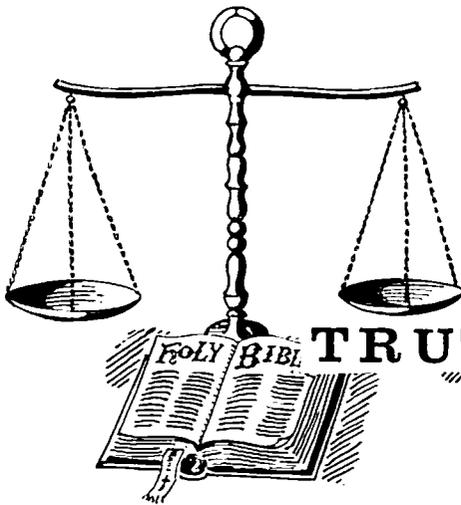
Christian academic community, said, "I think the students themselves, however, would despair of any other student take-over of either curriculum or discipline or administration of the college because the students are made up of large and diverse groups representing many interests. Students are a temporary group; they graduate within four years or leave within a year. And therefore I am sure that the students would want to advise and let their opinions be known, but that they would not want a take-over as the word power seems to indicate."

But it is not sufficient to attempt to smooth over these difficulties, because that is exactly what the students are attempting to do—take over the administration and discipline of the college. As one student stated at the demonstration, "[The Board's decision] simply represents an interference into the academic autonomy of the school." The students want to make the school policies, and resent it when they are brought

up short by those with more wisdom as well as authority. They seem to have little respect for traditional, time-tested policies, no respect for law and order, and great admiration for liberal innovations.

This decision could, as *Chimes* says, affect the whole Christian Reformed community. It is receiving a great deal of unfavorable publicity through *Chimes*, which, as the president of the college says, "Appears to be read more avidly and more universally in our churches than some periodicals." It could polarize liberals and conservatives, making both lose sight of what is right and wrong. About the only conclusion one can come to concerning the whole matter is that it is not yet finished; its effects have yet to be felt. The winds of unrest, dissent, and change are beginning to blow more strongly through the Christian Reformed Church. The students are carried along with the spirit of the age; those in authority make weak attempts to stem the tide of unrest and innovation. Which side will win?

MARK HOEKSEMA



TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

KARL BARTH'S CONCEPTION OF THE WORD OF GOD (3)

Barth's words on the existence of God cannot be overlooked. From our point of view, there are no arguments of human reason or philosophy which can prove the existence of God. We cannot, by the academic process of logic, start from the human

level and arrive at the Divine level. Therefore these words, by themselves at least, we like: "God and His Word are not presented to us in the way in which natural and historical entities are presented to us. We can never by retrospect, and so by anticipation,

fix what God is or what His Word is. . . . Therefore we can only . . . by faith in the Word of God — say who God is; He is the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (149). Here was a wonderful opportunity for Barth, quoting many sources as he does, to remind us that God is “the one only simple and spiritual Being . . . and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good” (Neth. Conf., Art. 1).

“God’s Word” means, God speaks. That signifies . . . its personal character. God’s Word is not a thing to be described, nor is it a concept to be defined. It is neither a content nor an idea. It is not ‘a truth,’ not even the very highest truth. It is the truth because it is God’s person speaking . . . It is not *something* (ital., RCH) objective. It is the objective, because it is the subjective, namely, God’s subjective. God’s Word means God speaking. Certainly God’s Word is not the formal possibility of Divine speech, but its fulfilled reality. It always has a perfectly definite, objective content. God always utters a concretissimum. But this Divine concretissimum can as such neither be anticipated nor repeated. What God utters is never in any way known and true in abstraction from God Himself. It is known and true for no other reason than that He Himself says it, that He in person is in and accompanies what is said by Him” (155). Stirring words concerning the ontological Word, *the Logos!* He is, in and of Himself, to the very depths of His Being, and apart from all creation, The Truth, The Word, The Person, The Subject and The Object. He is the Archetypal Logos. His revelation of Himself, sovereignly and freely revealed, is the Ektypal Logos. Therefore man can never think or know independently of God. God’s thought alone is univocal, and interpretive of all reality. Man’s thought must of necessity, then, be analogical of God’s. God’s thought and will alone is creatively constructive. Man’s thought must be receptively reconstructive of the thought and will of God. Man must be reinterpretive of the interpretation of God. This “acknowledgment of the Word of God by man is thus, of course, approval of the Word of God by man, but not such approval as is based upon persuasion between equals, but such as is based upon obedience, upon submission as

between the utterly unequal” (235).

Man, it is plain from the above, can never stand in any kind of mutual relation to God. For “God is the Lord, above whom there is no other person or thing, beside whom, right or left, there is no other person or thing conditioning Him . . . God is a *s e*. That holds without reserve of His Word also. But the aseity of God is not empty freedom. In God all potentiality is included in His actuality, and so (is) all freedom in His decision” (179). According to this, God is the absolute, self-existent, self-sufficient, independent God — in no wise dependent upon or conditioned by any being outside of Himself. He alone is sovereign; His will alone is free. So, the absolutely transcendent God is not an intensification of the natural, nor is He an extension of, or the sum total of humanity. God is God! In view of this, which must never be lost sight of, it can never be our business to formulate “a correlation-theology, i.e., a theology in which God in His relation to us swings up and down, either from below upwards so that God becomes a predicate of man, or from above downwards so that man would become a requisite in the nature of God” (196).

Thus far, Barth has been presenting to us his conception of the Word of God in a three-fold form, viz., (1) the preached Word — Proclamation; (2) the written Word — Scripture, and (3) revealed Word — Revelation. As we saw, he thinks of “the Word of God” as “uncreated reality, identical with God Himself . . .” (180), but not in any pantheistic sense such as Schleiermacher’s idea that “The ‘divine word’ is nothing else than ‘the spirit in all men’” (68). This Barth rejects. To him the Divine Logos is both immanent and transcendent; but “He is immanent in her (the Church) only because He transcends her” (113).

It is well known that Barth is fond of the idea of “paradox.” This seems to make its appearance under a heading entitled, “God’s language as God’s mystery,” where he says, “. . . it is to be recommended that in theology more sparing use should henceforth be made of this concept now that it has done its part, not without causing all manner of confusions” (189). Note, he recommends the *sparing* use of the idea or concept “paradox.” This for the reason that it has caused so much confusion. In spite of this, however,

Barth makes a somewhat prevalent use of it. He had said, "A conflict in which faith is involved" is not merely "a conflict of faith with unbelief," but that "in faith itself unbelief somehow . . . claims a hearing" (33). He seems to teach that the two opposite elements of which a paradox (contradiction) consists furnish us with the contents of the truth of a (given) matter. In other words, without these two elements, we do not have the truth on any given concept or item of revelation. He views, for example, the Cross and the Resurrection paradoxically, i.e., the two, the Cross and the Resurrection, are the two opposite elements in this (one) paradox. We must therefore listen to the one or the other, "or we listen to nothing at all." But we "listen to the other also in faith thru the one." He seems to require both the affirmative and the negative to be said of a thing at the same time in order to have the truth with respect to that thing; that both the positive and the opposite proposition of the same one thing speak the truth of the matter to us — otherwise we have "nothing at all" — We must listen to what both the positive and the negative have to say; and, we listen to the positive thru the negative. In this way we have the truth. Barth then quotes Luther in this connection to show what he, Barth, means by paradox. "Therefore must God's faithfulness and truth ever become a great lie, ere it become the truth . . . In fine, God cannot be God, He must first become a devil, and we cannot come up to heaven, we must first go into hell, cannot become God's children, for we must first become the devil's children . . ." (Ps. 117 expounded, 1530) (191). This seems to corroborate what we said above — to substantiate our interpretation of Barth's view of paradox. For doesn't Barth quote this (of Luther) to find support for this view of paradox? But it is a question what Luther himself meant by these words of his. Who can believe that Luther meant what Barth seems to intend by such language? No, the Barthian paradox goes far "to accomplish the impossible, namely, jump over our own shadow" (239).

Without specifically informing us that he does so, Barth treats of the subjects of Election and Reprobation with such words as that man "stands prior to all his experiences and decisions, within the sphere of Christ's lordship. Long before he can

adopt an attitude to God, God has 'adopted' an attitude to him. Whatever attitude he may take, it will take place within and on the ground of the attitude taken towards him by God. If he comes to faith, that will be but the confirmation of the fact that . . . he is claimed by God. If he does not come to faith, neither will that be a possibility he was free to choose . . . He will not choose, He will be rejected . . . It is . . . God's previous attitude towards him that will constitute his unbelief unbelief, his sin sin" (175).

In this connection of Election and Reprobation, the following is clearer: The Word of God is an act, an event (180), and is also a Divine choice (181). It is a choice of particular men. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet . . ." (Jer. 1.5). Cf. Isa. 49.1. The choice is also in some instances a *rejectio*, Mark 4.11. God, in His free choice illumines one man with His Light and blinds another with the same Light. He deals "with one as Peter and with another as Judas." This is the decision of Predestination, and just because it is God's decision, "it is a righteous and good decision."



No article was received
for the rubric

From the Pastor's Study

THE EDITOR



CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

TEACHING THE SCIENCES (3) re EVOLUTION

In my last two articles I have been trying to indicate how in my estimation the whole question of evolution is related to the important area of science. I am convinced along with many other Christian teachers that the field of science is a very legitimate area for Christian endeavor and study. I have profound respect for the scientist who has devoted himself to the study of the creation of God.

Science as an intellectual discipline is not to be scorned. From the Latin term *scientia* is taken the word *science* which means knowledge. To have knowledge is not wrong; that is man's calling. I am, however, militating in this series against an improper understanding of the function of science. The scientist is not to speculate concerning the origin of this creation nor is he to extrapolate from his sense experience a theory of earth history and origins. The scientist is limited to those things that he can perceive with the senses and his conceptions must then be in harmony with the revealed Word of God.

We are tracing in this series of articles the origin of the theory of evolution as it relates to the field of science in order to show how pernicious and all pervasive is this theory of evolution. We must be well aware of our enemy in this god-less world. We continue in this endeavor by speaking about the place that Charles Darwin held in the development of this god-less theory.

Charles Darwin and the Theory of Evolution

Charles Darwin who lived from 1809-1882 was born in Shrewsbury, England. From 1828-1831 he studied for the ministry of the gospel at Cambridge. In 1831 he was appointed as naturalist on the government exploring expedition aboard Her Majesty's the *Beagle*. From 1831-1836 Darwin circled the world with the crew aboard the *Beagle*. He became convinced that natural species are not permanent and he became a believer in evolution. Darwin wrote many books on biological subjects after his return and gathered a wealth of information on natural history.

In 1877 Darwin wrote to Otto Zacharias as follows:

When I was on board the *Beagle* I believed in the permanence of species, but, as far as I can remember, vague doubts occasionally flitted across my mind. On my return home in the autumn of 1836 I immediately began to prepare my journal for publication, and then saw how many facts indicated the common descent of species, so that in July, 1837, I opened a notebook to record any facts which might bear on the question; but I did not become convinced that species were mutable until, I think, two or three years had elapsed.

In 1859 when he was fifty years old he published the *Origin of Species*. These earth-shaking and Scripture-denying theories had also been proposed by a fellow Englishman, Alfred Russel Wallace. Wallace had pro-

posed the same theory to Darwin in 1858 and the two of them had presented the theory to the scientists in the Linnean Society in 1858. Because of the publication of the book the *Origin Of Species*, however, the name of Darwin came to be attached to evolutionary theory while the name of Wallace is little known.

In the *Origin of Species* Darwin presents his views on variation of species and the concept of natural selection. This theory he conceives to be the solution to the problem of a non-permanent or mutable species.

Can it then be thought improbable, seeing that variations useful to man have undoubtedly occurred, that other variations useful in some way to each being in the great and complex battle of life, should occur in the course of many successive generations? If such do occur, can we doubt (remembering that many more individuals are born than can possibly survive) that individuals having any advantage, however slight, over others, would have the best chance of surviving and procreating their kind? On the other hand, we may feel sure that any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed. This preservation of favorable individual differences and variations, and the destruction of those which are injurious, I have called Natural Selection, or the Survival of the Fittest.²

Darwin maintains that species will vary and that favorable variations are perpetuated while unfavorable variations tend to disappear with the individuals in which they were produced. As the variations which are favorable accumulate the first result is a new variety, then a distinct species and finally the transformation of one major type of animal or plant into another. It becomes obvious, therefore, that chance replaces the providential control of a sovereign Creator who is over all things. Favorable variations result because of environmental conditions and not because of the fact that not a hair can fall from one's head without the will of our heavenly father.

In the book the *Origin of Species* Darwin treats a variety of topics such as the effects of hybridization, the variability of instinct and habits, geographical distribution of animals, and a discussion of classification, morphology, embryology, and vestigial organs. When his views are all summed up they are basically a denial of the Scriptural record of the creation of all things according to and by the Word of God.

Darwin writes in his "Recapitulation and Conclusion" of the *Origin* as follows:

It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with bird singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life and from use and disuse: a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving namely, the production of the higher animals directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.³

It becomes obvious that Darwin believes that the Creation story is unscientific even though he leaves in the various editions of the *Origin* the statement that the Creator breathed life into the first form or the first few forms.

(To be continued)

1. Quoted from *Why Scientists Accept Evolution* by Robert T. Clark and James D. Bales, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 35.
2. Darwin, Charles, *Origin of Species*, Great Books of Western World, p. 40.
3. *Ibid*, p. 243.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Would the contributing authors and editors please keep in mind that the due date of articles is the 15th of the month previous to the month of publication, i.e., articles to appear in the February issue should have been in the hands of the editor on the 15th of January.

Thank you for your cooperation.

THE EDITOR

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY ON Paul's Epistle to the ROMANS

by REV. G. LUBBERS

ROMANS 4

In order to understand the teaching of the apostle here we must pay due attention to the relationship of this Chapter to the former Chapter, verses 21-31. The relationship is as follows:

1. Man, both Jew and Gentile, is hopelessly lost "under sin." By the law is the knowledge of sin. However, God has an altogether different way of salvation. It is the righteousness of God. We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Every mouth is stopped and the whole world is guilty before God (Rom. 3:19, 20).

2. The righteousness of God is revealed without law (Rom. 3:21). If there were a law which could make alive then righteousness would be out of law (Gal. 3:21). But such was not the divine intention. Salvation is not an after-thought, but salvation without works of law is taught everywhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is testified of by the law and the prophets. Compare Romans 3:21 with John 5:44-47 and Luke 24:26-32 for the "testimony" of the Law and the Prophets.

3. This law and the prophets, the O.T. Scriptures referred to in this 4th Chapter of Romans are the following Scripture passages from which the apostle adduces the arguments for justification by faith alone. Genesis 15:6; Psalm 32:1, 2; Genesis 17:10, 11; Genesis 18:18; Genesis 22:17, 18; Genesis 17:5; Genesis 15:6b and Isaiah 53:4, 5. Before you attempt to follow the argument of Paul in this Chapter acquaint yourself thoroughly with these O.T. Scriptures.

PAUL'S FIVEFOLD ARGUMENTS FROM THESE O.T. SCRIPTURES

Argument 1: Paul argues from the simple fact that Abraham, who admittedly was justified by faith, to the truth that justification is by faith for all the children of God, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. That is the argument in Romans 4:1-5. (Read from your own Bible!) Such is the clear teaching of Moses in Genesis 15:6. Abraham is justified. He is declared to be righteous, even though in himself he is most unjust. By looking at the stars in the heaven he saw the day of Christ from afar, the cross of Christ "towering o're" the sins of all the elect, both of Jews and Gentiles, set forth a propitiation for our sins (Rom. 3:25, 26). Before Abraham was, Christ is the "I Am," Jehovah God, which grace Abraham saw from afar in the promise (John 8:56; Hebrews 11:13). And so Abraham has no ground of boasting in himself. Calvin suggests that Paul has a syllogism here:

1. If Abraham was justified by works he hath whereof to glory.

2. Abraham hath not whereof to glory before God.

3. Hence: Abraham is not justified by works of merit.

And so Argument one is confirmed by the Scriptures. Abraham believed. He did not stand in any position to ask a reward of merit from God. He is justified without works of law! (Rom. 3:28)

Argument 2. The next argument and proof is the testimony of the law and the prophets as given in Psalm 32:1, 2 (read from your own Bible this beautiful utterance of David).

Paul here adduces the example of David. What was true of the father of all believers, is equally true of the great King, David. He too was a poor sinner in need of justification before God. The Psalm speaks of David's "iniquities" (lawlessnesses) and "sins." David transgressed the "law" of God and thus he became a "sinner" who wholly missed the mark of God. But David also speaks of sins "forgiven" and iniquity "covered" and of sin "not imputed." This is not infused righteousness, but it is justification of the "godless." See Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 23, Q. 60. See verse 5. Both Abraham and David are justified as "godless" ones!! And godless ones cannot be justified by works of law, but merely by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. It is without works of law!! See verse 6.

Argument 3: The third argument is one based on the circumcision of Abraham. The fact that Abraham was a believer, who was justified before he was circumcized ought to be noticed. Genesis 15:6 recounts an appearance of God before the happenings recorded for us in Genesis 17:10, 11, where we read of Abraham's circumcision and that of his entire house. Now what is the argument? This: justification has no dependancy on the rite of circumcision. There is nothing in circumcision that can be appealed to as a requisite for justification. The only manner in which Abraham, David or any saint can appropriate the righteousness of God is by faith. See Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 23, Q. 61. In this Divine dispensation the Jew has no advantage, and the Greek and the Gentile suffer no loss. The question is simply this: if we are Christ's then are we Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise. The question is: do we walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham. For circumcision is sign and seal of the righteousness which is by faith, but it is not the basis of being justified. That is by faith alone. Such is the argument in Romans 4:9-12.

Argument 4. In Romans 4:13, 14 Paul argues that justification is by faith alone from the very nature of the promise of God to Abraham and to all who believe. Yes, Abraham will be heir of the world. He will not be such personally according to the flesh. He will be such in the SEED, Christ (Gal. 3:16). When Christ is exalted at God's right hand in the heavens and receives all power in heaven and on earth, then it is that the promise to Abraham is fulfilled that he will be the heir of the world. Such is the cosmic implication of the promise in Christ in whom all things are united both in heaven and on earth (Eph. 1:10; 4:8; Col. 1:18). This promise made to the father is fulfilled in Christ's resurrection and ascension. And this promise did not come to Abraham "through law," through a principle in which Abraham merited this glory. That would nullify the promise and make the law of none effect. Grace would not be grace and law would not be law. Hence, Abraham and all his children are justified by faith!!

Argument 5. This is really the argument of No. 4 turned about. This is the argument of Paul in Romans 4:15-17. It is the argument from the nature of the law. Law and promise cannot be mingled as a basis for justification. Grace establishes the law! (Rom. 3:31). However, law cannot make a man alive and make him law-abiding. It is weak through sin. One cannot legislate virtue! The law can only be a power of sin; it works

wrath. By the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20). This is axiomatic! For where there is no law there is no transgression. Compare the various statements of Paul on this axiom in Romans 3:20; 5:13; 7:8, 9! See the clear and lucid statements of Paul in Galatians 3:16-29!

Such are the fivefold arguments of Paul for the truth of the gospel that a man is justified by faith, without works of law.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH IS THE ILLUSTRATION THAT JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH

Romans 4:18-25

In this section Paul again has a fivefold evidences that justification is by faith alone, so that in Romans 5:1 he can write, "Wherefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." These evidences of justification Paul adduces from the following in Abraham's faith:

Evidence No. 1. (Rom. 4:18) This is the argument from the object of Abraham's faith. The object of Abraham's faith was the promise "so shall thy seed be," that is as the stars in the heaven in multitude (Gen. 15:5). This was told to Abraham when Abraham had as yet no son, no heir from his loins. That promise was not conditioned upon works of law which Abraham was to perform, but was anchored in the unchangeable promise that God would bring it to pass, the God who went alone between the sacrificed animals (Gen. 15:12-15). He is faithful who has promised it. And this promise depends solely on Him who has promised it, the Testator of the Testament.

Evidence No. 2. (Rom. 4:19, 20) This is the argument that Abraham was saved by faith, which was a waiting in "hope upon hope." One episode of his life to the other was simply a salvation in hope, a waiting for God to bring it to pass in mercy and grace. Here was nothing that Abraham could do to bring to pass the promised salvation. Isaac must be born as a wonder-child, a child of "laughter"; it is the demonstration of the fact that "nothing is impossible with God," and, yet, that as for the fulfilling of the promise, all is impossible except God save us! If Abraham looked at his own flesh or that of Sarah he would have despaired. But he waxed strong in faith, and did not basically waver from the earnest expectation of the promise.

Evidence No. 3. (Rom. 4:21) Faith does a bit of reasoning. Abraham trusted in God. And his faith reached to the heights where it said: God raises the dead to life, and calls the things which are not as though they were. Thus alone Abraham did not despair, even though he acknowledged the human impossibility of having children at his old age on about 100 years with a wife who is 90 years old. It is simply faith, strong faith. Here is nothing of the works which man contributes toward the realization of the promise.

Evidence No. 4. (Rom. 4:22) This proves that Abraham was justified by faith alone. It was imputed to Abraham by faith. Not by a dead faith, but by a faith which works by love and that is perfected in works of faith (Gal. 5:6; James 2:23). And this was not only written for Abraham's sake but also for every one who believes, who is the property of Christ, and an heir according to the promise. In this one case we have the universal rule in the church. Abraham is the father of all believers.

Evidence No. 5. (Rom. 4:25) This is the central message of the promise summed up in the glorious words of Isaiah 53:4, 5. Christ was delivered for our offenses. He is set for a propitiation by God in our stead. That is the realization of the righteousness of God in Christ. And he was raised for our justification. Justification is finished on the Cross, the debt has been paid. The empty tomb attests to our being justified freely by grace, and that Abraham did not wait in vain.

YOUR PASTOR AND MINE

If he is young he lacks experience; if his hair is gray he is too old.

If he has five or six children he has too many; if he has none he is setting a bad example.

If he speaks from notes he has canned sermons and is dry; if he is extemporaneous he is not deep.

If he is attentive to the poor he is playing to the grandstand; if to the wealthy he is trying to be an aristocrat.

If he uses too many illustrations he neglects the Bible; if not enough he is not clear.

If he condemns wrong he's cranky; if he does not he is a compromiser.

If he preaches an hour he is windy; if less he is lazy.

If he preaches the truth he is offensive; if not he is a hypocrite.

If he fails to please everybody he is hurting the church; if he does please everybody he has no convictions.

If he preaches to tithe he is a money-grabber; if he does not he is failing to develop his people.

If he receives a large salary he is mercenary; if a small salary it proves he is not worth much.

If he preaches all the time the people get tired of hearing one man; if he invites guest preachers he is shirking responsibility.

Yet they say the preacher has an easy time.

— Author Unknown

To Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Rau and family the Federation Board on behalf of the Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies express their sympathy in the sudden death by car-bicycle accident, Dec. 8, 1967, of their son and brother

STEVEN RAY RAU

The brevity of his life serves to remind us young people of the words of Psalter number 246,

"O teach Thou us to count our days

And set our hearts on wisdom's ways;"

BOOK REVIEW

The End of This Present World

by LEHMAN STRAUSS, Litt. D.

Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Price \$3.95.

This book is divided into six chapters dealing successively with the following subjects:

The Coming World Church,
The Coming Man of Sin,
The Coming Doom of Russia,
The Coming World Conflict,
The Coming Reign of Christ,
The End of This Present World.

It is said on the jacket of this book that,

This book will prove a blessing to those whose faith is founded upon the solid Rock. It will prove a warning, hardhitting and frequently shocking, to those who have not rested their confidence in this Rock. *All who read will marvel at Dr. Strauss' broad grasp of prophetic truth in the light of fast-moving events today.*

It is with the italicized words that we have a little difficulty, for we are not impressed with the Dr.'s "broad grasp of prophetic truth" for it is indeed true that this is *in the light of fast-moving events today*. He should have exegeted Scripture with Scripture and then interpreted this prophecy.

The entire book is so saturated with the error of Pre-millennialism, in such a crass manner that to my mind he makes shambles of the entire subject. Now I wish it to be understood that there are some good statements in the book. For example, at the end of chapter one,

It is with mixed emotions that I have written this chapter. There are ministers whom I have known and respected for many years, men who believe as I believe in matters of doctrine, but with whom I must disagree as to their associations with denominations which are affiliated with the National and World Councils of Churches and which are looking with favor upon the modern Ecumenical Movement. I must remind them once again that the cause for which they are working is already lost. The Bible states plainly that Satan's superchurch is doomed to collapse. . . . And to any who read these lines not having been born again, will you receive

the Lord Jesus Christ now? For you He died, and for you He waits patiently now in order that you might be saved (p. 32).

We consider the first paragraph a demonstration of the fact that the Dr. desires to warn and admonish his erring fellow pastors, which is good. But with that is mixed the nonsense of self-willed regeneration which is so prevalent with the modern Arminian churches.

Again on p. 45 is found a very nice comment on I John 4:2, this comment very clearly holds water. It is also in Chapter 2 that he puts forth the speculation that Anti-Christ will be a Jew, an opinion which we have met before but is not proved too clearly. And it is on page 41 we read "Judas Iscariot will be the 'man of sin.' As Christ, the Seed of the woman, is God incarnate, so Judas Iscariot, the seed of the serpent, is the devil incarnate (Gen. 3:15)." The reader is inclined to ask at this point as to whether Dr. Strauss is advocating among his other heresies the heresy of Re-incarnation.

Chapter 3 is a study of sorts revealing the godless materialism of the Communist religion. Here also he identifies Russia as Gog of Ezekiel 38 and 39 (p. 74). Yet we find it very strange that the Dr. does not once here in his interpretation speak of the text of Ezekiel 38, 39 in relation to the text of Rev. 20:8ff. Maybe these premillennialists separate the Old Testament from the New Testament exegetically, which would also explain their complete lack of sense in the interpretation of the O.T. prophecies. It is a combination of all the above which causes the author to miss the boat with his interpretation of the battle of Armageddon. To the author the key is the physical Israel which in the one case gives rise to the Anti-Christ and in the other case here becomes the object of God's grace and the Lord is going to assist that land and people *according to prophecy*.

The error comes to a head in chapter 5. The author asserts that Christ will reign in the present Jerusalem and it is in this chapter that we give up hope entirely with reference to the Dr.'s exegesis. Under the division "Is the Kingdom Spiritual or Literal?" he makes it clear that to his mind the throne of David is a physical throne in

the earthly Israel. On p. 101 we read,

However, we insist that neither Christ's virgin birth nor His literal reign on earth can be spiritualized without doing violence to the laws of interpretation. This method of spiritualizing is enlarging the ranks of modernism, for when a theological student is taught that he is to spiritualize the Davidic throne in these passages, he may feel that he is justified in spiritualizing the virgin birth. . . .

Is the above an example of the reasoning of one called Dr.? This is such nonsense that one wonders how it can possibly appear in print. Then on p. 103 the Dr. has the nerve to stick his proud neck out with reference to ". . . our conservative brethren, who put forth honest effort in their interpretation of the Scriptures, there are those who either spiritualize the truth, or else satisfy themselves with the solution that the promises to David already have been fulfilled in Christ." Yes, we are satisfied with that interpretation but not in carnal pride and stubbornness but only because the evidence of Scripture persuades us that we view these things properly. We are of the opinion that proof lies in the text of Heb. 11:10, 16 and Heb. 12:22, 26-28. The author's chief mistake being that he interprets with regard to said subject the O.T. by itself. And conversely, the

N.T. is used not as more revelation and the completion of prophesy but as a mirror pointing back to the O.T. These contentions hold for all the material from p. 107 to p. 113 also. The section ending the chapter is nothing but repetition.

It is on the basis of the above that we maintain that because of the poor work in the first five chapters, the concluding chapter which is after all the real subject of the book is such a great disappointment. A mere 10 pages on the real subject of the book! This is extremely poor and we would expect far better of one who is a Litt. D., and one who is said, furthermore, to cause marveling by the breadth of his grasp of prophetic truth. Therefore we advise the Dr. to rework his subject and to pay more attention to his more conservative brethren. Especially the author should pay more attention to the Epistle to the Hebrews and the book of Revelation.

With the above criticism we recommend the book to our readers with this note of reproof. Remember that virtually no man in the Reformed circles today has and is treating this subject *at all*. So for this give due credit to the author for calling attention to this subject.

A.N.

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY LUBBERS

Miscellaneous

The Young People's Society of Loveland sponsored a sing-spiration on December 17 after the evening service. A collection was taken for new pews for the church auditorium.

The Hope Heralds sponsored a combined program and hymnsing on January 21 in the Hope church with Mr. G. Kuiper as director for the evening.

Deaths

On January 3 Mrs. Sarah Zylstra, from Doon, a charter member of the church, was called home at the age of 94.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Guise Van Baren from South Holland, a son.

MP & MRS JOHN ZANDER, JR.
492 GLENWOOD-LANSING RD.
GLENWOOD, ILLINOIS 60425

Rev. and Mrs. Engelsma from Loveland, a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Pete Miedema from Hudsonville, a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Bykerk from Hudsonville, a daughter.

Membership

On December 17 Mrs. Allen Vander Beek from Holland made public confession of faith.

Professor and Mrs. H. Hanko and family have transferred from First to Hope.

Mrs. William Lenting has transferred from Kalamazoo to South Holland.

Membership papers were received of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob De Vries of the Second Christian Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa; to the Protestant Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa.

Marriages

On December 15 Miss Grace Tuinstra and Mr. Ray Bruinsma from South Holland.

Fourteen

Servicemen

Neal Buitter from Oak Lawn has received a promotion and his new address is

SP4 C. Buitter
U. S. 548-14-592
4th M. I. Detachment
Data Link
A.P.O. San Francisco, California 96262

Marvin Mantel from Doon has been re-assigned and his new address is

M. Mantel 796-07-04
Deck Division
USS Altair (AKS 32)
SPO New York, New York 09501

JUST LIVING

Five-year-old John was so quiet his mother became suspicious of his whereabouts. She found him sitting on the floor perfectly quiet, just doing nothing. When asked what he was doing, he replied: "I'm just living."

There are many professed Christians in our churches of whom the same might be said. Some, we fear, are not even born yet.

— From PROPHECY MONTHLY

BEACON LIGHTS