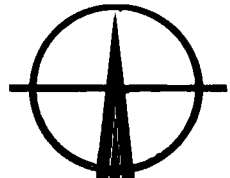


BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*



DECEMBER, 1976

CHRISTMAS





BEACON LIGHTS

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Editorial

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

by Gerald Kuiper

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Malachi 4:2

With these words God's final revelation in the Old Testament gave hope to the small remnant four hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. This word spoke of God's promise He had also given in Isaiah 9:2 where His Word came and said, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

This word of Jehovah came to Israel to show that in contrast to those who would "burn as an oven", there would be a Savior to heal those whom He had chosen to be reconciled to Himself.

This same word comes to us, Protestant Reformed Young People! We who have walked in darkness have seen the Sun of Righteousness arise. We too see the babe, Son of God, born in a lowly manger because there was no room for him in the inn. The sign of the manger speaks powerfully. Just as there was no room in the inn, so there is no room in our hearts for the Son of God, for our hearts by their very nature are filled with darkness. That is why Jehovah in the fulness of time sends the Sun of Righteousness, and shines into our hearts. What amazing grace of God to those who fear His name!

And that Sun now shines brightly. Christ, the source of all light, enlightens our hearts so we can give Him glory and praise. God has declared to us that the warfare between God and us is no longer.

That warfare is accomplished because the true Light shines. Our Redeemer lives!

That Sun of Righteousness gives light as the sun of the heavens. Extinguish the sun in the heavens and there is death. Extinguish the Sun of Righteousness and we are yet under the curse of darkness, and we stumble about aimlessly.

And Christ the Sun is the center of all things. Around Him all things in heaven and on earth revolve. He is the beginning, center, and the end of all history. For in Him God the Creator is revealed. He is God in the flesh - the **Light** of the World!

He is the Sun of **Righteousness** because without that righteousness there is no light. When you and I receive the good news of the gospel of righteousness, then all darkness is gone in our hearts, and we become reflections of that light. Our rebellion against God turns into perfect harmony with His will. There is now peace and joy between God and us.

The rays from that Sun of Righteousness heal us who were sick unto death. What a glorious truth is proclaimed to us on Christmas. We joy now, but look forward, because God's promise is that even though yet in the darkness of this world, we may look forward with the saints of all ages to the time when the Sun of Righteousness shall stand forever, and shine brilliantly on the new heavens and the new earth.

Glory to God for such a deliverance! How do we respond to this message of the gospel of peace? Let me leave you with an excerpt from **The Mystery of Bethlehem*** by the late Rev. H. Hoeksema.

"...Why should His mercy touch you and me, while thousands upon thousands perish in His wrath? Why?...

For His own Name's sake!

Another answer there is not!

O, serve Him, then, without fear, ye

that are so delivered and redeemed by His tender mercy! Seek not again the corruption from which you have been redeemed! Make not again common cause with the enemy from which you have been delivered! Retreat not into the darkness now the Sun of righteousness shines upon you, now the Dayspring from on high has visited you. Serve Him without fear of the enemy. For, though he raves and threatens, he is overcome, you have been delivered, and he cannot prevail against

you! Fight the good fight even unto the end!

In holiness and righteousness before His face!

All the days of your life!

Unto Him are all things! Glory be to Him forever!

Blessed, yea, blessed be God!"

*Hoeksema, Herman, *The Mystery of Bethlehem*; Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids Mich 1944 pp. 46 and 47

CHRISTMAS

by Sue Porte


Sue is a member of our Hope, Redlands, Church. She wrote this poem for Redland's Ladies Aid for their Christmas program last year.

Once in that beautiful garden fair
There dwelt a most blessed holy pair.
Their hearts were pure; their way was right,
And in all God's works they did delight.

In the cool of day they heard God's voice
And in Covenant fellowship they did rejoice.
For in His own Image God created them
And the breath of life they received from Him.

But alas! They broke this blessed tie
In disobedience; believing the lie.
They hid themselves from God's Holy Face,
Cowering there in shame and disgrace.

The curse of death now descended on them,
Hopelessly shackled in the bonds of sin,
Driven from Eden's garden of delight.
They must labor for existence, banished from God's sight.




But God, the Eternal Unchangeable One,
To His Covenant of love must ever be true.
He will not forsake His creature in sin,
Though His justice demands their eternal doom.

His arm of mercy is stretched out still
Forever; 'ere the Council of His Holy Will
In amazement and wonder we gaze at the plan,
That God has prepared for Salvation of man.

Yea; many a saint has wondered in awe
Standing before the mirror of God's Holy Law,
How can a wretched sinner like me
Find everlasting favor, dear Lord, with Thee?

How can Thy mercy and justice meet?
Seemingly all must end in defeat.
Death must carry us all away,
For sin besets us day after day.



Yet through the ages we hear God's Word:
Ye are my people; I am thy Lord;
I am the Almighty Unchangeable One;
I am Jehovah; The eternal I Am.

He spreads His rainbow in the heavens above,
In glorious colors of Covenantal love.
To Abraham is given His promise true:
I will establish my Covenant with you.

He leads His people through the Wilderness
Unto Canaan's beautiful land of bliss.
Their enemies are smitten by God's own Hand,
And His people established in the Promised Land.

Unto David is given God's promise sure
That his kingdom shall last forevermore;
His Kingly house and royal throne
Shall be established in David's Son.

But, we oft times ask, How can it be,
Blood of rams and goats cannot satisfy Thee?
In exile, we are driven far away,
While under Thy Wrath we must pine away.

And when Angel Gabriel came from heaven above
To announce to Mary, God's Word of love,
That she should bring forth the promised Son,
Who shall sit and reign on David's throne.

She asks in Wonder: How can that be?
For I know not one of royalty;
Of David's house there is not a man
From whom can come the promised One.

And then is unfolded, God's eternal mystery,
For the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,
And the power of the Highest o'er shadow thee,
That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee
The blessed Son of God shall be.

Ah! Wonder of wonders! How can it be?
That God so loved a sinner like me;
That His Only Begotten Son He would give;
That in His presence, I might live.

I see an angel descending in dazzling light,
While sheperds are tending their flocks by night.
And then the light fuzes o'er the heavens above
Into rainbow color of God's Covenant love.

The heavens opens, and the angel throng,
Breaks forth in praise, and glorious song,
With glory to God in the highest heaven
And Peace to men of His good Will is given.

That Peace; doth flood and o'erwhelm my soul,
As I contemplate the marvelous whole
Of God's eternal Covenant plan,
That wrought salvation for sinful man.

Feature

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT-JOY

by Mrs. G. Terpstra

Mrs. G Terpstra is a member of our Hope, Walker Church.

A time of Joy and Gladness! This is what I remember of Christmas past. When I was asked to write on this topic, there were many fond memories to recall. But as the memories came flooding back, the thought occurred that we have come a long way from those days. A long way — a better way? In those days very little emphasis was placed on celebrating Christmas as we think we must today. There was little of the eat, drink, and be merry type of superficial joy so often expressed during our holiday seasons. When you think about our decorated homes and gifts piled high, which we spend hours accomplishing, it makes one wonder how many times our thoughts turn to God's Great Gift to us. Many of our parents even felt that a tree and too many decorations detracted from the true meaning of Christmas. Gifts were few and treasured. There was a love and appreciation shown even in the gift-giving which somehow seems lacking today. It seems we have so much and the more we receive the less we appreciate it. Maybe the reason for all of this lies in the fact

that our parents had just come through the Depression. They were very thankful for their daily bread and expected no more. They taught us that our Joy and Gladness must be in our Savior's birth and His redemption of us, not in many costly gifts.

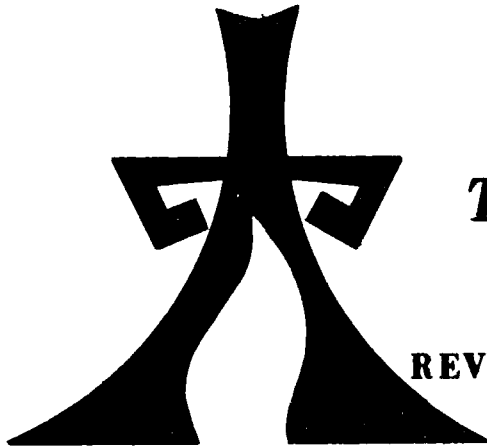
Are we faithful in teaching our children these things? Our Christmas celebration was not complete without singing. It's a good way and a good time to express our joy in praises to God. Even children can feel the tightening of the bond that unites our hearts in Christ as we sing to Him with family and friends. Our children are very privileged to have this experience every day. Christian schools were few and far between in those days. Only two of our family attended a Christian school, but the Christmas programs never equaled those given by the teachers and students in our schools. Surely they are being taught to express their Joy in belonging to their Faithful Savior.

It's a beautiful season to express our Joy — "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

The Federation Board and the *Beacon Lights* Staff takes this opportunity to publicly thank Mr. Jim Van Overloop, retiring editor of the *Beacon Lights*, for his faithful and diligent labors as editor.

The task has been at times difficult and his labors have often gone unrecognized. Yet his diligent efforts have been reflected in the fact that the *Beacon Lights* has continued to present an interesting variety of articles to stimulate the thoughts and edify the hearts of our Protestant Reformed young people.

We wish him the Lord's continued blessing.



Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

WEYMOUTH'A NEW TESTAMENT

R.F. Weymouth, D. Lit., (1822-1902) was a schoolmaster interested in the New Testament, a classical scholar and a Baptist layman. He called his translation, "The New Testament in Modern Speech, an Idiomatic Translation in Everyday English from the (translator's own) Text of 'The Resultant Greek Testament.'" This work is no longer on the market, except, perhaps, in the second-hand religious book stores. If you should ever run across it, you had better "latch on" to it.

Weymouth tells us of his more than sixty years' study of both the Greek and English languages, and of much further familiarity with these gained by continual teaching. He states that on the basis of this solid experience and scholarship, he made an earnest endeavor "to ascertain the exact meaning of every passage" of the New Testament. He shows wisdom and judgment when he says, "But in the endeavor to find in Twentieth Century English a precise equivalent for a Greek word, phrase or sentence, there are two dangers to be guarded against. There are a Scylla and a Charybdis. On the one hand there is the English of 'Society,' on the other hand that of the utterly uneducated, each of these patois having also its own

special, though expressive, borderland which we name 'slang.' But all these salient angles...of our language are forbidden ground to the reverent translator of Holy Scripture." He also reveals wisdom in his aims and methods in the production of a **modern** translation when he points out that this does not "imply that no words or phrases in any degree **antiquated** are to be admitted." For, as a matter of fact, there are "great numbers of such words and phrases still in constant use. To be antiquated is not the same thing as to be obsolete or even obsolescent..." His aim is to bring out the sense of New Testament Scripture "naturally as well as accurately in present-day English," but he admits that this "does not permit, except to a limited extent, the method of literal rendering." He quotes Aristotle: "I have deliberately rejected the principle of trying to translate the same Greek word by the same word in English...where circumstances seemed to call for it I have sometimes used two English words to represent one word of the Greek." Agreeing with the philosopher at this point, he maintained that "with a slavish literality delicate shades of meaning cannot be reproduced." Indeed 1.

takes wisdom and judgment for work like this, for "an utterly ignorant or utterly lazy man, if possessed of a little ingenuity, can with the help of a dictionary and grammar give a word-for-word rendering, whether intelligent or not, and print 'Translation' on his title-page." Greek tenses do not coincide, and "cannot be expected to coincide with those of the English verb, that - except in narrative - the aorist as a rule is more exactly represented in English by our perfect with 'have' than by our simple past tense; and that in this particularly the American Version is in scores of instances more correct than the American Standard Version." We must appreciate all this. Another related point demanding appreciation is that in the margin of the American Standard Version "distinction is made between readings supported by 'a few ancient authorities,' 'some ancient authorities,' 'many ancient authorities,' and so on." We may find it of positive advantage that "such valuation is not attempted in this work." For in the American Standard Version, and now today, in other modern Bibles, it happens that these marginal evaluations are often based on insufficient textual analysis.

It was not Weymouth's wish to replace the popular and beloved versions already in general use, but he hoped his work would be used in attempting and attaining the long-range aim of producing "a satisfactory English Bible" along the lines of, or even superceding, the King James Version, the American Standard Version and the Revised Standard Version. For the building of such a "far grander edifice," Weymouth's New Testament will have to be taken into account as a tool scholars must utilize in the ultimate production of that long desired Bible.

The format is attractive, with excellent type, uncrowded spacing of letters and words, the text in paragraphs, chapter and verse divisions given in the right hand

margins, and helpful side headings indented on the left. The side headings, for example, call attention to the Magnificat, the Benedictus and the Nunc Dimittis in Luke; and the subject of every paragraph and chapter is indicated in side headings. Quotation marks are used and quotations from the Old Testament are printed in small capitals, while certain names and titles are printed in capitals. Poetry is printed in poetic form - a distinct improvement in format. The footnotes are the work of Rev. E. Hampden Cook, but must be evaluated carefully and critically by the reader, as they are not wholly trustworthy. For example, at Matthew 3:11, where the translation is not of the best, we have, "I indeed am baptizing you in water...but... He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." A footnote, here, reads, "v. 11, In water, or possibly, 'with water.'" At Mark 1:8 and Acts 1:5 Weymouth has, correctly, "with water," but in numerous other passages, Baptist bias is evident in the translation. (This is so in Romans 6:4, "by our baptism we were buried with Him..." and in Romans 5:5, "God's love for us floods our hearts" instead of, literally, "has been poured out in our hearts.") A footnote at Matthew 2:9 calls attention to the fact that the literal "lo!" is translated, "strange to say." A note on page 422 speaks of "the Spirit *Itself* in *Its* fulness," which really is not the pronoun to use in reference to the Spirit, especially in the interest of His personality.

In most modern Bibles John 3:13 is omitted, at least in part. Weymouth unjustifiably translates the last part of the verse, "namely the Son of man whose home is in heaven," so that it contains no implication of Christ's omnipresence. In Romans 9:5 we are glad to read, "...in respect of His human lineage came the Christ, who is exalted above all, God blessed throughout the ages. Amen." But a footnote drags in the more modern(istic) reading, Or: "the Christ. He who is God

over all be blessed forever. Amen." The text at this point equates Christ with God, but the footnote distinguishes Christ from God. Certain sections of Romans and I and II Corinthians are smooth, interesting reading. In fact, just about the whole Weymouth Testament is easy reading. In I Corinthians 13:4-6 we read, "Love knows no jealousy...She is not...mindful of wrongs. She does not rejoice in injustice, but joyfully sides with the truth. She can overlook faults." In the Book of the Revelation, Weymouth is well worth reading, but the (preteristic) footnotes are worthless because they are so pitifully absurd. E.g., Revelations 17:8 is explained in terms of "the legend that Nero was about to reappear"; the mother of abominations is said to symbolize Rome; the throne of the Beast is the city of Rome itself; the number 666 refers to Nero; the white horse and rider (6:2) represent not Christ, but "triumphant militarism" (but militarism never goes on triumphing!); and that "every eye will see Him, and so will those who pierced Him" is an indication that John expected the Savior to return in the lifetime of those who crucified Him!

A footnote at Matthew 6:13 ordains the doxology of the Lord's Prayer "to be omitted on overwhelming textual authority." Dean Alford has said, "Had it formed part of the original text, it is absolutely inconceivable that all the ancient authorities should with one consent have omitted it...We find absolutely no trace of it in early times, in any family of manuscripts, or in any expositors." (Quoted in *The Shorter Catechism with Analysis and Illustrations*, 251, 1885.) But this statement is extremely misleading and out of date. True, the doxology is not in the American Standard Version or in the Revised Standard Version texts (it does appear in the margin or as a footnote), because, as some manuscripts omit it, the translators also decided to

omit it. It is not in the Latin Vulgate, nor in nine manuscripts of the Old Latin; but it is in five other Old Latin manuscripts. It is in the Greek Vulgate, i.e., in the Byzantine Text (the TR or Koine text). It is in several manuscripts of Matthew and in almost all New Testament Greek manuscripts, except ten of them. It is in three Syriac verses and in the Egyptian verse. We are also told that the doxology is found in the Didache (which was not known until 1883) or The Teaching of the Twelve (dating from around 100 A.D.), in the Apostolic Constitutions (completed before the end of the fourth century), in Chrysostom (470), and in Isadore (440). The scholarship which retains the doxology is to be preferred. (See Lange's *Commentary, Addenda.*)

In Matthew 22:1-9, throughout, the word "invited" or "invite" appears. But the word is "called" or "call" (an altogether different concept). In Matthew and Luke, the word "virgin" is changed to "maiden." (There is no footnote explanation at either of these points.) Nor do we care for "glory such as a father bestows on his only son" (John 1:14), "the only Son" (v. 18), and "He gave His only Son" (3:16).

In spite of the fact that there are renderings which we do not believe express the original accurately enough, Weymouth's translation does, generally, read well throughout the entire work. Any modern translation, however, should always be compared with the Greek New Testament and with the King James Version as well. This is a translation worth reading, worth study, and should especially prove of value to the theologian, the seminarian, the minister and anyone interested in textual criticism and/or the production of the highest calibre modern translation of the English Bible. Weymouth, a layman, led the church in a great step toward this goal.



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

"But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."
Ecclesiastes 11:9b

GODLY REJOICING OF YOUTH

As I look out of my study window I see children on their way to school, high school students wending their way to their classes, and college students attending the lectures of their professors. Here I sit, a man in the class of the men who belong to the age of those who are strong. I have heard many a man say: life has been long and I would not like to live it over again. One passes through this life but once. Life has its springtime and its ebbing years of fall when the golden leaves fall from the trees in God's parks and orchards.

Now I must write you something from this pastor's study. I must not come as an old man spinning out a little humanistic philosophy of life. You are all in the "days of your youth." But these are the days not simply of "youth," for the children of the world also have days of their youth. You have been separated from the youth of the world, and this separation has been

signified and sealed in baptism. You wear the uniform of Captain Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith. Your name is **Christian** youth. You are prophets, priests and kings of God, who share in the anointing of Christ by true faith. You desire to walk in a free and good conscience to fight against sin and the Devil in this life and to afterwards reign with Christ over all things. You are so very precious in my sight, exceedingly dear to me. You are much in my prayers, Christian youth!

Now I desire that you "rejoice" in the midst of the vanity of vanities of this world and this life which ends in death. It must be a very deep and profound rejoicing that you enjoy, and not some superficial fun. A young man has one more rejoicing in life than an old man has. That is also true of the modest Christian maiden. A young man "rejoices to run a race." (Psalm 19:5)

It is the young man who looks for the time when he will be the "bridegroom," and the young woman who rejoices in the hope of being the pure and beautiful bride. And these are the days of the "rejoicing of a young man." Every young man who truly rejoices looks for the day when he shall have a "wife" and not merely a woman. He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the LORD.

Yes, let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thine youth. Youth must live a happy, bubbling, glad and cheerful life. God does not expect you to be aged men and women at sixteen or twenty years of your lifetime. He expects you to cheer at the basketball games of your school, and to play the game with youthful vigor. Yes, walk in the ways of thine heart, says the Bible! And rejoice in the sight of thine eyes. Life must have some of the joy of discovery in it for youth. For the glory of a young man is in his strength.

However, do not be deceived. In all of this cheering and rejoicing there is a deep undertow of vanity of vanities in this life. You do this for but a little while. It is not true that "you are as old as you feel." It is good to feel well when one is old and gray, but the feeling-well does not constitute youth. Life begins at forty and not youth begins at forty! "Three-score years and ten we tarry, four-score years the strong may stay; long the load of grief to carry, 'til at last they fly away." So do not be deceived.

For life is basically not a playground, but it is a battlefield. It is a race to run with patience. And the Lord weighs the hearts and tries the reins. We must make each step of the way with God. And we cannot mock God: He is not mocked. And he will bring all these things into judgment. He will not select just a few things in our life — our daring attitudes, our sports activities — but also our attitudes toward all of life, the least of which is not our attitude toward our

fathers and mothers. This attitude will reflect in our attitude toward the minister of the Gospel, the elders, the teachers, the policeman...! And there is one overriding reality which we must profoundly know in each step of our youthful rejoicing. It is that we have God to deal with, before Whom all things are naked and opened.

Yes, God will bring us into judgment. Sometimes he does this as with David, who sings in Psalm 25:7, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions...." I have heard old, old people say this too. One woman was past ninety. She was old, worn out, shriveled and she was lying on her bed ready to die. She confessed that the "sins of her youth" still stood vividly before her eyes. She had rejoiced in the days of her youth, but sinfully. She had not heeded the warning of her mother to remember that the "date" she had tonight might be another woman's future husband. She had cried bitter tears over this for many years. Yes, she had found peace in Christ's forgiveness, but she had learned the hard, bitter way that sin's wages are an accusing conscience. Yes, God forgives sins, but only when they are confessed in deep contrition and sorrow, seeking pardon in the blood of the Lamb. Yes, God brings into judgment for all these things.

The way for youth that leads to life is also very narrow. Do you find it this way? This is a strong and mighty battle for young people. This battle is not fought by rationalizing that we all sin in our hearts and that, therefore, sinning in very deed is no worse. Jimmy Carter was not the first to reason thus. Nor must we sin, saying, "Christ forgives sinners." We must not sin that grace may abound. The narrow way must be "sought." Few there be that find it. Yes, rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth and in the ways of thine heart!

But, know...

You must not harbor the thought that you can temporarily stumble at Christ with impunity. You stumble over Him when you are offended at Him. And you are offended at Him whenever you think and speak or act, live and walk contrary to His precepts and covenant. When you love the world and walk in the world, when you ignore and neglect the means of grace, when you pursue the pleasures of the world and indulge in carnal lust, you stumble at the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence.

(Sermon by Rev. H. Hoeksema, *The Divine Purpose of Israel's Stumbling*. Romans 11:11.)

George M. Ophoff (11)

by Prof. H. Hanko

HIS CHARACTER

Man's character or personality, if you wish to call it that, is a very complex thing. I am convinced that God is the Creator of each man's person. At the moment of conception God puts each man's person in him, and by this, stamps him once and for all as a unique individual. It is difficult to say what is involved in this. Surely it is true that the person which God forms is in perfect harmony with the man's old nature so that the whole nature bears the stamp of that person and so that the person pervades the entire nature in all its parts. This is so true that even a man's fingerprints are uniquely his own and distinguish him from every other person who has ever lived. The "effect" of the person extends to all the extremities of the body and pervades all the inner recesses of the soul. It is also true that, although the person is formed and fashioned to a considerable extent by his environment, he is also the heir to the complexity of characteristics which have made up his parents and earlier ancestors. He carries his ancestors in himself through heredity. It is also true that heredity and environment are not the sole determining factors in what makes a

person uniquely himself. He is at the very core of his being a person with specific characteristics which make him unique among every person who has ever lived. God stamps him indelibly as a unique individual. In this sense of the word, he is his own man. God has made him the way he is. Whatever may happen to him in later life, this hard central core of personality remains fundamentally unchanged. And not only does it remain unchanged in life, but it remains unchanged through death and into all eternity.

It is also true that some people are far more complex individuals than others. Whatever the reason for this may be, the fact itself is beyond dispute. Rev. Ophoff was a complex man. Whether he was more complex than usual or than many others, I do not know. But there were many sides to his character and these different sides often seemed to be contradictory.

There were times when he left the impression that he was totally unconcerned about his personal appearance. He was in a very natural and unpretentious sort of way an extremely dignified looking

man. He stood about five feet, nine inches tall and was rather well proportioned; although in his later years he became somewhat heavy, he was not what one would call fat. His natural dignity lay in his bearing, in the look on his face, and in his head full of pure white hair. He was in his own way a handsome man, although he was personally completely oblivious to this. His eyes behind iron-rimmed glasses were sharp and penetrating. His head was massive and his chin had the set of a bulldog so that his whole appearance was one of tenacity and courage. He bore his natural dignity without thought and it was this more than anything else which made his dignity as impressive as it was. One did not easily fasten his attention upon the outward appearance of Rev. Ophoff, because the whole of his personality was written so clearly on his face and expressed so forcibly through his mannerisms that one was attracted to the man himself and soon forgot his outward appearance. His voice was deep and booming and his manner of conduct easily excitable. Yet the things over which he became most excited were the things which pertained directly to the truth of the Scriptures. He could laugh easily, yet he laughed seldom. He could be congenial and jovial, but if the discussion that was going on about him was not in some way related to theology, his interest soon waned and he turned in upon himself to ponder what was really his only love in life.

It was this innate dignity which characterized Rev. Ophoff, which made his outward appearance somewhat irrelevant. Nevertheless, his unconcern for his personal appearance was often strikingly evident. I remember vividly that he could come to school looking like he had been up all night (which he probably had). It was not at all uncommon in those days for both Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff to remain at their desks all night long. The pressures of work were so great that there was

oftentimes insufficient opportunity to sleep. But the result would be that Rev. Ophoff's work at his desk was only interrupted in the morning when the time came for him to dash off for school. There was no time to change his clothes, no time to wash and shave, no time even to make himself presentable for his classes. The result would be that he would sometimes have holes in his clothing from hot ashes which fell from his cigar or cigarette. His clothing would sometimes be rumpled and disheveled, his tie on askew and his shirt unchanged. This was not because his wife was not interested in his appearance. As a matter of fact, she assumed sole responsibility for his appearance and saw to it as much as she could that the clothes he put on were clean and ironed, that clean clothes were lying ready for him, and that he was ready as far as his outward appearance was concerned to take up his tasks in school. But oftentimes there was no time for this, and in spite of the fact that his wife had laid clean clothes ready, he had to rush off to school with changing them.

On the other hand, he could also be astonishingly concerned about his appearance. Sometimes he took great pains to look attractive and neat. He could be very unhappy when he thought his wife did not have a white shirt ready for him when he was ready to go away — although the shirt was lying on his bed ready for his use. He would light up with pride when one would mention how neat his appearance was. If we told him on occasion that a particular tie did not go well with his shirt, he would never wear that combination again.

I cite this as but one indication of the seeming contradictions in his life. There were more. He was a man of great temper, but also one of the meekest men I have known in all my life. It was not as if his temper would flare up unprovoked, for he was an exceptionally long-suffering man and had untold patience with his children and with his sometimes rather

stupid students in school. But if for some reason or another he was pushed beyond endurance, or if a question of the truth of

Scriptures was at stake, or if the well-being of the church seemed to be jeopardized by the careless talk of others with whom he associated, his temper would be great and fierce. His meekness was evident from the fact that when shown he was wrong, he was always more than willing to apologize for what he had done. He was a man who could be so absolutely sure of his position on a question of doctrine that no power on earth could budge him. But he was also a man who needed constant assurance that what he was doing was correct and right. He never arrived home after preaching without asking his wife what she thought of the sermon. She would loyally praise the sermon to the skies and assure him that it was one of the best he had ever preached. He knew she was going to say this, for she had said it hundreds of times; but this did not prevent him from asking

each time again. He was a man of glorious intellectual honesty who could carry through an argument to its conclusion regardless of what that conclusion might be; and this was coupled with great powers of logic. But in some aspects of his work he was the most disorganized man I have been privileged to know. The copy for his **Standard Bearer** articles often came into the print shop in such a condition that it was beyond the powers of a mere mortal to decipher them — and for a few years it was my dubious privilege to do the typesetting of his articles. His study was controlled chaos and no one upon pain of a fierce reprimand could venture into his study even to clean. His notes, books, manuscripts, papers, letters, and various paraphernalia for his work were scattered on all the shelves and piled high on the floor. Yet he always seemed to know where everything was and could lay

his hands on any sheet of paper which he happened to need at any given time,

although it might take him quite a while to find it. He was in some things naive to a fault so that he was constantly leaving the impression that anyone could pull the wool over his eyes — and many did. But he was also extremely aware of what was going on and sensitive to many things to which others were oblivious. He could not remember the names of his catechumens even after having taught them a couple of years; and he would not recognize them if he met them on the street. But there are few who had the profound understanding of human nature which he had. He understood the subtleties of the human heart and possessed an insight into human nature which was in many respects unique. In school he gave us clues to the understanding of the heart of man which have remained with me to this day. The older I become, the more I recognize not only how true they were, but how incisive and correct.

It is impossible, I think, to bring any kind of harmony to these conflicting aspects of his character. But there is a common thread which runs through them all and which explains much of this problem. I refer to one aspect of his character which was, in a certain sense, predominant. I speak now, however, of something spiritual. Rev. Ophoff was totally committed to the Church of Jesus Christ and to the truth of the Scriptures.

This has several aspects to it. For one thing, Rev. Ophoff was brought up and trained in the Reformed faith. This was true in his home, in his church, in the home of the grandfather for whom he cared, and in school. He steeped himself in the Reformed faith, came to know it and love it, and it became the ruling passion in his life. For another thing, Rev. Ophoff was a man of remarkable tenacity. He has sometimes been pictured as a bulldog and in some respects his facial features faintly resembled those of a bulldog, but this was above all true of his character. He would hang on to a subject with such ferocity

that nothing could persuade him to let loose. This was also true of his intellectual processes. If he was pondering a problem, he set his mind on that problem and nothing could shake him loose from it. This could go on for hours not only, but sometimes for days. Coupled with this was a remarkable power of concentration. He was capable of concentrating so completely on something that he literally became oblivious to all his surroundings. He did not know what was happening about him. There was a time in the past when after his stroke I picked him up at his home to attend Rev. Hoeksema's Dogmatics class. We would discuss many different questions in the short ride between his home and school, but even if two days elapsed between our conversations he could pick up the thread of that conversation as if there had been no interruption. If his mind became engrossed in a problem facing classis or synod, he could ask for the floor to discuss that problem even after the matter had been voted on and the assembly had gone to another subject, so that the chairman would have to inform him that no longer was the body discussing the subject which he was still pondering in his soul.

But his interest in life was the truth of the Scriptures. It was an all-absorbing interest, a total concern, a deep and passionate love affair which brooked no interference. His whole life was given over to it. This was so completely true that he had no interest in ninety percent of the things people talk about. He was almost totally without humor because his mind was analyzing the joke or the humorous situation while the humor of it escaped him entirely. He was not even the father and husband he should have been in the home, and the whole operation of the

home fell upon the shoulders of his wife. But this was because of the fact that his heart and soul was dedicated to the welfare of the church.

Many, many stories have been told about Rev. Ophoff's absent-mindedness. These stories have become something of a legend which has been woven over the years. But his absent-mindedness was essentially his preoccupation with matters which alone were of interest to him.

This was the man who began his ministry in Hope Christian Reformed Church in 1921. This was the man whom God was to use for an important work in the history of the church of Jesus Christ.



Rev. Ophoff in the early years of his ministry with his brother-in-law.



NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

We welcome Cindi Dykstra to this department. Cindi is a member of Hope Church, Walker, Mich.

BIRTHS

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Young of Southeast Church were blessed with the birth of a son on October 3.

Mr. & Mrs. John Cleveland of Hope Church in Grand Rapids were blessed with the birth of a son, Jason John on November 2.

Mr. & Mrs. C. Haveman of Hudsonville Church rejoice at the arrival of Michael Jon who has come to make his home with them.

Mr. & Mrs. Alvin Kaptein of Hope Church in Grand Rapids were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Michelle Marie on November 9.

Mr. & Mrs. Craig Baarman of our church in Hudsonville were blessed with the birth of a son Matthew Adam.

Mr. & Mrs. Jim Huizinga of Hope Church in Grand Rapids were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Susann Marie on November 29.

Mr. & Mrs. Dave Moelker of Hope Church in Grand Rapids were blessed with the birth of a daughter Karilyn Marie on December 4.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our church in Hull, Iowa has received Marlene Fisher's membership papers from our Randolph, Wisconsin congregation.

Southwest Church has received the membership papers of the families of Roger Groendyke and Henk Vonk.

Hull has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Carl Jansma and the baptized children from the Delaware Reformed Church of Lennox, South

Dakota.

Mike Kooienga's membership papers have been transferred from Hope Church to First Church in Grand Rapids.

The membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Ken W. Kuiper have been transferred from Southwest Church to our Hull, Iowa Church.

South Holland has received Wanda Kuiper's membership papers from our church in Loveland, Colorado.

Mrs. Ed Ophoff's membership papers have been transferred from Hope Church in Grand Rapids to First Church.

Randolph has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Harry Rutgers and those of Mr. & Mrs. Harry Rutgers Jr. and their three baptized children from First Church in Grand Rapids.

Hope Church in Grand Rapids has received Mrs. Dan Schimmel's membership papers from Oakview Reformed Church.

First Church in Grand Rapids has granted a certificate of dismissal to Mrs. C. Smith (nee Debra Grusczyński).

First Church in Holland has received Mrs. James Vander Kolk's papers from Hope Church in Grand Rapids.

Southeast has received Linda Vander Vennen's membership papers from Hope Church in Redlands.

First Church in Holland has received the membership papers of Mr. P. Van Koevering and two baptized children from North Blendon Reformed Church.

Hope Church in Grand Rapids has received JoAnn Van Uffelen's membership papers from Hope Church in Redlands.

Hull has received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Marlin Westra and one baptized child from our Loveland, Colorado congregation.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

Sherry Van Beek of Southwest Church made public confession of her faith on October 24.

Donna Haveman and Marc Elzinga of First Church in Holland made public confession of their faith on November 7.

Joyce Kuiper of Southwest Church made public confession of her faith on November 14.

Tom Engelsma and Ron Koole of Hope Church in Grand Rapids made public confession of their faith on November 14.

LECTURES

The Men's Society of South Holland sponsored a lecture on October 27. Rev. Veldman spoke on the topic "Evangelism in the Light of the Reformation".

The annual Reformation Day lecture was held on October 29 at First Church in Grand Rapids. Rev. M. Joostens spoke on "The Priesthood of All Believers".

On November 11, Rev. G. Lubbers gave a lecture entitled "The Decalogue in the Reformation" in Randolph Protestant Reformed Church.

MARRIAGES

Mr. John Van Beek of Southwest Church was united in marriage with Mrs. Grace Westerhof on October 14.

Mr. Edward Ophoff and Miss Elizabeth Engelsma were united in marriage on October 21 in Hope Church of Grand Rapids.

Mr. Harry Petroelje and Miss Mary Veltman were united in marriage on December 3 in First Church of Grand Rapids.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

The Federation Board sponsored a singspiration at Southeast Church on October 3.

South Holland's Young People's Society had a hayride at Trails Bend Ranch on October 18.

The young people of Hull, Iowa had a hayride followed by a wiener roast on October 19.

Hull's Young People's Society sponsored a Reformation Day Singspiration on October 31 in their church.

The Federation Board sponsored a picture party (on the convention at Camp Geneva) at Hope School on November 12. They also sponsored a hayride followed by a bonfire and refreshments at Hope School on November 19.

Prof. Hanko was the speaker for the Thanksgiving Mass Meeting at Southwest Church on November 21.

On the last Sunday of each month, the Junior Young People's Society of First Church in Grand Rapids sponsors a song service, lasting approximately 15 minutes led by their society leader, Mr. Ophoff.

This year, our Faith Church in Jenison has a Young People's Society. For their Bible discussion they are studying the Parables.

Connie DeVries, secretary-treasurer of the Young People's Society in Randolph, Wisconsin writes, "we're studying the Word of God from the book of James this year. However if any member (they have four C.L.D.) should find another passage he or she would like to discuss, we may do that and then come back to James."

"For after-recess, we have a general discussion on a present day topic. Presently we are looking at the Charismatic Movement or Neo-Pentecostalism so that we may answer to the glory of God when the world questions us on subjects such as these.

"We plan to invite the congregation for an evening at a gym playing basketball and volleyball. We also hope to have a rollerskating party soon."

OTHER ACTIVITIES

A dedication and open house for The Protestant Reformed School in Hull, Iowa was held on October 8. Rev. Kortering spoke on "The Educated Pilgrim".

On November 21, the Ladies Auxiliary of South Holland School sponsored a Singspiration including special numbers by the Choral Society and the Men's Quartet.

The Ladies' Society in Randolph sponsored a Thanksgiving Singspiration on November 26. Besides congregational singing, they had a special speaker from Grand Rapids, Mr. Truett Hugg who told of the events the Lord used to lead him and his family to a fuller knowledge of the

truth and into our churches. One year ago, they were living in Nebraska. This fall, he began his training for the ministry in our seminary.

PLAN AHEAD FOR COMING EVENTS

First Jr. Young People's Society is sponsoring a Pizza Luncheon at Hope School after the Alumni game on December 28.

The Hudsonville Young People's Societies will be hosting the 1977 Young People's Convention. Due to the fact that they have obligated themselves to pay for the sign of their new church, they would appreciate any help other societies can give with fund raising projects.

Note: For those of you who send bulletins to the News Editor, please include dates of coming events.

The *Beacon Lights* Staff and Federation Board takes this opportunity to thank Miss Karla Kalsbeek who has served as head of the "*News from, r, and about our churches*" department. A hearty thanks for her time and effort!

R.F.P.A. PUBLICATION SALE

Parents of young people approaching the age of marriage, this is for you and for anyone interested in our Protestant Reformed publications. If you wish to give a gift of lasting value for Christmas this year, you will be interested in the three volumes which are sale priced till January 1, 1977.

MARRIAGE: The Mystery of Christ and the Church is a thoroughly scriptural and instructive book on marriage which offers abundant practical instruction for Christian husbands and wives.

Peaceable Fruit is a book for parents who look for some guidance in training their children in the fear of the Lord.

God's Covenant Faithfulness is a book which gives not only a history of our Protestant Reformed churches and schools, but also a summary of our stand as a denomination.

Order now and receive the book on marriage (a \$3.50 value) for \$3.00. Each of the other two books sells for \$5.95. Till January 1, 1977 they will be available for \$4.75.

For an even greater saving, order all three and pay only \$11.00.

Send your order to: R. F. P. A.

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Include payment, please.

And remember this offer good to January 1, 1977.