POST CONVENTION ISSUE

The October Issue For 1952
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EACH YEAR at this time, protestant Christians everywhere bring to mind a series of fateful events. One person played so major a role, so prominent a part in those events, that he will never be forgotten. That series of events is now known as the Reformation. That individual was Martin Luther.

Luther himself was typical of the movement which he led. The leader was like his followers: firm, sincere, and valiant. Because Luther was so typical of the Reformation, he has often been its representative. Thus I too shall use Luther as a lens to focus our attention on a greater subject.

Let us consider Luther, the musician. From his childhood, Luther was both a performer and a lover of music. He had the gift of a good voice which he did not waste. The young lad's sweet clear voice caroled often in the streets and cathedrals of Eisleben and Erfurt. Luther also became a competent player of the flute and the lute. Luther said that music was a "gift and a grace of God; it could drive out the devil and make men forget all wrath". These skills were relatively unimportant to Luther in his youth, but they became vital weapons in his great struggle.

Some of Luther's greatest struggles were over before he first used music as a weapon. Luther wrote the first of his many songs in 1523. The ninety-five theses, the debate with Dr. Eck, the bull of excommunication, the trial at Worms: these familiar events of Luther's life were already history. The struggle for the birth of protestantism was over; but the contest for the survival of protestantism had just begun.

In the years preceding 1523, there were practically no hymns. Except for a very few unknown and unused hymns, the only church music was the Latin liturgical chants. These songs were performed by either the priest or a specially selected choir. Thus the common folk never participated in church singing, either as listeners or performers; for they could not understand it and they were not permitted to sing it. Into these surroundings, Luther's hymns were born.

Luther's hymns were immediately popular. His first song was written in 1523. A year later the first protestant hymnal was published. It contained eight hymns; four by Luther. The little book "flew all over Europe" in answer to a deep felt want. The new hymns with the magnificent music were eagerly learned by the people. Musicians
played them from church steeples, and crowds sang them in the market places. Twenty years after the first hymnal was issued, at least one hundred seventeen collections of hymns by Luther and his associates had been printed. Because of his many compositions (said to be 37; 12 of them translations) and the efforts he had expended in promoting congregational singing, Luther won the name of the “nightingale of Wittenberg”.

In substance, Luther’s work for the people’s song was a detail of his liturgic reform. The congregational song both “symbolized and realized the principle of direct access of the believer to the Father, and thus exemplified, in itself alone, the whole spirit of the worship of the new church”. However, Luther’s musical endeavors have proved to be far more than a detail. His songs were one of his most potent and lasting weapons. Coleridge said of him: “He did as much for the Reformation by his hymns as by his translation of the Bible.”

Luther’s greatest hymn, what we might call his masterpiece, deserves more than a passing notice. The English translation of that hymn is “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”. In 1529, Luther was a fugitive from the law of the land. Charles V, the emperor, had banned him from the Holy Roman Empire. Because of this, Luther was concealed in the fortress of Coburg by the Elector of Saxony. The manner in which he was being hounded, maligned, and persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church only stirred his independent soul to greater courage. “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” resulted.

The lyrics of the hymn were inspired by the forty sixth Psalm. The origin of the melody was a Gregorian chant. From this fusion of melody and verse emerged the rallying cry of the Reformation. The hymn was a tonic for the discouraged and distressed. Conflict with “the prince of darkness grim”; difficulties like a “flood of mortal ills”; “this world with devils filled” threatening “to undo us”—all these are reminders of Luther’s heroic words on entering Worms in 1521: “Though there be as many devils in Worms as tiles on the housetops, I must go;” and of the equally heroic declaration there before the great council: “I am bound by the Scripture; my conscience is submissive to the will of God. I can recant nothing and will recant nothing.” Triumphantly rings out his confidence in “the man of God’s own choosing”, “from age to age the same”, who surely “must win the battle”.

That giant faith and hope of Luther’s should be ours today. Our God is with His people in the same measure today as he was in Luther’s day. Like Luther, we must have the conviction that Christ’s followers are invincible and His cause is inevitable. We are youth, and youth’s task is to maintain our heritage, and then to progress to new heights of achievement. To do this successfully, we shall trust in God who is a “mighty fortress, a bulwark never failing.”

Wise Sayings of Benjamin Franklin

The discontented man finds no easy chair.
As often as we do good we sacrifice.
He who gives promptly gives twice as much.
Great talkers, little doers,
He that cannot obey cannot command.
Approve not of him who commends all you say.
EDITORIZALS

FAITH—HOPE—LOVE

THE 12TH ANNUAL convention of our Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation has drawn to a close. The young men and women, delegates and friends, have all departed and gone to their respective homes.

Your editor was not among the privileged ones who attended this wonderful convention, but from all sides come the reports of the hearty hospitality of our good Northwest Iowa people; of the sincere friendship and fellowship displayed; of the inspiration, encouragement, and comfort derived from the excellent addresses of the Revs. Hoeksema, De Wolf and Hofman. It was said also that a spirit of co-operation and unity prevailed at the meetings.

What a great means for the upbuilding and strengthening in the faith this convention can be for each individual attending, but greater still is that influence upon our churches as a whole, when these young people return to their respective communities and churches inspired and strengthened to resume the work in their societies for the coming season. It is always a matter of regret to us that each one of our boys and girls cannot attend the convention. We feel that some of our young people could attend if a more serious effort would be made and plans would be made early enough. In this connection we wish to call in the cooperation of our parents to not only urge their boys and girls to attend our young people's convention, but help and even sacrifice, if need be, for this purpose.

Under God, the fellowshipping of our young people with one another in their society meetings and conventions is the greatest means we can use to promote the forming and cementing of friendships and ties which bear spiritual fruit for themselves, the Church and God's Kingdom.

The Old Testament church was continually warned against mingling with the surrounding peoples. This was a negative admonition. We feel that we can apply this in a positive admonition to our young people. They should seek and promote fellowship among each other, namely among those whose confession and walk is similar. In so doing we strengthen our own and each other's spiritual life and guard against forming those friendships which eventually lead us away from the truth we love and the church we hold dear.

Parents! Promote, make opportunity for, and urge your sons and daughters to cultivate friendships and fellowship with other young people of our own, and in so doing you can expect God's blessing to attend your and their way. See that they attend society and other meetings of our young people faithfully, that they may not be as some young people among us who are virtual strangers to our church and people. Surely it is no wonder that most of these drift away from our fellowship entirely.

And now ABIDETH faith, hope, charity, these three——

As we said in our commencement, the young people have all gone to their respective homes and communities. Hull, whose homes and streets rang with
cheery, youthful voices has again resumed its usual quiet; but these three—faith, hope and charity abide. They abide in the hearts of all God’s people for these are His rich gifts which He freely showers as His blessings on all those that love Him; that are the called according to His purpose from everlasting.

Young people, rethink the excellent addresses you heard on these three all-important subjects; and may a Lively Faith, an Abiding Hope and a Fervent Love be yours from the Father of Lights forever and forever.

Thanks, Hull, for showing our young people a wonderful time!

A PLEA FOR “BEACON LIGHTS”

Young people, parents and friends—“Beacon Lights” solicits your constant prayers that it may continue to light us on our way to the eternal harbor. It also solicits your material gifts in order that it may continue to send out the “Light” to our boys in service and others who are deprived of close fellowship. Our funds are very low. Please remember us and them by sending a liberal gift to Miss Jane Schipper, treasurer, 913 Adams St., S.E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

S. D. Y.

Advice to the worried: “Take the first turn to the right.”—The Christian Advocate.

Conversion may be the work of a moment but a saint is not made over night. Christian character is a development.
Nothing But Leaves

LEAVES, LEAVES, and more leaves... That is what we find at present in nature round about us. Every Fall, about this time of the year, regardless where we go, on sidewalk and lawn, in the city and on the farm, it seems we find nothing but leaves.

There is something sad about that, I always find. The same leaves which once were the life and beauty of the trees, now appear dead and withered and ready to be burned. And the trees which they once adorned stand naked and bare, deprived of their foliage and beauty.

However, there is something serious about it too, for God’s Word tells us that the things of God’s kingdom are done in parables, which means that the earthly is a picture of the heavenly and that the natural is a symbol of the spiritual.

The autumn season with its falling leaves, therefore always reminds me of that sad expression which is contained in the Scriptures “nothing but leaves”, and of the cursing of the barren fig tree.

We all know the history, no doubt. On a certain day when Jesus was on His way from Bethany to Jerusalem, he became hungry and sought fruit on a certain fig tree. For even though the time for figs had not come, yet this particular tree had an abundance of leaves, and it is well known that the fig tree puts forth its fruit before it produces its leaves. Hence, the wealth of leaves this tree possessed warranted the expectation of fruit.

But when Jesus came to the tree he found nothing but leaves. Though the tree through its leaves gave a promise of fruit, yet in reality it was barren. Though it held out a nice hope, it rendered only bitter disappointment. It professed much, but performed nothing.

Hence, the tree was a huge practical lie, it is not surprising that Jesus cursed this tree and that the following day it had already withered away.

However, we must remember in this connection, that this tree which Jesus cursed, is but the symbol and picture of another tree, namely, of the nation of Israel. For often when the Bible speaks of the children of Israel, it compares them exactly to such a tree, and the reason why it should do so is plain.

As this fig tree had been carefully planted by its owner’s hand, so also the Jewish nation had been planted by God Himself. And even as Jesus came to this fig tree seeking fruit, so also throughout the entire Old Dispensation God came to the children of Israel, demanding of them that they worship Him in spirit and in truth, and that they bear fruit to His honor and glory.

And even as the fig tree made a nice promise, put on a big outward show, so it was also with the nation of Israel. They sacrificed daily, made loud profession and long prayers, and were so strict in keeping the outward letter of the law, that in some respects they even did more than God demanded of them. But when God came to them seeking
fruit, He found nothing but leaves. Though they drew nigh unto Him with their lips, yet their heart was far from Him. Though they appeared to love God and His people, yet in actual life they devoured the houses of orphans and widows. Though they had a form of godliness, yet they lacked the powers thereof.

And, no doubt, it was because of this deplorable condition in Israel, that Jesus cursed the barren fig tree. In the cursing of this fig tree, Jesus warned them and gave them a picture of what they could expect, if they failed to bear fruit and yielded nothing but leaves. But in spite of the warning, the nation went on as before, and we all know the result. Shortly after the fig tree was cursed, God’s curse also came upon the Jewish nation. Their temple was razed, their city destroyed, their land given to others, and even until this present day they are scattered over the whole earth.

And yet, if we should see no more in the cursing of the barren fig tree than this, then I’m afraid we would miss the main part of the lesson, for Jesus cursed this fig tree not only as a warning for Israel, but also as a warning for us. For we too have been brought into being by God Himself, and the very purpose of our existence is that we might bear fruit. Hence, even as God came to His fig tree seeking fruit in the old dispensation, so He comes also to you and me today. And woe to us if we too have nothing but leaves. Then our end will be even worse than that of Israel, for we have both the fig tree and them to learn from. The one lesson we must learn therefore is that we are here not for ourselves but for God’s sake, and that God is interested in fruit, not merely in leaves.

And O how we need that lesson today! For we are living in an age in which many are very pious and religious outwardly, but their lives plainly reveal that inwardly they have no love for God and His cause whatsoever. They have their names on the church roles and bear the sign and seal of baptism, but their religion is nothing but an outward show, for a life of sanctification and self-denial they despise. And many others, though they are very zealous in God’s cause and kingdom and have a leading role in God’s church, nevertheless resemble the Pharisees of old, for they are haughty and proud at heart and base their hope of salvation not on what God does for them, but on what they do for God. And such “fruit” is obnoxious even in the sight of men, and it certainly is in the eyes of a holy and righteous God.

The fruit He desires consists first of all in a broken and contrite spirit and the confession that our only hope of salvation is the cross of Jesus. For by nature we are all bad trees. Hence we must learn to see and confess that there is no good in us and that Jesus’ cross is our only hope of deliverance. And that confession must reveal itself in our work and play and in everything we do and say, so that our lives truly become God- and Christ-centered, and we find our all in Him.

And that fruit is possible only when, even as Christ Himself tells us, we abide in Him, for without Him we can do nothing. To really bear fruit therefore, by a living faith, which is the gift of God, we must be ingrafted into Christ and live out of Him. Only in the measure that we live close to Him, is His strength made perfect in our weakness, and can we truly be fruitful trees in the garden of God.

Hence, in the final analysis the fruit which we bear is not our gift to God, but God’s gift to us, for we love Him only because He first loved us, and He it is

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CURRENT COMMENTS

REV. L. DOEZEMA
Bellflower, California

THE CHRISTIAN'S VOTE

During these months of electioneering, this fervent spirit to show the voters that a certain individual and party is the only one to vote for and expect better times, the Christian cannot help but ask himself about his calling to vote in the coming election in November. There are points of interest in politics that even captivate the Christian as citizen. The speeches and events take up part of our conversation. Some of you have seen and heard the conventions last summer and are now listening to the speeches that are being made and the contests for seats in Congress by certain individuals who have been prominent in Washington but must now fight hard to keep their position.

In considering our calling to vote we probably confront ourselves first of all with the question, Shall I vote at all? It may be that neither one of the nominees for president meets with approval and the decision may be that it is better not to vote. The question may also arise from a deeper cause. Often I ask myself shall I vote for any of the candidates for office? If they cannot assure me of their Christian principles of government may I vote as a Christian? There are some groups of Christians that maintain that as a church principle, that they cannot engage in politics and cannot vote unless there is Christian government. Such a position I consider incorrect although I have much sympathy for it and feel that it is a stand more in harmony with Christian life than the passive take-it-for-granted attitude of many. It seems to me that when we vote we do not have to say that we stand for all the principles of the party and the candidate. That is not implied in the vote. If the candidate is non-Christian our voting for him does not mean that we approve of a non-Christian government. As citizens the right to vote is given us. The parties and candidates are presented and we exercise that right and express what and whom we consider to be the preference of the given.

Another question that confronts us is, How shall I vote? With this question I do not mean to consider the choice itself, for whom we shall vote? That decision should be left to the individual and is not the main consideration in articles which seek to help make the correct choice. Our concern in this question is with motives and purposes of our vote. Here is the important question, shall I vote for an individual and a party which satisfies my interests? That is the motive and purpose of the American voter today, namely to gain his particular advantage in the American commonwealth. There are the sectional interests, the class interests, the race interests that are struggling for power and recognition today and the parties appeal to them and try to please them all. It ought to be evident that it is not Christian to vote as an American citizen from personal and private interests. It is not Christian to vote for a party that favors the farmer above the laborer, or the labor unions over against the capitalists. We should
exercise our vote so that we show preference for justice and fairness in legislation. We should desire a man and a government that rules according to law and justice wisely, and not a government that is ruled by other pressures. It ought to be evident to the discerning mind that such is beyond our present expectation. Probably our vote is made by considering the choice, which pressure group do we consider the preference under the circumstances.

In connection with this motive of satisfying the selfish interest is the motive to seek material prosperity itself. Of all motives that is certainly carnal and not Christian. Our government should not seek to appeal to our bellies in these days of world crises. It seeks to influence other peoples and nations with the American dollar. We are led to seek the wealth of America above all virtue. The luxury that we have and desire for more ease that it stirs up is the cancer that eats at the foundations of our civilization. To vote for a government which appeals to that desire of the people to live at ease and enjoy the “good life” for its own sake is to hasten the day when the travails of the judgments shall come upon us.

What is our expectation of the vote of the people? If we have voted for the better, shall we expect the better to be the choice of God? We must understand that in the will of God’s providence it is not always the better that gains office. His choice is David, Christ who now rules through all rulers. He puts in office to accomplish His will. He put in office Hazael, Caesar, Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman and our next president.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Cont. from page 6

that works in us both to will and to do. Therefore it is not strange that God is so concerned about fruit, for by means of it the stream returns to its fountain, and God is glorified in and through His own work. And for the same reason it is not strange that it is so terrible to have nothing but leaves, for God seeks His own glory, and anything and everything that comes short of that, as leaves, must needs be burned.

May this fall season with its many leaves therefore spur us on to be faithful, in order that in the day of Eternal Harvest, it may not be true of us: nothing but leaves!

WELCOME

We have several new “faces” in this issue of Beacon Lights. We welcome to our staff of contributors:

Rev. M. Gritter—pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church at Pella, Iowa is our new Bible-Outline Editor.

Rev. P. Vis—pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church at Manhattan, Mont., who will write for the department of Christian Living.

Mr. Andrew Voss of Grand Rapids—amateur nature-lover, who will share his thoughts on interesting and instructive things in nature.

MANY, many thanks to the retiring editors and contributors for their thoughts and labors in behalf of our magazine. We sincerely hope we may reserve the privilege of calling on them for service at some future time.

To all our regular contributors and editors we extend our hearty thanks and appreciation for their willingness to serve the cause of Youth among us. May God bless you all richly.

The Editor
FROST

It has been a typical October day, crystal clear and sunny, but the warmth of the sun has been noticeably tempered by the chill wind. There have been a few slight frosts which have nipped the more tender plants of our gardens, but tonight's weather forecast seems to spell the end for the still living plants and flowers. The forecast warns that a killing frost will take place.

The weather map shows that we are under the influence of an intense high-pressure area which has originated far to the north and has brought with it clear skies and cool temperatures — an ideal condition for a killing frost. We hurry in the last of the vegetables and hopefully place newspapers over some of the remaining flowers.

What are the processes that go on during the dark hours of the night that causes the morning to dawn on whitened lawns and gardens? Suppose we spend the night out of doors — in fancy of course — and see how the Creator of heat and cold suspends again for a season the growth and development of all grass, herbs and trees. It is still early in the evening as we glance at the thermometer which is already down to thirty-eight degrees. This shows that the radiation of the stored sun heat has already begun in earnest. If our eyes could see them, we would perceive tiny heat waves, travelling out from every object around us, including ourselves. As we look up at the blazing stars we know that there is nothing to stop these heat waves. If there were a cloud layer, radiation would be greatly slowed for much of it would bounce back toward the earth.

Let us now look closely at the topmost leaf on this maple tree. It is about 35 feet above the ground. Suppose now that the air surrounding this leaf, upon which our attention is fixed, goes no lower than thirty-three degrees during the night. The leaf contains moisture and as the evaporation of moisture tends to cool, we find that our leaf's temperature drops a trifle lower than the air surrounding it. This slightly cooler air, being more dense than the surrounding air, begins to settle. This goes on about every leaf, so that by the time all these tiny trickles of cooler air converge there is a decided drift downward. When it reaches the ground surface it begins to spread out like a pool.

Our maple is located on sloping ground so that if again we could see this cold air we would notice another flow coming from higher ground and joining our pool. Where at first it was but a film, it has now thickened and caused a more rapid radiation of objects covered by it, which in turn increased the coldness of this frosty layer. At the bottom of this slope on which we stand is a level field. It is the lowest point in our vicinity. The dense cold air now begins to move toward this low spot, much as a stream would fill a hollow space to form a lake, only now we have a lake of freezing air and if this low spot be a muck farm, as is often the case, we find our heaviest frost damage there. To plant an orchard, for instance, in a valley would subject the blossoms to a much greater degree to
frost damage than if the orchard were on a hill.

The U. S. Weather Bureau has prepared tables of average first and last killing frosts and they are well to consult when we plant our more tender flowers and vegetables. In perusing these vegetables we were amazed at the difference of the growing season between last and first killing frosts. For example, Aroostook, Maine, has its last frost June 7 and its first September 22, while Los Angeles, California, has its last January 3 and its first December 28! The former has one hundred seven growing days while the latter has three hundred fifty-nine!

As we awaken and see this white hand of death covering all the plants we are saddened for we know that the beauty of yesterday will be dead and black today as the sun reaches the whitened plants and flowers. But we are Christians and all of God's works in nature have lessons for us. These plants are not dead! They live in seeds and spores and roots. Neither are we dead when death strikes us down as the frost the tender plant. Next spring the plants will rise again and in the eternal Spring of the new creation we also shall rise to die no more.

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TREES BESIDE STILL WATERS

Bordering the water's edges
Pompous trees are verdant green.
Rich their foliage, deeply rooted,
Fertile, grand, a beauteous scene.
May we drink thus at the fountain,
Walking as God's sons and daughters,
Deeply rooted, fruits abundant
As the trees beside the waters.

Mrs. J. A. Pastoor

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THE SUNSET

On a river's bank one evening,
I watched the glorious setting sun,
Speaking in its glorious splendor
That another day was done.
I drank in all the ecstasy
And every blending hue,
Of orange, red and lavender,
Of purple and of blue.

I pondered over many things
As I watched this golden crown,
Floating in an azure sky
And fleecy eiderdown.
This beauty surely filled my soul,
No, I could never own
A painting that would quite compare
As I sat there alone.

Then finally the sun was set
And disappeared from view,
But in my heart it was not gone.
The picture still was new.
God's nearness filled my being then,
No, not alone was I,
For He was there and He did make
The Earth, the Sea and Sky!

Mrs. J. A. Pastoor

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MY CHILD'S HAND IN MINE

She holds my hand and gaily walks,
Her steps are firm and sure,
With confidence and child-like trust
She finds her world secure.

I look into her eyes of blue
Such peace and love are there,
I bravely fight away the tears
And breathe a silent prayer.

"Lord, make me worthy of this love,
And lead her steps aright,
For this I cannot do alone,
I need Thy power and might.

"May I walk side by side with Thee,
In holiness divine,
'Tis only then that I can lead
With Thy hand clasped in mine."

Mrs. J. A. Pastoor
THE CHRISTIAN LABOR IDEAL

If the dignity of labor must be viewed in the way that the Reformers following Scripture, have indicated, then we will immediately understand that this noble function runs into many complications in this sinful world.

We have seen that the dignity of labor lies in its purpose, in its worthy product, in its abiding fruitage.

In this world of crooked and perverted relations and situations this principle is constantly trampled under foot of course.

It appears in the promise made by political leaders, "a job for every able-bodied adult" or similar ideals.

Now taken all by itself such a motto, such an ideal could mean, the goal at which we aim is the most efficient application to the task that God has laid upon us as a race, namely, to subdue the earth and its potentialities, to cultivate and enhance our existence and manifestation as servants and friends and covenant co-workers of our Creator and Redeemer in the glorification of His name.

And to be sure if the motto would mean that then it would express a very beautiful thought to say "a job for every man".

But of course it is hardly more than an amusing oddity to mention such a principle even, and much more ridiculous still to suggest such an ideal.

For the bitter fact is that such a motto actually toys with a purely selfish motive.

REV. ANDREW PETTER
Grand Rapids, Michigan

It usually does not imply the inherent joy of being worthily, productively engaged, but simply the thought of getting something for the self.

Whereas under the divine idea of labor and under a spiritual motivation the idea of "a job for all" would mean an opportunity to be productively engaged to be helpful, to be able to give of your gifts, your talents, your energies, to be able even, if need be, to toil, to undergo weariness, hardship, sacrifice for the welfare of our fellow men and for the service and glory of God, now in reality the sad meaning and implication is that it offers a chance to get a wage, a pay check, an accumulation of dollars.

Now someone will resent this as being very idealistic, and will quite boldly counter with the cross assertion, "Give me the pay check, brother, and just let some other do-gooder strive for your dreamy ideal."

But the simple facts of life give his crass assertion the lie, and sustain the ideal. And these simple facts are the unconscious testimony of sinful men to the beauty of God's ordinances.

We may adduce a simple example from the family life. The classic illustration is the unstinting toil and care and sacrifice of a mother to help her ailing needy child on the way to health and welfare. It is the example of noble, self-sacrificing, long range, purposive, productive, beneficent toil. The element of remuneration and dollar gain is completely out of sight.

On the other hand there is the instance that is so well known to many of
us, namely, the W.P.A., the government ' Work Program Administration' of recent depression times.

In two directions that instance illustrates the above indicated divine ordinance.

The purpose of this program was to level down somewhat the wealth of the economy into the levels of the unemployed and needy.

Then in the first place the purpose of the Work in the Program was to remove and avoid the demoralizing sense of the dole, the hand-out, and on the other hand, the demoralizing burden of the arrangement was the relative uselessness and non-productivity of the work.

As far as the actual tangible gain and product was concerned it might have been better to spare the wear on wheel barrows, shovels and shoe-leather, and to simply have delivered the dole to the man in his easy chair.

Thus the point of the divine ordinance is clearly sustained by the testimony of that famous work program—both by the attempt to create a feeling of being productively engaged, and by the demoralizing consciousness that the employment was not productive—the point namely that the divine purpose of labor lies in its productivity, its accomplishments, its beneficence.

Now it is the forgetting, the trampling under foot of this divine principle that aggravates the woes of our time. And it is also the calling of the Christian to see and live by this principle.

One of the most glaring examples of forgetting this principle appears in a wartime prosperity so called.

In a high spiritual sense a war can of course be thought of as the implementation of good righteous government and in so far we could think of cooperation in a war effort as rewarding occupation. That high ideal is abstractly conceivable of course.

But in actual fact a war effort is little more than a production only to see its products destroyed in complete fruitlessness.

The prosperity of war-time is a false prosperity. There is nothing left to show for all the effort and industry put forth. All its product goes into the holocaust of war or into the dump of decay.

And yet the general feeling easily rules us that the great exchange of dollars involved in this fruitless wartime round of activity means prosperity, welfare, progress, good times.

It is the false illusion that the purpose of labor is to bring us money, dollars, regardless of its production, beneficent value.

It is the self-deception of a false prosperity.

We could illustrate this self-deception by an imaginary family.

They have one communal purse, these parents with their children, and after a period of poverty and need a cyclone strikes the home and by a miracle a prosperity begins to appear. The father pays mother for clearing the wreckage, the mother pays father for repairing the structure, and both parents from their feeling of financial progress pay the boys a stimulating wage to bring in wood from the wood-lot and to rustle up vegetables and fruits from the garden and orchard. The girls are paid to stimulate sewing and knitting for the family.

We would say: happy days have come at last! Prosperity has entered.

And, marvelous to say, it was by the tragedy of a cyclone!

But it is a self-deception, it is a false prosperity.

That which could not be set going by
Summary of Convention Speeches . . .

"FAITH"—Rev. Herman Hoeksema — Roger Faber, Reporter

THE SUBJECT of Rev. Hoeksema's speech was Faith, the first member of the trilogy, chosen as the convention theme. His introductory remarks were concerned with the relation between faith and the other members of the trilogy, hope and love. The root of all, and hence the greatest of all, is love in the regenerate heart. Yet without faith there is no possibility of love, for faith is the bond with Christ, the confidence that God loves us. Moreover, hope is the longing of love for perfect fellowship with God.

Rev. Hoeksema then proceeded to the first main division of his speech: Faith, what it is. In general, he stated, faith is our bond with Christ, because true faith is saving faith, and all our salvation is in Christ. Salvation consists of two parts. First, we are delivered from the greatest evil, that is, from the guilt and power of sin and from the result of sin, which is death. Second, we are made partakers of the highest good, namely righteousness, holiness, and life. All this is in Christ because He is the essence of it. The speaker then presented three illustrations of our bond with Christ. He compared it with the connection between a house and a central power plant of electricity, with the bond between a tree and the soil, and with the living connection between a branch and the vine. This bond between us and Christ is faith, he continued. Faith is a God-given power of the whole soul, the channel through which Christ imparts Himself to us, the spiritual power by which we draw our all from Him. Faith may be distinguished into two parts: first of power and activity, second of knowledge and confidence. The power is given in regeneration and is latent, like the power of speech in an infant who as yet cannot talk. The power becomes activity through the preaching of the gospel. Knowledge must include both knowledge about Christ and experiential knowledge of Him. Confidence is the assurance that God loves me, forgives my sin, and gives me eternal life.

In his second division Rev. Hoeksema discussed the relation of faith to salvation. Negatively, he said, faith is neither a work, nor a hand that accepts an offer, nor a condition. Faith is not a work which replaces the works of the Law, for it merits nothing and is itself a gift of grace: Christ merits all on the cross. It is not a hand accepting an offer, for this is too mechanical a concept and one which implies that man must do something of himself. Further, he stated that faith is not a condition or prerequisite for the following reasons: God is always first; faith is a free gift belonging to salvation, and the term condition is Arminian in origin. Positively, Rev. Hoeksema went on to say that faith is a means. All our salvation is in Christ, and by the power of the God-given faith we become one plant with Him and draw all our life out of Him.

The third main point of this speech was concerned with the cause of faith, namely election. Election is not based on foreseen faith, but is rather the cause of faith and its deepest root. Hence, the speaker said, only the elect are saved and receive the gift of faith which can never be lost. Moreover, this faith is given to us through the Holy Spirit. He implants the power of faith in us at the moment of regeneration and brings it to activity by the Word of God and the preaching of the gospel.

Rev. Hoeksema's fourth main division
led hour and registration.

Wednesday morning there was a Get Acquainted Meeting. Rev. Theodore was the speaker. The meeting was officially opened with the Mass continued to arrive. Thursday evening the con-

ference delegates and federation members 

evening. Thoroughout the evening and all day 

heads arrived at Hall at 7:00 P.M. Monday 

Aftcr a long day of travel the bus from Grand 

...
treated of the fruits of faith. The first fruits of faith are good works. These good works are inevitable, for believers are active members of Christ, and it is impossible that faith should not bring forth fruit. These good works constitute our part of the covenant, namely love of God and the brother as well as repudiation of the world and hatred of sin. It is in this way that we receive assurance. Our speaker concluded with the following admonition: Do you have faith? Then bear fruit, for by the fruit the tree is known.

"HOPE"—Rev. Hubert De Wolf — Miss. Ruth Dykstra, Reporter

IT IS MY duty to call your attention to things of a serious and spiritual nature. I will call your attention to the Christian’s hope. Notice the meaning, the object and source, and the certainty.

Hope is exclusively the possession of the child of God, it is not for the world, her hopes are vain dreams, mere wishes and desires. The hopes of the world are like bubbles that disintegrate when touched. This is because the world places its hope on the things of this world. They all must end in death.

Man lies under the curse of God because of his sin, and God constantly makes foolish the wisdom of the world. We can see that in all things around us. What is there in the world that gives satisfaction? Nothing! Today the world is at the very brink of despair, nothing is working out as it should and as man hoped it would. Man lives in the terrible fear of atomic destruction and man is throwing himself into sinful pleasures with the slogan “what’s the use?”

In this hopeless world of sin and death, the Christian has a lively hope. Scripture speaks of hope from two points of view: objective and subjective. Objective hope is the thing hoped for. The object of our hope is for our soul what an anchor is for a ship. Subjective hope is the activity of hope. Practically these two are never separated, the one implies the other. If I have hope it means that there is something to hope for and that I hope for it.

Hope is a spiritual power whereby the Christian reaches out and longs for the fulfillment of the promise of God. Hope consists of three things: Certainty, the assurance that it is mine, Expectation, living with a view to the day when we shall receive our hope, and Longing, an intense desire to possess the hope, so that we live for the very purpose of possessing it.

The object of our hope is Salvation in the full sense of the word. We should be conscious of the fact that by nature we are sinful; but in the midst of the world and sin we stand sure in the hope of Christ. He made it real when He paid the debt of sin and put them to naught. Our hope is the fruit of the life of Christ in us. He delivers us from the temporal world with all its miseries, from this body that is bound by the fetters of time, from the power of death and corruption, and from death itself. To be perfectly holy and righteous, to live with God in His fellowship, to serve Him perfectly without sin. This hope is possible for us because our hope is not of the world nor fixed upon anything in this present world. The Christian alone has a real and lasting hope, fixed not in the temporal, but the eternal. He has an anchor grounded in the rock that is firm and sure. The Christians hope is anchored in Christ. Because of that anchor of hope the Christian remains unmoved in the midst of the world.

Do you have that hope? Then you
Thursday morning the business was completed. Lunch was served at noon in the church. There was an essay in the afternoon. Finally the convention was closed with the usual banquet and for many there was the long trip home.
will NEVER fail, for Christ will be there and will be all in all!

“Oh, were with ink the ocean filled
And the whole sky of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could a scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.”

SYMPOSIUM - “LOVE”

— Henry Kuiper, Reporter

ON THE AFTERNOON of August 28, the 1952 Convention was favored by a Symposium on love. The panel consisted of Leslie Havenga, Ronald Ezina, Agatha Lubbers, Ruth Miersma, and Gertrude De Vries, with Rev. Howzyl as the moderator. I will try to bring before you most of the ideas advanced in this discussion.

The moderator called on all the members of the panel to give their comments on the phase of the topic, after it was established that the “love” under discussion was the love between God and His people (which really is the only love) not the ill-tempered passion and lust of the world.

God is love. God is the fountain from which all love flows and the object for whose glory all love works. God loves Himself, first of all, as the highest good. In Himself He finds all good and therefore needs nothing on which to set His love.

Yet, it pleased God to create and to choose a special people on which to bestow His love. (For what end we will see later). Who were these people? You and I, yes, but what were we? A corrupt and HATEFUL people! Haters of God we were, and all that which was of God. But God loved us, not as we were in ourselves, but as we were in the greatest of all manifestations of love, Christ on the cross. What a love was shown there!

God now fills us with the Spirit of love. Giving this love He commands us to walk in love towards God and the neighbor. We must walk in unity with each other and that is obtained through grace by (1) Killing our old nature of sin (2) Walking in humility; forgiving one another in Christ. We must remember that we do this not of ourselves, but that it is GOD’S love manifesting itself in our lives. Love is also the banner of the Christian by which all may see and recognize us as a different people. They will see it in our walk, in our attitudes, in everything. As a result of wearing and living this banner, we are derided and persecuted. But love, through faith, sees Christ in the end. With an eye singled to that end, love suffers long and endureth all things. Read the unwavering language of faith, about love, in Romans 8:38-39.

The experience of that love’s nearness and power varies throughout the life of each individual child of God, One may feel that the Love of God is more real at one time than at another. The love is not lacking, but the experience of it is. In the measure that we walk in sin, in that measure we lose the consciousness of His love.

The final end for which God has poured out His Spirit of Love upon the people of His choosing, is identical to that for which all things happen. God poured out His love through Christ upon His people that they in their lives and hearts might return to Him with His love, praising Him for all the wonders of His grace.

All is of God, even the love wherewith we love Him. By faith we look for Love in perfection in the day when the Son of Love will return.
CONVENTION

What do you think of the ride back from Municipal park?

It was an interesting experience for the whole caravan of cars. The lightning, thunder, rain, and wind gave us a good sample of Iowa weather. Even though the lightening came close occasionally, it certainly was beautiful.

Were you inspired by Rev. Hoeksema's speech?

Once again the convention is a thing of the past. Gone but not forgotten. Rev. Hoeksema's address on "Faith" was again one of the hi-lights of the convention. Faith the instrument of our salvation. Implanted by God.

Truly a very educational, inspiring and long to be remembered speech.

H. Ipema

What is your impression of the Convention in general?

We enjoyed every minute of the convention from the mass meeting through the banquet. The speeches were very interesting and the outing also very enjoyable. We think the hospitality of the Hull people was wonderful and the young people deserve many thanks for their splendid job of being host society.

Ferna Flikkema and Claire Leep

IMPRESSIONS

Did you enjoy the symposium and essays?

The symposium on "Love" which was led by the Rev. Howerzyl and consisted of essays contributed by five young people, I feel was very instructive.

The essays were excellent and well written. I know after hearing these essays and discussion, together with the convention, the love of God holds more meaning for us as covenant young people and has given us the blessed assurance of his ever abiding Love.

Isla Stegink

Did you enjoy the trip through the Morrell Packing Plant?

I think I can speak for all of the young people who attended the convention as well as myself when I say that we enjoyed the tour through the Morrell Packing Plant at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, very much. It was interesting to see the different processes of how we obtain our meat. The tour was entertaining as well as educational.

Thea Bylsma
TRUTH VS. ERROR
cont. from page 12
a sense of duty of communal obligation of gratitude, of helpfulness was finally stimulated by the circulation of jingling money.

The machinery of prosperity seems spinning again, but only as long as the money jingles, and as long as no hitch occurs anywhere along the line or in the cycle.

But the sense of joy in duty, of affection, of welldoing and helpfulness fast disappears in this household.

There is nothing to span the inevitable lapses in the giddy round of selfish self-deception.

Woe to the family whose lot hangs on such a motive—the feel of money.

It is a simple illustration. But it points the direction in which God has ordained that we shall live our lives also in this mad world of labor-problems.

THE CHURCH
The Church of God, as Jesus said
Upon a rock is built,
Our sins are truly blotted out,
Removed is all our guilt.

Our hearts are filled with joy and hope
To dwell within these walls,
For happiness and peace are there
No matter what befalls.

A call to prayer, a call to peace
Our darkness is made light
Communion of the Saints we find
Makes our dark pathway bright.

A beacon light in a dark world,
So shines the Church of God,
May we be witnesses for Him
And loud His praises laud.

The bride is ever thus adorned
With faith and hope and love,
The bridegroom speaks and she obeys
The message from above.

Though imperfections now are found
As we on earth abide,
The final day we'll enter in
The Church then glorified.

Mrs. J. A. Pastoor

A blind man is really nourished by
the food he eats, even though he cannot
see it; so, when by the blindness of our
spiritual wisdom, we are unable to dis-
cern the Savior, yet his grace sustains
our strength and keeps us alive in fam-
ine.

We Acknowledge with Thanks:

Gifts for Beacon Lights Fund

1st Church, Kalamazoo ............. $25.00
2nd Church, Grand Rapids .......... 35.93
A friend .................................. 1.25
A friend .................................. 5.00
Hope Ladies' Society .................. 25.00
Mr. and Mrs. J. Hoekstra .......... 2.00
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Doon Prot. Ref. Church .............. 10.81
Hudsonville Church ................ 37.40

Servicemen's Fund

A friend ................................ 10.00
OPEN FORUM

Dear Mr Editor,

“What shall we have for a project this season?” Every society season we are faced with the same problem. Here’s a suggestion. Why not start a church library fund? There are many reasons why all of our churches should have libraries:

1. There is a certain amount of required reading that those in school must do. We could include some of these books in our library.
2. This reason offers a solution for program committees. So often these unfortunate people are faced by the reply, “I can’t find anything” when they ask a member to take part in the after recess program. Books of readings etc. could be included in the library and would eliminate the excuse.
3. For those who do not have reference material in their homes we could include concordances, Bible dictionaries, etc. and thus encourage more thorough preparation for Bible discussion.
4. Now for the most important reasons—entertainment. How nice it is to have good, entertaining literature close at hand. As we do not have many really good Christian novels, some well qualified person(s) could be appointed to read the books and write a short review to be placed in the front of the book, which would point out the good and bad points of the books and guide the reader.
5. My last reason is to me a very prominent one. So often we read the book reviews in Beacon Lights and are unable to obtain the books which sound interesting to us. These books also should be included in the church library.

I have been told that our Second, Oaklawn, and Manhattan churches already have libraries and although they only have a small number of books yet, it is rapidly growing. I understand that the library in Manhattan is run by the Young People’s society and that each member donates a book to the library on his or her birthday. This is an excellent idea.

This is a challenge to all our young people. Let’s accept it and really work on it!

Sincerely, Diane Brummel

AN OPEN LETTER TO SCHUILER

In the Beacon Lights of August an article appears by Schuiler in which he writes that the teaching of Reformed Doctrine is not the task of the school and that Christian School Societies err when they appoint ordained ministers of the Word to teach Bible and Reformed Doctrine in the school. For the sake of brevity I will not quote this article but merely refer our readers to it.

The reader will understand that the undersigned is greatly interested in this question. And I am sure that the school board is also interested. Fact is, I have been engaged in this work during the last school season and have been requested to continue in the season that lies before us. I expect to teach two classes of Bible and certainly look forward to teaching our children in our Protestant Reformed doctrine. According to the article in Beacon Lights the school board erred when they asked me
to teach and I erred when I accepted the appointment.

We know that there are three agencies of instruction: the home, the church, and the school. If it be true that no Christian School Society may appoint ordained ministers to teach Bible or Reformed doctrine in the school and that to teach Reformed doctrine is exclusively the task of the church, then one cannot escape the conclusion that also the home may not be engaged in this task. I would, therefore, ask you the following questions. First, may I as a Christian parent teach Reformed doctrine to my children in the home? Secondly, should we not distinguish between teaching doctrine and preaching the Word? When I teach doctrine to my children at home or to the children in the school I do not preach to them.

Rev. H. Veldman

TELEVISION PROGRAMS

Whereas, The development of television has become an important part of many homes and the programs exhibited are frequently frivolous, carnal, and of the character which is opposed by the Christian religion; and

Whereas, The commercials on these programs promote the use of alcoholic beverages, and encourage other habits injurious to youth; and

Whereas, The programs are watched by children and young people of immature resistance:

Be it resolved, That we register our protest against these programs with the I. C. C., our Congressmen and Senators, and demand that laws be passed requiring television to present programs of education, artistic culture and constructive entertainment, and that the apparent monopoly of the liquor, beer and tobacco interests over this form of domestic entertainment be broken up.

Resolution passed by National Association of Evangelicals, April 11, 1951.

AN ILLUSTRATION

A tramp who had asked for a drink in a saloon was requested, by the assembled crowd, to make a speech. He spoke as follows: "I look tonight at you and myself, and it seems to me that I look upon the picture of my blighted manhood. This bloated face was once as handsome as yours, for I was a man of the world of men. I, too, once had a home and friends and position. I had a wife as beautiful as an artist's dream, but I dropped the priceless pearl of her honour and respect into a cup of wine, and like Cleopatra, saw it dissolve, then quaffed it down in the brimming draught. I had children sweet and pure as the flowers of spring, and saw them fade and die under the blighting curse of a drunken father. I had a home where love lit its flame upon the altar and ministered before it, but I put out the holy fire, and darkness and desolation reigned in its stead. I had aspirations which soared as high as the morning star, but I broke and bruised those beautiful forms, and strangled them, that I might hear the cries no more. Today I am a husband without a wife, a father without a child, a tramp without a home, and a man in whom every impulse is dead. All have been swallowed up in the maelstrom of drink." (Said to be a true tale of a once prominent attorney at Tiffin.)

—Illustrated Bible Studies
The Military Mail Bag

IN MEMORIAM

The editor of this column, along with the entire staff of Beacon Lights wishes to express his deepest sympathy to the Dangeroend family of Redlands, California in the loss of their son

PFC. CLARENCE C. DANGERMOND

We pray that the Lord will sustain them in their days of sorrow and trust that they may see His hand in all things.

Thus our column begins. It is not our purpose or intention to dwell on this tragedy, but we do feel that a few words would not be amiss.

If we were writing in a paper read by the people of the world, the beginning paragraph would to them be of no comfort whatsoever. We would have to tell them that dying for one's country was wonderful, that to keep America free from aggression was the proud duty of all of us, etc.

You young men, know better. We know that we are only instruments used by God to bring His plans to pass. We also know that when our days on earth are finished, regardless of where we are God will call us home. And so that is why we really never die. God looks down from His heavenly kingdom and calls to us. We as his children answer. That Christian soldiers is our comfort. Then we need never fear.

---

Harold Knott from our Creston Church, has returned from two years of service with the Navy. This past week he was reunited with his wife and children. We rejoice with them.

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Ed Ophoff from first church has recently been promoted from Corporal to Sargeant. Congratulations Ed.

---

Say, you fellows let me down again. No letters this month. What's the matter? This has got to cease as of now. Believe it or not, people back home are really interested in your letters. Remember there are lots of ex-servicemen who have been stationed in the same places where you are now. They would like to hear about your experiences and reactions to those far away places. Those service days aren't so far behind them you know.

The percentage of letters received from our servicemen is really shameful. They amount to less than one percent of you a month. I know you can do better than that. Let's really go to town next month and try to get that percentage way up there—to at least two percent. We'll be looking for your letter. DON'T disappoint us.

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A genius is an ordinary fellow with his heart harnessed to his task. Call the roll of the great, and, sure enough, you will find that those who become leaders are men and women who fall in love with their jobs.

---Progressive Mail Trade
BIBLE OUTLINE

LESSON 33

Beware, The Voice of Old Testament History

(I Cor. 10:1-6)

PAUL RE-BROADCASTS the voice of Old Testament history for our benefit, that is for our warning, admonition and instruction. They who are sincere will take it to heart, others will disregard it. By the trail of dead men’s bones you can trace the path of the disobedient through the desert. How real are those dead bodies scattered across the desert. Paul makes those dead bodies speak. They tell the story of the Israelites, in the peculiar and favored position of living under the Word and the Sacraments and meanwhile lasting after world-conformity. Calvin says: “on their abusing their privileges they did not escape the judgment of God. Be afraid, for the same thing is impending over you.” The Corinthians were surrounded by idolatry and idolatrous practices. Paul uses Israel’s history to warn and instruct the brethren.

Paul speaks in all these verses of the FATHERS. And they were the fathers whose dead bodies were scattered along the burning sands (vs. 5). He speaks of them as fathers in a wide, national sense as heads of the covenant generation. (Cf. Acts 22:1 and often). The Jews to whom Paul writes in Corinth are children of these fathers, and in a sense we are too. If that happened to the fathers, don’t boast as if it could not happen to the children. It will if they walk as their fathers walked. God remains unchangeable.

Paul emphasizes the word ALL. Nationally they all had in common that they had contact with the things of Christ, for they ate of the Manna and they drank of water from the rock. What nation was there like Israel who had God living so close to them? All were under the cloud (Ex. 13:21, Nu. 9:15, Deut. 1:33, etc.) that is, they were all under the sheltering position of the presence of God. All passed through the Red Sea and thus they were led out of Egypt and were headed toward Canaan. All were baptized unto (into) Moses and by that passing through the Sea and by dwelling under the cloud they were nationally attached to the Mediator of the Old Testament. Moses led them. Moses prayed for them. Moses pointed them to the Christ. What a peculiar and responsible position they held. They all ate angels’ food which the Lord sent them six days per week. They all drank from the rock. Christ Himself was the Rock and the demonstration of Christ’s presence followed them through all the desert wanderings.

Hence Israel as a nation had the peculiar privilege of being in constant contact with the things of Christ. Something of which we are reminded in Heb. 6:4-6, Jude 5 as well as Romans 3:1-2. Never a day went by or they had to confess: Christ is all around us.

And how did they conduct themselves amid such covenantal demonstrations?
Vs. 5 tells us, "With the greater part of them God was not well pleased" (cf. the Dutch translation). And God showed His anger by scattering their dead bodies along the desert path. Do not say now that God’s Word or Promise has failed, for Romans 9 will convince you that behind these scenes we have election and reprobation, and the election has obtained it. It is beside the point to argue that all had grace and all partook of Christ, for “the sacraments are connected with the thing signified, nevertheless both are not received by (all) men”. (find it in the Belgic Conf.) In fact the wicked receives the sacrament to his own condemnation but he doth not receive the truth of the sacrament, he receives the sacrament but not the Christ signified thereby.

The point Paul establishes in this passage is to show Israel’s conduct amid the demonstrations surrounding them. How did they behave themselves? They lived in unbelief. They were idolatrous. They lived in the Christ-contact but in the meantime they lusted after things contrary to Christ. They professed to be God’s people, presumed that they could live complacently. They loved not God but they loved sin. And in them sin comes to its most horrible manifestation.

These things happened to them as types for us; examples of what unbelief is, what it does and how God punishes it. Beware then ye Corinthians that ye lust not after evil things as Israel did. Your streets are lined with idols and heathen practices. Be admonished. And so the Word is carried to us also. For the Kingdom of heaven is shut to those who under the name of christians maintain practices or doctrines inconsistent therewith and will not, after having been admonished, renounce their errors.

Questions for Discussion
1. All passed through the Sea. Ex.14:12 states that many would rather have remained in Egypt. Did they go thru the Sea against their own wills perhaps? Or what?

2. Sin is sin, but what difference would you say there is between the sin of those who live in contact with Christ’s things and those who do not?

3. What do you think about the reasoning: we are children of God, warnings, exhortations and threatenings are out of place? (Cf. Canon 5 V: 14).

4. We should evidently keep lively contact with the Old Testament. How best to do that?

LESSON 34

For Our Admonition

(I Cor. 10:7-14)

IN THIS PASSAGE we find four examples of the conduct of a people come through the Sea, baptized into Moses, eating of the manna. Idolatry, fornication, murmuring...all manifestations of unbelief. There is a remnant according to the election, but even the word remnant indicates the process of sin, judgment and righteousness.

Paul says he cites these historical events because they happened to them as examples for us. What happened to that Israel will happen to unbelievers in our day. May we have faith to see the examples.

Written for our admonition.

The event recorded in vs. 7 comes from Ex. 32:6 where the people, once led out of Egypt, kept the lust of sin in their hearts and engaged in a pagan feast of idolatry around the golden calf. The eating and drinking and dancing went
hand in hand with burnt offerings and peace offerings to their gods. Imagine Israel doing that. What is called Israel today can do the same.

Corinth at that time had its streets lined with gods and theatres for pagan feasts. Our world has the subtler form of idolatry. Israel corrupted itself. Eating, drinking, playing and singing (Ex. 32:18) can be elements entering into the service of God if the heart is right, but where lust is these things degenerate into idolatrous revelry. Witness our modern world and its revelry. In the case of Israel judgment followed.

The second example is taken from Num. 25:1. At Balæam's advice Moab invites Israel to come and play with them. Israel goes. Revelry and fornication follow, of which Num. 25 presents one shameless scene and we know the rest. Judgment followed quickly for twenty-three thousand were slain. Num. 25:9 says twenty-four thousand were slain. Both figures are correct. Such variations only prove how accurate the Scripture is. How easily Israel was led to world-conformity. Example.

The third, recorded in vs. 9, comes from Nu. 21:4-6. The people are discouraged at the detour on the already too-long journey to a Canaan they did not care about. Some readings state that they tempted Christ, some say they tempted the Lord. Both are true of course. Christ is the Bread of Life. When in Nu. 21:5 they speak of the manna as worthless bread they grievously blaspheme the Christ. They tried the Lord and found that He was faithful. The serpents came at them from bush and hedge and sand dune, serpents that otherwise harmlessly crawled at their feet now slashed them with their fangs. So once more, says Paul, judgment followed.

In vs. 10 the reference is, I think, to the rebellion of Korah and his company in Nu. 16, the murmuring in 16:12-14 and the judgment in vs. 49. The destroyer is the earth-opening, the fire and the plague: Instruments of God's righteous judgment.

These things happened to them as types to you, Corinthians. Written for our admonition who live in the end-times. There is mercy in these admonitions. Thousands died, that we might be admonished. We profit by their loss. There is finality in these admonitions, and beware, lest you despise them.

We err if we think that we are free of the sins which brought the rebels of old time to ruin. We are not better. Christ has come and He has taken upon Himself the judgments of the sins of His children. Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. This is not to undermine our Christian assurance, but to rid us of complacency. Israel after the flesh lived puffed up and conceited, it lived recklessly, boasting that they were the people and that they were beyond danger. If you stand on such conceit...the fall will come.

And don't say that God is at fault, as if He tempteth (tries) His people so that the fall is inevitable. No, to, it is not His fault but yours. Lust leads to sin and sin leads to death. With God is grace abundant to endure every trial. If you lust after evil things you incur judgment. God keeps His people, for His election never falls (cf. Canons V: 1-8) and His saving grace never ends. Don't tempt Him then, but instead FLEE from idolatry and flee to Christ Who has overcome all that we might enjoy His victory by faith. Wherefore, dearly beloved, instead of seeking and exposing yourself to idolatry, flee from it.

Questions for Discussion

1. Young people often spend more time meditating on how they may engage in idolatry, than how they may flee...
from it. Is that statement true in your life?

2. What prevented ALL Israel from being destroyed by sin?

3. God punishes the idolaters, our lesson tells us. What punishment is there on idolatry today? Or does it wait until the final day of reckoning?

4. Upon us the "ends of the world are come" (vs. 11). Literally it says that the "ends of the ages are arrived upon us". What does that mean for the days in which we live? Cf. also Rev. 22:10-12.

5. Suggestions for an after-recess paper next week: Modern Idolatry—I. Confronting our Covenant Youth, II. Discerned by our Covenant Youth, III. Our Covenant Youth Fleeing from it.

LESSON 35
Fellowshipping With God and With Devils?
(I Cor. 10:15-22)

THIS IS WHAT Israel after the flesh had been doing. Chap. 10:1-14 illustrates that very clearly. Professing to be sacramentally joined to God, eating the Manna and drinking from the Rock, etc. they nevertheless also joined themselves to pagan nations and attended their feasts.

You have seen how this provoked the Lord to anger and how in His jealousy He destroyed them; showing you how holy and different He is.

Will you, Corinthians, repeat the sin of profaning the covenant? You stand in danger of it because you profess to have communion with Christ... you partake of the Communion. And a little way down the street from where you profess to have fellowship with God stands an idol temple. You go there to partake in that heathen feast? Can you fellowship with God and with devils?

Nay, brethren, says Paul, let me patiently and firmly instruct you.

I speak as to people who have been instructed in the Apostolic doctrines and as people who can give intelligent answers. I ask you: The wine which Christ blessed and ordained into a sacrament, is it not the fellowship of Christ's blood? And the bread, is it not fellowship with Christ's body? Answer that. Your answer is: YES. You are enlightened enough to know that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament signifying union between believers mutually and between believers and Christ. As out of many kernels of wheat one bread is baked, so out of many believers who eat that bread Christ makes a unity, a communion.

You know that. That is the way it was in Israel's days too. They which ate of the sacrifices were partakers of a communion. And if they touched an unclean thing and ate of the offering, they were cut off. (Lev. 7:21) You know that, for I speak to such as have been catechized in Apostolic doctrine.

Professing therefore to have fellowship with Christ, would you attempt to have fellowship with devils also?

Paul has reference to the pagan feasts which were held in Corinth. The heathens had their "mysterie:" and celebrations to their gods. All the Corinthians used to attend these feasts. But the power of grace through the Gospel had come and some had been converted. Yet there was a tendency among some to back-slide. They professed to be joined to Christ but they also attended the heathen feasts. Against this sin of backsliding the Apostle warns both them and us today.
You cannot, says Paul in vs. 21, you cannot do both. An idol is nothing (vs. 19) The gods they serve at the feasts do not even exist. But behind their feasting there is the devil. He is REAL. He DOES exist. And when you attend these feasts you join with pagans to sacrifice to devils.

You cannot do that. Not only that; you MAY not. You cannot do that without denying God and incurring the wrath of this Jealous God. Provoking the Lord, is that what you want to do? He is jealous and would you tempt Him to show His holy jealousy? Israel did and they found that He was stronger than they and they were destroyed.

So Paul instructs them and us to live holily, as those who are joined to the Lord and therefore must be separated from all that the Lord hates. God is the God of the antithesis. Faith and sanctification cannot be separated. As we are united to Christ by a living, obedient faith, so shall we be a peculiar people on the streets of Corinth and everywhere. They in Corinth had their pagan feasts, we have refined paganism all about us.

Questions for Discussion

1. Notice how essential is the knowledge of the Apostolic Doctrine. Our God-view determines our view of all things. His jealousy, for instance.

2. Someone says: I will escape the rigors of the antithesis by not making confession of faith, hence not a communicant at His Table, hence free to attend pagan feasts? How would you answer such an one?

3. Do heathens knowingly “sacrifice to devils?” Vs. 20. Ignorantly then?

4. II Cor. 7:1 speaks of “perfecting holiness” —what does that mean in our lives as young people?

LESSON 36

For Edification of Another

(I Cor. 10:23 - 11:1)

MUCH OF SCRIPTURE comes to us as the inspired answer to real problems in the church. Our passage is such an answer to the question of whether it was right or wrong to eat meat once offered to the idol but now sold at the butcher shop. Such petty things, you would say. But a principle is involved. And principles are eternal, as the Truth, unchangeable.

In the Corinthian congregation one says: we have christian liberty and we may eat all meats. Paul had enunciated this principle of christian liberty in 6:12 and 8:10 (cf. especially Outline 30). Another says: no, if we eat meat offered to an idol we establish contact again with idolatry. So this one says it is not lawful.

Says Paul: eating of all kinds of meats is lawful (permissible). We have that liberty. But our liberty is not a selfish thing (vs. 24), it comes up out of brotherly love and must be used for the edification of the brother. If your weaker brother is offended at the ease with which you eat all kinds of meat, don’t press the point of liberty, but rather reach for edification.

If it is a matter of your own conscience, feel free to stop at the butcher shop and order meat. And don’t be disturbed as to whether it is tainted or untainted meat. Psalm 24 says that the earth is the Lord’s and all its meat, and the Lord gives me that meat. Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (I Tim. 4:4). So meat-eating is lawful and a non-existent idol can do nothing to the meat to taint it.
That is your freedom. Whether that meat is set before you in the butcher shop (vs. 25) or whether you happen to be invited to the home of an unbeliever and it is served at his table (vs. 27). Ask no questions, that is, don’t inquire about what kind of meat it is. Your knowledge of the Apostolic Doctrine should be strong enough to free your conscience from the need of asking questions.

You are so right. You have liberty. It’s a luxury to enjoy the freedom which we have in Christ.

But wait, says Paul. There is such a thing as giving up your luxury for another’s edification. Some in the church probably are not as far advanced as you are. They might be offended when they see you so “carelessly” buying and eating meats. Give them time to catch up with you. Your liberty has limitations. You may be technically correct, but brotherly love is something too. In vs. 24, Paul reminds them that none should selfishly seek his own advantage. If at the private table certain meat is pointed out as being tainted, for the sake of him that made the remark, refrain from eating meat. Your own conscience does not accuse you, and neither will you let your liberty be judged by another’s conscience. Conscience is not your guide. God’s Word is. If you eat and drink in recognition of God, who can find fault with you?

But the law of brotherly love requires that we give no offence in such indifferent things as these. I will eat no meat, says Paul, I will forego living in the luxury of my Christian freedom if by so doing I can seek the profit of many, that they may be saved. The edification and salvation of others is more to me than freely eating meat. And you, be followers of me as I also am an imitator of Christ. He came, not to serve Himself nor to please Himself.

He gave up all things for our sakes. Can we give up some?

Questions for Discussion

1. Touch everyday life with the principle enunciated above and what do you have? Someone always being offended by something someone else does. Someone says: I’m not going to give up my lawful freedom, let the other fellow learn to quit being offended and learn my freedom too. What would you say about it?

2. Why the three groups in vs. 32. Or is it one group or two?

3 In vs. 27 does Paul sanction social intercourse with unbelievers?

4 Why is the salvation of others (vs. 33) so important to Paul? Do we give evidence of it being important to us? How?

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OUR UNIVERSAL NEED

“Religion is adventure not in theory but in practice. What we need now is not a new set of Ten Commandments from a professor of sociology, but a truer understanding of the old ones and a stronger will to keep them in the spirit. What the modern age lacks is not a new concept of God scientifically defined, but a deeper sense of His vital presence in the world and in our hearts, and a more courageous resolve to make Him known to our fellowmen through Christ.”—Selected.

There are no times in life when opportunity, the chance to be and to do, gathers so richly about the soul as when we suffer. Then everything depends upon whether we look to the lower or the higher source of help. If we look to God, the hour of suffering is the turning hour of life.—Phillips Brooks.
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