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Rev. H. Hockema
Out here in the midwest corn belt, there is an insurance company,—its name is not important,—which has the rather gruesome custom of marking every fatal highway accident with a sign, which, besides bearing an "X" to mark the spot, also carries in large letters the single word "THINK." I suppose the sign has merit in so far as it is an admonition not to be thoughtless, not to dream, while you are driving a couple of tons of potential death down the highway at sixty miles per hour, and in so far as it is a grim reminder, with its "X marks the spot", of the possible consequences of failure to think. But I submit that the admonition is not complete. It ought also to carry some such word as straight or correctly. For if you think, but think wrongly, the consequences will be equally as fatal as when you fail to think at all.

It was not my purpose, however, to write an essay on straight thinking behind the wheel. I'll leave that to the safety officials. I do want to offer a few thoughts on the subject of Straight Thinking by you young people, and that too, in connection with the subject of the day, the schism in our churches.

You can scarcely avoid thinking about that schism. I cannot, and your consciences cannot, and your parents cannot avoid it. But you cannot either. Nor would I advise you to try to avoid thinking about it. I would rather give you this advice: THINK STRAIGHT! Nor is it difficult to point out the fundamental reason why you should think straight. That schism,—and in this connection I think mainly about the doctrinal issue, the issue of the truth, which lies at the root of it,—that schism concerns the churches in which you either have already made or are going to make confession of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That means you give an answer to the question: "Do you acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian Church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?"

Briefly, I would define straight thinking as that process of mind (and should I, mindful of the fact that we face basically a spiritual issue here, add the words: "and heart?"), whereby upon the basis of the objective facts in a given case (in... The author of this feature article is the Reverend Homer C. Hoeksema, pastor of the Doon, Iowa, Protestant Reformed Church.
this case, the schism), and in the light of abiding principles of truth (Scripture and our Confessions), we draw the obviously correct conclusion.

The above is a rather formal definition. But it applies. And any other kind of thinking in the present situation is fatal. And we should ban it.

However, it is very easy to be led astray in this respect. So easily we allow emotion and sentiment to control our thinking. And sometimes it appears equally easy to allure our thoughts out of the straight course marked out by Scripture and the Confessions by other means, by false philosophy, false doctrine, by false witness, false quotation.—in short, by all those means which Scripture classifies as "the sleight of men," and "cunning craftiness."

I cannot here present the objective facts concerning the schism in our churches. They would probably fill more than a single issue of Beacon Lights. But let us briefly take notice of some instances of wrong thinking, and be warned against them.

"I can't imagine that Rev. So-and-so would teach such a heresy. I can't imagine that Rev. Blank is not Protestant Reformed. Why, I had all my catechism instruction from him. He has a reputation for being Protestant Reformed. I never heard him say anything that was not Protestant Reformed when he was in the ministry." The above are some examples of wrong thinking, when such thoughts are allowed to carry weight in coming to a conclusion about the present schism. And let me add that they are all real examples. But do you not see the error? This whole schism is, in the first place, not a question of what anyone can imagine, not a question of anyone's reputation for being Protestant Reformed, and not a question of the past teachings of anyone. And if we allow ourselves sentimentally to be guided by thoughts like the above, we will surely go astray.

For schisms are undoubtedly painful; and the smaller and more intimate the church circles which schisms strike, the more painful they become, I suppose. But how about the question whether heresy has been propounded, whether church political rebellion has taken place, and whether or not a certain officebearer, or member, is knowingly and wilfully supporting such heresy and rebellion? Think on that, unbiased by your emotions.

"They don't mean to teach heresy. Rev. De Wolf himself said he never meant to teach that, etc., etc." This is probably one of the most frequent instances of wrong thinking. Let me answer it very briefly, by saying that in the church and in the pulpit, and when it concerns the truth, the old saying does not apply, "Take a Dutchman for what he means, not for what he says." Let me answer further by asking, "If it be true that he, or they, do not, or did not, mean what has been said, would it not be the easiest thing in the world to retract it?" And let me warn further: find out what indeed they did mean, if they did not mean what they said!

Another mode by which some are tempted to leave the path of straight thinking is the frequent claim that the whole issue is not important anyway, that it is a quibbling about terms, that it is theological hair-splitting. To think the above thoughts is also wrong thinking. For, in the first place, history should teach us two things on this subject. The first lesson of history is that it is a favorite method of those who depart from the truth to speak in the above manner. And the second lesson is that the occasion has been rare indeed when a case of genuine hair-splitting arose. And in the second place, it could very easily be demonstrated—and it has not been to date—if this were a case of mere terms or a
case of hair-splitting. And finally, I would add that the truth is indeed distinctive, down to its finest details.

The above examples could be multiplied. But I lack the space.

Be warned by them.

And exercise yourselves in straight thinking. Ask yourself: what are the facts? What are the issues? What principles of Scripture and the confessions are at stake here? And guide your decision by the answers to these questions.

That requires study. It requires searching of the Scriptures. It requires that you be founded in the full truth.

And let Beacon Lights aid in this. It is well that Beacon Lights should be an "all around" magazine for our Protestant Reformed young people. But let it never lose its fundamental aim of shedding the beacon light of our Protestant Reformed truth, the true and complete doctrine of salvation, upon the path of life. For if that aim should be forgotten, it would become a beacon without any light.

—Homer C. Hoeksema
Not Despair, But Hope

Even as the adults, the members and their families, have experienced the breakdown of the denominational and institutional life of our churches by the recent so-called "split" in the Protestant Reformed Churches, so our young people have experienced the disruption of our church life, as it has affected them in their young lives, in their contact with our churches. In young people's societies, catechism classes, Sunday schools, and young people's boards, as well as in the churches, the young people see with their own eyes the results of separation and division.

"Beacon Lights," the literary voice of our young people, their societies, and the Federation Board, found it necessary to re-organize its editorial and publishing arrangements, in order to meet the needs of the young people who desired to remain faithful to the historic Biblical and theological position of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Therefore, in the midst of the present situation that has developed and now prevails in our family of churches, faithful Protestant Reformed young people are called upon to give no vent to feelings of despair, but to continue fervent in hope. "Hope maketh not ashamed," said Paul, the Apostle.

"Hope," someone will ask, "what is hope?" The answer to this question is: Hope is that Christian virtue that expresses itself in a certain, definite expectation, coupled with a longing of the heart after the desired end. The content of hope, as a Christian virtue, is the final and ultimate glory of God. Christian young people are God's people, to whom God has given, by sovereign and free grace, hope, as a living thing; living in the hearts of His people. Armed with hope, Christian young people will have victory in the midst of any battle, any fray, for their hope is in the Lord. No matter, then, what given situation develops in their young lives, they have the calm assurance that all is well. Their God will bring victory out of seeming defeat. In this way, hope is the bulwark of the child of God.

The beautiful plant of hope, it is thought, thrives best in the soil of prosperity. But such a view does not accord with reality. The truth of the matter is, if we retain the metaphor—that the same plant of hope will bloom when watered by the tears of tribulation, trial or adversity. Out of tribulation, or any other form of suffering, hope takes heart and courage. Hope will reveal itself as a true, living hope, a beautiful gift, when it is a hope that is sanctified by the grace of God. Tribulation will not form a shadow on hope; but, instead, tribulation will be a ray of sunshine.

Because tribulation does not hinder the growth of hope, but fosters it, the present difficulty that has arisen in our churches must be considered as a form of suffering for the cause of Christ in this present evil world. The suffering that young people experience now, as they find themselves deeply affected by the developments that have already transpired, and have now become history, plus the present existing scene, these experiences, for them, will give substance to their hope. Tribulation, on this basis, as it takes the form of suffering for the
cause of Christ in our churches, will never be cause for despair, but will be cause for rejoicing. Christian young people who correctly evaluate tribulations do not merely accept them, as simply accidents; but they rejoice in the tribulations and trials that come, for they count it indeed a privilege that they can suffer for the cause of Christ in whatever circumstances God places them. The "split" itself is not cause for rejoicing. It could not be so,—never. Rather, the split is cause for sorrow and grief of soul. But the sorrow does not give way to despair, and end there. True sorrow is godly sorrow. It is sorrow that is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. True sorrow is sorrow over sin, and brings forth the fruit of repentance. Sorrow over the disrupted denominational and institutional life of the Protestant Reformed Churches is sorrow that arises in the hearts of the children of God in our churches because sin is manifest in the history that revolves around the two heretical statements of the Rev. H. De Wolf which were condemned by the classis of our churches. This history is well-known in the circle of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Our young people, who love the cause of God and His truth, look at the "split" as the work of God's hand whereby He is pleased to develop, further, the truth of His covenant and His promise,—as being a promise that is unconditionally given to His elect in the line of the generations of the believers and their seed. This truth of the Word of God is crystallized in the hearts of God's people through the means of the present controversy. The cause for rejoicing lies in God, and in His truth. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." I Cor. 1:31.

In addition to what the Sacred Writings teach about the relation of tribulation and suffering to hope, the Bible teaches the truth that tribulation makes a definite contribution to the spiritual life of the Christian young person. Tribulation works a positive advantage to hope, and that advantage is this: tribulation strengthens hope. Tribulation strengthens the hope of the Christian in three ways.

First, tribulation and suffering work in such a way that the cause of God prospers in the midst of the world. Not because of the world does it prosper, but the cause of God prospers because it is the cause of God. No trial, nor trouble, nor sorrow, nor need, nor any other adversity is used of the Lord to the detriment of His cause, which is the cause of His kingdom and covenant. All things work together for the good of His kingdom.

Secondly, tribulation strengthens hope in such a way that the longing of hope is intensified. With every form of suffering, the cry of God's people, whether in youth, or in advancing years, is the cry of the heart, and the desire of heart for the realization of the final glory of God. The longing of the Christian's hope is raised in the prayer that God's determinate counsel and will concerning all things, and in connection with all things, may soon come to pass, even when God's plan includes tribulation.

Thirdly, tribulation strengthens hope, to the end that the consciousness of the certainty of the Lord's victory grips the heart and mind and soul of God's child. The Lord is always victorious in battle, even before the battle starts. His name is Jehovah, the Lord God of Hosts. Because He is the Victor and the One who conquers all His foes, His people share in His conquests: for they are identified with Him by a living faith and the bond of love, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, Who dwells in the hearts of His people, and by the power of the Lord's Word. Tribulation serves hope best by giving to hope the

(Continued on page 12)
Living Out Of Good Works

Last time we pointed out that this discussion (the discussion of good works) must underlie any discussion we may have concerning the practical life of a Christian here below.

We also pointed out that it was only a Christian that could really discuss these things. And that for the reason that our rubric is entitled Christian Living. That presupposes that the Christian lives. And we made the distinction, the fundamental distinction between the Christian and unbeliever, that the one has life and the other does not. It is plain that we have reference to the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. The child of God is given new life at the point of regeneration. He becomes again a living creature. The unbeliever is in this sense of the word dead. He has not this life. Therefore he cares not for the Christian walk in the midst of this world. The Christian is vitally interested in this walk because it is a manifestation of the life which he has within him.

You may say that we need not discuss these things because we learned all these things in catechism and we have heard them time and again. Therefore we understand them and need not hash over it all now.

But these are important matters and not always understood the way they should be. This is evident from the fact that those who now follow De Wolf and cling to conditional theology deny these very things. They are very far from the Reformed line also on this. And therefore it is important that we understand just what we mean by Christian Living.

In general the problem centers around the question of the relation between salvation and good works.

More specifically the problem is: Are good works the fruit of salvation or conditions to it?

There is a wide difference between the two.

Let us explain.

Those who hold to conditional theology refuse to admit the difference. Let us see that first of all. They always add as an appendage to their conditions, Yes, but they are fulfilled by the grace of God. And that is supposed to eliminate any difference. It should strike our attention, first of all that this is only added as an appendage. If you do this, then God will do that if you fulfill this condition, God will do this. But He fulfills the conditions. The fact that the latter is added as an appendage should be a warning that it is really only a camouflage. Of course, they would not come out and say point blank that man must fulfill the conditions of his own power. That would be a dead give-away. Even though that is what they mean. But look at the foolishness of it.

Let me illustrate with an example I heard not so long ago which is very fitting. Think of a man lying in bed with two broken legs. You are standing by the door of his bedroom and you offer him five dollars if he will get out of bed and walk to you to get it. Of course he is unable to walk so that he can not possibly come to get the five dollars. He cannot
fulfill the condition of walking to you. So are you really presenting him with a condition? Of course not.

But now say that you go to the bed and carry him over to the door and then give him the five dollars. Do you have any condition left at all?

Now if God presents us with salvation if we come to Him, and since we cannot come to Him because we are dead in sins and trespasses, He carries us to Himself and presents us with salvation, is there any condition left at all? You say again, of course not.

The analogy is poor but serves the purpose nevertheless. And this is so obvious that we may safely conclude that those who adhere to conditions do not really mean that God fulfills the conditions. Because if they are conditions, and if it is supposed to make sense, then, it follows that we fulfill the conditions ourselves.

So you see, there is very plainly a difference between the two.

But let me point this out further.

Although, these men speak of many conditions which we must fulfill in salvation (including all the good works of a Christian) let us just use the act of faith as an example to keep the issue clearly before us. The act of faith they stress more than anything else as a condition to salvation.

And then they say that a person who has been regenerated, and who has already principally in his heart faith, must believe of himself if he is going to be brought into final glory. Apart from the faith which he principally has in regeneration, that faith must become active if he is going to be saved. I dare not ask them what would happen to that man with faith in his heart if he never manifested that faith in active belief. I wonder whether he would go to heaven.

But we conclude that all the good works of the Christian are exactly this kind of condition. He must perform them in his own strength apart from the power of God which he has by virtue of his regeneration, if he is going to be saved in the final sense of the word, i.e., if he is going to go to heaven.

But lest you doubt that that is what they actually teach: listen.

It is so apparent that De Wolf and his followers say exactly this, namely that a man can fulfill these conditions in his own power, that they go farther and say that "Our act of conversion is a prerequisite (condition) to enter into the kingdom of heaven." A man before he is regenerated must and therefore can fulfill conditions in order to be saved in the very initial sense, i.e., saved in regeneration.

And do not deny this. I am not interested in all the word twisting and sophistry that goes on to explain this in a right sense. The statement as such teaches this and can teach nothing other. If those who hold to this statement do not want that doctrine then let them now before it is too late retract the statement and apologize for ever using it. But at the same time, if it has been pointed out conclusively that that is the only interpretation, and they still hold to it, then the only conclusion we can come to is that they want exactly that.

But what has that got to do with Christian Living?

If our act of conversion can be performed while we are completely under the power of darkness, then any good work pleasing in the sight of God can be performed outside the kingdom of light. Then Christian Living only means that anybody must and therefore can live the life of a Christian, and therefore the purpose of this rubric is only to show people the way that they ought to live. We must then tell them that they can and therefore must live this way. They must not live in sin because then they will not be saved; but they must forsake... (Continued on page 12)
What is Truth?

It is perhaps well that we, at the very outset of our discussion of the battle of all ages, attempt to determine just who and what the participants in this battle are. We distinguish two camps. Over the one a banner is unfurled which bears the label of "Truth". Surrounding it on every side and even infiltrating into its ranks is the massive and unrelenting foe which is known through all history as "Error".

Truth vs Error! The battle which never ceases but waxes hotter and hotter to the very end of time!

In the present article we propose to make a precursory investigation of the first camp in order that we may somewhat acquaint ourselves with the Truth with whom we, as covenant children of God, are allied in this battle. This investigation then will have to be of a general nature and purposes only to assist us in distinguishing "the spirit of truth from the spirit of error" (I John 4:6). We hope that later we will have opportunity to become more intimately acquainted with the truth as we discuss it in detail in connection with the various phases of her battle.

What is Truth?

It is a sad omen of our times that many today have lost interest in this question. They no longer regard it as important. They are interested primarily in gain, which they suppose is godliness, and have turned their ears from the truth unto fables. Because the Word of God has forewarned us that it is to be so, we should not be alarmed at this nor should it detract from our interest or lessen our vigilence in seeking the truth. (See I Tim 6, II Tim. 3 and 4) The christian regards truth above all and, furthermore, his interest in it is not merely intelectual but he knows that it vitally concerns the "regula fidelis" (rule of faith) which governs his daily, practical life. The truth to him is the medium of sanctification (John 17:17) so that his soul is purified through obedience to it. (I Pet. 1:22) Every day, every hour and every moment the christian is deeply interested in the answer to the question, "What is Truth?" in its practical application to every decision he is called upon to make and to every circumstance with which he is confronted throughout life. Truth is his infallible life-guide! And there is no greater joy to be found than the joy of walking in the truth! (III John 4)

What then is Truth?

In answering this question we must remember the particular viewpoint from which we are considering the truth. It is her position as she stands in the midst of the battle of the ages and is always attacked by the enemy. That is the truth, not from any natural point of view, but considered specifically from the viewpoint of the Word of God. It cannot be denied, of course, that we can and often do speak of truth and of truths in a general or natural sense. We speak of the truth of mathematics, of science, of astronomy, of medicine, of history, etc. And these truths are not greatly contested. At least they are not brought into the arena of battle and your life is not endangered when you maintain them. No one will harm you because you believe that three times four is twelve or that the earth is warmed by the rays of the sun or that penicillin is antibiotic. These are simply factual truths. But, as soon
as you begin to propound the truth revealed in the Word of God you are met with relentless opposition out of which the bitterest battle ensues. That is because "the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehends it not" and "men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil". (Jn. 1:5, 3:19) The result is that evil men, denying the truth, oppose the truth and become corrupters of all things. Even in their discovery and investigation of natural things they corrupt the truth holding it under in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18)

If then we are to recognize the identity of truth, we must not look for her in the world but must find her in the Word of God and in the church that faithfully proclaims that Word in the midst of the world. Turning to the Scriptures we do not find a ready made definition of Truth. The Bible is no dictionary. Yet the concept is very prominent through the whole Word of God. Jesus declares of Himself, "I am the Truth" (John 14:6). The Psalmist states, "Thy law is Truth" (Ps. 119:142). Akin to this are the words of John 17:17 "Thy Word is Truth". And in 1 John 5:6 "The Spirit is Truth". The Truth is a master to whom we are to be subject and obedient. (Gal. 5:7) So there are many passages in Holy Writ which shed considerable light on this matter. It, however, is not our purpose now to consider the broad implication of truth for, as we stated earlier, we hope to do that when we come to discuss the battle of truth proper.

At this point, however, we wish to make a triple observation based on the passages cited above and which ought to place us four-squarely in the camp of Truth. We note: (1) That it is indisputable that GOD TRIUNE is Truth, is centrally THE TRUTH; (2) that it is further evident that all that GOD reveals (His Word and law) concerning Himself and all things is Truth for God cannot lie; and (3) whereas that revelation is for us the "regula fidelis" it follows that Truth in its most practical form is living in harmony with the revealed Word, Law and Will of God.

Now we may say a bit more. In the light of this last statement it is not difficult to see the fact and reason why you, covenant young people, who stand firmly upon and walk faithfully in the truth are always the object of attack. The Truth places you right in the midst of the battle. You now readily understand why they cast Christ out of the synagogues, persecuted and maltreated Him in every conceivable way. For He is The Truth. And the world hates the truth and opposes it. Error is always against the truth. Do you have reason to expect it to be different with you? When you walk in your home, in your church, in your business, in your place of labor, in your sphere of pleasure and entertainment in the truth, that is, in harmony with the revealed Word of God, can you expect that the world, in which no truth is found, will leave you alone?

Never!

Walking in obedience to your Master, THE TRUTH, you must expect a battle. The enemy of your Master is your enemy. He surrounds you and uses every power and opportunity he can to dissuade you from the truth. Do not shirk from that battle! Be not afraid! Be steadfast! Refuse compromise! Remember it is Truth vs. Error!

Walk in the truth and the truth shall make you free! More glorious assurance of victory there is not.

Gerald Vanden Berg
Water Around Us

“And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Thus Genesis describes the beginning when God formed the earth. In that same week of creation God separated the waters above from the waters below and, since the flood, there have been oceans and seas as we know them today.

The “waste and void” suggest to us something similar to one of the mud pools of Yellowstone Park and we know that God transformed this confusion into an orderly, functioning earth. To the majority of us, the act of God whereby he created the mighty seas appears to be one of the minor accomplishments of creation week, I am sure. Of course we realize that water is necessary for plant life as well as our daily nourishment. We are aware of the convenience of ocean travel, too. Not the least of water’s value is the inspiration which its beauty provides. Nor do we limit our conception to the vast expanses of oceans and seas but must include lakes, streams, snow, ice, and clouds in the scope of this creation.

However, let’s focus our attention now on the rich depth and breadth of the mighty oceans. We know that water covers a majority of our planet’s surface; and thus has a very great influence upon our lives. Until modern times, no one had accurate data on the depth of oceanic canyons since even the more shallow surfaces of the ocean had not been sounded. Navigators carried lengths of rope not more than two hundred fathoms and then only in order to test their proximity to land. Magellan, when he lowered his sounding line to two hundred fathoms between the islands of St. Paul and Los Tíbarones in the Tuamotu Archipelago and did not strike bottom, declared that he had discovered the deepest part of the ocean. Little did he know that there are places where the surface is four miles above the ocean floor!

Modern investigators have found that the surface of the ocean floor corresponds generally with that of the earth. It has mountains, valleys, canyons, plains, and high plateaus. It even has volcanoes which build up layers of material to such an extent that islands sometime arise out of the depths. As planetoid dust (50 tons per day) settles on the earth’s surface, so sediment from the land settles in the deep. This takes place by the action of the waves on the shore, by the action of rivers carrying silt, and to an extent by settling of particles out of the air. Thus the ocean may well be called the storehouse of the world since it is a well known fact that water and wind erosion carry away valuable materials. In general the geographic provinces of the ocean are continental shelves, continental slopes, and the floor of the deep sea. Often the valleys of this floor are continuations of the valleys of our own rivers. Mountains and canyons make up geographical sights unequaled by the grand canyon except that the depth of the ocean hides them.

Tides of the ocean are a most interesting phenomena. We have all wondered why the large oceans wax and wane while lakes do not swell and shrink. It is an established fact that the water of the ocean gravitates toward the moon,
The ocean is attracted by the moon's gravitational pull; not each individual drop of water but the whole mass. Since lakes do not have a sufficient volume of water to be attracted, they do not rise and fall with the appearance of the moon. Tides keep the water of the sea in constant motion. However, the action of the tides is not uniform along the earth's shores. For instance, at Nantucket Island the sea rises and falls little more than a foot. However two hundred miles north, at the bay of Fundy, the water may rise as high as forty or fifty feet. This great difference is caused by sub-surface geography and conflicting motion of deep water currents. Tides as well as storms cast a great deal of debris upon the shore. Among the great benefits of the tides is the marvelous assistance it lends to several kinds of marine life. It enables deep sea plants to leave their haunts and come near the surface for life-giving sunlight. Life would also be impossible for many animals which eat these plants. It is interesting that the breeding habits of oysters, sea urchins, the palolo worm, and many others would be hindered if tides would cease.

One of the greatest effects that the ocean has upon our lives is its control of weather and temperature. We are especially conscious of this 'weather control' in such places as Alaska, Spitsbergen, Greenland, and many other unseasonably warm spots. At the North Cape, warm currents keep open such harbors as Hammerfest and Murmansk, although eight hundred miles south at Riga on the shores of the Baltic, the harbor is choked with ice. The slightest variation of temperature of the Gulf Stream will profoundly effect the weather of Europe and America. Since our prevailing winds are westerly, the warm Gulf Stream does not raise the temperatures in our country while it may make a considerable difference to Western Europe. In fact, because the Gulf Stream was unusually warm in 1916, the western winds bore down on the United States worse than ever. The ocean may well be called the 'savings bank' for solar energy; receiving deposits in seasons of excessive heat and paying them back when the cold strikes. Thus it stabilizes our temperatures. That is why the winters in the Great Lakes region are not as severe as those on the western plains.

Students of the sea claim that the temperature of the water around us is gradually becoming warmer. Of course this change has a direct influence upon our weather. They point to the fact that since 1900 the ice of the artic regions has been diminishing. In 1940 the northern coasts of Europe and Asia were freer of ice than at any time in recent history. This change has effected the migration and habitats of many northern animals too. 1920 marks the first time such southern birds as the Baltimore oriole and Canada warbler have appeared in Greenland. By 1930 cod fisheries had been established for the first time in the northern continent and the catch is now about 15,000 tons a year. The milder artic and sub-artic climate has already resulted in longer growing seasons and better crops. In Norway good seed years are now the rule rather than the exception. Oceanographers have discovered that the artic branch of the Gulf Stream has also increased in volume during these years.

Our final consideration is the great wealth of the seas. In addition to the abundance of fish and other sea foods man derives great riches from the waters around us. The ocean is the earth's greatest storehouse of minerals. In a single cubic mile of sea water there is 166 million tons of dissolved salts alone. Sea animals are much richer chemically than men, due to their environment and facility for collecting these materials. However,
we have found it difficult to harvest the chemical wealth of the sea and our efforts are dwarfed by the success of marine creatures. It is easier for us to collect our salt from underground deposits since extraction from the sea has proved costly. This last statement also explains why we have not claimed the stupendous quantities of iodine, magnesium, petroleum, etc. from the great salt seas. There is enough gold in the sea to make every living man a millionaire, but the sea will not yield it. A cubic mile of sea water contains about $93,000,000 in gold and $8,500,000 in silver. Although all sea animals accumulate vast quantities of iodine, scarcely a trace of it can be found in sea water. About 99 percent of the world's magnesium is found in the sea.

Through the dim eye of contemporary science we can begin to see the unfolding of the wonders of the deep. At a later time we will look at the wonders of the earth, its rock, minerals, vegetation, and animal and human life. The foundation of our earth is the sea as ordained by God. Thank God for these wonders and their revelation to us.

Thus ends our 'saga of the sea'

Dwight J. Monsma

DON'T BLAME MY HANDS

The Rev. Thomas K. Beecher despised deceit in any form. Finding that a clock in his church was habitually too fast or too slow, he hung a placard on the wall above it, reading in large letters: "Don't blame my hands—the trouble lies deeper."

That is where the trouble lies with us when our hands do wrong, or our feet, or our lips, or our thoughts. The trouble lies so deep that only God's miracle power can deal with it. Sin goes deep; but Christ goes deeper and changes the heart and the will.

—Christian Witness

consciousness that the victory of the Lord's cause is certain even in the face of a seeming defeat. Even death must serve the cause of God, His church, and His people, His elect, which are, historically, the believers.

The knowledge of the way in which God works, so that all forms of suffering serve His cause, is not a matter of simple addition or subtraction. If this were so, the most faithful Christian would be one who made high grades in his arithmetic class. The hearty confidence of the believing young person,—that God works adversity as a benefit to hope,—is knowledge that is an act of faith. By faith which God gives to His people,—never a condition,—through His Spirit and Word, the Lord works the knowledge that all forms of suffering and trial serve the interests of His kingdom and His covenant.

Therefore, the conclusion must be reached that all the present difficulties that beset the activities of Protestant Reformed young people as a result of the present difficulty and disruption in our churches must never give rise in the hearts of our young people to a comfortless despair. But the present tribulation, in whatever form it takes, must be a God-given means to be used of the Lord to bring forth a strong hope, and a holy courage and daring for the future. May the Lord so will it.

James A. McCollam

their sin and then they will be brought into heaven.

But I don't believe that that is the purpose of this rubric. And therefore, as I said before, we must discuss these things and understand the relation between salvation and good works before we can ever become practical.

But that next time.

Herman Hanko
The OPEN FORUM offers to all our readers the opportunity to express their opinions and thoughts concerning articles and contributions published in Beacon Lights. It also extends to our readers the privilege of space for comment on any other issue or development within our sphere of interest.

If you wish to place a contribution in OPEN FORUM, please feel free to do so. All we ask is that copy be typed (double-spaced) or at least legibly written.

P.S.—And not too long, please.

February 14, 1954
Grand Rapids, Mich.

In the light of recent events, we recall the grotesque antics of a contentious faction whose discordant ways kept the congregations of our Protestant Reformed Churches at loggerheads. What ailed the splinter group? Was it too much jealousy and selfishness interfering with the minds of the people who order religious guidance? Obviously they are not committed to their religion.

How glibly they all talked about their God! But they talked a different language. The high quest that should have bound us all together—the doctrinal truths of religion—is the one and only thing that keeps us apart. If our God had really possessed them, they might have distorted anything else, but not the truths of God!

Fortunately we are yet prejudiced and partial to one particular truth, there is no truce to be made for there is no room for compromise in our religion. I’m sure if there was it would have made them feel a great deal finer and more useful with their conditions.

But their conception of God isn’t big enough. He couldn’t command their attention. He is such a frail little fellow in their eyes that they have the audacity to fight and lie before His face! He is so impotent that in His presence they are able to exploit all of their futile conditions and works of salvation, they sneered at our effort to evaluate Him. If God had meant anything to them they couldn’t have done it!

As time passes we may see them falter into a poor, cloddish, selfish, stupid church, there is nothing to stir their courage or stimulate their minds.

Whereas being members of the true church we can feel the ecstasy, the tug, the thrill of the spirit which inspires us to reverence, awe and devotion before Him. Being humble in our way and not menaced with a developed cancer of self-righteousness.

Hollis D. Heemstra

Weather reports are the order of the day. The man on the street talks about areas of high pressure and low pressure as if he were a graduate of a meteorological school. The radio and television furnish him with more ideas regarding weather than the pulpit furnishes on the spiritual weather. The American pulpit loves the easy, entertaining sermon. But to influence the average man, we shall have to have more Bible-anchored analysis of man, society, and the coming of the Lord.
Why art thou cast down O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. —Psalm 43:5

Many times, fellows in the service are disquieted or cast down, by the life they have to walk among the men of this world. They are far away from church and loved ones with no one that they can have companionship with. There isn't anyone that we can have fellowship with without being lead into temptation. Ever do they have to fight against this weakness of the flesh.

When all the wickedness of this world surrounds us in the service, there is one great comfort that we can have. And that is prayer. There is one that we can go unto. We find this in Psalm 25:1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

To lift up one's soul to God, to enter into His sacred presence and commune with Him of all that fills the heart, that is the sweet mystery of prayer.

Prayer is not something outward, a matter of cold form, the mere folding of hands and closing of eyes and mumbling of pious phrases does not constitute prayer. If we have no more we have nothing. Such dead externalism requires no grace, neither need you be a Christian to offer such prayers.

Prayer is the vibration, the spiritual experience of that covenant bond which God has laid between Himself and us in Jesus Christ. By virtue of His covenant with us Jehovah is our friend, Who dwells with us and speaks to us as a friend; and we are His friends, His children who may dwell with Him and commune with Him forever. The living experience of that fellowship, the working of that covenant tie, that covenant life in action, that is prayer.

In prayer, therefore, we enter into the presence of the Holy One, consciously, by a true and living faith. True in a sense God is always near, for He is the omnipresent God. In Him we live and move and have our being. However, as far as our consciousness is concerned we may be far from Him and He from us. In prayer we draw near to Him, enter into His presence, consciously, with all our minds and hearts. Our souls are lifted up to Him in heaven. Anything else is not prayer.

Thus entering into His presence we talk to God, commune with Him as friends together. Whether it be to magnify Him and sing His praises or to express our gratitude to Him for all His benefits bestowed on us; whether it be to humble ourselves before Him or to petition Him for all our temporal and eternal needs; whether it be in joy or sorrow, in health or sickness, in peace or war, in the lonely nightwatch or amid the din and roar of actual combat, whether it be in the communion of saints or when all alone with God, in speech, or song, or a single sigh or groan always prayer is conversation with God.

Conversation of the soul! God who sees and knows all things, desires truth in the inward parts. Our praise and adoration, confession of sin and gratitude must be the expression of a soul unburdening itself to the Lord. And when we petition things of the Lord it must be the soul that opens itself to God to be filled all for the well-being of our soul.

We have filled your section in the Beacon Lights with this short meditation. May the next issue be filled with letters from you fellows. We will be happy to hear from you, and waiting for those letters. Send those letters to the

Military Mail Bag
Everett Buiter
R.R. 2 Box 120
Tinley Park, Illinois.
**Federation Board Report**

Time has passed by very quickly since we saw each other at the convention and many things have transpired. Our first Beacon Lights has appeared for your inspection and spiritual enjoyment and you now have the second issue of the new volume in your hands. I think that we all owe our Publication Staff and all its different committee members a big word of thanks. We also want to thank our acting-editor for giving us many helping hints and suggestions in order for us to get our paper back on its feet. I want to especially take this opportunity as reporter for the Federation Board, to thank the Publication Staff for their expended efforts and to assure you, as Staff, that your efforts are really appreciated. Also we urge all our society members and friends to continue to support our worthy little magazine, especially during these troublesome times.

Yes, these have been troublesome times and it has required much faith for your Board to carry out its labors. We have had five Board meetings since the last convention and are planning one for the very near future at which time we wish to receive a financial report from our treasurer and also make plans for our Spring Mass Meeting.

In past Board meetings we have made plans for our Reformation Day Mass Meeting which was held on Oct. 31 in our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. It has also been necessary for the Board to make many appointments to fill necessary vacancies in the Publication Staff. Our Publication Staff was greatly hampered in this way because many of those now serving on the Publication Staff have had no experience in serving on a publication of a magazine. Nevertheless we believe the Staff has carried on very capably.

The Federation Board has also been handicapped due to the resignation, in the early part of the year, by their secretary, Eleanor Veldman. We want to thank her for her past efforts and are sorry that she could not carry on in her work.

We hope that this brief report will have given you some insight into what has happened in the Federation Board. Watch for "Convention News and Details", Societies.

Agatha Lubbers
Assistant Secretary

**NOTICE:** Will all society secretaries please mail their addresses to the following address so that the copies of the business which transpired at the past convention can be mailed to you?

Agatha Lubbers
1304 Maude Avenue N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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16 BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

The Alcove...

Yes, indeed, power Christ had to lay down His life in order that He might take it again! Had it not been so, His death would still have been vain, and could not have had the value of a sacrifice blotting out our sins. No one could possibly offer His life as a vicarious sacrifice, unless he had been authorized by the Judge of heaven and earth. Christ, however, had power so to lay down His life that He might take it again in glory, and that by this voluntary death He might obtain forgiveness, eternal righteousness and life for His own. The idea that must have the emphasis here, according to the meaning of the original, is that Christ had received authority to lay down His life, and to take it again. To be sure, Christ also had power in the sense of ability and strength to lay down His life as a sacrifice; for He is the eternal Son of God, and as such He is the Lord of life and death. And He was in position to give His life as a sacrifice for sin, for He was without sin, and was not Himself under the sentence of death. We have no life to give away or to offer as a sacrifice to God. We are under the death sentence. How could a criminal, sentenced to death and about to die on the gallows, stipulate that his death should be received as a sacrifice for his fellow criminals? But the Saviour knew no sin. He was, therefore, in a position to offer His life to God as a sacrifice for the sins of others. And He was capable of bringing the perfect sacrifice, as an act of perfect obedience, because it was His meat to do the Father’s will. He was the perfect High Priest, Who not only had a sacrifice to offer without blemish, but Who could also make the offering an act of perfect love of God. And even as He was capable of laying down His life as a sacrifice, so He had power to take it again, for He is the life and the resurrection!

Yet, the idea that He had authority to lay down His life and to take it again, must have all the emphasis. Of what avail would it be that a man would deprive himself of his life, or take the place of another on the gallows, if such a sacrifice were not authorized and accepted by the judge? Christ was authorized, officially appointed and empowered to lay down His life and to take it again. He was God’s High Priest, appointed to bring the atoning sacrifice instead of His people. And so, the cross is, indeed, the manifestation of the great love of the Good Shepherd for His sheep, but it is ultimately the revelation of the unfathomable, eternal and unchangeable love of God to us. The cross is not the cause of the love of God to His people, but the outflow and central revelation of that love. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Surveying the wondrous cross by faith, we are assured that on that accursed tree “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” II Cor. 5:19. And relying on that eternal love of God revealed in the cross of His Son, we have righteousness in the midst of our present sin and guilt; peace with God, transcendent, victorious peace, in the midst of the present unrest; and eternal life and glory even while we still lie in the midst of our present death!

—This Pre-lenten thought is an extract from chapter seven of “The Amazing Cross” by the Rev. H. Hoeksema, one of the fine books offered to our readers in the special subscription offer given on the back cover of this issue.
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