BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

Where is He Going?

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BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOL. 15 MAY — 1955 NO. 4

The Next Convention

"What," you say, "the next convention!" "Why, here it is only the month of May, and you are talking about the next convention already?" Yes, that's right. And that's because we really have something to talk about. A certain group of young people have been talking about he next convention ever since the last one. They have not only been talking about it, but they are doing something about it also. The Host Committee in conjunction with the Federation Board have already made all the plans and have begun to put them into effect.

At Hudsonville, so it was decided at the last convention, the next convention will be convened. Just about half the distance between Grand Rapids, the furniture capital of the United States, and Holland, the tulip city, lies the village of Hudsonville, Michigan. Not so many years ago, if you passed through this fast growing farming community and happened to wink your eye, you might not see the village at all. So small it was. Today, it has taken on sizable proportions and may well be in the not distant furture a city to be reckoned with.

In this village, constituted mostly of the hardy dutch, whose ancestry harks back to the pioneer days of Van Raalte, is the Protestant Reformed Church. To its pastor and his Young People's Society has been assigned the task of planning and preparing for the next annual convocation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

Anyone acquainted with the dynamic pastor of this church (and who isn't?) knows what we may expect in the way of a pleasant visit. If you have never met the Rev. Vos, we assure you that it will be worth your trip to the convention just to see and meet him. But don't forget the vivacious group of young people at his command. They have through the years of Rev. Vos' ministry become thoroughly imbued with his energy. We haven't forgotten the last convention that was held in Hudsonville. So, if you hate a good time, I warn you not to come to the next convention.

We may leave it up to the Host Committee or the Federation Board to announce the Theme of the convention, but we can tell you now that it is a good one. Of course, the Theme and its development by the various speakers appointed

is the most important feature of any convention. This will be especially true this time. It is timely, instructive and practical, and will be especially prepared with our young people in mind.

There are other reasons, however, which should move all our young people to make plans now to attend. First of all, there are matters of business which command the interest and attention of all our societies and on which action must be taken. Not only the routine matters must necessarily be treated, but special proposals offered for consideration which are always presented with a view to the best interests of all our societies, or for the best possible management of our mutual affairs.

Then, too, another substantial reason for attending this convention is the wonderful opportunity for the various delegates to express themselves before a larger group than their own individual societies. Here is a greater opportunity to use and develop in the talents and gifts the Lord has given the several members who are appointed from each society as delegates. Each society should bear in mind to send representatives who can best ably express the mind of their individual group. Conventions should not be all play. There is serious labor to be performed which demands conscientious laborers who are prepared for their task.

Moreover these conventions offer the best possible reason for all our young people getting together. There is ample opportunity, though it be only for a few days, for young people to meet young people, and that, too, of our own faith. All parents of our young people who read this article should certainly keep this in mind when they consider with their sons and daughters the matter of allowing them to come to the convention. I can say from my own experience that these conventions have been so well supervized that no parent need hesitate to send their children for fear they might get into trouble through meeting the wrong person or going to the wrong places. Those of us who have been more or less responsible for steering conventions have always kept in mind the possible dangers of young people being, so to speak, on their own, and have taken special care that they are always well supervized. Sometime ago I talked to a father of a young man and woman who lives a long way from the center of our churches and who expressed the thought to me that he had been thinking seriously of sending his son and daughter to the next convention simply because he would like to have them meet our Protestant Reformed young people. Where he lived he saw the grave danger of his family running away from our churches through his children associating exclusively with those of another church. I find this commendable on the part of that father, and also encouraged him to follow through. I'll be looking for his son and daughter at our next convention.

There is another reason why these annual gatherings of our young people are desirable. They afford us a wonderful opportunity to express our unity. Perhaps no time in the history of our churches has this spirit of unity been felt so keenly as it has since our recent trouble after certain of those who were formerly with us left us through way of schism. The last two conventions in which we met without them were especially marked by this sense of unity. At the first, which was held in Grand Rapids, we thought we noticed a little sadness because of smallness but also there we remarked that the spirit of unity was magnificent. At the second, which was held in South Holland last year, all traces of sadness were removed, and there was one grand feeling that we were a united

band. To be sure, our group has become considerably smaller in numbers; but also this has its advantages. Surely no one need complain that he gets lost in the crowd. Our spirits are not dampened. In fact it seems to me our experience of becoming smaller has given impetus to our enthusiasm, and strengthened the bond of unity among those who remained faithful with respect to our truth. This has been the experience in all our societies and also our federation meetings, not only of our young people, but of our Men's and Ladies' groups as well. I have attended our Ladies' Federation meeting, and also the Men's League on two occasions of late. And in both of them I have noticed not only that they have grown in numbers but also in enthusiasm. The same is true in our individual societies. My Men's Society is almost three times as large as it used to be when we had twice as many families. The same or the Ladies. The interest and enthusiasm and unity is so marked that we look forward to the time of meetings. And this is as it should be. So we also look forward to convention time when as covenant youth from near and far we come together to express our unity.

This year the convention is to be held on August 16, 17, 18. Those who are working and have a vacation coming should reckon with these dates, and ask now for leave of absence for that time. Those living in the middle West and even in the far West cannot find a better place to spend a vacation at that time of the year than right here in Western Michigan near the cooling waters of our great Lake. I have been all through our Eastern States and I have traveled through our mid-Western and even through the Pacific Coast States, and I have seen some beautiful scenery and several different climates. But give me

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EDITORIALS

Numbering Our Days

Words have power! Think of the association brought to mind by such words as "liberty," and "victory." Some words, in combination with other words, will have a telling effect on the hearers; as, for example, expressions like "iron curtain," and "cold war." Words are powerful because ideas are conveyed by them.

Along with the fact that words have power, is the corresponding reality that men who know and understand words and their use, and who know how to use them with powerful appeal, have often become leaders of others. This art is not limited to men. Remarkable women, who knew the art of making words their servants, have become leaders in public life too.

In the use of words, in Bible times, it is evident that Moses, the great leader of the Exodus, was a man of great talent, ability, and industry. He pleaded on an occasion, that he was not eloquent nor a man with ready tongue (Exodus 4:10). Yet he was used of God in a most remarkable way to convey to God's people a mass of legislation that is as singular for its spirituality and profundity as it is for its transmittance and revelation. That Moses could use words, and use them effectively, is borne out by the fact that he gave to the Church, as the instrument of the Holy Spirit, the five books of Moses. It must not be supposed that Moses was pleading a mere excuse for a lack of eloquence. Mindful of his arduous undertaking, to persuade the monarch of Egypt to compliance or compulsion, Moses was aware of his own deficiencies in the light of his needs, for the great task to which God had called him.

Being a man who was well schooled, as befitting a son of Pharoah's daughter, Stephen said of Moses that he was a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. (Acts 7:22). All the knowledge and training that Moses received was benificial to him because he put it in the services of The Faith. Speaking and writing, out of many years of experience in the walk of faith, he penned these words to the church of the ages: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90:12). These are words of deep meaning; words that convey a thought with searching effect. Well may youth give ear to these words of wisdom.

While the words form part of a prayer by Moses for divine blessing on God's people, the words are a pointer to a walk of godliness in the school of life. These words are worth proper consideration.

When Moses said that our days should be numbered, he did not mean that our days were to be counted as a simple arithmetic device. Numbering our days refers to the apportioning of our days in view of the shortness of life, in order that we, by grace, may attain unto true wisdom. A wisdom that God gives to His people through His Spirit and Word, is true wisdom. This wisdom is, first of all, a knowledge of Christ; and secondly, a knowledge of ourselves. This true knowledge has as its foundation, that it is of God's own good pleasure and mercy that His people are saved. And He, God, gives to

us the knowledge that we belong to that people whose God is the Lord.

Now to young people who know that their years spent in school were profitable to them, these words of Moses speak volumes. These words mean to boys and girls of God's covenant, that their youth should be spent in wise pursuit of activities that will be beneficial to their spiritual life. The particular value of Moses' words to spiritual life lies in the application of the principle behind the words.

Let us apply this principle to school. Five days a week; seven hours a day, school is on. By school we do not mean any school; but Christian school. Some of us have the privilege to attend our own school, by the way. That is fine. Now being a student in a Christian school means, first of all, that we are students in a school that God gives us through devoted Christian parents. To have such a school often means self-denial.

How do we treat our school? Do we just take it for granted? What do we think of our teachers? Do we consider our teachers the same way? We should not, of course. We know we should not.

Our teachers are men and women who love God's Cause in the world. They love Christian education, first of all. To that end they trained themselves. The training took several years beyond high school. Teachers are required to return to college every few years to take additional courses that bring them up-to-date on the latest teaching methods. It is well known that our teachers could earn more money teaching in public schools were it not for the fact that Covenant education is their first concern. Christian school teachers are teachers of principle. Let us never underestimate the place our teachers hold in our schooling in life.

Connected with the school is the official school board. Without their labor, the Christian school could not function. Maintaining the plant, building, and equipment of the school, permitting us, day by day, to meet in well-lighted comfortable class rooms, is the responsibility of the board on behalf of the parents.

Last but not least in the school picture is the friendly bus driver, who, morning after morning, takes us from home to school. He too has a place to fill in our schooling in life.

Turning from school to church it will be seen that the principle, "So teach us to number our days," applies to the church too. Coming to mind first is the faithful pastor, who, from Sabbath to Sabbath preaches the Word of God. Friendly, kind, conscientious, and solicitous for our spiritual welfare, he labors in the midst of the Church. Bearing the flock of God on his heart, he has a word in season for the sheep and for the lamb. Little do we know of the hours of prayer and supplication he has given that God may bless the flock in the knowledge of heavenly things.

Especially in catechism it becomes evident that the learning process continues. The pastor labors week after week, using the arts of instruction in the training of the seed of the church. But what of the catechumens? Applying their hearts unto wisdom? Not so. How often precious moments were wasted in foolishness and youthful mirth. Hearts are easily applied unto the ridiculous; not unto wisdom. And yet, any appreciable time given in serious study of the questions, reaped a rich reward. The lesson was remembered for a long time.

With the church is the society — the young people's society. In society the bond of fellowship with the membership as brothers and sisters in the Lord is experienced. The informality; opportunity for learning leadership; meeting with the boys and girls of one age group:

these contribute their share in your schooling in life.

Then there is the young people's convention. Society life reaches a high point for youth in the convention. This is a time of joy in the Lord in summer. The feature article in this issue will tell you some things about the convention.

This August the Convention will be held in Hudsonville. Rest assured that this year will be no exception to the standard of excellence that is set by the host society, the federation, and the speakers. The theme for the 1955 convention is "The Gospel of the Promise." Speakers will be, D.V., Rev. H. Hoeksema, Rev. G. M. Ophoff, and Rev. G. Vanden Berg. Make plans to attend now.

The convention continues the school of life.

Schooling in the correct numbering of our days, so that hearts may be applied unto wisdom, is not complete until the home is considered. The formative contribution of the home is a very large one and a very important one. That God places His children in Christian homes is great cause for rejoicing. Day in and day out; month after month; and year after year: loving parents have left no stone unturned to bring us up in the fear of the Lord. Clothed; fed, sheltered; and all needs supplied: thus physical requirements were met. Rebuked; chastised, and disciplined: thus moral needs were filled. No obligation was too arduous for Ma and Pa. What is more, with all this care, went hours of prayer, that God would be pleased to bless all these means to your hearts.

How have you responded? Is there fruit for this pruning and care? Have you learned to apply your heart to the true wisdom? Have you learned to love with your heart the true wisdom? Have you learned to number your days wisely? Since the Lord blesses His Word to His people, may He so grant it, in order that your joy may be full, that you harvest life in its fulness.

James McCollam

"I'l tell you what's the matter with you Christians," said a high caste Hindu, "you are not as good as your Book."

— Pillar of Fire

During the months of May, June, and July please send all Federation Board material to:

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Michigan in the summer months, especially from August to October. You won't find it better anywhere.

So, Young People! begin talking it up now. Begin planning and preparing now to attend. The Host Society and the Federation Board have been working ever since the last convention to give you a most blessed and pleasant time, and they will do still more to make it the best convention we have ever had. But they cannot make it a success alone. If you are not there, we can have none. It is you, Young People, that will make it a success. All roads will end in Hudsonville, the Lord willing, on August 16, 17, 18. We'll be looking for you!

Rev. M. Schipper

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Preparation, Societies

Thus far in our series, we have discussed the place of Catechism and Confesion of Faith in the life of the Christian youth as a means to prepare him for his place in the church of Jesus Christ. Although the convention is yet some months away, preparations are being made for it, and the news is being published in the "Beacon Lights." The Convention is a convention of the young people's societies of our churches, and therefore, is an outgrowth of those societies. Therefore, I thought the proper time had come to discuss the place of societies in our life as covenant young people. And when we discuss the place of societies, the place of a convention naturally follows. Therefore the next two issues, with the exception of an issue devoted to our schools, will be concerned with this question.

What is the place of societies in the church? This is an important question to answer, if we are to understand the benefit we derive from society life. In relation to the congregation, societies differ from Catechism. From a principle point of view, there are these differences: 1) Catechism is part of the church as institute; societies are part of the church as organism. 2) Catechism is a means of grace, even as the preaching of the Word is a means of grace; societies in this sense of the word are not. 3) Therefore Catechism is characterized by instruction by the minister; societies are characterized by discussion of the members.

When we talk of the difference between Catechisms and Societies, we look at the church from a different viewpoint. The church in this connection is the local congregation as it is a manifestation of the body of Christ; i.e. as it is a manifestation of the church of all ages which is gathered from the beginning of the world to the end of time. For that local congregation is a complete manifestation of the body of Christ. That local congregation can be looked at from many different points of view as you undoubtedly have learned in Catechism. It is, e.g., visible from one point of view, invisible from another, institute from yet another, and organic from another point of view. Of these last two viewpoints do we speak. The church as institute, is the body of Christ as manifested in the local congregation from the point of view of the consistory and the means of grace. When we speak of the church as institute we speak of the ruling body in the church — the consistory, of the preaching of the Word, of the sacraments, of christian discipline. Under the church as institute, is the teaching of Catechism, for that is also part of the preaching of the Word. Therefore the Catechism classes are conducted by a minister; are under the direct jurisdiction of the consistory even as the preaching of the Word on Sunday is under the direct jurisdiction of the consistory.

But this is not true of societies. Societies are part of the church as organism. When we look at the church from the point of view that it is an organism, then we say of the church that it is united to Christ in such a way that the life of Christ fills the church. And that life, the members of the church manifest in all their walk. Societies are part of the walk of the Christian as it manifests the

life of Christ. When the societies of the church disappear, or when the members of the church are too busy to go to societies, then the church is dead and has no longer the life of Christ. Therefore societies arise spontaneously out of the church. The Consistory does not create societies, and insist that the members of the church go, for societies are not under the direct jurisdiction of the consistory, but rather, the living members of the church feel the need for coming together to discuss the Word of God, and they spontaneously form societies for that purpose. It does not mean, however, that the consistories have nothing to say about societies. For they have jurisdiction over the church as a whole, and thus over the walk of the individual members of that church. There has been, in the church, a discussion of this very point, i.e., in how far the consistory can control the societies in the church. Briefly we may say that the consistory has jurisdiction over the walk of the members of its church even as that walk manifests itself in the society life of the church. Therefore, although the society itself has control of the internal government of its group, nevertheless in all that it does it must not walk contrary to the principles of a Christian walk.

That leads us up to the question, of what benefit is society attendance? There are those that say, and many who evidence a belief, that since the preaching of the Word is the sole means of grace, and the society is outside of the sphere of the preaching of the Word, there is therefore no benefit to be derived from society attendance. This is wrong. For although it is true that the preaching of the Word is the sole means of grace, there are many things which stand in connection with the preaching of the Word that can also be grace to the hearts of the children of God. In a sense, it may be said that all things that are in this world, and all things that happen in this world are means of grace as they are interpreted and understood in the light of the preaching of the Word. E.g., the events that now take place in the world, such as the tension between the nations under the rule of communism, and the nations that oppose communism as a form of government, as understood in the light of the Word of God, that there shall be wars and rumors of wars before the end comes, can certainly be grace to the heart of the child of God who comes under the power of that preaching which he has on the Sabbath. Also, such a thing as the rainbow, as understood in the light of the Word of God, where it is pictured as a sign of the faithfulness of the promise of the covenant of God, bestows grace upon the hearts of the believers as they see the rainbow in the heavens when the rain falls and the sun shines.

Thus also, societies, as they stand related to the preaching of the Word are means of grace to the people of God. For from Sunday to Sunday they have that Word expounded to them by Christ through the minister, and then as they discover the truths of that Word in Society as interpreted by the preaching, God gives His grace to their hearts. When as living members of Christ, they reveal the life of Christ within them by attending faithfully the societies which they themselves have organized, they receive a rich blessing, and grow in grace.

That is also the case in Young People's Societies. That is why societies occupy such an important place in the life of the christian youth. What a sorry situation it is, when societies in the church are neglected, and when the people themselves cannot seem to find time or interest for the societies to which they should belong.

H. Hanko

TRUTH VS. ERROR

Credo . . . . Non Credo

It was the time of the evening service, when the people of the Lord thronged to the house of God to keep the holy day. The service was begun with the usual prayers, the reading of the Holy Word, and the singing of the Psalms. But, there was something special about this particular service. An unusual stillness creeps over the congregation. Everyone is specially attentive just now. From a small book in his hand, the minister, as the spokesman of Jesus Christ, solemnly reads these words:

"Do you acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments nd in the Articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian Church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?" He continues:

"Have you resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine: to reject all heresies repugnant thereto, and to lead a new, godly life?"

Before him, standing before the face of God and in the presence of all His congregation, are a young man and young woman who have expressed their desire to make confession of their faith. They are a son and daughter of the congregation who, from their infancy, have been instructed in the doctrine they are about to confess.

Once more the voice of the minister is heard, "What is your answer to these questions."

With unmistakable clarity the affirmative reply of this young couple is heard by many witnesses and more so, by the Holy Spirit of God, as He dwells in His Church. The congregation rejoices, believing that this confession is evidence of the work of Divine grace, realizing the covenant in generations.

* * * *

The time is now a few years later. Once more the congregation is assembled to worship Jehovah but this time it is the morning service. The same young man and woman, having since been united in the bonds of holy matrimony, have taken their place this morning in the first pew. Upon the lap of the mother lies a tiny infant whom this young couple are now presenting for Holy Baptism. From the same small book in his hand, the minister has just finished reading the Form for Baptism, reminding them and the church that "baptism is an ordinance of God, to seal unto us and our seed His covenant; therefore, it must be used for that end, and not out of custom or superstition." The minister then requests these parents to stand in the presence of the congregation and before the face of God to answer **sincerely** a few questions, thereby manifesting that they are thus minded.

Clearly, slowly, and emphatically he addresses them:

"Do you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and which is taught here in this Christian Church, to be the true and perfect (complete) doctrine of salvation?"

"Do you promise and intend to see this child, when come to the years of discretion, instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause him/

her to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?"

And, unhesitatingly the answer, heard by many witnesses and recorded upon the pages of the book that shall be opened in the Day of days, is uttered, "YES!"

Yes, I acknowledge this doctrine to be true! Yes, I am by God's grace, resolved to reject all heresies! Yes, I promise to faithfully instruct my children therein!" Credo!

* * * *

The scene changes once more. A period of some time has elapsed after which we hear of this young couple once more. This time it is not in the service of public worship. The Consistory is now in session, buisily engaged in the labor that concern the best interests of the church of Christ in the world.

There is a knock at the door! The clerk rises to answer it. There stands the young man with a forlorn look upon his face. He hands a piece of paper to the clerk and makes haste to turn aside. The clerk glances at the paper and then quickly steps into the hallway.

"Brother . . . . don't go away. The consistory may wish to speak to you."

A reply is muttered, "There's no use in talking. Our minds are made up. Just send our papers to the -------- church."

"Please remain a few moments nonethe less," replies the clerk and thereupon returns into the consistory room.

The request is submitted to the Consistory and the young man is summoned to explain this unusual phenomenon. The president of the Consistory addresses him first.

"Will you kindly present to us the reason for your request?"

The young man stammers a bit, groping for something to say, and after a few unsuccessful attempts and muttering this and that, it becomes evident that there are not **reasons** but only a few petty excuses by which one seeks self-justification before the bar of the conscience.

The minister speaks. "You remember your confession, do you not? You may be reminded of what you vowed before God and His church." He then quotes from the little book. Continuing he says, "And you are aware, brother . . . . that never once have you appeared to show that this christian church has departed in profession or practice from this doctrine, are you not?"

By this time the man is a bit uneasy. Rather indignantly, he rises and walking toward the door, utters something like this: "I'm not here to argue with you. Send me my papers." Upon his departure, he gives the door an extra slam to give vent to his ire. Non-credo!

The next Sunday a notice appears on the bulletin, "Mr. and Mrs. ---------- and one baptized child, upon their own request, were given certificaties of dismissal."

The question arises inevitably, "Wa then that good confession after all a real evidence of the working of God's grace?"

* * * *

Once more the scene changes. This time the place is the judgment seat of Jesus Christ where all are summoned to give account. The books are opened.

Credo . . . . Non-credo!

Truth vs. Error!

Credo is to believe the truth and believing it, to live it. That is true discipleship and everlasting life. "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

Non-credo is to embrace error and follow it unto death in generations to come. The way of the wicked shall perish!

Make sure your confession! It is very serious! It will be more tolerable for those who knew not, than for those who knowingly have repudiated the truth and trampled under foot a good confession!

G. VandenBerg

MILITARY MAIL BAG

"Beacon Lights" received the following letter from one of our service men readers·

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 1955

Dear Friends:

Well, just a few lines to tell you all hello and to tell you how I'm getting along.

I left the States on the 25th of August. By ship it took 12 days to get to Tokyo. Flew from up there to down where I am now by a c-119 and a c-46. Getting here on the 9th of September.

Upon getting here, I was put to work in the Tower and that's where I've been working. Here on this base, we have a great lot of traffic. Having as many as 240 landings and/or takeoffs during a six hour period during the day.

Also, upon getting here I found a very nice group of Christian fellows. One of them is a Christian Reformed fellow from home. We spent many happy hours talking together before he left for home.

Since getting here I've seen quite a bit of Japan. About a month after I got here, five of us took a three day pass. Went down to Unzen National Park and Nagasaki. Unzen means cloudy mountain and actually is part of a mountain. At the town of Unzen there is hot mineral springs and the park is very beautiful too. Nagasaki is a place where one of the two atomic bombs were dropped. It was very interesting to see the few ruins that were left. It is very surprising to see how litle you can tell that a atom bomb was dropped there. The city is completely rebuilt with only a few ruins left (on purpose). We all had a very nice time. Since getting back I've visited a couple parks in town, and also did some looking around in the shops in town. Have gone bike riding in the country, also. There's many interesting things to see here; such as strange ways of dressing; motorcycle trucks, Japanese ways of farming; Japanese buildings, religious shrines, and so on. There is quite a contrast between the old and the new.

I manage to keep pretty busy since I've been here. It has helped to make the time go fairly fast. Have been going to school about twice a week since getting here. Have already finished a course called Harvard Speed Reading and I'm now taking typing. Typing classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30.

I would like to say that the Lord has certainly been with me. I found, upon getting here, a very fine group of Christian fellows whose life here centers around the Chapel. Some of the activities we have are: daily devotions every day at noon from 12:00 to 12:15; Bible study Wednesday night; Gospel hour on Thursday night; and services Sunday morning and evening. There's about 25 fellows that spend all their extra time over here, even when there isn't something special doing.

The Lord's will is certainly to our good. I can see many ways that my being here is working for my good. One of these is: Since I've gotten here, I've been getting a lot of religious reading material, so much in fact that I haven't been able to keep up reading it. So I've learned to carry some of the leaflets and booklets along with me. Using every waste moment I can find. We all have quite a few of them. (While in the service, you have

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CURRENT COMMENTS

"GUARANTEED ANNUAL WAGE"

During this month of May, the leaders of the automobile industry are gathered together for the purpose of answering a proposal; one that is of great importance at this time, both to the union and to the corporations. In all the news happenings, we hear and read much about this realitively new term in industry, called GAW. The fear of a nation wide strike; a drastic setback in our economy; thousands of dollars lost because of idle production; are but a few predicted results that would develop, if such a proposal would not be approved.

In the last fifty years, the labor group has come a long ways toward better working conditions. Sick benefits, paid vacations, shorter working hours, and better working facilities are some of the few things that they have gained; but this year they are asking for something that they have never proposed before: GAW, or Guaranteed Annual Wage. Briefly, this new proposal, if approved, would give them a guarantee that they will work so many hours a year and receive so much pay, thus protecting them against layoffs and setbacks in business. The labor group feels that a proposal like this would give them a certain guarantee of a good economic standing, harboring them, to a greater or lesser extent from financial incompetency.

However, as Christians, to rely on the powers of a labor union to provide for us ,our earthly needs, is indeed a dishonour to God. Let us adhere to the words of Christ in Matt. 6:31-33, where we read, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where withal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things. shall be added unto you." Throughout the whole of this discourse, Christ reproves that excessive anxiety, with which men torment themselves, about food and clothing. We know that men are born with cares. But excessive care is condemned for two reasons: either because, in so doing, men tease and vex themselves to no purpose, by carrying their anxiety farther than is proper or than their calling demands; or because they claim more for themselves than they have a right to do, and place such a reliance on thei own industry, that they neglect to cal upon God. We ought to remember this promise; though unbelievers shall "rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows," yet believers will obtain through the kindness of God, rest and sleep. Though the children of God are not free from toil and anxiety, yet, properly speaking, we do not say that they are anxious about life; because, through their reliance on the providence of God, they enjoy calm repose.

Hence it is easy to learn, how far we ought to be anxious about food. Each of us ought to labour, as far as his calling requires, and the Lord commands; and each of us ought to be led by his own wants, to call upon God.

The Lord, who has given life itself, will not suffer us to want what is necessary for its support. And certainly we do no small dishonour to God, when we fail to trust Him, that He will give us necessary

food or clothing; as if he had thrown us on the earth at random. He who is fully convinced, that the Author of our life has an intimate knowledge of our condition, will entertain no doubt that he will make abundant provisions for our wants. Whenever we are seized by any fear or anxiety about food or clothing, let us remember, that God will take care of the life which he gave us. Psalm 37:3-5, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

John H. Haan

The Practical Implications of the Ascension

Each year, forty days after the celebration of Easter, the church celebrates Ascension Day, commemorating the Ascension of Christ from this earth to His heavenly abode.

We have the Easter season behind us. That season is greatly known in the world about us. Whether we know anything of the meaning of that season, is hard to see in the world. But of Ascension Day, you hear very little. Even we are, in some ways, like the world. It isn't easy to forget Christmas, Good Friday, or Easter; but Ascension Day or Pentecost could easily slip by and be forgotten.

Why should this be? Ascension Day is just as important as any of the other days. Without the Ascension of our Lord, His work of salvation would not be complete. For without His ascending into Heaven, there would not be the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost.

The event of the ascension of Christ Jesus into Heaven is not mentioned in detail as the other events of Christ. The event is mentioned in Mark 16:19, "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." In Luke 24:50, 51 we read, "And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." In Acts 1:9-11 we have a more detailed testimony of the Ascension where we read, "And when he had spoken these words, while they be held, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

In these verses we have a testimony of the Ascension when it happened. There are many places that tell us of the Ascension, and Christ many times told those that were listening, of His Ascension. As we have it in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

What are the implications of the Ascension for the Christian, as he is in this world? We have an answer for this in Lord's Day XVIII in question and answer 49 where we have a threefold benefit from the Ascension of Christ. In answer to the question, "Of what advantage to us is Christ's Ascension into Heaven?" First he is our advocate in the presence of His father in Heaven; Christ is our advocate in Heaven for his people in this

sinful world. By Christ's work of atonement, we are made clean before the Father. The Father is delighted with the work of Christ as our Advocate, so that He may show His everlasting mercy and eternal love to us his chosen people, by the forgiveness of our sins.

The second advantage is "that we have our flesh in Heaven as a sure pledge that He, as the Head, will also take up to himself, us, his members." Christ took upon Himself our human body and soul in the human nature. That human nature was unfit to enter into heavenly glory. It was of this earth, corrupt through sin. We did not have the right to be delivered from that corrupt nature. That nature Christ took upon Himself without sin. Christ suffered all that was required to satisfy God's justice, so that we could be righteous, and have the right to heavenly glory. Christ as our Head took our flesh into glory so that all that was His, may be ours. Then His ascension is our ascension. He is ascended up on high, so that we have the right to follow Him.

The third advantage is "that he sends us his Spirit as an earnest, by whose power we 'seek the things which are above; where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on the earth.'" This is a great advantage of the Ascension. By the Ascension of Christ, He sent the Spirit on Pentecost, so that we may be partakers of the heavenly life. We are delivered from the earth, earthy. We, by the Spirit, long for those things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. We are sojourners and strangers in the earth and ,as Christians, we must declare plainly, that we seek a better country.

Everett Buiter

Oak Lawn Church

THE LAW — BELIEVERS DELIVERED FROM IT

That God's elect have been delivered from the law is the literal teaching of Paul.

Romans 7:1-6, "Know ye not brethren (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

So then if, while her husband liveth, she is married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

The substance of the teaching of this passage is clearly this: As the wife is freed from the law of her husband by his death, so were God's people freed from the law by the sufferings and death of Christ. Let us take notice of the statement, "But now we are delivered from the law" (vs. 6).

But that this does not mean that now the believers are through with the law is just as plain from the Scriptures. It may be well to quote a few Scriptures.

Romans 13:8, 9, "Owe no man any-

thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself."

It is plain that the apostle's saying, "You owe it to one another that as believers you love one another," is equivalent to the thought: you owe it to one another that as believers you keep His commandments with regard to one another; as activated by love the one shall refrain from defrauding the other, bearing false witness against the other etc. Doing so, you fulfil the law. For all the commandments are comprehended in this saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

God's redeemed people have the right to keep Christ's commandments — a right merited for them by Christ; and they also will to keep His commandments; doing His will, ordering their lives according to His precepts, is their delight, the reason being that He imparts unto them the virtues of His cross. But the "may" and the "can" does not obliterate the "ought." But God's believing people, when they are spiritual, do not feel this "ought" as a constraint, compulsion upon them. What they **ought** to do they also delight in doing, for His law is in their hearts. This is true liberty. But as yet this new obedience is but a small principle in them. In this life the saints sin constantly. But they are sorry for their sins, and this tells them that they belong to Christ and that for His sake all their sins are forgiven them of God. And the Spirit of God testifies with their spirit that they are His children. And being His sons, God also chastises them in His love of them in order that more and more they may be partakers of Christ's holiness. But seeing that God punished Christ for all the sins of His people, this chastisement must not be conceived of as punishment for sin.

If these matters are clear, we may face the question, what it means that God's people have been delivered from the law To arrive at clarity on this point we must consider that the Scriptures, definitely Paul in his epistles, distinguishes between the law by itself apart from Christ and the law as the commandments of Christ that on the ground of His atonement He puts in the hearts of His people, and that in the epistle of James is called "the perfect law of liberty," and the "royal law." The law "as such" appears in the Scriptures as a master vested with the right to mandate and threaten man as follows, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them" (Lev. 18:5); and, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them" (Deut. 27:26). In a word, the law by itself directs to man this terrifying speech: Do the things that I prescribe and live in or by them; but cursed art thou, if thou confirmest not all my words to do them." Paul quotes both these with the right to mandate and threaten passages, the former to shew that the law is not of faith (Gal. 3:12), and the latter to shew that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse (Gal. 3:10). We perceive how true this is. The law is not of faith. It is not of faith in Christ. Adam in the state of integrity lived not by faith in Christ. He had no need of Christ. Christ was not his life and his righteousness. For having left God's hand a sinless man, he lived in and by the commandment of His God, that is, in the way of his keeping it. His righteousnes was therefore his own. The law by itself is not of faith. How

true this is of fallen man. One who now imagines that he lives in the law by doing the things that it requires deceives himself and is an enemy of Christ. Such a one is cured of the law seeing that all he is capable of doing is to violate all its requirements. For that precisely is the sole office of the law, namely to bless the law abiding and to curse the lawless. Christ alone blesses the penitent lawless.

It is terrible to contemplate what would become of God's people had they to do with the law as such. They would be driven into perdition by its curses. As it is, they are justified, and saved. How can this be? The answer is Christ. He delivered them from the law by satisfying for them all its requirements. The law required that they be cast into hell because of their disobedience. Christ met that requirement by suffering for them all the agonies of hell as motivated by a perfect love and thereby obliterating all their guilt. The law required a perfect obedience something that they could not render, being as they were dead in sin. But Christ met that requirement by His perfect obedience and thereby merited for them eternal life in glory.

So were they delivered from the law "as such" and they became the exclusive property of Christ. What it means is that the law **as such** can no longer mandate them; it can no longer threaten them by its curses. Rightly considered the law **as such** has nothing more to say to them. For Christ is now their master, Lord, Saviour. "Wherefore brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another. And this other is Christ raised from the dead. Christ as the husband of His church, His bride, certainly has the right to mandate His people. And this He does. Believe in me, He says to them. Love me. Keep my commandments, bring forth fruit unto God. And, of course, it's the same ten commandments. Only as our almighty Saviour He speaks His commandments, His law, in our hearts, which is but another way of saying that He sheds abroad in the hearts of His sheep the love of God so that as a result the speech of the psalmist now reverberates also through their soul, "O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day long."

Yes, it is so true that Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the law and that therefore we need do nothing to be saved. It is so true that we have been delivered from the law by Christ and have become the sheep of His pasture to be mandated by **Him** now and to be saved by His commands as written by Him in our hearts. No, we have nothing to do with the law **as such** anymore. From that we have been delivered. But certainly we have everything to do with Christ's commandments.

"Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God.

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:21, 22).

Of course, I have only scratched the surface of my subject. The space allotted me forbids any additional exposition.

Geo. M. Ophoff

(Continued from page 11)

a lot of waste time at least I have.) I've already got a great blessing from doing so and want to continue using my waste time even after I get caught up on my reading. Carrying a real small booklet on me at all times that has a chapter of the Bible in it. Reading a verse in those waste moments, and meditating on it in between, if possible.

It's something I think we all should do as much as possible. For thereby we will be doing what the Lord wants us to, as told us in Ephesians 6:10-18.

BASIL J. HAFER

MUSIC IN THE CHURCH

II.

In our last article we tried to show how worldly music has made its way into the church. We found that there were not only corrupt texts, but also corrupt tunes. Most of these can be attributed to the Arminian so-called "Evangelistic" movement of the late nineteenth century. This, in turn, gave rise to the "fundamentalism" of today from which comes most of the musical trash.

In examining this problem in our own circles, let us determine where music is used. First, of course, is the church service. There, in addition to Psalm-singing, we have instrumental preludes and postludes, played on the organ or piano. Second, we find much music in the special meetings, such as societies, catechetical classes, hymn-sings, etc. Third, music has an important place in our schools and, finally, in our homes.

First, then, and of primary importance is the church service. The singing of psalms does not present any great difficulties, even though there are many poor tunes in our psalter. The ministers carefully choose their texts, and, in addition, there is a Psalter Revision Committee working on both texts and tunes. The instrumental prelude and postlude, however, do present a problem. We might ask, "Why the prelude, and of what value is it?" Answering, the prelude should be such that it indirectly promotes a reverent and prayerful attitude in the hearts of God's people. The music should be solemn, quiet, and unobstrusive. Music with excessivily loud or rhythmic passages, and hymns having weak or objectionable texts should be avoided. It is practically imposible to separate the text of a familiar hymn or chorus from its tune. Yet we sometimes hear songs with decidedly un-Protestant Reformed texts played as preludes. To one knowing the text, this is a great detraction. Postludes almost always should be jubilant and should serve to remind the child of God that he has just been fed with the Word of the Living God. The same precausions as to music having a text should be observed. Much organ music is available that, although not specifically sacred, can easily and advantageously be used in our churches.

At special meetings, in our churches Psalms, for the most part, are sung. There are exceptions, though, and it is with these exceptions that we are concerned. Hymn-singing in general is certainly not to be condemned. Hundreds of hymns, which are both textually and musically sound, can be found. Why is it, then, that we so often hear these overly sentimental ballads so misleadingly called "Gospel" songs. ("I come to the Garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses," "Oh why not saw 'Yes' to the Saviour tonight, He's tenderly pleading with thee," "He holds my hand," etc.) Why can't it be the we, who so jealously fight to preserve our doctrine, also fight to remove all worldly traces from something so important as our church music. It is true that host sound hymns cannot compare favorably to the average sun of "Gospel" songs in toe-tapping, rhythmic appeal. But, should the appeal be to the feet or to heart?

Finally in our schools and homes, teachers and parents should do all within their power to cultivate in the children a love and understanding of good music — particularly, good sacred music. Questionabel collections of "Gospel" songs and hymns should be avoided. Paper-bound collections such as "Favorites" fall into this category. What little good music they may contain is far outweighed by the junk. Children should be made familiar with such works as "The Messiah," "The Elijah," and perhaps even the "Passion According to St. Matthew" of J. S. Bach and simular works.

In concluding this article we wish that all music heard in Prot. Ref. churches might express the truth as clearly as this thirteenth century hymn,

"Of the Father's love begotten,
Eve the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.

Christ to thee with God the Father
And, O Holy Ghost to thee
Hymn and psalm and high thanksgiving
And unweared praises be
Honor, glory, and dominon,
And eternal victory,
Evermore and evermore! Amen.

Roland Petersen

. . . . . he's going to the

15th ANNUAL P.R.Y.P. CONVENTION

at Hudsonville, Michigan

He will be there on August 14, 15, and 16.

The theme of the Convention will be

"The Gospel of the Promise"

and he will hear these three messages:

"The Idea" ..... by Rev. H. Hoeksema
"The Recipients" ..... by Rev. G. M. Ophoff
and **"The Fulfillment"** ..... by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

Will he see you there?