

The Strength of Youth

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I was inspired tonight and I believe that I can legitimately say that the nearly 100 young people who gathered in the downstairs of the First Protestant Reformed Church for the Annual Spring Banquet were also inspired and went home satisfied. We enjoyed a delicious banquet dinner served and prepared by the catering committee of First Church under the considerate auspices of the Senior Young People's Society of the same church.

Not only were our gustatory senses stimulated but our spiritual sensitivity was also stimulated by means of lively song service to God, and instrumental duet, and the dynamic singing of Arnold Dykstra.

What proved to be the most essential and prominent event of the evening was the speech, "The Strength of Youth," made by Rev. H. Hoeksema. Rev. Hoeksema has spoken at all the spring banquets that I can remember and each time he rises to the occasion by presenting another inspiring speech. This evening was no exception to the rule, which we as young people so often simply take for granted.

INTRODUCTION

Rev. Hoeksema noted in the introduction to his speech that he had given this speech before at one our Young People's Conventions (some of our adult readers will undoubtedly recognize that he spoke on this subject before) but he believed that he could speak on this subject again. This he certainly could because there were very few in the audience this evening who would have remembered this speech and a repetition of this speech would do no one any appreciable harm, in fact those of our readers who missed this speech due to their absence are to be commiserated.

Rev. Hoeksema also noted that when he gave this speech the Second World War had just terminated. People were living in the optimism that this was the war that had been fought which would end all wars. Today, however, more than ever there are wars and rumors of wars. But, for us, said the speaker, there is a spiritual battle that will have its climax at the time of the Anti-Christ: therefore we must be strong.

Rev. Hoeksema proposed to answer five questions in his speech. They were:

1. What is meant by the concept strength?
2. What is meant by spiritual strength?
3. What is meant by concept youth?
4. What are the peculiar and distinct characteristics of youth?
5. In what way is this strength of youth developed?

STRENGTH

In answering the first question the speaker posited the fact that the subject presupposed that youth is strong, and that youth is with a peculiar kind of strength. The speaker also stated that there are different kinds of strength. There is a passive strength such as is possessed by a piece of iron or a piece of wood. Strength can be defined as being active. Electricity is strong

because it gives light, moves trains, and is able to kill. The animal has strength because is conscious and instinctive. Finally our speaker noted that the human has strength. He can accomplish things, can think, and has the power to will and the power to speak. Rev. Hoeksema concluded that the strength of youth lay in a combination of all these kinds of strength. The youth has a body and soul but above all he has the ability and certain distinct endowments from God, his Creator.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Commencing to answer the second question, “What is meant by spiritual strength?” our speaker noted that man is a being with a soul and body. He is said to be both physical and psychical. Physically characterized man has a strong heart, steady nerves, suppleness of limbs, and clear eyes. Psychically characterized man is endowed with a keen intellect and a strong will. In most characteristic fashion, Rev. Hoeksema, put the “frosting on the cake.” He made the point that man is created, spiritually after the image of God and that man was related to God in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness so that he might love and serve Him. That power man lost and fell into complete and absolute darkness, corruption and death. The only way out for man was a complete restoration in Christ by the power of grace.

OUR YOUTH

When answering the question concerning the concept youth we were reminded that we are covenant youth. As covenant youth we are adopted unto son ship so that we may believe and be ingrafted into Christ. When we are strong therefore, our strength is rooted in the grace of God and then we are strong in all things.

PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS

The speaker noted in the fourth place that youth have certain distinct and peculiar characteristics. Youth are abounding, impetuous and unstable because they are growing. They have more strength than they seem to need. They must always be active and something to do.

DEVELOPMENT

It is exactly during this time of much activity and impetuosity that youth must grow and develop. There are definite ways in which the youth must develop. He or she must grow in knowledge, and grow in sanctification. This growth in sanctification, Rev. Hoeksema characterized as being very necessary. He noted that it should keep pace with the physical and intellectual growth of the youth. This growth in sanctification is likewise difficult because Satan comes with all kinds of temptations and allurements to draw the youth away from the truth as it is confessed in the Reformed community and away from Christ. Rev. Hoeksema cautioned our young men and young women that they must constantly on the look-out for the allurements of the world, our old nature, and Satan as each individual Christian is enticed to leave the truth and follow all kinds of heresy and unscriptural teachings.

MEANS

There are definite means whereby this strength of youth must be developed. The strength of youth is first developed by means of the preaching of the Word of God. It is also developed through catechetical instruction and societies. The speaker warned that our societies should not become mere clubs and social gatherings but that the fundamental purpose in all our meetings should be to study the Word of God and to become more *grounded* in the truth. The final means to develop the strength of youth is through prayerful life – a life which stands always in direct touch with God. Then youth have the victory and no one can take their crown.

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