July-August 1960

PRE-CONVENTION ISSUE

Covenant Youth and Drama
PROF. H. C. HOEKSEMA

Others... Not Himself
REV. R. VELDMAN

Convention Time
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1310 Kenowa, S. W., Grand Rapids 4, Michigan.
Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area please forward subscription dues to
CHRISTINE FABER, 1028 Temple S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Subscription price: $3.00
Second Class Postage paid at
Grand Rapids, Michigan
I am happy to be in your midst tonight and speak to you, especially because this occasion affords me the opportunity for contact with our young people, — something which I rather miss since I took up my new labors.

I am not too happy, however, about the subject which was assigned. From a certain point of view it is understandable that drama presents a problem to you. The opportunity to take part in drama or to be entertained by it frequently recurs in your lives. You are confronted by the drama-question basically in regard to the so-called theater or movie problem. You are faced with it in connection with television, by means of which you can bring the theater into your homes very easily at the flick of a switch. In your school life too you rather often face the problem of taking part in or attending skits, dialogues, class plays, and other dramatic productions, sponsored by Christian schools or other apparently Christian organizations. Hence, from that point of view the choice of subject is understandable.

But from another aspect I cannot understand the repeated choice of this subject. In fact, it is rather perturbing that again and again this subject crops up. For it is not a new subject at all. It has been discussed and debated and spoken on and written about repeatedly in our circles and already a long time ago. I well remember that when I was a boy in David Society at First Church we debated the subject rather vigorously. It was the subject of debate at a combined meeting of the Young Men’s and Talitha Societies in my day too. I recall that it was debated at a convention in Oak Lawn years ago. And undoubtedly more than one society has treated the subject in its after-recess program in the past. Besides, the pages of the Standard Bearer have given us instruction in this regard already before your time. Frankly, that makes me a bit suspicious that some of us want to discuss the subject because they indulge in drama or would like to indulge in drama, and probably would like to justify this indulgence. It also makes me wonder whether our homes have failed in this respect to instruct the generations of the covenant as to the proper attitude to take towards drama. At any rate, I want to say from the outset very bluntly, that as far as I am concerned there is absolutely no place for drama of any kind in our lives as Protestant Reformed people. And I don’t intend to compromise on that tonight. This drama-question ought to be a settled question among us. It ought to be a matter of settled policy in our homes that we do not allow drama a place in our lives. And we ought not to be forever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth in this respect. We ought to be leaving some of these first principles and going on to higher things and to deeper and richer truths.

Hence, if you are merely interested in
an academic discussion of drama tonight, and want to "but the subject around," I assure you that I am not interested. But if you want to be instructed as to a sanctified and covenant walk in this regard, and want to practice that instruction, if you want to dare to be different and separate, if you dare to be considered narrow and probably dull, then I have something to say to you. My subject is: "Covenant Youth and Drama." And I will divide it as follows:

I. The Basic Question of Attitude Involved.

II. The Principal Issue of Drama as Such.

II. The Practical Matter of our Walk at Stake.

When I speak of the basic question of our attitude in this connection I, refer to the fact that we live in a world that is entertainment crazy. It is beyond question that one of the most important questions of the world today, which has much leisure time, is: what can we do to amuse ourselves? In fact, we may safely say that this is one of the controlling questions of the day. The whole world is bent on having a good time. I admit that this is a broader question, including much more than drama. But I insist, first of all, that this whole amusement-craze is basic to any consideration of the drama-question. The purpose of dramatic productions is to entertain, to amuse. And the purpose of attending such productions is the same. It is sometimes claimed that this is not entirely true, and that the purpose of drama is at least partly educational, that drama can serve a useful purpose in audio-visual education. Now, apart from anything else, I am old-fashioned enough to believe that the value to so-called audio-visual education is grossly overrated. But be that as it may, if we are honest with ourselves, the purpose of drama and the function of drama is not educational. I remember well from grade-school days that we were treated periodically to dramatic productions on the screen in connection with the history of our country. I also remember that we learned little history from those movies, and were not interested in learning history from them. We considered those movies a nice substitute for school work, and were highly entertained, especially if there was a little blood and thunder in the pictures. And thus it is generally with drama. We may safely assume that the dramatic production, whether on stage or movie screen or TV screen whether amateur or professional, is entertaining in its purpose; and we may also assume without fear of contradiction that the sole reason for attending such productions is that we crave amusement.

I therefore make the indictment that our whole so-called "drama problem" is but one aspect of a larger problem, or evil, namely, that we live in an age that is largely entertainment-orientated, pleasure-mad, amusement-crazy, and that we ourselves have in no little degree fallen victim, willy-nilly perhaps, to the devastating philosophy that people, especially young people, including covenant young people, need amusement! And by the same token, I venture to say that if you get rid of that wrong amusement-philosophy, root and branch, your drama problem will also be solved.

Let me elaborate on this a little.

The proposition that we have ourselves to no little extent fallen victim to this evil amusement-disease hardly needs proof. Let me appeal to your own conscience, first of all. How much is your own life not governed by the aim of having yourself a "good time," even to the extent that your work and your schooling are governed by it and receive a secondary place? School work must not crowd us too much, and must be taken care of as quickly and as easily as possible, in order to make room for "fun." How common is the complaint among young people, especially when certain types of entertainment are contraband, that "there's nothing to do!" For many a person a night at home is unthinkable, much less so doing something truly worthwhile on such an open night. If nothing else, young people can find a multitude of excuses for just going out and tearing around in a car for no sane reason, — and often not in a sane manner. In the second place, think how all kinds of sports, — ball games, bowling, boating, racing, skiing, roller-skating, etc., — and all kinds of shallow entertainment, along with plays, pageants, movies, T-V dramas, have come
to play a dominating part in our life. If there is any kind of worthwhile program, it must not be too heavy and serious. Nor must it be too long. And it is even claimed that you cannot get an audience for a "light" program of religious music during the week. Such programs must be rendered on Sunday evening after the service. In the third place, how our societies suffer! Bible discussion is brief, and it is poorly prepared for. After-recess programs are a chronic problem, often of little real value, and receive still less attention and preparation. Beacon Lights, let alone our Standard Bearer, now, is little read by those for whom it is mainly published, our young people. And it is much less studied! This is all because we "have no time" supposedly. The truth is, of course, that we don't take time, that we crowd our lives with entertainment and amusements instead. It is a rare thing when our young people, to mention more items along this line, sponsor a lecture or other worthwhile program today. Even the entertainment side of our conventions looms larger and larger. The convention becomes more and more a time to get away and to go out without having too many restrictions from our parents. Attendance at business meetings and at programs must be enforced. And besides, a large measure of outside financial help is required by our young people to sustain their own federation activities, this in a day when they think nothing of spending endlessly on cars and gasoline and on all kinds of useless amusements. More could be mentioned. But let this suffice. And it is my position that this whole matter of our attitude toward life, our outlook upon life, is an important aspect of the "drama-problem" too.

Is this indeed the proper outlook on life for covenant youth? You might expect it from the world's youth. But how about covenant youth? Is the chief, the most important thing to be entertained and to have pleasure? What is our answer in the light of God's Word?

No, the Christian must not be an unhappy person with a long face. And this especially not the case for covenant young people. The Christian must be joyful and happy! But his joy must be the Lord! And there is undoubtedly a place in the Christian life for relaxation and recreation and enjoyment. But that place is limited! And that means, in the first place, that there must be the proper balance in our lives. Not amusement and fun is the chief thing, so that it becomes a most serious and pressing problem to provide enough of it. The place of entertainment is minor and subordinate. Even our entertainment and recreation must be but a means in fulfilling our life's calling. In the second place, even our entertainment and recreation must be Christian, and our hours of relaxation must be spent in a Christian way. There is no relaxing and no trace in our battle to be manifest as children of the light! Spiritually we may not relax even in our hours of relaxation. And that means that all our pleasures must be able to stand the test of God's Word. Our entertainments must have a positively Christian character.

No, the world is not a play-ground, but a battle-field. And the calling of the covenant young man and young lady is not to play, but to fight a battle and to prepare and train for a spiritual battle. To that end, we need not amusement and recreation chiefly, but we need edification and instruction in the Word of God. We must become founded in the truth. We must be equipped to make our way through the world as saints! And therefore, you must not give your chief attention to amusements by any means. And you must not be led astray by all kinds of pseudo-Christian amusements, amusements that are supposed to be of a Christian character merely because they are sponsored by some so-called Christian organization. No, you must prepare for battle! And you must do that by searching the Scriptures at every possible opportunity, at home, in catechism, in your societies. You must study! You must learn! You must grow in grace!

If you do this, you will find that even as your entire outlook on life changes, so the question of drama becomes less and less a question. It will no more present a practical problem for you. For not only will you spontaneously have very little time, if any, for such things; but you will also realize that drama is not a legitimate form of entertainment for the Christian.

(to be continued)
editorial

SPECTACLES OF THE WORD

When one is blind, the world lies in darkness. He has no part in beholding the beauty of the rainbow, the symmetry of each flower, the colors splashed throughout the forest. He cannot see the great advancements in the arts and sciences. His eyes are blind.

Of a less severe nature is one who has impaired vision. He can see, but not clearly and distinctly. Objects appear before him, he strains and squints, trying to distinguish one thing from another. This man, however, is not without hope. He can make an appointment with the optician and with the corrective lens he receives, he will be able to see more clearly the things about him.

Man is in darkness. Though sin he became blind. He cannot see the beauty and wonder of God. Oh, he can look at it with his physical eye. He can distinguish a tree from a flower. He can behold colors, shapes, and sizes. He can work with the elements of nature, combine, analyze, and mix them so that he produces great "wonders" and inventions that cause most of us to be amazed. He can do all these things with his physical eye, yet he is blind.

Romans 1 informs us that even God's eternal powers are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. That is a paradox concerning the wicked. They see, yet they are blind. The answer to that apparent contradiction: "Their foolish hearts are darkened." They can see with their natural eye, but they are blind spiritually. The testimony stands. All creation witnesses of God's greatness and glory. Hence the wicked "hold the truth in unrighteousness." The works of God abide, they speak, they reveal, but the wicked are blind, they are darkened in sin, they refuse to see, hardened in the depth of hatred against God.

In contrast, the believing child of God is not blind. He has an eye that sees. He has the physical eye that focuses on the objects about him. In all his way he distinguishes, he perceives. In so far he is no different than the ungodly. That which is natural is natural. The difference that comes to the fore is that the righteous sees and beholds all things, but the wicked sees and does not behold. The righteous sees in faith. The man of God is different. The heart of the ungodly is darkened, the heart of the righteous is enlightened. That is the power of grace. By grace the darkness is shattered, his heart is filled with light, the light of God. In that light the man of God walks in faith. The whole world radiates the glory of God. In creation, His handiwork, God reveals Himself in a revelation of glory and power. The godly see that and behold the "invisible things of God." In the trees and mountains, on the grassy slopes, in all God's dealings with His people in history, in the nation of the world, in all things, He sees His God.

That man of God, redeemed and delivered, enriched with seeing eyes, needs corrective lenses, he needs spectacles. Not that the power of faith—his seeing eye, itself is weak. It is not so, that the work of God is imperfect, incomplete, or impotent. He needs "glasses" because that seeing eye is still in a weak body of sin. His nature is inclined to all evil. The world entices him. He would focus his eyes on all things of unrighteousness. We experience that, do we not? We do not see God in all things. We are not always conscious that "The heavens declare and the firmament showeth." We need spectacles.

The living Word of God focuses all that which passes through our "eyes," whether we see, hear, touch, taste, or smell, upon the retina of our heart. That heart is spiritual. It is overflowing with the grace of God. In that heart, that which is perceived is spiritually perceived, so that we see the power and glory of God in all things. As this takes place through the divine directive of the Word of God. That Word, we read,
we preach, we sing, we meditate upon it. It is God's revelation to us that leads us into the way of truth.

The conclusion is that the more we study the Word, the more we also will perceive spiritually the purpose of the world in which we live not only, but also our place in the midst of this beauty of God. Even as the one who wears glasses, the more he wears them the more they help him, so the more we read and study the Word, the more we shall understand the real purpose of all things. Then we will see that this world and all its glory is a little shadow of the glory that awaits us when we shall have perfect eyes to behold God's glory in the face of Christ.

J.K.

PENDING PROPOSALS

The following information was sent by the Federation secretary to every young people's society but is important enough to be repeated here.

BUSINESS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE 1960 CONVENTION

1. The Federation Board proposes that a Scholarship Fund Program be established to provide aid for prospective ministers and teachers; which program shall be under the administration of the Federation Board.

Grounds:
   a. There is a need for Protestant Reformed ministers and teachers.
   b. The Federation is in an advantageous position to help satisfy this need.
   c. At present there is no scholarship program in our churches.

2. The Federation Board proposes that the assessments for the 1960-1961 society season be eight dollars ($8.00) per member. One dollar shall be appropriated for the Scholarship Fund.

Grounds:
   a. The increase in Convention costs (higher traveling expenses and higher speaker fees).
   b. Possibility of going West after three years of convention in the East.


4. The following officers must be elected for a two-year term:
   - President
   - Secretary
   - Vice Treasurer
   - Librarian
   - Advisor

Delegates to the convention should consider these proposals carefully. The first two proposals deal with the knotty problems of money. Acceptance of the first proposal implies that the societies are willing to shoulder the additional monetary burden of supporting a scholarship program. This support would not be assessed but would be in the form of contributions. However, the nucleus of the project would be supplied by the adopting of the second proposal. This proposal really contains two distinct parts. The first part would raise the assessments of each society member from $6.00 to $8.00. The second part of the proposal would direct $1.00 of the $8.00 into the scholarship fund. The change occurring here is that for the past several years one assessed dollar was given to Beacon Lights, whereas now, this one dollar would be given into the scholarship fund. The reason for this change is not that Beacon Lights is more flush than previously, but that the Board could not think of any other way to guarantee some sort of scholarship at the outset. The scholarship program itself was discussed in the March 1960 Beacon Lights.

The fourth item also demands investigative thought. Delegates should not allow the election of officers to deteriorate into a popularity contest. Already, the delegates should be mulling over a list of qualified candidates for Federation Board positions. Those whom the delegates elect will run Federation affairs for two years and certainly must be conscientious, capable-in-their-office young persons. Those delegates who are not familiar with available nominees might make a special point of inquiring from the ministers at the convention who the possible candidates are.
It seems to me that the business meetings this year will be especially important. Adoption of the scholarship proposal would indicate progress, a vehement shaking off of that tenacious old leech, status quo. This sort of progress, of course, affects young people where it hurts, their billfold. d.e.

BEACON LIGHTS will not be published in August, as the staff will take a customary summer vacation. The next issue will be, D.V., the September issue. The next deadline for contributing editors is August 1.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

CONVENTION TIME

REV. H. HANKO

Convention time is here again!

I presume, if I may judge by past conventions, that this is met with mixed reactions among our young people. There are always those, and they are no doubt, by far in the majority, who are elated at the news for ever since they have left last year’s splendid convention in Oak Lawn, they were looking forward to the new one to be held this year in Grand Rapids. Or, if they have not had the privilege of attending a convention before, they look forward to a new experience—one which fills them with excitement.

There are also others who hear talk here and there of the convention, but pay little or no attention to it. They have perhaps attended past conventions, but have found them rather boring, to say the least. Or they have never attended a convention, and are not going to start now. Their reaction to the news is one of cold indifference. These are in the minority—and we hope, a steadily decreasing minority.

There are others also who glance at the news and think of the convention coming as a time to get away from home far from restraints of parental demands and instruction where they can do pretty much as they please. They evidently consider convention time as a time of license and unrestrained life with as little to do with the activities of the convention proper as possible. These are very few in number, I know.

To all three I write.

Young people have a place of their own in the church of Jesus Christ—a place which is uniquely their own. They too are members of the church. Of this there can be no doubt. They belong to the body of Christ not only, but to the church here upon earth, members of the congregation into which they have been born, or have moved, necessarily active in the institute of the church.

This place which they occupy is uniquely their own. This is because they themselves are unique. They are in their youth. And youth is a time that differs from any other age in life. On the one hand, they have reached that point in spiritual development and maturity where they are beginning to understand the implications of their membership in the church, of the truth which their church confesses, and of the solemn obligations which belong to the people of God.

On the other hand, youth is a time of
vision, of idealism, of enthusiasm. This is perhaps true even in a natural sense of the word, and is a characteristic of youth which lost only with the gravest consequences. When the youth of a nation become cynical and indifferent, it bodes nothing but evil for the nation of which they are citizens. For they cannot capture again the inspiration upon which they have turned their backs with sneers and mockery.

But I am speaking of covenant youth in whom the vision, the idealism, the enthusiasm of a young generation is spiritually directed and controlled by a regenerated heart. I know that as one grows older, some of the idealism and enthusiasm is shattered upon the hard rocks of reality; some of the vision fades in the problems of life which are often difficult and disillusioning; some of the boldness and ambition must necessarily be tempered. For no one can live this life in this world while walking with his head in the clouds far removed from life's problems. It is good that age brings with its discretion and a tempering of hasty action by a mature wisdom. But woe be to the man who tries to drive from young people their hopes and dreams, their aspirations and plans, to be replaced only with disillusionment and its twin brother, cynicism.

And indeed, these characteristics give to covenant youth their own unique place in the church. They are the generation of tomorrow, the church of the future, the saints who must take their place when their parents go to join the company of the saints made perfect. And all their eagerness, their enthusiasm, their idealism, when directed in the proper channels, can only serve the welfare of the church. If young men and young women start life bitter and cynical, what would the future bring? But when they start their active life in the church eager and courageous, fearing nothing and strong in hope, and when all their energy and ambition is directed into the proper channels, then the church can face a strong tomorrow and a confident future.

So it should be with the young people of our denomination. And so, by God's grace, it is to a considerable extent.

The Young People's Convention belongs to the young people. It is your convention, your's to plan, your's to carry out, your's to enjoy. And above all else, it is your convention to use to the glory of your God and the welfare of your church.

How can one who has the love for the cause of our churches in his heart be indifferent to the convention? How can one who has the desire to see the kingdom of Christ prosper use the convention for wrong purposes?

The convention is a tremendous opportunity for your gifts and talents to be developed, for your enthusiasm to be directed into the proper courses of action, for your idealism and optimism to find its proper outlets.

There are speeches by consecrated men of God to speak to you of the truth which they have learned to love, and which they desire that you love—a desire which increases daily as the times becomes sterner and the days grow short before our Lord returns.

There are opportunities for the development of your own gifts and talents in programs and the discussions, in the opportunities for debate and exchange of opinion.

There are occasions when your own ideas about the welfare of the unique cause of our young people in their Federation, their Beacon Lights, their other programs can be aired and discussed.

There are times of fellowship and fun when you can come to know the young people from other churches, from other parts of the country—their problems at home, their society activities, their life so different often times from your own. Then are the moments when you can see that the church of our Lord is composed of many different kinds of people, but all who are united in a single endeavor, a common interest, a oneness of love and hope and faith.

And the convention is the only opportunity for this on a denominational level. Taken as a whole, there is the most splendid opportunity in the whole world for you who belong to God's covenant to give vent to your enthusiasm, to press into the service of the cause of Christ your idealism, to look to the future with confidence and assurance that when you must take your place in the church you are eager and ready.

All that I have written may itself sound idealistic. A perfect convention will have to wait till heaven I am sure. But the goal
is there; and to cease to strive for it will end in chaos and failure.

God calls us to the convention. God will bless us. Our churches He loves. Our strength is that which comes from Him. May our convention, under His indispensible blessing be a time of spiritual happiness for all of you!

## Giving Our Last Mite

**MARY BETH ENGELSMAN**

Sunday night I attended a hymn singing. The collection plate was passed, and as I scurried through the contents of my purse, I came across a few forgotten coins. When I hurriedly dumped these coins into the plate, they clinked against the other small coins nested in the plate. After singing a few more numbers, the director for the evening announced that the collection amounted to $28.01. We resumed singing. The hymn singing being over, I went home, but all the way home, something bothered me. Twenty eight dollars and one cent kept ricocheting through my head, and I didn’t know why. I’ve heard collection results announced before, so why did this particular amount perturb me? And then, I knew why — it was the odd collection amount which haunted me. Where did that one cent come from? How strange to have a collection for Beacon Lights result in pennies! Upon reflection, I couldn’t help but recall that most of the young people at the hymn singing were fashionably dressed and had well kept cars. Many even had full time jobs; and yet, the collection amounted to twenty eight dollars and one cent.

Really, fellow young people, it’s a bit hard to understand. We plan and save our money for weeks in order to make payments on skirts, or fender skirts; we diligently budget our money for a new paint job on our cars, or a new dress with shoes dyed to match; we willingly allot money for flashy new class rings. But, has any of us ever planned and saved our money for even one week for a hymn singing, or for a school drive, or for society dues? Why, that’s unheard of; Ridiculous! Foolishness! But is it?

Oh, we, like the widow Christ commended for giving her last two mites, give our last mite, alright; but, is it because that’s all we could have given? Remember, that is the point of the whole text. Two mites were all the widow could have given. Can any of us say the same?

As early as the fourth grade, we’ve heard such phrases as: “to give is better than to receive”, “the Lord loveth a cheerful giver”, “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.” Have these much repeated phrases failed to impress us? If not, how can we account for our negative attitude and inarticulate utterances when society dues are raised one measly dollar? How can we soothe our consciences when we toss pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters into collection plates, and spend five dollars, ten dollars, twenty dollars for new clothes, new cars, trips, entertainment, food, cosmetics and you add the rest?

Look at the title of this article once again. Yes, young people, for the most part, isn’t this exactly what we do? We give our last mite, our last bit of money — the money we were shocked to know we even had, the money we were unknowingly carrying around, the mite which fortunately stuck in a corner of our purse or pocket, thus saving us the social embarrassment of having nothing to put in. There is no planning involved, no allotting of our weekly paychecks, no apportioning of our money for the “lasting” things; but, on the contrary, we go right on giving our last mites, the mites which fortunately happen to be within grasping distance. And mites such as this are supposed to put out this magazine, pay for conventions, support the poor, build high schools, publish pamphlets, send out missionaries, pay teachers, and support a host of other worthwhile causes... but can they?
Dear Frank:

You say Calvin admitted the mode of immersion, and then ask, do I know more than Calvin? Now, brother, merely because I may, and on certain points do, differ from Calvin, the necessary conclusion is not that I assume to know more than he; nor any more than supposing I should agree with him on everything, that the necessary conclusion would be that I assume to know as much as he! But although I do not regard immersion as the Scriptural mode, I would go so far as to say that immersion may be a valid mode. That is, it could be valid, inasmuch as in the process of the immersing, sprinkling and pouring would be accomplished. For immersion is not the only mode, nor, in my estimation is immersion the mode indicated by the baptism of Christ on the cross, or the baptism of the Church with the Holy Spirit. Yet however that may be, your reference to Calvin is not quite accurate. The same inaccuracy is to be noted in a tract published by Berachah Church, of your old home town, Philadelphia, which is entitled, “Baptism: Its Mode and Importance.” There Calvin is (mis-)quoted, “The very word baptize, however, signifies ‘to immerse,’ and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.” (Institutes, IV, XV, XIX). I furnish this reference, as the tract in question does not give the reference to locate the passage. But it is only fair to let it be known what Calvin had to say immediately before this quotation: “whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only poured or sprinkled upon him, is of no importance; churches ought to be left at liberty, in this respect, to act according to the difference of countries. The Berachah Church tract does not include the above quote. Why is it baptists omit this part of the quotation?

Now as to the matter of supporting some of our (Reformed) contentions by inference: an inference, you will agree, is not a mere implication, but is a logical and justifiable conclusion which we reach in our thinking based on Scripture. It is the conclusion of Scripture itself. Now I realize that you as a baptist do not like me to gather infant baptism by inference. Yet, as I pointed out to you, you infer (conclude) that the Lord's Supper was administered to women. And that is all that you can do on that point. 1 Cor. 11 furnishes only the inference to this idea. There I read such expressions as “he,” “man,” and “brethren.” You must infer that women were included. In the first part of the chapter Paul had much to say about woman in another connection. However, you do make this desirable inference; and I am glad that you do. But why not grant me the same right to infer my inferences?

I find it more than a little difficult to believe, with you, that the households that were baptized had no children or infants; or having them, that they were not baptized. It is more probable to infer that they had them and baptized them, than to assume they had none, and did not. But let that go. Take those Jews at Pentecost. They were there with their little ones. The little ones had had the symbol (sign) of the Old Covenant, circumcision, applied to them. But on this occasion the parents heard the preaching of the New Covenant. They see that by election and redemption God's people are in that covenant. But they do not suffer any amazement over the fact that there is no N. T. sign of the covenant to be applied to them and their children. For there was such a sign (baptism!).
knew that in the old covenant the children were always included. They did not expect, nor did they lead to expect, anything different under the new covenant. They needed no (new) warrant to include their children by visible sign in the covenant. There was nothing to the effect that the gracious privilege of wearing the covenant sign had been revoked. The covenant sign, therefore, continues, although circumcision in the flesh no longer does. So, a new and formal command to include the children in the new covenant with its sign would have been altogether superfluous. This was of long standing well understood, so that it would have been completely out of place to contend that a change was to be expected at this point. Rather, the new covenant so far from withdrawing or limiting covenant privileges, only multiplies and extends them. For this reason Peter says, “For the promise is to you and to your children.” As a Calvinist you will agree that that the promise is made only to elect children — “Even to as many as the Lord our God shall call”! This shows that the promise, faith, and baptism are all based on election.

To return to the matter of the baptism of households, it is, of course, true that there are only about five instances of it in the New Testament. Nevertheless, this is a good percentage, for there are only about 12 separate instances of baptism on record in all the New Testament, and 5 is a pretty good percentage of 12. And mark, in all of these 12 instances of baptism, you never once read anything of leaving the children UNbaptized until such time as they make a confession of faith for themselves. With this in mind, I would have you answer the following questions. (1) Can you show that children were left unbaptized? (2) Can you produce one single example of where baptists make it their practice to baptize whole households or families? That is a New Testament practice, but why do not Baptists practice it? (3) Can you show any where in Scripture one single example of an adult person, baptized as an adult, who comes of Christian parents?

Now, I still contend that the instances of baptism in the New Testament do not provide us with any material from which we could deduce any mode of baptism. Neither you nor I can prove mode from any or all of these cases. You have now agreed to this in your list. So you should not have asked me to prove sprinkling from any of these cases. For I refer to none of the New Testament instances for mode. We should be completely agreed that that can not be done! This raises more questions: Then where will you go for proof of immersion? Where is the Scripture support for mode? You apparently get the idea of your mode from the preposition into (eis), and every instance of its appearance in Scripture take it to mean only into. I find from my concordance, however, that certain “repented at (eis) the preaching” (Matt. 12:41); that Jesus told one, “Go home to thy friends,” that certain “bowed down their faces to (toward) the earth” (Luke 24:5); and “she goeth unto (eis) the grave” (John 11:31). These three occurrences of eis (an indefinite preposition) are a preposition of relation. John 11:31 shows its oldest and commonest usage. There it is a preposition of place. So with 11:32, “fell down at His feet”; “Jesus cometh unto (eis) the grave” (11:38), but no one believes He went into it. In 20:1, “... cometh Mary... unto the sepulchre,” it is here taught that the action of coming unto it was accomplished before any going into it. (cf. Mk. 16:2). Also in this same text is the little word ek (out of): “seeth the stone taken away from (ek) the” tomb. From, not out of. The body of Jesus was in the tomb; the stone was not.

But eis is also a preposition of end or purpose: “created in Christ Jesus unto (or for) good works” (Eph. 2:10); “to will and to do for (eis) His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). Therefore, I do not, as you do, appeal to eis and ek in order to prove what I believe to be the mode of baptism. But why do you say that it would be foolish to go down into the water and get wet if only a handful of water at water’s edge would do as good? For in the light of the manifold usage of eis and ek (as shown above), what does the Bible mean by “going down into the water”? Eis, as shown, doesn’t always mean into. The foolish thing lies in your reference to Acts 8:38f to prove immersion. For the foolish thing is that if the going down into the water means total immersion, then Philip immersed himself as well as the eunuch,
tor "they went down both into (eis) the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Rather foolish for both preacher and subject to be simultaneously or together immersed! The passage (8:31) does say that the eunuch desired that Philip "would come up and sit with him" in the chariot. Then in the chariot they came upon (epi) a certain water (v. 36). Here the chariot stood still (v. 38). Now the next thing they did was not to step out of the chariot, and walk over to the water, then wade out into it waist deep. But rather the text says after the chariot stood still they "went down both into the water," that is, stepping down out of the chariot they stepped into the water. They did not let themselves down into it, nor wade into it, much less, plunge into it. They stepped into it! Then when they "were come up out of the water," the eunuch was back in his chariot immediately. For the chariot was upon or at (epi) the water. But claim that this instance of baptism teaches mode (immersion-mode) and you teach that the convert and the preacher were both together immersed!

When the Church was baptized with the Holy Spirit, it was not by immersion, not by the Lord putting them into something, but by the pouring out of the Spirit upon them. "The Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44). How was this "falling on" of the Holy Spirit in baptism accomplished? Thus: "on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit" (10:45). Peter confirms this: "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I . . . 'ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit' " (11:15, 16). This is the true baptism, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, of which water baptism is the sign. Peter also referred to this when he quoted Scripture, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17ff.). Peter must have baptized according to "what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

**DONATIONS**

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**BE AT THE 20TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**AUGUST 16, 17, 18**

**IN GRAND RAPIDS**

**BEACON LIGHTS**

*Eleven*
Himself He cannot save!

How true! All men say it, church and world alike. Looking at Calvary, that's one thing that strikes us. He went on, never thinking for even one moment of coming down from that cross. He went on, until He had left His life on that tree and had poured out His soul in death. "Himself He cannot save!"

Yet, what a difference in the way it is said. Here is another example of how two people can say the same thing, yet mean something altogether different.

What a difference in the reason that is given, why He could not save Himself. The world mocks and says: He could not save Himself because He did not have the power. He was a deceiver, a fraud, a blasphemer. He never was the Son of the living God. The church worships and says: He could not save Himself, not because He lacked the power, but because of His love for His sheep, the purpose for which He came into the world, the task He had to perform, the mandate He had received from His Father to redeem all that the Father had given Him and raise them up again at the last day.

What a difference, too, in the conclusion that is drawn. In devilish pride and wicked folly the world reviles and says: Therefore He could not save others. How can a dead Christ give life to others? If one cannot save Himself, how can He possibly save others? The church prostrates herself before this cross of Jesus and says: That's precisely the reason why He can save others; that's why He could save me.

We know the occasion.

Finally the hour had come; the hour of Satan, Jesus, God; the hour of suffering, judgment, redemption; the hour of sin, righteousness, fierce battle and glorious victory. The enemy, after waiting and hating for so long, had managed to capture Him at last. Finally, after a night of horrible injustice as far as the trial and treatment of the defendant were concerned, they had succeeded in nailing the Son of Man to the accursed tree. Even while He hangs there, however, He is mocked and reviled from every side and also the sarcasm of our text is flung into His teeth.

The mockers here are the leaders of Israel. True enough, the soldiers too, the common people too, the malefactors too who were crucified with Him, reproach Him in much the same language. Here, however, they are the leaders of the people, the chief priests, scribes, elders and Pharisees, that hurl their mockery into the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Obviously, therefore, these words have their source in the most implacable and ruthless hatred against the Lord's Christ. That hatred seemed insatiable. It was! That was true at that time of these leaders in Israel. It is true today. The same hatred still burns like an uncontrollable fire in the hearts of the children of darkness. That hatred is ignited in hell itself; cannot be satisfied any more than the flames of hell can be extinguished.

How plain this was from all they did to Him! They had captured Him, bound Him, condemned Him. They had beaten Him, spit into His face, reviled Him. They had delivered Him to the brutality of the Roman soldiers, scourged Him, crucified Him. Were they satisfied? No! The hatred
of wicked men is never satisfied. For them the sufferings of Christ are never enough. For the most brutal killer there is still sympathy when finally the death sentence is pronounced. Not so with Jesus. "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Psalm 69:20.

It is from that hatred that you must explain this mockery of Israel's leaders: "Others He saved; Himself He cannot save." This is Satanic sarcasm, of course! They don't mean to say: It is true, that He saved others; that He did much good while on earth; that He healed the blind and deaf and maimed, cast out devils, and raised the dead; but now, strangely enough, He cannot save Himself. Why then did they nail Him to the cross? What they mean is this: He is no Savior at all. He's a fraud, a deceiver, a blasphemer. This Christ cannot even save Himself from that cross; if He could He would. How then could He have saved others?

What devilry! How can human mind conceive it?

Also, what folly! Spiritual stupidity! Were they not the elders, scribes, theologians of Israel? Should they not have known, from all the prophecies, from all the sacrifices and ceremonies in Israel, that God's people could be saved only in the way of blood? Had they not read Isaiah 53 again and again and again? In the light of all this, could anything be more logical than the cross? Did not everything in the Old Testament point to just such a Savior as this, the Christ of Calvary?

Therefore, what the world intends as mockery is nevertheless a deep and precious truth: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." In fact, because he saved others, because he had a countless multitude to save from Abel to the end of the ages; therefore He could not come down from that cross.

Himself He could not save! Hallelujah! Eternal thanks to God for that! That is our salvation, now and forever!

That was not because He did not have the power. He was the Lord of heaven. He could command legions of angels, and they would come down to do His bidding.

It was not because the enemy was stronger than He. With a single word of His might He could have destroyed that entire filthy conglomeration of foes in a moment. Had He not proved that in Gethsemane?

It was because He was Zion's Redeemer; because He had come from heaven to do the will of the Father. It was eternal love that held Him on that cross; the love of the Father for His children; the love of the Good Shepherd for His sheep. It was the Father's mandate, "that of all that He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day."

Therefore He could not come down from that cross, nor did He want to, that a redeemed church, so hopelessly lost by nature, might sing in heavenly ecstasy: "There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains."

Therefore He could save others!

Had He stepped down from that cross, not one sinner would now be saved. We all would be on the way to eternal destruction.

But now! Now He can save others and bring them to eternal glory. Now He can perfect the covenant of God with men and redeem an innumerable host unto life everlasting. Now He can carry out the Father's will and Calvary radiates the eternal love and grace of God for poor and wretched sinners like we are.

All praise to God's unspeakable grace!

ATTENTION, SHUTTER-BUGS

If you have a camera and are coming to the convention, you might be interested in knowing that Beacon Lights will publish the best convention pictures in the September issue. We invite you to submit as many convention shots as you wish. Send all entries to the managing editor, Lam Lubbers. In order that we may meet printing deadlines, all proofs must be in our hands within a week following the convention.
the strength of YOUTH

A. lubbers

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 of 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 young 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:

I. What is meant by the concept strength?
II. What is meant by spiritual strength?
III. What is meant by the concept youth?
IV. What are the peculiar and distinct characteristics of youth?
V. In what way is this strength of youth developed?

STRENGTH

In answering the first question the speaker posited the fact that his subject presupposed that youth is strong, and that youth is strong with a peculiar kind of strength. The speaker also stated that there are different kinds of strength. There is 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 it is conscious and instinctive. Finally our speaker noted that the human has strength. He can accomplish things, can think, 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 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 a 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 sonship 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 have 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 be 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.
Exactly what was the nature of the sin of our first parents? Eve first sinned when she disobeyed God's unspoken command that she love God and Adam. She disobeyed God when she refused to call Adam to rebuke the tempter. By refusing to call was that she became immediately a creature of darkness, totally depraved, and inclined to all evil. It was not so that she merely tended to sin but did not until she took of the fruit. She was already plunged into corruption when she at the very out-set did not call Adam.

Now the question arises, what part did Satan have in this first sin of Eve? He is the father of lies. He lied to Eve before she lied. So it was he that must have sinned concerning Adam first and must have lied about Adam as the head of the human race and as the husband of Eve. We know that Satan did not say "you need not talk to Adam about this." If he had, it would be obvious that the lie was taken over by Eve from Satan, the father of lies.

However, Satan did lie about Adam but not in his speech directly. Adam was with Eve when Satan addressed Eve. Satan, by addressing Eve, lied to Eve about Adam's relationship to her. She immediately liked the lie about Adam and forthwith in the whole discussion about the tree she too acted the lie; Adam is not the head, Adam is not her husband, Adam is not even a person present. She lied in a three-fold social relationship but Satan did it first.

Now the problem is, if Adam was present then he fell simultaneously with Eve for he did not make one protest concerning Satan's and Eve's conduct and speech. His silence showed consent. This is not true, for he consented to nothing at first. He was not busy so much with what they said as with what they did to him. And he was persecuted and suffered while they treated him as though he was Adam she sinned in both her relationships to Adam. He was head of the whole human race and if she had acknowledged this she would certainly have called him. Also he was her husband and in this social relationship she sinned. The result of her sin not there. It is thought that Adam should have rebuked Eve. This would have done no good at all as soon as Eve sinned her condition was hopeless as far as Adam was concerned. Only Christ could save her. Adam could not save anyone.

There were three things Adam could do. One was to stay there and eventually Eve would have killed him. The second would be to flee from Eve and from sin. In his case sin was localized to the person of Eve so that by separating himself from her presence he would also flee sin. The last choice would be to join Eve in her sin against him. This he chose to do.

How is it that Adam chose Eve and sin? Always when one is faced with making a judgment and a choice the past experienced of that person do influence the mind and will. Adam's past experiences were different from Eve's on two counts. Adam received the command concerning the tree directly from God and Eve did not. Also, Adam lived the first days of his life in absolute social solitude and Eve did not. He knew what it was to be alone. He valued the presence of another person. God exactly wanted Adam to have this experience. He did not create Eve as an afterthought nor after making an observation. God waited with the creation of Eve with a view to glorifying His own Son. That past experience of loneliness was an important factor in the choice that Adam made.

Rev. Ophoff writes in his Old Testament History page 61 "she should have... allowed her husband, who must have been present, to set the tempter straight." I too believe Adam was present. The first sin of our parents was a social sin.

We have a report on the mass meeting of the Oak Lawn and South Holland Young People's Societies held May 3. Rev. J. Heys was the speaker for the evening and special numbers included a piano solo by Pat Iperna, a reading by Ken Haak, a vocal duet by Al Poortenga and Len Lenting, and a Bible Quiz by Carolyn Lenting. Games were played after lunch.

On May 8th a combined meeting of Oak Lawn and South Holland Young People's Societies was held at South Holland. Bible discussion was from Luke 15:11-24—the parable of the Prodigal Son. The program consisted of two musical numbers and an essay.

Congratulations

- to Mr. and Mrs. H. Kuiper, Sr. (Southwest) who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary recently.
- to Mr. and Mrs. I. Korbom of Hope on the celebration of their 55th anniversary.
- to Mr. and Mrs. J. Schaan (First Church) who celebrated their 61st anniversary.

Membership papers of Miss A. Den Besten have been transferred from Southwest to Redlands church.

Miss Joanne Heller was received into the fold of First Church as a baptized member.

Wedding Bells rang

- on June 17th for Mr. Kenneth Kloetstra and Miss Della Mensch (Hope).
- on May 28th for Miss Joanne Heller and Larry Van Putten (First).
- on June 10th for G. Vroom and Miss C. Rutgers (Oak Lawn).
- on June 17th for Harry Boonstra and Thelma Pastor (First).

The Annual Field Day of South Holland (and Oak Lawn) was held on Memorial Day at Glenwood Forest Preserve. On the 4th of July the Annual Picnic of Doon, Hull and Edgerton congregations was held at the park in Doon. What better way can there be to spend a holiday than in the fellowship of the saints.

The "singingest" groups seem to be the Chicago area and Loveland congregations. Each had a Singspiration on April 17th and May 2nd. The Young People's Society sponsored South Holland's Easter Singspiration, which was conducted by Rev. J. Heys for the benefit of Beacon Lights. The School Auxiliary held a Singspiration at Oak Lawn on May 22, with Miss Audrey Klaver directing. Loveland's Young People have started an Organ Fund, which was the recipient of the collection at their Singspiration on May 22nd.

Future Conventioneers:

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Larry Nelson of Loveland.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Everett Buiters of South Holland.

A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Bert Wories of South Holland.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. D. Geason of Southwest.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. D. Mensh of Hope.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Pastor of First Church.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ueltman of First Church.
Also baptized at First Church were the young sons of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Ezinga and Mr. and Mrs. John Bos.

Rev. G. Vos has been laid up for about three weeks in May with heart trouble, but we are happy to report he has again taken on his full duties of shepherding his flock.

Seven of Hudsonville's servicemen have returned home: Lambert (and wife Donna) Schut, Leonard and Jay Holstege, Gerald Lubbers, Ted Miedema, Glen Lubbers, and Gary Lee Lubbers. Steve Holstege left for overseas duty.

On June 6 Mr. J. Korting graduated from our Theological School at exercises conducted in our Hope Church.


Sunday School Picnics of First and Southeast Churches were both held on a rainy June 15. Games were played between showers and both groups report an enjoyable time in spite of some muddy clothing.

Have you all heard that our Synod decided to broadcast from a station at Monte Carlo, "The Voice of Tangiers" that beams its programs to England, Scotland, Ireland, and parts of Germany, France, Belgium, and Holland. The station broadcasts in 26 different languages.

Called Home:
Mr. Jasper Koole of First Church at the age of 73 years.
Mrs. E. Bylsma, also of First Church.
Mrs. Richard Van Baren of Hudsonville at the age of 24.
The infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Van Overloop of Hudsonville — 1 day old.

In First Church the following young people confessed their faith: Bonnie Bylsma, Elaine Bult, Mrs. Donald Ezinga, Louisa Looyenga, Mary Pastor, Gordon Ondersma, David Ondersma, John Velthouse, Robert Velting.

These made confession in Southeast: Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Engelsma, Melva Wiersma, Virginia Heemstra, Ben Hendricks, Larry Pastor, Bertus Docter. May our Covenant God grant these young people grace to walk according to their confession.

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of Southeast Church held an Ice Cream Social on July 16th at Adams St. School. Ice cream, orangeade, cake, and coffee were served. Proceeds of this event were added to their Organ Fund.

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