PILGRIM'S DREGRESS
DAVID ENGELSMA

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE
AGATHA LUBBERS

YUVENILE DELINQUENCY
ROGER HARBIN
## BEACON LIGHTS
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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Pilgrim's Digress

DAVID ENGELSMA

"The man made answer saying, I am one whose name is Valiant-for-truth. I am a pilgrim, and am going to the Celestial City."
—John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress

But there was nothing of the kind: only the long straight road, very narrow, and on the left crags rising within a few paces of the road into ice and mist and, beyond that, black cloud: on the right, swamps and jungle sinking almost at once into black cloud.
—C. S. Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress

She stared glumly down the long narrow road. Pilgrim was dissatisfied. For as long as she could remember she had been traveling this same restricted way, and, frankly, she had become bored. Boredom made her feel oppressed, and now rebellious thoughts raged within her. A few hundred yards away, in the sultry Sunday afternoon air, Pilgrim could hear the rustle of her fellow travelers as they gathered by the roadside for the Service. Once more, the leader of the Aethedestatos Group would explain to his weary charges the purpose of their life-long excursion. He would explain to them that they were on their way to the Father's Land. He would read with them one of the letters which Father had sent to his marching children so that they would not lose sight of the road nor the goal at the road's end. Somehow, no matter how difficult the way was, whether the Narrow Road led the travelers up the laborious mountains of self-sacrifice or down into the gloomy swamps of Death, no matter how oppressive the weather was, whether the hot, arid winds of persecution were blowing or the chilly blasts of loneliness, these Services never failed to revive The Group. Pilgrim knew that tomorrow, the little band with which she traveled would resume their journey with a speed that could only be explained as a gift of the Father Himself.

Pilgrim hesitated. She really should attend the Service, but she was sick of being warned against leaving this narrow little cowpath. After all, what harm could come to an eighteen year old girl from merely taking a pleasant little stroll in the beautiful country bordering the road? She turned and slipped into the forbidden fields.

The soft, lush grass and the stately, leafy trees caused Pilgrim to laugh to herself as she thought of how her parents and the leader of The Group had told her that this country was dangerous. Certainly, they were ignorant of the real nature of the land beside their Narrow Road. Suddenly, without any warning, the ground gave way, and Pilgrim fell with a thud into grass-covered hole. The bottom of the hole was filled with pebbles which bruised Pilgrim, but that did not concern her as much as the fact that the surface of the ground was beyond her reach.

"Unless I get help, I'm trapped here," she murmured worriedly. "Here, let me help you out," said a strong, deep voice. Startled, Pilgrim looked up with fear, for her parents had also told her of the frightful inhabitants of this country, which was called The World.

"Do you live here?" she asked.

"No, you need not worry, I too am a traveler."

Reassured by these words, Pilgrim stretched out her hands and was quickly pulled out of her earthen prison. Her

BEACON LIGHTS

One
rescuer was a tall, manly young fellow, whose admiring glances were not lost upon Pilgrim.

"My name is Pilgrim," she stammered. "I am a traveler in The Alathestatos Group. We travel on that Narrow Road back there." As she pointed toward the road, she noticed with a twinge how far she had already wandered from it.

Quickly, the stranger attracted her attention again.

"My name is Fals Tolerance. I am a member of The Alathes Group. We are not bound by such rigid rules as you are, nor do we travel such a straight road. Anyone can see that the country here is beautiful. Of course, we should not penetrate too deeply into This World, but we travelers may enjoy some of its beauties. After all, our Father owns This World, and if we are careful to avoid those little pitfalls, such as you stumbled into, we can get along very well."

The handsome stranger's genial manner and tolerant, almost bemused attitude toward her Group contrasted sharply with the harshness of Pilgrim's parents and leader when they talked about the other Groups. Perhaps, they were ignorant of these other Groups just as they were ignorant of This World. There was that nasty fall, though, I wonder—

"Why don't you come along with me," broke in Fals. No one in your Group has asked you to marry him. The little difference between our Groups is not enough to warrant our remaining apart. For I do love you."

Pilgrim soon agreed, and the two set out for Fals' Group. Slowly, the distance between them and the Narrow Road lengthened. The countryside began to change. It still was beautiful, but the beauty troubled Pilgrim. The terrain had become quite rugged. The smooth little brooks were now rushing torrents, and the lush grass was ranker and denser. The sun had lost a little of its former brilliance, and weird shadows flickered around Fals and Pilgrim.

At the sight of a huge building, Pilgrim stopped short. Apparently, some builder had made a dreadful mistake, for the entire structure was sinking into a swamp. The astonishing thing was that none of the people entering it seemed to notice its impending doom.

"Let's go on," said Fals.

But Pilgrim had caught sight of the inscription over the door. It read, Pseudes Group.

And then all the horror of her precarious situation swept over Pilgrim. Many, many years ago the Pseudes Group had been faithful travellers of the Narrow Road. They too had marched their difficult way with never a jaunt into the forbidden fields. One day they had left, first to struggle along in the fields near the Narrow Road, losing members now and then in the grass-covered pitfalls, and finally, having given up traveling altogether, to settle in This World with the inevitable result of total destruction.

"I can not go on. I cannot leave the Narrow Road and the Alathestatos Group."

Fals wheeled about, and now visible on his face was a trace of ignorance.

"If you love me, you will not let a quibbling difference separate us. Besides, you have come to far now to return."

Pilgrim realized, as she looked back, that they had indeed come a long way. What had seemed to be a mere stroll had carried them down a long, steep hill, far out of sight of the Narrow Road. But the mighty impact of years of training strengthened her, and she recalled one of Father's messages to his traveling children:

"So take a fresh grip on life and brace your trembling limbs. Don't wander away from the path but forge steadily onward. On the right path the limping foot recovers strength and does not collapse."

"I must go back, please come with me. We—"

Now the trace of ignorance on Fals' face was joined by a monstrous amount of intolerance as he roared, "I'll never join your Group of narrow-minded bigots, never, never, NEVER! And with every shout, he raised his foot high and stamped it furiously into the ground so that, at last, he imbedded it solidly and could not have joined her even if he wanted.

Pilgrim paused for a moment to take one last look at what might have been; then she turned and began running up the hill to the Narrow Road.
The "What's the difference?" attitude is not a new phenomenon, but is one which is ages old. It is so old that it has existed almost as long as the now existent world. That old deluder, Satan, came to Adam and Eve in Paradise and asked the very same question.

The "What's the difference?" attitude is one which is assumed in many areas of life and by many classes of people. Often a relativistic philosophy of life is the basic reason for this either-or attitude toward the things of this life. (This either-or attitude is nothing more or less than Satan's lie.)

People of God, pilgrims and strangers, also are heard asking the question, "What's the difference?"

More important still, young people of the church are also heard asking this very same question. Sometimes the question involves real intellectual ignorance but often the question is asked skeptically and involves a basic lethargy toward the truth. Often times young people will flippantly and irresponsibly avoid taking a stand on some issue simply because it is thought to be one of those indifferent or inconsequential things.

It is certainly true that we cannot ascertain stringent stipulations concerning every phase and activity of life but there are certain things which are axiomatic in the Scriptures, as they are interpreted by the Three Forms of Unity.

Basic to the propositions and assertions that I shall make in this article is a basic assumption that in almost every area of life it makes a great deal of difference how we live and why we do what we do. This is just as true for young people as it is for the older generations; the same command comes to all: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Does it make a lot of difference to you, young people, that you are Protestant Reformed Christians living in the year 1960 A.D. or have you lived so long in the Protestant Reformed Churches and have you been so sheltered that the vigor and the fire of being Protestant Reformed is meaningless to you? Do you take for granted the fact that you go to a Protestant Reformed Church and are privileged to hear the Word of God explained as it is explained and taught nowhere else? Does your membership in a Protestant Reformed Church make you justifiably proud or are you just a little bit ashamed to tell others that you are Protestant Reformed?

I am not one of those who believe that we should loose sight of the historical perspective and forget about the past. More than thirty-five years ago the Protestant Reformed Churches came into existence because the leaders of our churches were cast out because they refused to have the truth of the Bible and the confessions mitigated. There were those in our churches that refused to say that because God assumes a favorable attitude of grace to all men, therefore the promise of the gospel can be offered to all men. They further maintained over against those who taught the opposite that God does not restrain sin in the heart of the reprobate and that unrighteous, unregenerate man can do no good, not even civic righteousness.

Do you believe that these things are worth maintaining today?

Because you answer this question affirmatively then it should be understood that this maintenance be not out of mere habit and custom. The strength of our churches today lies in the strength and fervor of our youth, the church of tomorrow; therefore the truth as it is taught and maintained by our churches is to be a living part of our lives.
The doctrines we are taught in catechism are the rudder of our ship and should determine the course of the ship in spite of all kinds of adverse winds and currents.

If as young people, we are willing to maintain that the doctrines as they are taught in this (Protestant Reformed) Christian Church are the true and perfect doctrine of salvation and if these doctrines constitute the rudder of our lives then we will not be stranded on the sands of relativism.

This means also that it makes a lot of difference whether we know these doctrines and it's going to make a lot of difference in our lives if we think that there is any difference because only then we will work hard to learn these basic doctrines of salvation.

This also implies that we will use every avenue and every means to become more deeply grounded in the truth. It will make a lot of difference to us whether we faithfully attend catechism, whether we diligently frequent young people's society meetings whether we attend Protestant Reformed Christian Schools wherever possible, or whether the truths as they are maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches are important in our lives and will become manifest in the kind of job that we choose, the kind friends with whom we associate, the kind of life's partner we choose, the kind of amusements we attend.

Some of us who read this article are thinking seriously of an occupation for life. We are faced with decisions and choices. Some positions will be outwardly lucrative and very appealing while others will not be nearly so appealing or lucrative.

Our Protestant Reformed Christian schools are faced with a severe teacher shortage and it makes a great deal of difference what kind of teachers staff our schools. Our Protestant Reformed Christian school is an extension of the Protestant Reformed Home. It can be no better than its teachers and therefore we need teachers who are dedicated to the cause of Protestant Reformed Education. Positions in our schools may not be as outwardly inviting but the reward is not from men but from God. Young people, do not desert the cause of Protestant Reformed Education; the future of our schools depends upon your faithfulness and devotion to the cause.

You, who are contemplating marriage, does it make any difference whom you marry? You do not marry just to have a husband or a wife? You want to so marry that you both love the same thing. If both love the truth and both live according to the same rudder then that marriage will be happy.

It makes a lot of difference, don't you agree?

agatha lubbers

CHRISTIAN LIVING
AND ITS EDITOR
SAY AU REVOIR

Beloved Young People,

It is with mixed emotions that I write this letter to you, for this is a letter of resignation as editor of your magazine. On the one hand, I have enjoyed writing for the Beacon Lights in the past and do not look forward to discontinuing this work. But on the other hand, I must do this, for the press of work makes it essential. I have been asked to write for the Standard Bearer, and I can hardly refuse this request. I assure you that had I written only a short time for Beacon Lights, I would not consider resigning and would not consider another request to write for a different magazine. But since I have been on your staff for seven or eight years, it is no doubt good for you and for me to “have a change.”

There are a few things I would like to say in parting however.

1) This resignation on my part ought not to be construed by you as if I have lost interest in the affairs of the young people or in your magazine. Quite the contrary is the case. I myself have worked on the staff, have now written for the Beacon Lights for some time, and I assure you that your paper has and will always have a warm place in my heart. Your magazine is splendid and has an important part in the activity of our churches and in the affairs of our young people. My
prayers will continue on your behalf, and if I can ever be of any assistance to you in any way, I will be more than willing to help all I can.

2) I would like to make my resignation final by the first of October. This will give you opportunity to secure another staff writer to take my place.

3) At the risk of seeming presumptuous, I would like to add a word of encouragement to you. God has placed in your hands the operation and publication of this paper. That means that you have a position of leadership among our young people. I would like to encourage you to make use of this position of leadership through the means of the "Beacon Lights". We live in times when leadership is sorely needed. The temptations that surround the people of God are many and varied as well as enticing and alluring. I mean not only the temptations of a sinful world, but also the temptations of false doctrine and sinful philosophies. Many are the problems which face especially our youth. Difficult are the questions which arise to trouble the minds of young people. And yet, our covenant youth must be the church of tomorrow. They must remain faithful at all costs. How important then becomes our paper. If "Beacon Lights" gives faithful leadership, it must stand in the vanguard of the young people. It must give direction in the paths of righteousness. It must never give forth an uncertain sound, but the trumpet call to the battle must be loud and clear. It is never enough for your paper simply to raise questions and excite discussion. It is never enough simply to point to problems. Your calling is broader than simply to arouse an exchange of opinion. You must point to the solutions and the answers. You must give leadership so that the decisions arrived at are correct and in harmony with God's Word. You must warn of evil, and encourage holiness. You must give to our young people a sense of purpose and a secure hold on the future.

I do not mean to preach to you; and I hope my remarks are not construed as such. Nor even is there implied in what I have said a rebuke as if you have not done this in the past. But this is your calling as you have carried it out by God's wondrous grace. Never lose sight of it.

May the God of all grace richly and abundantly bless you. May He fill you with a deep and abiding sense of your calling. May He give you fruit on your labors and satisfaction in your efforts. May His name be glorified also through our young people and the efforts of our Beacon Lights' Staff.

Your brother in our Lord Jesus Christ,
H. Hanko

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Covenant Youth and Drama
PROF. H. C. HOEKSEMA

This concludes Prof. Hoeksema's lecture on drama.

And that brings me to my second main proposition, namely: all drama is, as a matter of principle, wrong.

In order to see this, we must have a definition of drama, first of all.

By drama I do not refer to the literary composition as such. I consider the drama a legitimate form of literary art. It is very well possible to employ dialogue as a device of direct quotation in literature. There is nothing wrong with that as such. It makes no real difference whether you write a story that is interspersed with the direct quotation of the conversation of the characters in the story, or whether you write the entire story in the form of a dialogue, which is nothing else than direct quotation. Hence, with drama as a literary composition we have no difficulty at all. We can very well write and read dramas.

But by drama as we discuss it tonight we mean the enacting, the performance,—usually in a suitable stage-setting,—of such a dramatic composition, whether in prose or verse, portraying the character and life
by means of dialogue and action. The term drama is Greek. It means literally “a thing done.” Our term theater is also from the Greek. It means “a seeing place.” The later, Latin term audience means “those who listen.” And while today there is a good deal of dialogue in a dramatic production, originally the term emphasizes the action rather than the dialogue, or speaking, and the seeing rather than the hearing. And this is still the main element of a dramatic production today: drama is acting out the character and life of others.

We must distinguish in this connection between impersonation, or acting, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, imitation. Imitation is legitimate. We are even enjoined in Scripture to be imitators of God, or to follow the example of the apostles and of the saints in the past. When you imitate, you remain yourself. Your actions remain your own; your character remains your own. You merely choose a pattern to follow, whether for good or for evil. And therefore, in imitation as such there is nothing wrong.

But drama involves impersonation. In drama your person is merged as much as possible in the person and character of another. Physically, you must look like that person, and put on a mask of make-up. Psychologically, you must be merged into that other person’s mentality and will and emotions. Your soul must be merged into his. Spiritually too you must become that other person as much as possible. In your character and in your person, in your actions,—in all these you must be and become as much as possible another person. It is a well-known fact that professional actors even become typed. And some have been known to play a certain character-type, or even one specific character, all their life. Hence, in drama your person and character is submerged in that of another individual. And the more realistically, the more completely an actor succeeds in eliminating his own person and character and substituting the person, character, life, morals, speech, deeds of another individual, the more successful is the dramatic production.

All this is for the entertainment of others, mind you. It is for the amusement, the emotional titillation, the thrill, of the audience. If the true person and character of the actor shine through and the drama loses its realistic character, then the thrill is gone too. The successful drama must carry the audience away from the world of reality into a dream-world.

This is the idea of the drama as such. The idea may be attained through various means and in varying degrees. There is the skit. There is the rather simple dialogue. There is the amateur play, more or less elaborately produced by the high school or college senior class or by the school dramatics club. There is the professional production of the stage and screen. There is the opera, a musical dramatic production. There is the T-V play. But they are all basically the same in their conception and purpose.

And every form of such drama is wrong in its principle. In the first place, such acting is in itself a lie, and it purposes to cause the audience to live in a lie-world. The actor violates his own God-given nature and character and gifts, which he is to use to live his own life and to perform his own deeds. You may object that this takes place with the knowledge of both the actor and the audience. But this does not justify the lie; in fact, it makes it worse. The lie is always wrong. But to lie knowingly is more wrong. And it is a patent fact in drama that the more convincingly you can lie and make your audience forget who you really are and believe that you are someone else, the better actor you are. And the audience participates in this lie. For not only does the audience support and approve of the lie by its presence. But the drama purposes to make the audience live for a while in a different world.

In the second place, all drama is sinful as far as its content is concerned. Either it portrays that which is sinful, or it presents that which is holy. There is no third possibility, no neutral ground. We sometimes speak of an “innocent little skit.” But the fact remains that even that little skit portrays the sinful or the holy side of life. And to play that which is holy is blasphemous. It is a lying and vain playing with holy things. But to play that which is sinful is surely sinful. It is a
repetition of that which you know to be sin, and that too, as realistically as possible. The actor must put all his soul into the repetition of that sin. He must use all his talents to perform that which is displeasing to the Most High. Think of it! And all this is for entertainment too! The actor plays that which was real life, that which was a matter of the soul and life of a man, for many or for fame. He portrays the life of Luther,—of which that reformer himself would say that it was only principally holy and so filled with sin and imperfection that it bears no repetition,—portrays his soul's search for peace, his struggle of faith, his joy at finding justification through faith, his appearance before the authorities with his "Here I stand... God help me." He portrays all this, though he is not Luther. And he does all this for the thrill, the entertainment of the audience. Or he portrays Judas Iscariot and his betrayal of the Christ. Can you imagine a Christian ever wanting to portray Judas? Or, as is so common in most of today's drama with its emphasis on the sex-and-love theme, he portrays all the moral filth of the gutter,—the more realistically and naturalistically the better,—all to thrill an audience. And the audience is amused, and pays for being amused, by the serious, life-and-death incidents and aspects of the real life of a sinner or a saint that is responsible before God for that life and those actions!

When you think into it, you wonder how a Christian can even consider being entertained by this sort of thing.

And now we have not explored all the aspects of drama. You could investigate drama historically. You would find that our drama of today has its origin in Greek paganism. You would find that in church history drama does not have very commendable forbears. You would find that the sons of the Reformation at their strongest and purest spurned it and even tried to ban it by governmental regulation. You could investigate drama psychologically, and you would find that even worldly psychologists warn at least against over-indulgence in this world of "un-reality." You could investigate drama morally and spiritually. Then you would find that most drama of today makes abundant use of the sex theme and plays upon that which is smutty and morally filthy, that much of it intends to thrill with "blood-and-thunder," and that all of it purposes to titillate the lusts of the old man. However, I have not the time to elaborate on all this tonight.

I do want to issue a warning as to our practical walk. Begin with the skit or dialogue, and you will end with the full-fledged stage production. You must either close the door completely and principally against all drama, or you will open it all the way. Then you will enjoy all the fruits of Hollywood's corrupt productions. Or you will imitate those productions as professionally as possible. You will end up by producing in the name of John Calvin,—as the daily paper informed us recently by article and picture,—by producing and being famous for operatic and dramatic productions. A shame to any school that goes by Calvin's name!

And frankly, if I were going to give in and to indulge in drama, I would not "monkey" with amateur productions. I would go all the way then, and enjoy the cup of Hollywood's lusts to the full. Experience proves too that I would not be alone. If you get a taste for drama,—and don't forget: drama is appealing to our old nature,—of you get a taste for it in the amateur production, you cannot ban the drama of theater and movie and T-V. The reason is that you have abandoned the principle.

In conclusion, therefore: hold the line. Hold it for the sake of principle. Hold it for the practical reason that once you give in, you cannot stop the trend. Hold it for the reason that as covenant youth you have very little time anyway for amusement, and certainly none for illegitimate amusement.

And then don't consider yourself deprived and impoverished because you cannot go along with the crowd. If you consider it strict and an unfair restraint that you may not indulge in this form of entertainment, if you strain against this restriction, that's only an expression of your lustful old flesh. Down that flesh! As covenant youth you have something far more precious than the world's amusements and entertainment-forms. And you can and should fill your
life with that which is far more worthwhile. The time of preparation for life is far too brief to be wasted: and the strength of your youth must not be dissipated by and on the corruptions of the world!

Stand fast, therefore! Dare to take your stand! Stand even against the tide! And then count yourself happy that you may!

"So long as we live here, we are always at a great distance from perfection, and are in continual progress towards it: but the Lord judges of us according to that which he has begun in us, and having once led us into the way of righteousness, reckons us to be righteous. As soon as he begins to check and reform our hypocrisy, he at once calls us true and upright."

CALVIN COMMENTARY, Vol. 2 (p. 212) Isaiah 26:2

TRUTH VS. ERROR

a letter to a "YOUTH-FOR-CHRIST" DIRECTOR about COUNSELING YOUTH

REV. R. C. HARBACH

Dear W.S.:

After reading a copy of the "Youth-For-Christ Magazine" I would like to discuss with you some problems and questions sent into the youth counselor editor for advice. One problem was, "Many times in discussion with other Christians, the question of eternal security comes up. Would you please explain it, and give Youth-for-Christs opinion of it?" The advice of Youth For Christ follows: "Satan delights in side-tracking Christians on disputed issues about the Bible. While many folk solidly behind YFC take one view on this subject, others take exactly the opposite view. God honors most those who busy themselves on the one big issue—winning men to Christ and leading them into a life of victory over sin and growth in the knowledge and delight of a wonderful Lord. As you study your Bible, you will find for yourself your own position on this as well as other disputed passages. But don't make them issues. It takes a lifetime to invest oneself in the cardinal issues of the Word. Whatever his position on the matter of eternal security, the man who is genuinely born again, whose heart and life are fully yielded to the Lord, who walks openly and honestly before Him everyday of his life, is a man who has great spiritual security!"

That is the article as it appears in the magazine. But I cannot believe that you approve of its import and content. However, let me discuss and evaluate this article with you. We may differ in our thinking, but rather than hide our differences, lest we become offended at one another, let us discuss these differences in a brotherly way, with a spirit of meekness.

First, the inquirer asks that the doctrine of eternal security be explained. This is not done, not so much as an attempt being made to explain it. Why not? Is it the editorial policy of the magazine that it cannot furnish doctrinal knowledge? that its duty is not to "declare...all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27)? If an earnest young believer asked you, "What is the doctrine of eternal security?" would you refuse, or fail to exactly comply with his request? The request was for bread, but a stone was given. Again Arminius holds the doctrine of the preservation of the saints. The statement that "Satan delights in side-tracking Christians on disputed issues about the Bible" has bad implications. It implies that the doctrine of the eternal preservation of the saints is only a "side-issue," and that it is of the devil that we place any emphasis on that issue. This means that for a "Fundamentalist" to maintain that the eternal security
of the elect is a fundamental doctrine of Scripture is to be inspired of the devil. This contention, however, is the pet polemic of Modernism against every single foundation stone of the Christian Faith. The perseverance of the saints is no “side-track.” It is part of the one track of truth which runs all through Scripture.

“God honors most those who busy themselves on the one big issue—winning men to Christ.” This is a belittling of the perseverance of the saints, making it of very minor significance among the essentials of the faith. The statement, further, insinuates that the chief end of man is to win souls for Christ, whereas Scripture teaches that the chief end of man, objectively, is to glorify God! and, subjectively, the chief end of man is that he belong to his faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. The one great issue of life is for God’s sake, not for man’s sake; for God’s glory, not for man’s welfare. The very salvation of souls is for the glory of God. The eternal security of the saints is for God’s glory, not merely for their safety. But this statement implies that God honors most that great majority of people who deny the infallible preservation of the saints, but who speak so much of “winning souls to Christ,” such as the “Pillar-of-Fire” movement, Pentecostals, Holiness sect, Nazarenes, Volunteers of America, etc. This is also the principle of Modernism that life’s greatest work is for the advancement of mankind. God honors most the seeking of the greatest good of the greatest number, regardless of the truth of Scripture!

Then to speak of leading men “into a life of victory over sin” without the eternal preservation of the saints is like an attempt to win the battle against the devil, sin and death itself by man’s own puny power. Modernism has always had the effrontery to claim that this is possible. But the “victory” referred to is an abstraction. It is something only vaguely here today, and completely gone tomorrow. It suggests a “victory” (?) dependent upon man. It has nothing to do with the already accomplished victory eternally secured in our Lord Jesus Christ: “there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” The rubric in YFC magazine would have victory without security in Christ.

But the victory of the Christian cannot be such a shaky, tottering thing! “He that hath begun a good work in you shall perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.”

It is said to be our great aim in life to “delight in a wonderful Lord.” It is the chief end of man to fully enjoy God for ever, and to have the only comfort that we belong to Jesus. And Jesus is “Wonderful,”—that is His name. And He is Lord. That name, in Jude 4, means “Despot.” He is the only Despot, a benevolent Despot of absolute sovereignty. But if He cannot or does not save His people to the end, how is He so wonderful? When you pray to your Saviour, do you ever think of Him as the high and mighty Ruler of the universe? as the LORD? I know you do. When you fly in an airliner above the clouds and the mountains, with your baby in your lap, and you lift up your heart in prayer through the Lord Jesus, do thoughts flood your mind as to whether He can or will keep you safe and secure? I know thoughts of peace flood your soul! If you should happen to think of a “crash,” do you commit your souls unto Him with fear and dread that perhaps He may not be able to get you through to Glory, or that you may not make it? No, thoughts of peace guard your mind in Christ Jesus. Why? because He is Lord, really Lord! Once He saves you, He always saves you. He “doth deliver” and He “will yet deliver” (II Corinthians 1:10). The lord of the doctrine of “the falling away of saints” is not wonderful; he is horrible. He is a liar from the beginning.

“As you study your Bible, you will find for yourself your own position on this as well as other disputed passages.” This implies that the Bible is not the inerrant, infallible Word of God which teaches that what God has revealed therein in the truth, but that the Bible is inspired only where it may happen to speak to you. It denies: “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” It also implies that your opinion on this subject is as good as another’s; that it is simply a matter of deciding for yourself what you shall believe regardless of what God has clearly revealed in His Word. It implies that Scripture puts the matter in your (and my) hands to pick and choose what to believe and
what not to believe. Nothing is said about the Holy Spirit leading into all the truth them that ask Him. It matters very little what Scripture intends; what you may find for yourself and adopt as your own position will be satisfactory. Here the truth of the preservation of the saints is put aside in favor of man's finding for himself what he thinks he discovers in Scripture. What God's Word teaches on the subject is not important. It is what you think it teaches that matters! But this great truth is either the doctrine of the Word of God, or it is not. If it is, "your own position on this" amounts to nothing, unless it agrees with the position of Holy Writ. If it is not, then it is not for us to find a certain "position" or theory to hold regarding it; but we must rather wholeheartedly and entirely respect it! Modernism has always forwarded a "your-opinion-is-as-good-as-any" philosophy. It has always suggested a "do-it-yourself" method of interpretation of Scripture. But Scripture is not of any private interpretation. It must be understood in the light of the doctrine that the Spirit has given to the true Church; and in the light of the main current, thrust and teaching of all Scripture.

It is claimed that the "other disputed passages" are not to be "made issues." This not only implies that the Holy Spirit leads one believer to confess and love the truth of the preservation of the saints, yet leads another believer to reject, misrepresent and agitate against this truth; but also implies that this point is not only very debatable, but quite non-essential. It implies that because some denominations dispute, for example, the doctrine of eternal punishment, that therefore we are not to make that tenet an issue. Carry out this principle, and when we find that some deny the infallibility of Scripture, some the doctrine of regeneration, others deny the Lord's Supper, and the majority dispute the doctrines of election and reprobation, we have no issues left for which to stand. What are we to do? Take all the disputed doctrines, sweep them in a pile, and eject them out the back door! We would have no Bible left! We would certainly have no atonement, no Christ (only "another Jesus") and no trium Jehovah! Do not make this doctrine an issue? It is not even dignified or regarded as a doctrine. The Modernist has always so cleverly denied God's Word. Make it no issue? But God's Word has already made it an issue. If not, we have lost our Gospel.

I have much more to say of this quotation. But just a word about "the cardinal issues of the Word." Remove the disputed doctrines, and what is left that may be called "the Word?" What is cardinal? the Lutheran's justification by faith? the Presbyterian's perseverance of the saints? the Reformed doctrine of Predestination? the Baptist's baptism? May any of these be regarded as of "no issue?" Isn't that the Devil "side-tracking" the main lines of Scripture? And what of the fundamental principle of all Scripture? which is: the absolute sovereignty of God! We need not make that an issue. God has already done so. What our calling is, is to maintain the antithesis of God's truth over against the Devil's lie! And it does take a lifetime to do that! The Christian cannot for a moment deny his faith. I have tried to make you think. Now I shall give you time to think.

**NEWS**

**from, for, and about our churches**

**MRS. C. H. WESTRA**

Most of our congregations have had the opportunity of hearing the Word preached by some of our ministers other than their own pastors. Even during their vacations most of our ministers "fill in" for another on vacation.

*Twelve*

**The Ladies' Auxiliary** held a picnic at South Holland Park on July 27th. This consisted of a picnic supper with the pie, coffee, and milk furnished; and a sale of baked goods, hand-made items and other dry goods.
The Grand Rapids area bulletins contain an invitation to attend the celebration of Rev. H. Hoeksema's 45th anniversary in the ministry at Douglas-Walker Park on August 31st. We are certainly thankful to our covenant God for giving us such outstanding leadership through these years.

Southwest congregation plans to occupy its new church building on September 4th. Although grateful for the substitute meeting place of Adams School Gym, where they have met for nearly three years, the people are surely looking forward to worshipping in their own church building.

Rev. Robert Harbach spoke at the chapel service of the Christian Rest Home in Lynden on July 31st. His topic was: "He Shall Save His People" taken from Matthew 1:21.

Future Conventioners:
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. C. Kamps of Southeast Church.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Sjoerdsmma of Southeast.
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. P. Vande Vette of Southeast.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Albert Van Den Top of Lynden.
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Wiersema of Hudsonville.
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Oomkes of First Church.

Hope School Circle has sponsored a couple Kom-as-U-R-Coffee parties this summer—one on July 14th and one on August 11th.

Southwest Holland's Young People's Society invited Oak Lawn's young people to an outing on July 20th at the Forest Preserve in Thornt.

Those who confessed their faith at Hope Church on July 17 were: Mary Engelsma, Robert Huizinga, Betty Koolenga, Donald Langerak, and Duane Mensch. May these vows never be taken lightly. We vow to walk as children of the Light in the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Churches!

Called Home:
Mrs. P. De Young of First Church at the age of 76 years.
Mrs. Kate Van Ellen of First Church at the age of 80 years.
Mrs. G. Kruisenga of First Church at the age of 72 years.

On July 31st the Young People's Society of South Holland sponsored a Singspiration at South Holland. The pre-convention Singspiration was held on August 14th at First Church.

The Sr. Young People's Society of First Church conducted a paper drive at Adams St. School on August 2 and 3 to raise money for the Young People's Convention.

Ben Hendricks (Southeast Church) was injured in a water skiing accident on August 20th. He suffered a broken leg and is convalescing at home.

Do you ever stop to wonder why God placed you where you are in life?
Does it seem as if all things reverse themselves from the way you plan?
Your daily chores——
Your heartaches——
Your gropings and fears——
Your sorrows and tears——
Do you wonder why they've come to you?
The Master Builder smooths each rough-cut stone
And readies it throughout the years
That it may smoothly fit;
Yea, none other could replace it.
My life alone will me prepare
For my place in th' eternal edifice——
The church triumphant, at the crystal sea.
Then I shall know——
The All-wise God will show——
Why each phase of my life was a necessity.
—Mrs. C. H. Westra

BEACON LIGHTS

Thirteen
Laying Down His Life
For The Sheep

REV. R. VELDMAN

"and I lay down my life for the sheep"
John 10:15b

Of course He does! For many glorious reasons.
"I am the good shepherd," so He speaks in the preceding verse, "and know my sheep, and am known of mine." He knows, recognizes and acknowledges them as His own; and they know, recognize and acknowledge Him as their own.

Jesus is not a thief and robber. That's a frightful thing: a thief on the loose, amuck in a flock of sheep. Such a thief comes only with evil intentions. He doesn't know the sheep, and they don't know him. He comes only to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. "I am come," says Jesus, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Jesus is not a hireling either. A hireling is little better than a thief and murderer. He works only for himself; is not the shepherd of the sheep; doesn't know and love the sheep as his own; is not concerned about them. Consequently, he will watch and feed the sheep as long as there is no danger. Comes the wolf, however, he will take to his heels and leave the flock to the greed and violence of the foe. A hireling will not give his life for the sheep. He doesn't care that much about them.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He does not work for Himself at the expense of the sheep. He loves them; knows them as His own; wills that they shall have life in abundance.

Therefore He can add: "And I lay down my life for the sheep."

A deeper reason still He gives when He says: "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." I know My sheep! What is more, however: I know My Father!

I know His mind, His will, His heart. I know how He loves the sheep and wants to save them for His Name's sake. And I know that the Father wants Me to lay down My life for those sheep. "Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again."

It's the picture, often referred to in Scripture, of a shepherd and his flock.

Visualize it! The sheep are gazing in the pasture, content and confident; the shepherd is seated on a knoll, whence he can keep watch over his flock. Or, the sheep are on their way to the pasture or back to the fold; the shepherd is leading them and they follow faithfully.

Suddenly an enemy approaches. A wild beast, perhaps, a lion or bear or wolf. Perhaps they are evil men. The purpose is to steal the sheep, or to kill and devour. The sheep, defenseless and bewildered, panic and huddle together in mortal fear.

See, however, what the shepherd does.Were he a hireling, he would take to his heels. Now, however, he takes his place between the flock and the oncoming foe. He compels the enemy to divert his attack to him. Fearlessly he fights to the bitter end; even though the odds against him are overwhelming; even though it costs him his life. Seeing this, we say of that shepherd: he lays down his life for those sheep.

The same is often said of a soldier, who dies in battle. He gave his life for his country.

How beautiful!
Still, the picture is imperfect and inadequate, too. Really, that shepherd does not give, lay down his life. It's taken from him, by force.
In the first place, mere man cannot lay down his life. To lay down one's life means to give it, voluntarily, by an act of one's own volition. Mere man cannot do that. He may fight to the death; risk his life; permit an enemy to take it by force; do violence to himself. But, mere man cannot simply lay down his life.

Besides, that earthly shepherd has no such intentions. No more than that soldier who dies in battle. He fights to live, not die. To his dying gasp he struggles to save himself and his sheep. That is because the life of his sheep depends, not on his death, but on his life. If he dies, they die; if he lives, they live.

With Christ, therefore, all this is much more wonderful.

The Good Shepherd CAN lay down His life in the fullest sense of the word. No man can take it from Him. Really, the enemy does not kill Him. He GIVES His life. He can do this because He Himself is God in human flesh. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Verse 18.

When the Good Shepherd dies, therefore, it is only because He wills it so. That is His sole purpose in coming down from heaven. His whole heart is not in living this life, but in dying.

The differences, therefore, are obvious. The earthly shepherd cannot lay down his life; the Good Shepherd cannot be deprived of it. The earthly shepherd does not want to die; the Good Shepherd does not want to live. The former dies to live; the latter lives to die.

The reason, too, is obvious. THE enemy of God's people, who must consume us as we are by nature, is not the world, not Satan, but God Himself—the consuming wrath of God. World and Satan, as well as hell and damnation, are but instruments of that wrath.

That wrath has its cause in the guilt of sin, which must be blotted out shall that wrath be no more.

That guilt of sin can be blotted out only in the way of complete satisfaction. The full penalty of sin must be borne.

That penalty is death; eternal death according to body and soul. Shall we live, we must die. "The wages of sin are death."

That death the sheep could never die; that penalty they could never bear. In the first place, because it is eternal, infinite; and the sheep are finite. They could never finish the job, and live again. Secondly, because the punishment, to have atoning value, would have to be borne in love. Unwilling suffering can never reconcile with God.

What the sheep themselves could never do, however, Christ did for them. He came down from heaven into the flesh and blood of the sheep, assumed their guilt, laid down His life to blot out that guilt, took it again to apply unto His own all the riches of that atoning sacrifice.

That is the mystery of Calvary! "I lay down my life for the sheep."

For the sheep!

That would be quite impossible. For these sheep Jesus lays down His life. If Jesus lays down His life for a sinner, that sinner is saved. His sins are gone and he is reconciled with God. Had Jesus done this for all men, all men would now be saved. There can be no condemnation where there is no sin.

Besides, to apply this to all men would be contrary to all Scripture. Again and again Jesus speaks of them "whom the Father has given" Him. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me (Listen carefully, for here Jesus Himself tells us what is God's will concerning man's salvation), that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." John 6:39.

And certainly, this would be contrary to this entire chapter. Throughout Jesus distinguishes between the sheep and those who do not believe. Concerning the latter He says: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." Arminianism likes to turn this about and read: ye are not of my sheep, because ye do not believe; you all could be my sheep, if only you would believe. The great decision is yours, after all. Jesus says: "ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." The former, therefore, is the fruit, not the cause of
the latter. Concerning the sheep Jesus says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish."

Who then are the sheep?

They are those, whom the Father has given Him from all eternity. The elect! What other answer can be given? Were they not His sheep when the Good Shepherd came down from heaven? Were they not sheep before they were bought or heard His voice and believed? Isn't that plain from what Jesus says in verse 16: "And other sheep I have (notice: I HAVE), which are not of this fold: them also I MUST bring, and they SHALL hear my voice?" If then we are sheep before we are bought and before we hear His voice and believe, what other answer can be given than this: the sheep are the elect of God from all eternity.

Furthermore, the sheep are those who experience the fruits of this election in their hearts and lives; who are born again by almighty grace; who are united with Christ by a true and living faith; who can say in truth: "I am crucified with Christ, and I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me."

For those sheep the Good Shepherd lays down His life. Not because they live, but in order that they should live. Not because they are righteous, but in order that they should be. Christ died, not for the living, but for the dead—dead sheep; not for believers, but for unbelievers—unbelieving sheep; not for the righteous, but for the ungodly—ungodly sheep. In every case, for the sheep, and them only.

These sheep only He had in His mind and heart from Bethlehem to Calvary and forever more.

To them only He applies this wonderful redemption.

Now in principle.
Presently in heavenly perfection.
And all of grace, for God's Name's sake.

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**Convention TIME**

WAYNE LANNING

The 20th Annual P.R.Y.P. Convention was started with afternoon and evening registration on August 16 at First Church. Here, each delegate and visitor received his banquet and outing tickets, plus a bright yellow badge announcing the theme, Faithful TODAY! This was followed by the inspirational Mass Meeting, featuring the speech by Rev. H. Hoeksema on the sub-topic, "Faithful in the Truth." He pointed out that God alone is truth, and that to be faithful in the truth, one must be faithful to God. Only then is he faithful in the truth. This faithfulness can only exist when God bestows His grace and causes His spirit to operate. Only by this means, can his people continue their struggle against the devil and become examples in the world.

Following the Mass Meeting, refreshments were served and dates were arranged.

Old courtships were renewed and new ones begun. The 1960 convention was now in full swing.

Wednesday began with a business meeting where proposals were discussed and nominations for officers were submitted. Then the cars left for Saugatuck and lunch at Mount Baldy. After a late lunch, the dune scooters provided the thrills and each one was left to find his own way to the Christian Reformed Conference Grounds on Lake Michigan. Here nearly everyone swam, some even in full dress, as Rev. Vanden Berg may well remember He was deposited unceremoniously, by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, waist-deep, in the water.

This continued until the line formed for a dinner of barbecue, watermelon, pop and milk nickels (Loveland language), after which Rev. J. A. Heys spoke on
"Faithful in Walk." He stressed the walk which a Christian must maintain throughout life. They should do only that which is in complete harmony with Christ's will. Each should ask, "Would Christ be willing to do this with me?" Faithfulness in walk, implies a real walk which should carry us more frequently into the house of God, and to diligence in His Word. Our total dependence must be upon our God and Him alone.

The final day of the 1960 convention began with the traditional pancake breakfast and was followed with a panel discussion on the subject of how the world shows hostility to the Church today. Next came the business meeting. All proposals were passed with only one minor change. Instead of the proposed $8.00 assessment per member, it was raised to $10.00. From this, $2.00 would be appropriated for the new scholarship fund to help prospective teachers and ministers. The third proposal provided for another season of studying from the Book of Revelation. Finally, the new Federation Board officers were chosen. Emerging victorious were, Harry Langerak as the new President, Mary Beth Engelsma as Secretary, Vice Treasurer, Dave Ondersma, and Librarian, Bonnie Bysma. Replacing Rev. Mulder as one of the advisors, was Rev. G. Vos.

After a 6:00 p.m. picture at First Church, everyone went to Mayfield Christian School for a splendid banquet in a Japanese setting. A small group from Edgerton, however, became quite lost and ended up at an entirely different banquet, and, although invited to stay, they decided that the food at their own was better and eventually found their way back.

The after-dinner speaker was Rev. G. Vanden Berg who developed the sub-title "Faithful Unto Death," pointing out that our faithfulness cannot be a temporary or part-time thing, but must be even unto death. And not only must it be even until death, but also unto death. Believers should be willing to die for their truth. They are constantly faced with the enemy, death, but their strength lies in God and He will hold them fast. If God is for us, no one can possibly be against us.

After the speech, Mr. R. H. Brower showed beautiful pictures of nature. Then the new officers were presented and it was announced that Loveland, Colorado, would be the scene of the 21st convention in 1961. The new president closed with prayer, and after bidding each other Sayonara, the 1960 convention was a memory of the past.

THE DILEMMA OF DELINQUENCY

ROG HARBIN*

Headlines in both large and small newspapers, over the radio, in all sorts of magazines and in every medium which reaches the masses shout about "juvenile delinquency." These references are frequent, condemning, and accusing as they make the term "teenager" synonymous with such words as criminal, delinquent, evil-doer, destructive, and many more derogatory names given to wrongdoers as they picture the misbehavior of today's youth in communities throughout the U. S.

Currently, no social problem arouses so much attention as that of juvenile delinquency and as is true in so many intricate problems, no one solution is in sight or at present even plausible. That delinquency is a cause for concern is true. The problem
is complex and contradictory. In accordance with common belief, slums do breed delinquency. Yet many good citizens began their lives in slums or under slum conditions. Rejection and over-protection by parents has contributed to make the list of delinquents longer, but many children who suffered these experiences are not delinquents. Children from "rich" homes as well as "poor", from "right" neighborhoods as well as the "wrong," have gotten into trouble. It is this contradiction of empirical observations which gives the psychologists and sociologists particular difficulty in prediction.

How must we as clergy, teachers, parents, and teenagers view these individuals whose behavior is contrary to our values and mores? Are they normal or abnormal; are they just plain naughty, bad, or wicked or are they sick, ill, or diseased. The answer is simple and reasonable. An old geometric axiom can be applied here: the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. Or as the Gestalt psychologists put it: the whole of the personality entity is equal to the sum of its parts. So that if one part is stricken or diseased it affects the whole personality. Thus if a person has delinquent behavior, which is, incidently, not considered normal, that behavior affects the whole, which must then also be considered abnormal.

But now that we have established the status of the delinquent we peer around the corner and find that the common law tells us that we do not condemn persons who are mentally or psychologically unable to "keep straight."

Now the problem is, do we condemn them or help them. That is, do we use our time and energy to help them, or do we consider them lost and condemned before God forever. We shall for practical purposes (not absolute) dichotomize and establish two levels in the social realm; that of a God-man and a man-man relationship.

Since we do not and cannot know God’s eternal will and good pleasure let us not (Romans 14:13) therefore judge one another anymore, but rather judge this, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. We must strive for the rehabilitation and correction of the offenders with all the gifts of love. God has given us, then we may know that we are not a stumblingblock to our brother. The rest is up to the ethical motivation God has given him for his behavioral change. We know that every tongue shall confess to God and every man will give account of himself to God.

Because we are Christians, a reflection of our God-man relationship is directed toward our relationship with other men so that we react with true love and sincerity.

Since we know there is reason for all behavior, must we say one man to another we can excuse this individual for his anti-social behavior because we know it is due to certain psychological and environmental stresses and strains? Reasons do not excuse. Man is responsible to God and society. If he is not able to abide by the law and rules he may not have the privileges of a free man in society.

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