BEACON LIGHTS for PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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Post Convention Issue

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Convention In Retrospect

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Convention In Retrospect

by JOHN KALSBEEK

The twenty-fourth annual Protestant Reformed Young People’s Convention is now history. Its history, however, will not be presented in the history books or historical works of this age; but will be confined to the hearts, minds, and memories of the young people who attended this convention. This convention, as well as past conventions, lives in us who heard the speeches; who actively took part in discussion; and who were drawn closer to each other in the unity and fellowship of the truth of the Word of God.

This convention from all outward appearances was highly successful. Everyone had a very good time.

Early Saturday morning, August 22, the first conventioners—the Loveland delegation arrived in Grand Rapids. Because of their early arrival they fortunately were able to participate in the pre-convention singspiration held Sunday evening at Hope Church.

This singspiration was a fitting prelude to the convention and attracted a large enthusiastic audience. All those who attended were happily rewarded for their time and energy. It was rather too bad that all the conventioners could not have attended it.

After the last song and closing prayer, everyone, I am sure, went home spiritually strengthened in the bond of covenant fellowship.

Late Monday afternoon the Edgerton, Minn., delegation made their appearance in Grand Rapids. However, they did not come in together because they lost track of each other just outside of Edgerton. The front car somehow thought they were behind so they speeded up; while those in the rear thinking they were ahead stopped. Instead of drawing closer together they drew further apart. A rather foolish way to begin a convention, I think. What is really remarkable is that some of them arrived at all.

Other conventioners came late Monday evening and early Tuesday morning. These included the Hull delegation, the Doon delegation, and the Randolph delegation. The Oak Lawn, South Holland and South Dakota conventioners arrived Tuesday afternoon.

All the conventioners were registered in front of Hope Church Tuesday afternoon, at which time they received their badges,
booklets, tickets and maps. They were also subject at this time to a couple of amateur photographers. They all seemed to survive this ordeal with patience and perseverance; some even appearing to like it.

Tuesday evening everyone arrived early at the South Grandville Elementary Gym to have their picture taken again—this time as a group. Apparently all conventioners like to have their picture taken after all. This became even more apparent when all the young people pushed to the center when they realized that they might not all get on the picture. Some of those on the outer edges especially appeared to get quite frantic when they found that out. Their alarm, however, was unnecessary because the picture in the end did not even turn out. The photographer was unknowingly using defective equipment.

After the picture was supposedly taken, the young people along with many parents and friends settled down to listen to a speech by our Prof. H. C. Hoeksema on the topic Be Ye Holy—Personally. He reminded the young people that we must be holy in our personal walk because Christ, who is the head of the church, and therefore, our head, is holy. Our walk in life must be holy and in accord with the will of our Savior Jesus Christ. Since He is the head and is holy, so we also being members of that one body must be holy. This calling to be holy means further that we must daily pray and search the Scriptures. Our minds must be concerned with things holy and spiritual and must not get involved in worldly matters.

Following this enlightening address, refreshments were served, the exhibits were viewed, and the young people participated in a get acquainted game. The commotion caused by the game was—well, I don't even want to talk about it, but I guess I'll have to. There was so much noise and so many voices that it would have made a herd of trumpeting elephants look ridiculous in comparison. Now that, I tell you is really bad.

In order to describe the game each person was given a card with a number at the top and a letter in the middle. All the persons holding a certain number had to group together and spell out with the letters one of the states of the union. The team that came in last was threatened with the penalty of picking up the mess afterward. After about five minutes one voice, that of Mike Engelsma, could be heard above all other voices. It's true because I heard it myself. He was trying to let everyone know that his team had come in first. The reason this is mentioned is because he hasn't let anyone forget it since. So we must, I guess, give credit where credit is due. Too bad we don't have all the names of that spectacular group.

Out of about twenty groups three failed to finish and they happily were relieved of the penalty because it was believed that some of their number unfortunately left before the game began.

Thus the first day of convention ended in the making of new acquaintances and friends.

The next day, Wednesday, dawned bright and late for some of the conventioners who decided that the bed was more important than the business meeting held that
morning at 9:00. May they have rested in peace.

At the business meeting the following points on the agenda were accepted: 1) the young people decided to continue the study of Genesis for the 1965-1966 society year, 2) the young people again set the assessments at $10.00 for the 1964-1965 society year, distributed in the same way as they were in previous years, 3) nominations were then received for the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Librarian, and Advisor, 4 and 5) the young people accepted the Southwest and Oak Lawn Young People’s Societies into the Federation.

Upon conclusion of the business meeting the young people left for John Ball Park. Here they had the opportunity to view the animals, the fish, the reptiles and plants of the Grand Rapids Zoo. However, while most of the young people enjoyed this part of the zoo Miss Jane Brummel from Hull on the right, Miss Margie Mantel from Doon in the center, and one of their friends on the left decided the children’s zoo — for the kids — was the place for them. Here they were again at home with the kittens and puppies, the ducklings and chicks, and the calves, lambs and kids of the western farmyard. Notice the wistful expressions on all of their faces.

Oh yes, by the way, Mr. Duane Gunnick from Edgerton, another farmer, was also found in the children’s zoo. He was engineering the stationary train engine on an imaginary journey. That’s him in the sunglasses.

Not all the young people found the animals interesting. Here we see two lads playing with their gas filled balloons. The one bending over is Cal Kalsbeck, while the other one is, the afore mentioned, Mike Engelsma.

These are only a few of the many incidents which occurred here and which shall often reoccur in the memories of the conventioneers. Before I ramble on I should mention that about this time Bob Velthouse ripped his trousers and had to be taken home to get a replacement. It ripped in a
very bad place. Too bad no picture was taken of this incident.

Wednesday noon lunch was served in a beautiful pavilion overlooking the greater part of Grand Rapids. At this time potatoe salad and ham on bun were devoured with relish and many healthy eaters made their unheralded appearance.

After eating, the conventioneers were transported to Bostwick Lake where many of them took the opportunity to go swimming. Those that forgot their bathing suits sat out on the beach in their regular clothes while others found time to relax in the beach chairs. Still others toured the lake by means of a special boat for this purpose.

Although the water was a little cool and the wind a bit chilly all had a good time at Bostwick Lake.

From here we went to Townsend Park. It was here that the east took a seven to five decision from the west in the annual East-West softball game. The winning pitcher was Dale Kuiper while Rev. David Engelsma took the loss. Here one of the players from the west futilely attempts to hit the ball and goes down swinging. We wish him better success next year. All in all the west was a pretty good loser.

The next important event of the convention centered around the tug-of-wars. One group of conventioneers was placed on one side of a creek that runs through the park; and the other group was stationed on the other side. The object of the tug-of-war was to pull the other group into the creek. However, before this could be achieved the rope happened to break and conventioneers were sprawled all over on both sides of the creek. At this time Rev. Hanko got the bright idea to tie the ends together in a square knot. The result was that the knot slipped and again conventioneers were flat on their backs. After a few more attempts the knot held and the tug-of-war commenced; quite a few had the misfortune of getting wet. After the guys tired out, the girls decided to give it a try and many of them also happened to get wet.

While these events were taking place others were enjoying themselves in such activities as volleyball, football, and collecting autographs.

Following these rather strenuous exercises the hungry conventioneers were given their supper. Again most of them ate well. Hot dogs roasted over a small fire, and potatoe chips — they forgot the chip dip — made up the menu.

That evening the young people heard Rev. H. Hanko from Doon as he spoke on the topic Be Ye Holy — With Friends. I think all the young people were again personally effected by the pointed pertinent remarks

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that were made concerning our behavior
with each other, with those of other denomina-
tions and with the opposite sex. If all
were not effected it surely was not the
speaker’s fault because his statements were
clear, concise, logical, and easy to under-
stand. In dealing with this topic Rev. Hanko
pointed out that we as young people should
make friends with those in our own churches,
that we should date those from our own
churches; and if it is necessary proceed
with caution when we date and make
friends with those outside our churches.
These are but a few of the many ideas that
he covered in his speech. Would that all
our young people could have heard it.

The second day of convention ended ap-
propriately when the young people joined
their voices, hearts and minds as Rev. Lub-
ers led them in the singing of the songs of
Zion.

The next important activity of the con-
vention was the pancake breakfast early

Thursday morning. After replacing a few
blown fuses and a couple of other odds and
ends the ladies from Hope Church and Gib

Schimmel (wearing the hat), also from
Hope, were able to serve pancakes, sausage,
and coffee to all who desired something to
eat.

Having been fully satisfied the young
people returned to Hope Church where they
finished the unfinished business of the day
before, elected officers, and listened to a
debate on the topic, “Resolve: that Chris-
tian young people may read secular litera-
ture that describe scenes of wickedness.”

The unfinished business took very little
time, but this was offset by the time spent
for election of officers. In the end Ed Lan-
gerak was elected President of the Federa-
tion Board for a two year term. John Kals-
beek was elected Vice President for a one
year term, Lois Schipper was elected sec-
retary for two years, Jim Huizinga from
Hope treasure for one year, Clarence Kuiper
Assistant Treasure for two years, Ruth
Kuiper Librarian for two years, and Student
Robert Decker advisor for two years. Every-
one sighed a sigh of relief when this part of
the business was over.

Immediately following the business meet-
ing the debate was held on the afore men-
tioned topic. Jim Huizinga from Randolph,
and Ed Langerak were the affirmative team;
while Lyn Tryon the winner of the contest,
and John Kalsbeek were the negative team.

The affirmative argued that we as young
people may read this literature because 1) it
portrays reality, 2) the talent and genius
of the world must be utilized by the Chris-
tian, 3) by grace we as Christians can read
this Literature wisely.

The negative felt that the thought of sin
was equal to the sin itself, therefore, by
reading things that cause us to think sin we
in actuality do sin. In the second place the
negative believed that in reading this ma-
terial we become agents of the devil because
we allow ourselves to be tempted. And
finally, the negative strongly emphasized the
need of holiness in regard to the type of
literature we may read. They believed that
when we read the first goal must be a
spiritual goal. This means that the intel-
lectual must always be subject to the spirit-
ual.

The young people took a lively interest
in the debate which they revealed in there
attentiveness. In the end they decided that
the affirmative had better arguments and
that they won the debate.
After dinner a new experiment was tried and found wanting. The reason for the failure was not that the experiment was out of order, but because the young people had no interest. This new experiment was the introduction of discussion groups. Of the more than one hundred and fifty conventioners only thirty-six felt the need to discuss matters pertaining to the kingdom of God. This was a sad incident in an otherwise successful convention.

For myself, I feel that the goal of this convention was sadly missed. When such a few were willing to give only thirty to forty-five minutes of their time for something spiritual it is a sure indication that something is lacking in our young people. It was a sad thing when ten to twelve cars boldly left the church yard fully loaded after their occupants had been requested to remain to enjoy some spiritual fellowship.

One begins to question the right of the Federation to spend over fifteen hundred dollars just in order to entertain our young people. Oh – this entertainment has a place all right, but when it becomes an obsession then one begins seriously to wonder if perhaps our conventioners are losing sight of the goals. It no longer is worth the money spent. There are too many other causes in our churches that could use this money to advantage, for instance: our schools, our seminary, our high school, our Beacon Lights, our Standard Bearers and so many other worthy causes.

In questioning those who attended the discussion groups it was found that lively discussions took place in all cases. Those who attended were from all appearances happy that they could participate in this kind of activity. We wish more of the young people would have reconsidered and joined in the discussions.

Questions begin to be formulated as to why there was this unfortunate display of disinterest among the young people concerning such discussions. Why has this happened?

Three answers come to mind. The first is found in the home itself. Here one does not find lively discussion, at the supper table or at other times, on practical matters concerning the Christians walk in the world, and in the Scriptures; but rather an unintelligent mumble and jumble of foolishness and nonsense. Parents and young people fail to realize the value of good conversation, and as a result when convention time arrives no one is prepared to discuss worthwhile ideas and thoughts. Also they are afraid to express an opinion. A second answer lies in our societies. Here also discussions are apathetic and lackadaisical. The young people do not participate in discussion, but rather all to frequently attempt to promote unrest and disturbance by means of unnecessary and out of order remarks and whisperings. Further they fail to prepare at home for the Bible lessons. Finally, a third answer lies in the federation of societies as a whole. It has failed to define the correct goal for conventions. The host society, often left to its own resources and without backing from the federation, fears to advance in the direction that it often feel it should go. In stead it proceeds its work on its convention with the false assumption that a good convention depends on how much fun the conventioners have. This happens all to frequently and has become a sad commentary on our conventions.

The young people should realize that it is time for a change. A change, from all outward appearance, from materialism to spiritualism. May these changes be accomplished before it is too late to make these changes.

That evening at Unity Christian High the convention picture was again taken and the convention banquet was held. Its theme was "Netherlands" and this was carried out by means of tulips for centerpieces, a windmill design on the booklet, Dutch costumes for the servers and menu written in Dutch.

Following the banquet the young people heard the third and final convention speech Be Ye Holy in the World. Rev. David Engelsma from our Loveland, Colorado congregation began his speech by using two extreme illustrations as to the churches reaction to the world. The first illustration was of Simon the hermit who sat on top of a pole in order to separate himself from the world. The second illustration centered around Lot, the nephew of Abraham, who went to live in the middle of the wicked city of Sodom. Neither was the correct way to be Holy in the World. The hermit forgot that he was also worldly while Lot forgot that he was the church. Rev. Engelsma then went on to attack the subject of materialism.
among Protestant Reformed youth. His was a very timely address.

After this speech by Rev. Engelsma the long anticipated movie “This is Your Beacon Lights” was shown to the young people. It was well received by them and we hope that they may develop a greater appreciation for their Beacon Lights. The Federation Board and Beacon Lights Staff hopes the young people will be stimulated to read it and take a more active interest in their magazine by promoting it through the means of getting subscriptions when ever possible. This movie, by the way, is scheduled to go to Doon, Iowa, in the near future. We hope all those in the vicinity take this opportunity to view it.

Upon conclusion of the film Ed Langerak our new board president presented David Vandenberg with a spotlessly clean, bright, new, convention booklet for collecting the most autographs, announced that the twenty-fifth annual convention would be held in South Holland, Illinois where it all began some twenty-four conventions ago, and then closed the convention with prayer.

With the song God Be With You Till We Meet Again in our hearts, the 1964 convention became history. Thanks be to God who made it possible.

Editor’s Note:

In this the Post-Convention issue Beacon Lights is pleased to publish the 1964 convention speeches. This will enable all of our people to read them. It is our prayer that they may prove edifying to all who read them, but especially to our young people who now have the opportunity to read and study them.

Special mention ought to be made concerning the kindness of two staff members, Lois Schipper and Marilyn Ondersma, who unselishly gave of their time and effort in typing two of the speeches from a tape recorder.

Next month D.V. all of our regular articles will appear. R.D.D.

Beacon Lights is pleased to introduce a new contributor Miss Karlene Oonkes. Miss Oonkes will edit the News column. She has taught at Hope School and at present is a teacher at Adams Street.

We take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Kregel for her faithful work as News writer. Her services are appreciated and Beacon Lights has benefited from her contribution and effort. R.D.D.

CONGRATULATIONS!
The Beacon Light’s Staff is happy to congratulate The Standard Bearer upon the occasion of its Fortieth Anniversary. The event signifies years of faithful witnessing to the Word of God in the historic Reformed tradition. May our covenant God continue to bless its labors.
BE YE HOLY—PERSONALLY

by PROF. H. C. HOEKSEMA

Mr. Chairman, Protestant Reformed Conventioners, Parents and Friends gathered with us tonight: It is with rather mixed feelings that I am on the platform tonight; feelings with regret, on the one hand, because I am acutely aware, as you must be, that I am a substitute for one who had well-nigh become an institution on this first convention evening. Both personally, and as far as the Federation and the Convention are concerned, I regret that I must be here in the place of my father. On the other hand, I am glad, nevertheless, that I may address you tonight in connection with the theme of the convention “Be Ye Holy”; and I will try to be of service to you with respect to the particular aspect of the theme that was assigned to me, that is, “Be Ye Holy—Personally.”

By personally, I understand, not that we must be holy personally in distinction from impersonally: that would hardly make sense. But by the limitation personally, the convention committee undoubtedly meant to distinguish our personal, private life, both in its inner aspect and its outward aspect, as distinct from our life with our friends and our life in and over against the world. I will try to treat that aspect of our calling to holiness without transgressing on the territory of the other speakers. To do that, I have to call attention, in the first place, to the idea and meaning of holiness, and, in that connection, especially to the truth that God is the Holy One. In the second place, I have to call your attention to the fact that we are called to holiness, and that calling to holiness is always and only in Christ Jesus, in order, in the third place, to call attention especially to the personal aspect of the holiness to which we are called. So I will address you a little while on the subject, “Called To Be Holy—Personally.”

I. The Source and Standard of That Holiness

II. The Calling to That Holiness

III. The Personal Aspect of That Holiness

God, beloved, is the Holy One. That truth, that God is, in the absolute sense of the word, the Holy One, is the truth that underlies the theme of this convention. You cannot understand and you cannot receive the admonition, “Be Ye Holy,” except on the basis of and in connection with the truth that the Lord our God is the Holy One. We must never lose that aspect of the truth from sight, therefore. That is strongly emphasized, first of all, in the theme text of your convention: “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation because it is written, ‘Be ye holy, for I am holy.’” That is emphasized, too, not only in the text from Leviticus, which is quoted here in I Peter 1; but that really constitutes one of the main aspects of the whole book of Leviticus, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” That is emphasized also elsewhere in Scripture very, very often. I could quote passages from Scripture to prove that for a long time tonight. Let me mention just a couple. Think for example, of the passage in Isaiah 40:25— “To whom then will ye liken me or shall I be equal?” saith the Holy One.” Or think of that beautiful and impressive vision of the prophet Isaiah in the sixth chapter of his prophecy, the vision of the Seraphim covering their faces with their wings and crying continually, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.” Or think of the fact that the Lord Jesus in His High Priestly prayer in
John 17 when He prays that His own may be preserved in the midst of the world, addresses God as "holy Father." Or to mention one more, think of the fact that the apostle John in his first Epistle, chapter 2:20 tells us that we have an union from the Holy One. God is the Holy One in the absolute sense of the word, and that, therefore must be our starting point! That's the keynote of the theme of our convention.

What does that mean? It implies, in the first place, that holiness is a peculiarly divine attribute. God is Holy, is The Holy One, in the absolute sense of the word. All holiness, wherever it may be, is in Him, and of Him, and through Him, and, therefore, unto Him. In the second place, especially in that attribute or virtue of His holiness, God is the incomparable God. That is why you read in Scripture, "To whom then will ye liken me or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." It is exactly in His divine capacity of being the Holy One that God is altogether incomparable, altogether distinct, altogether unique. There is none like unto Him. And as such, as the Holy One, God is the all-glorious God. That is why Scripture also frequently connects God's holiness and His glory.

What is implied in that unique holiness of God? First of all, God's holiness means that He, the living God, is the sole good, not merely the chief good, not merely the supreme good, but in the most absolute sense of the word, the Only Good. God is in Himself, and of Himself, and by Himself, as the Triune God from all eternity, the good God, the implication of all perfections. He is righteousness, He is truth, He is goodness, He is mercy, He is justice, He is wisdom, He is knowledge; and as the God of all infinite perfections, He is the only good – the Self-sufficient good. In the second place, God's holiness means that, as such, as the God Who is in and of Himself unchangeably the good God, He seeks Himself, aims at Himself, desires Himself, is infinitely consecrated to Himself. God, beloved, is absolutely Self-centered. He is the only one that may be self-centered, in fact. In the third place, as the Holy One, Who is perfectly consecrated to Himself and Who always of the Father, in the Son, and by the Spirit, seeks, and desires, and aims at Himself, God is the absolute sovereign also. As such, He seeks Himself in all creation, and in all the works of His hands. As the sole Lord, He has the divine right to do so. As the Holy One who is Lord over all, He has the prerogative to declare who and what the creature shall be. He has the right to impose His will upon the creature. He has the divine right to insist that the creature shall be as He wills it to be. God is the One, therefore, Who sets the standard of holiness for the creature. Not only that, God always maintains and insists upon His own holiness in relation to the creature. No matter what that creature may be, whether that creature is holy or whether he is unholy, whether that creature stands in harmony with the holiness of God or whether that creature stands opposed to that Holy One of Israel, God insists upon, and He maintains His own holiness. He always insists upon the living truth that He is the Holy One, always continues to aim at and to seek and to desire and to be consecrated to Himself as the only good in relation to the creature. And in all of His dealings with the creature, He always deals with the creature according to the standard of His own absolute holiness. That, in brief, is the meaning of the truth that God is the Holy One.

There is also, of course, the negative aspect of that holiness of God, of which we almost think automatically when we think of holiness – an aspect which indeed Scripture emphasizes also very strongly, although Scripture teaches us that that is not the only aspect of God's holiness. That negative aspect is that God is not common and unclean, not in any wise. God is certainly not like the creature. He is not to be compared to the creature. Certainly God is not in any wise like unto the sinful creature. On the contrary, God is absolutely separate from sin. He is the light in Whom there is no darkness at all. He is the God Who stands opposed, with all the infinite perfection of His holy being to all that stands opposed to Him. That can never be otherwise! That is why, if I may insert that for a moment – and we as Protestant Reformed young people may never, never forget that – that is why, theologically speaking, such a thing as common grace is absolutely impossible: because God is The Holy One. If God showed favor to the wicked, beloved, to the rebellious wicked, He would by that very fact deny Himself as the Holy One. Because He
is The Holy One, He stands perfectly and eternally opposed to all those and all that which opposes Him.

Now what I said constitutes the truth behind the truth of your convention theme, "Be Ye Holy." It is that, and, therefore, is determinative for the meaning and the understanding of the entire theme, because that truth that God is the Holy One means, in the first place, that God is the source of all holiness. God is holy in Himself and of Himself as the Self-sufficient "I Am," and there is never any holiness to be found, any holiness to be found anywhere, but it is of Him. The calling to holiness, therefore, as far as its authorship is concerned, as far as its content is concerned, as far as its power is concerned, as far as its realization is concerned, and as far as its fruit is concerned, is all of God. In every respect it proceeds from Him, and that too, precisely as the Holy One,—the fountain and source of all holiness. That means too, beloved—and that will become clearer in the latter part of my address tonight—that our holiness is always a derived holiness. Our holiness is always dependent upon the holiness of God. And that means that as far as the Christian's calling to holiness is concerned, it is a matter of grace, pure grace. As I said, I will enlarge on that in a little while.

There is a further implication, however, in that truth that God is the Holy One; and that is that God is the standard of all holiness. God alone has the prerogative to determine who and what the creature must be. And therefore, holiness for the creature (and, I have in mind especially man, and still more especially, the Christian), holiness for the Christian, beloved, does not mean to be self-centered. The creature may never be self-centered. He must always be God-centered, consecrated to the living God with heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, with all his being, with all his power, with all his talents, with all his abilities, in all his striving, in all his thinking, in all his desiring, and in all his acting. Therefore, there is also the negative aspect to that holiness as far as the creature is concerned. That negative aspect is that the creature, man, the Christian, is called to be separate from and opposed to all that stands opposed to God, and is called, therefore, negatively and positively, to be of the party of the living God in the midst of the world. That is our calling. That is the nature of our calling.

Our calling is, therefore, a calling from holiness, a calling to holiness, and a calling for holiness. A calling by God, a calling to God, a calling for God. A calling by the Holy One, a calling to the Holy One, and a calling for the Holy One.

That calling presupposes our natural unholliness, beloved. Let's understand that! Let's understand it fully, otherwise we can never understand and hear and heed the calling to be holy. We are by nature unholy. We were holy once. We were holy in Adam, holy on the level of the earthly, so that in Adam we stood once consecrated in our minds to know God; consecrated in our wills, so that our wills were attuned to God's will; consecrated in our hearts, so that our hearts were motivated by the love of God. That was Adam's original status, and it was ours in him.

But we fell.

Adam fell. And all men, the elect included, fell in him. And through his fall, we fell utterly from that holiness. The result is that by nature, we are all unholy—unholy in our mind, so that we are spiritually ignorant (and by the way, the apostle speaks of that ignorance in the context of your theme text: not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, he says in verse 14: "your ignorance"—not natural, mental, intellectual ignorance, is meant, but spiritual ignorance—is ignorance of the love of God, ignorance so that we do not really know sin and do not really know righteousness to love it.) That is our natural condition. We are ignorant, unholy in our minds. The same is true of our will by nature. Our will is not attuned to the will of God, but to the will of the devil. The same is true of our heart, the very center of our being.Spiritually, that heart ever since the fall is not motivated by the love of God, but by enmity against God. That carries through to our whole life and walk. We walk in lust by nature—all kinds of lust, all kinds of sin and unrighteousness, and hatred, and envy, and malice, and pride, and covetousness, and adultery, and fornication, and uncleanness, and slander, and backbiting, and robbery. That is the nature of man. He is a slave of sin. He is a hopeless slave of sin. He is a hopeless slave of sin because he is a willing slave, a slave in his very being, in his heart, his mind, and will. so that his posi-

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tion is that he cannot, and will not, and he cannot will, and, in fact, he may not do anything else but be unholy by nature. That is the natural man: and that is our state and condition, beloved. That is more to the point. That is yours and my status, apart from grace. Absolutely hopelessly, inextricably unholy!

In that whole world of unholy mankind, there is one Holy One: that is Christ. Christ is the Holy One of God. You know, it is very striking in the New Testament that the devils were the first to acknowledge that and to see it very clearly. They said to Jesus once, “We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.” They perceived that immediately. He is the Holy One, He is the revelation of the Father, the Son of God in the flesh. As far as holiness is concerned, beloved, that is the meaning of incarnation. God, the Holy One, united Himself with our flesh in one divine Person. And in that Christ Jesus, the Holy One of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, is the perfect revelation and the perfect realization of God’s holiness in every respect. It is in Him because as the Holy One of God in our flesh, He always revealed Himself as being perfectly consecrated to the Father. The revelation and realization of that holiness is in Him because, as the Holy One of God, He was able to make the perfect sacrifice. The revelation and realization of that holiness is in Him because He could and did represent the cause of God’s holiness in the midst of a world of sin. That revelation is in Him because as the perfectly holy Lamb of God, He was not only able to make the perfect sacrifice, but He actually laid Himself down in perfect obedience of consecration on the altar of God’s holiness, and by that act He bore the wrath, the whole burden of the wrath of God which was exactly the fierce and consuming expression of the wrath of the Holy One. Not only that, in all His sacrifice He remained perfectly consecrated to God. He said to God, “Thou mayest slay me in Thy holy wrath. Even then I love Thee. I lay myself on this altar exactly because I love Thee, and seek Thee, and am consecrated to Thee. Thou mayest forsake me. I will still call Thee my God,” and He did. Still more, beloved, He is the revelation and realization of the holiness of God because as the mighty Son of God in the flesh, He was able to sacrifice Himself as the Holy One in the place of many and as the representative and organic head of many elect. Therefore, He arose. He arose, also, as the head of the innumerable company of the elect. He arose in newness of life, resurrection life, heavenly life, the new and holy life, for all His own.

The implications of that are plain as far as your and my holiness is concerned, beloved. It means, in the first place, that in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Child Jesus, is our right to be holy, first of all. That is a privilege. Don’t forget when it says here, “Be Ye Holy—Personally,” that’s a privilege, a divine privilege. That is a privilege to which you and I had lost every claim through our fall into sin, a privilege that we could never regain of ourselves. Christ gained it for us. He gained it in such a way that it could never be lost again. In the second place, in our Lord Jesus Christ is all the power, and, therefore, all the possibility of holiness. In the third place, in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God, crucified and raised in newness of life, is all our ability to be holy. It is only in that light that you could possibly understand the calling to holiness. There is no other way! That calling is in every respect in Christ Jesus, never outside of Him or apart from Him. First of all, it is in Christ Jesus, not out of Him, that we are called from all eternity unto holiness. The Word of God is, “I have called you by name. You are mine from eternity to eternity by sovereign election in Christ Jesus.” God called us His holy ones. That is Scripture! He has chosen us from before the foundation of the world in order that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, according to Ephesians 1. In the second place, called we are with a divine calling—centrally and objectively in the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. There, at the cross and in the resurrection, God not only called Christ, but in Christ called all His elect people out of the unholiness of sin and death and into His marvelous light. We are holy objectively in Christ and the holiness of Christ is imputed to us. Not only that, called we are, actually, through the Spirit of the exalted Lord and by the Word of the Gospel, called in the very depth of our being, called as far as our consciousness is concerned. That is His calling, “Be ye holy, as the Holy One that called you.” He has
called you and me, beloved. The voice of the Almighty God Himself has reached us. That voice has called us away from the sin and service of the devil and called us unto God's own life and service.

The contents of that call are very plain. In the first place, that calling always witnesses of sin, your sin, my sin, our total depravity; and it witnesses of God's estimation, God's evaluation, of our walk in the lusts of sin, in the light of His own holiness, and condemns us. If you hear that calling, the very first effect will be that you respond by saying, "I am a sinner. O God, be merciful to me. I am altogether unholy." Have you heard that call of God? In the second place, that call of Almighty God proclaims redemption and deliverance from the corruption and filth of our unholiness through the blood and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. That also is an integral part of that calling unto holiness, beloved. He calls us through the blood. He calls us, too, so that we pass through the blood by faith. He calls us so that we emerge from that blood-bath of the death of Christ purified and cleansed. In the third place, always constituting an integral part of that calling, is the truth that that voice of Almighty God by His Spirit and through the Gospel makes plain to us our sacred duty, our calling in the sense of our obligation, to be and to walk as the people of the Holy One in the midst of the world. Mark you well, that calling to holiness is not simply the calling of the outward preaching. What effect could that ever have on those who are by nature totally unholy? None! It takes more than the power of the preacher, beloved, no matter what a silver-tongued orator he may be, to make you and me holy.

The power of that calling is not the weakness of a mere offer. You and I are so unholy, that even if we are offered the opportunity and the possibility to be holy, we would despise it. That calling is efficacious, irresistible. It is the calling of the voice of God, through the preaching of the Word, resounding in our hearts. Not begging, not pleading, not merely inviting, not merely urging, not simply exhorting, but calling in such a way that it draws us, draws us out of the depth of the filth of our unholiness into the marvelous light of God! The result is that we spiritually understand, that we repent, that we depart from the way of sin, that we actually enter into the light.

God calls us, beloved, He calls us, first of all, in the very depth of our heart, by His Spirit, through the wonder of regeneration. The Apostle Peter spoke of that in this chapter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." That is God's calling; and if thus He calls you, and in the depth of your heart says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall light upon thee," there is nothing else for you and me to do but to awake! That is surely the result! Not only that, He it is, Who through the almighty power of His own voice, by His Spirit, through the Word of the Gospel, quickens that beginning of the new and holy life into consciousness. He calls us once. He calls again, and again, and again, and as long as we are in this world, through the Word of the Gospel, out of darkness, into His marvelous light. Don't make the mistake of thinking, beloved, that the power of that efficacious calling is experienced only once. There is never a time when I, or any preacher, could proclaim, "Be Ye Holy," and expect to have positive fruit upon that exhortation if God Himself did not continue to say through that preaching, "Be Ye Holy."

The result is that we are holy. We are holy, perfectly holy, in principle. The theme does not require of you and me to become something that we are not, but to be what we are, and to be actively what we are. We have, through the power of the efficacious calling been set aside for the service of God, by God Himself. "I have called thee by thy name," He has said. "Thou art mine." Our minds are consecrated to know Him, and our wills have been attuned to His will, and our hearts are motivated by the love of God in Christ. We are holy, too, in that we have been separated, separated from all that is evil, all that is filthy, all that is unrighteous, all that is impure, and all that is contrary to the Holy One of Israel.

But there is a danger, beloved. There is danger, first of all, from within, because we still have our old, sinful nature. We have only a small seed of that new holiness, but it is surrounded by that old sinful nature. We are not completely delivered, not by any means yet. That means a struggle.
a daily and constant struggle because that small beginning is consecrated to the living God, always and only. It cannot sin! That old sinful nature is attuned to the devil. It cannot seek God. There is danger, too, from within, from the whole world round about us. That whole world, no matter where you turn, is in harmony with the former lusters from which we have been principally delivered, but which are the former lusters of the old sinful nature.

Because of that two-fold danger, from within and from without, the danger confronting the holy but imperfect Christian in the midst of the world is that he fashions himself according to those former lusters yet. That is why the call of God, through the gospel, must and does sound continually to the stranger, the elect, sanctified, holy stranger in the midst of this world, that has every thing against him, except for the Word of God—I say, that's why the call sounds continually, "Be ye holy." When we are in heaven after a while, we won't have to hear that exhortation any more. We will always be perfectly, completely, freely, holy. We won't have to fight to be holy. But now we do so. I say, beloved, that is an integral part of the Gospel, you cannot hear the gospel at all except you also hear that part. You cannot hear the gospel of sin and salvation except you understand that to it belongs the call, "Be ye holy for I, the Lord your God, am holy." He saved us exactly that we should be a holy people. You cannot hear the Gospel at all unless you hear the Word, "Be ye not conformed to this world, but be transformed through the renewal of your mind."

I would say, beloved, for our day, there could not very well have been a happier theme chosen for the convention. This is a very, very serious matter, especially in the day in which you and I live. We live in a day when there is very little distinctiveness, a day when Christ and Belial seem to go arm in arm, a day in which, when you look at the Church and at the world, you would rather readily ask the question, "Where is the difference?" That begins closest home, too—in our personal, private, inner life. Even there, as far as that personal, private, inner life is concerned, you must not first think of your outward deeds, even the outward deeds of your private life, but of yourself and myself. I beseech you by the mercies of God, present your bodies, that is, yourselves, and your bodily existence, as a living sacrifice, a burnt offering, an offering of consecration, to the holy God that called you.

As far as that inner aspect of our private life is concerned, beloved, that begins at the center, with the heart. The calling is, "My son, Give me thy heart." If you hear that calling, you will respond with Calvin, "My heart, Lord, I offer thee, readily and sincerely." It concerns the mind and its secret thoughts. "Be ye holy." It concerns the will and the desires that arise from within, "Be ye holy, be not conformed but transformed." From within, it concerns the whole of your private, personal life, beloved. That has a broad range yet, even in distinction from your life with others, with your friends, and in the world. It stands to reason, unless you and I are holy in the privacy and the intimacy of our personal life, it will be impossible to be holy with our friends, and before the eyes of the world.

Therefore, let me close by asking you and myself some pointed questions.

Do you pray? That song of the sextet was right, you know. "Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord." How else can we be holy? How else, beloved can we possibly be holy except we stand in intimate communion with the source of all holiness. Do you pray? I mean, not merely do you pray with your family and at the table. I mean, not merely, do you pray as a matter of mere habit before you lay your head on the pillow at night. But do you commune privately, personally with the God of your salvation, the holy God that called you, often: We need that.

Another is this. Do you make diligent and frequent use of the Word of God? How else can we be holy except in that way, beloved. It is through that Word that the calling to holiness sounds unto us. It is in that Word that we have the road-map of the path of sanctification. Do you use that Word? I mean, again, not merely at the table with your family, but in your private, personal life when there is no one to see you but your God, and no one to urge you but the urging of the Spirit in your heart? Do you use it? Diligently? Consult it often? Do you seek it, seek it with all your heart, in the Church where that Word is proclaimed in all its purity—and I mean in the
Protestant Reformed Church, and no other? Do you read it in your young people's societies, and you, parents and friends, in your societies? Or do you perhaps profane it by the very fact that you don't even open it before you attend society? Do you seek it in the catechism class, young people, without your parents urging anymore, earnestly and diligently and prayerfully preparing and studying and being instructed, and praying that the Lord may give you grace to receive that instruction in your heart and life?

I don't dare take any more time. I have more questions, but those are the fundamental ones. They will control you in your reading, in your studying, in your working, in your relaxation. They will control you as far as your life's goal is concerned. And controlling you in your personal and private life, they will control you in those aspects of which Rev. Hanko and Rev. Engelsma are going to speak to you too. Therefore, in conclusion, beloved — because no one else can do it — may God by His Holy Spirit lay this calling more and more seriously upon your heart and mine.

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**Be Ye Holy—With Friends**

*by REV. HERMAN HANKO*

I wish to thank the Host Society of this year's convention for the privilege of speaking to our young people. I enjoy speaking to young people not only; but I find the subject which was assigned me interesting and important.

The calling to holiness in friendship is not an idle question. There is no doubt about it that especially the years of youth are years when friendship is very important. No man can live alone; every man needs friends. But what is universally true is emphatically true of young people. Besides, friends are a major influence on one in these formative years of life. It is not only true, as the old adage expresses it, "Birds of a feather flock together"; but it is also true that birds of a feather have tremendous influences upon one another — for good or for bad. The choice of one's friends is an important choice. Finally, in speaking of the command to be holy in the unique relationships of covenant youths, the communion of the saints is a critical factor to be considered. For all these reasons and others, this question is important.

Before we enter specifically into the question at hand, there are a few points that ought to be made.

It is not necessary for us to enter into the question of the meaning of holiness; Prof. Hoeksema accomplished this last night at our mass meeting. I only want to emphasize that the basic idea of holiness is the idea of separation. One who is holy is separated. He stands apart. This separation consists in being a separation from the desecration of the world; a separation by sanctification through the blood of the cross; separation to dedication and consecration in the service of God.

In the second place, I want to call your attention to a very prevalent danger of our day that bears directly on our subject of holiness. I refer to what is called "The new morality." This new morality is being widely discussed today, and sadly enough, is being especially espoused by educators and leaders in the Church. To define what this new morality is, I quote from a recent article in a leading Protestant theological journal: "The central conception of Christian ethics that runs through all the various expressions of the 'new morality' is a complete rejection of any divine sanction for any specific law, rule or regulation." The meaning of this is clear enough. This new morality teaches that there is no objective standard of what is right and what is wrong. The ten commandments are old-fashioned and out-dated,
not at all suited to our modern age. There is, in fact, no law above us to tell us what we may do and what we may not do. Rather, there is only one real rule that governs our life; and that rule is, "Is it good for me?" I, of course, determine for myself whether any particular action is good for me or not. And so, if by doing something I do not happen to harm myself, nor do I intentionally harm my fellow man, it is all right for me to do this.

This is not some far out view that is being discussed miles away from the sphere of the Church among those who are fully committed to a life of sin. This is a view which is finding increasing support among Church leaders and pedagogues in our educational institutions.

Yet even we come perilously close to this view many times. I am reminded of it for example when I hear young people try to support their worldly conduct with the words, "Why can't I do it? Everybody else does." Or, "What is the harm in it?" Again you come perilously close to this view when you try to condone evil conduct by hiding behind the excuse of Christian liberty.

Yet there are many evils to this view, evils which I have not the time to point out tonight.

It is, basically, a complete rejection of God as the One Who alone possesses the sovereign right over against His creatures to determine for them what is good in His sight and what is sin. It is the culmination of the lie of the devil in Paradise, "Ye shall be as God knowing good and evil." It is a rejection of sin as sin against God and a defense of sin as a moral and social fault. Under the cover of this theory all kinds of immorality is condoned as long as no one is harmed by it; even gross immoral conduct is approved of as the thing to do under certain circumstances. The end of this view can only be moral ruin and complete chaos.

Over against this view therefore we must maintain that a life of holiness is governed by an objective moral standard. This objective moral standard is the law of God. God alone possesses the sovereign right to determine our conduct. Something is right or wrong because God says so; nothing else. Sin is sin against God first of all. To Him must be given account of every deed. And He punishes the transgressor. Holiness means therefore, that we bow in humility before this mighty and sovereign God with fear and trembling, confessing His authority over our life, and asking, Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?"

Thirdly, there is one other point which needs to be made. That is this: a holy life is always rooted in the knowledge of the truth. I make this point because there are strong tendencies to deny it among us. So often I hear that we must make a distinction between doctrine and practice. I am not sure exactly what is meant by this distinction; but it has something to do with a divorce between the truth of Scripture and our outward conduct. The cry often goes up that we are subjected to too much doctrinal preaching; the plea is made loudly and with emphasis that we must have more practical preaching.

Whatever those who make this plea may mean by this distinction in which they divorce doctrine from life, the fact of the matter is that holiness is rooted in the truth. I cannot emphasize this strongly enough. If we would neglect doctrinal instruction, we would do so only to our destruction. Just as soon as the young people become interested only in "life," in "practical living" to the exclusion of sound doctrine, the result is not a holier life, but a very worldly and carnal life. Just as soon as sound doctrine is corrupted, the truth denied, compromised and sacrificed; just as soon as men stray away into error or grow indifferent to it, the result is godlessness and worldliness in the church.

This can be illustrated in a thousand ways. The "new morality" e.g., is founded upon a thoroughly liberal and modern view of God and Christ. Modernism has led to this devilish threat to our moral life. The same is true of the theory of common grace. It was a departure from the truth. It has led and is leading to worldliness and moral decay—as any of you can see with but little investigation.

The fact is that if we wish to live holy lives, we must, at all costs, maintain the truth of God's Word. Holiness will only and ever be rooted in a clear conviction of the truth.

Finally, when we speak of holiness, we do not refer, as many do today, to some mere external outward reform of conduct. So often in our superficial age, holiness is equated with mere external reformation of
life. Holiness is little more than good manners. Holiness is only a way of living externally a pious life. It is made synonymous with closing saloons, emptying jails and walking in freedom marches.

But holiness is rather a matter of the heart. It is a change in the innermost depths of our being. It is a holy walk that comes from a pure heart. It is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. Only when we seek inner purity will our life in all its aspects be conformable to God's holy law.

To turn now to this question of friendship, I would remind you first of all that friendship is a deeply spiritual concept. It is a deep impulse in man's being which God Himself has placed there. No one likes to live alone; or, if he does, he is odd. Normal life is a life in which we associate with others.

That this is true is evident from the fact that this need for friendship was to be found already in Adam. He was not created to live alone; he was formed to live with others. And this soon became evident to Adam when he named the animals. They all had their mates, but Adam had no helper meet. His very creation was adapted to the need for companionship. He was given the gift of knowledge, of speech; the power to communicate with others. But all in order that he might have fellowship with others like himself.

Basically this fellowship for Adam was to be found in his relationship with God. Friendship is fundamentally friendship with God. True friendship is only possible when one is a friend of God. Adam could only have fellowship within the bond of friendship when both he and his mate were both God's friends.

This was ruined through sin, for sin meant that man became God's enemy. And in a world of sin no true friendship is possible. There are imitations, caricatures; but man, totally depraved, is a selfish man seeking only his own advantage. This absolutely precludes the possibility of friendship.

Thus the friendship of which we speak tonight is possible only because God has once again become our Friend through Jesus Christ, and made us His friends. There is no higher blessedness than this—to be a friend of God. It is always extolled in Scripture as being of the very essence of the covenant, and man's highest good. The saints in Scripture are sometimes called the friends of God; and Scripture makes it clear that nothing more wonderful can happen to a man than this. Our friendship with one another is therefore always rooted in and always flows forth from our friendship with God. The implications of this shall presently become evident.

If we ask what the meaning of friendship is, the answer must be given that it is a covenant idea. Friendship is a bond that unites people together. And this bond is a mutual relationship in which friends share each other's lives. They are bound together in a bond so that, to a certain extent, their lives merge and intertwine. Friends share each other's life's experiences; life's problems, life's joys. Friends speak to each other of the deepest secrets of their sojourn and experiences. They speak together of their troubles and their triumphs, of their happiness and their sorrow. Friends bear each other's burdens, help to make life richer through sharing the loads of life's weary griefs.

You can see how, in the deepest sense of the word, friendship is rooted in our relationship to God. God shares with us His life, His love, His blessedness, the secrets of His eternal counsel. And He calls us by His grace to bring to Him our cares, our burdens, our griefs, as well as our joys. And only when this is a living reality in the lives of you and me, can we truly be friends.

It stands to reason then that this relation of friendship is an exclusive relationship. At bottom in this matter of friendship is the relationship which we call the communion of the saints. It is only within the sphere of the communion of saints that any kind of friendship is possible. Holiness in friendship? That means friendship in the sphere of God's people.

How does the apostle James put it? "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever would be a friend of the world, is an enemy of God." It is always one or the other. Being friends of God, we have room in our friendship only for God's people. There is no room for a third party. If we make friends with those who hate God, we become necessarily God's enemies, and friendship becomes an impossibility.

I have been asked by the Convention

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Committee to apply this in a two-fold way: first of all to our friendships with others of our own sex; secondly to the question of friendship with those of the opposite sex.

To turn first of all then to the matter of friendship with those of our own sex, the conclusions seem to me to be obvious. Our friends should be of those who are one with us in the faith. To find our friends among ungodly people, or even those who do not agree with us in the truth means that we sacrifice the holiness that we claim. We turn our backs then, on those who are one with us in our confession and walk. We deny the principle of separation and consecration. We deny the friendship we have with God. "How shall two walk together except they be friends?"

I am aware of the fact that this is a difficult problem oftentimes. Perhaps in this area where we have several of our own Churches the problem is not too great. But I am conscious of our smaller congregations isolated oftentimes from fellowship with our other Churches, and the problems they face in finding their friends. Two things about this: 1) If you find your friends among those who are not one with you in your faith, your friendship will be limited by your disagreements. Your friendship will take on the character of debate concerning questions of life and truth more than anything else. And sooner or later you will part your ways, he to go his, and you to go yours. There is an inevitability about this.

2) It is better to be alone, and forego the pleasures of friendship and necessary and pleasant as they may be, if your friendship with others leads you in their evil ways. And you must never forget that they will influence you for bad rather than influence them for good if you persist in their friendship when they have shown themselves to be enemies of God.

To turn then to the question of friendship with those of the other sex, really the same principles apply, and I will be brief.

There is no one relation of friendship which is as intimate, as wonderful as the relationship of marriage. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that marriage especially is an earthly picture of the relationship of friendship between God and His people through Christ. Because it is ordained to be a picture of this heavenly friendship of God's covenant, there is nothing quite like it on earth.

And dating stands connected to marriage in an inseparable tie. I know this is often denied. There are so many instances of this in our own lives that it hardly needs my emphasis. Young people go out on dates (to quote them): "Only for a good time."

"Because everyone in my class at school has dates." "I want to play the field before I settle down," etc. I make no apologies for insisting that this is all wrong. If dating is to have a place in our lives at all, it must have as its purpose to find the one whom God has chosen to be my life's partner. Prayerfully, humbly, spiritually, we must seek to find the one whom God has chosen for us to complete in our lives this heavenly picture of Christ and His Church. Apart from this marriage, dating has no purpose. And much of the frightening immorality of our times and the ghastly looseness of morals can be traced back to the fact that dating has become little more than a plaything.

You can see what this means. Dating is serious business. And to find our friends of the opposite sex with marriage as our goal will surely have its influences on how we date.

It will have as its result first of all that we seek our marriage partners from our own Churches. I make no apologies for insisting on this either. It seems axiomatic. The relation of marriage as a picture of Christ and His Church is possible only when both marriage partners confess the same truth and agree together in their calling in life. When they can and do worship together, pray together, instruct their children in perfect agreement, then and then only does their marriage reflect the unity of that heavenly marriage which is given to us of grace.

Once again, I am deeply aware of the fact that it is not always possible to find a marriage partner within the sphere of the Church. This is especially true of our isolated congregations. How serious this problem really is, I do not know. I sometimes think it is not as bad as is claimed. Sometimes it seems only as if "the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence." But the problem does exist. To you who face this problem therefore I can only say that this matter of church affiliation is of paramount importance. It must be settled quickly. Perhaps you think the first date is too
early to begin to discuss these questions. Maybe it is. But surely by the second or third date, the issue ought to be brought up. And only when this question is settled can you proceed with dating. If it cannot be settled, marriage ought to be out of the question. Experience is replete with examples of those who have lived a long life time of misery because of the foolishness of youth. But when you are one in the truth of the gospel, then your marriage is a friendship that grows richer with the years and will be filled with the blessings of God. When you are not only husband and wife, but brother and sister in Christ, both part of Christ’s elect bride, then you will know what friendship means in its richest sense.

Thus holiness in friendship means that we seek the friendship of those who are friends of God. Shun evil companions; they wait to lead you to hell. They are determined to take you from your God. Seek your friendship among God’s people. You and the Church to which you belong will be blessed.

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Be Ye Holy—In The World

by REV. DAVID J. ENGELSMA

Mr. Chairman, Protestant Reformed Young People, and Friends, I am thankful that I may be with you this evening. I have become more and more aware of the debt which I personally owe to the Protestant Reformed Young People and their various organizations, especially the organizations of Beacon Lights, the Federation Board, and the Conventions. I feel that that debt is increased this evening.

In the history of the early Church, there was a certain man by the name of Simon who was much impressed with the fact that the world in which he lived was unholy. The solution of this certain Simon was to climb a tall pillar where he remained for many years of his life. That was one solution to the problem of holy believers in the world. There is another solution to that problem, the solution which you find exemplified in the case of Abraham’s nephew Lot. The solution of Lot was to pitch his tent towards Sodom. I submit to you this evening that neither of these two solutions answers to the fervent exhortation of the Apostle Peter to you, “Be Ye Holy—In The World.” But these two examples of Simon and of Lot are embodiments of two strains of thought on the matter of being holy in the world. When I cast about in my mind for an example of the latter solution, that of Lot’s pitching his tent toward Sodom and of finally entering into Sodom itself, I am reminded of a speech given in chapel during my college days by a certain Professor. The subject and the content of his speech, which was later printed in a Reformed magazine, was “Pitch Your Tents Toward Sodom.” In that speech, he advised Christian young people to get as close to the world as they possibly could, to hobnob with the world, to seek out and take advantage of every opportunity—to come as close to the world as possible, in order, if I do not mistake myself, to permeate that world with the leaven of Christianity and raise that world, if possible, to a higher level.

You will find an example of the other strain of thinking, that which defends Simon the Stylite’s solution to his being holy in the world. In the monasteries of the Roman Catholic Church, where certain men in order to avoid the contamination of the world, separate themselves from all society and claim to live a holier life than is possible for those who do not follow their example. I submit that these alternatives and the doctrines which propose either of
these solutions — as the answer to Peter’s exhortation to you and to me to be holy, are false.

I suggest also this evening that the theme which we have to do with is of vital importance to you. It is of vital importance to you because you are children of God, that in the first place. In the first chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, the fourth verse, we are told that the purpose of God with his divine election of you and of me was that we should be holy. To my mind, nothing more forcefully brings home the truth of the value of the worth and of the importance of holiness than that fact. Of course, God had a higher purpose also. His higher purpose was the glory and the praise of His own grace. But that higher purpose is never achieved apart from your holiness and mine but precisely by it. I consider this theme of vital importance to you and suggest that you consider it likewise, by virtue of the closely related fact that you are Protestant Reformed Young People. Since the inception of our existence as Churches, the charge has been leveled at us that we are guilty of the sin of Simon who climbed his pole to flee from the world. That tag has been pasted on us and continues to be pasted upon us that we are fleers of the world. In the had Roman Catholic monastic sense, I will attempt to show that that charge is malevolent and false, and that although we reject that error, that solution, we nevertheless may never fall into the danger of rejecting at the same time, the truth that we are called into a separation from the world.

The idea of Holiness has two sides. One of those sides is consecration to God. Since that has been effectively demonstrated at length, I would rather spend sometime with you this evening investigating the other aspect of Holiness — that aspect which is separation from the world. When we begin to inspect that other aspect of Holiness, separation from the world, it is necessary, first of all, to recall that God is separated from the world. But that leads us to another matter, the matter of what we mean by the world. Scripture uses that term in more than one sense. There is the world that God loves. There is the world of creation, and there is the world from which God is separated at an infinite distance and with absolute finality. That world, I take it, is the world described in our theme this evening. As the holy God, inasmuch as the holy God is consecrated to Himself, He is separated from the world which includes the totality of men, of devils, of all things in the service of sin; and it is important to notice that God would not be God if He were not separated, absolutely and perfectly, from that world. The Holiness of God implies such a consecration of God to Himself that He burns with fervent fire of opposition against all that is not consecrated to Him as He is to Himself. Were He to cease separating Himself from the world, then He would cease to be holy; that is, no longer being consecrated to Himself. And if He ceases to be holy, He is no longer God.

Now our holiness is prescribed by God’s holiness. We have no business this evening or any other time, to go about defining for ourselves and our lives holiness as we would like that holiness to be or even as we with our arrogant natures often attempt to do to prescribe what God’s wisdom ought to say holiness is. Our holiness is circumscribed and defined by God’s holiness. Then, it follows that our holiness will consist of a separation from the world from which God is separated. Yet, it will not do merely to say that we are separated from that world of men, devils, and instruments of sin. But there must also be, on our part, God’s attitude of opposition against that world from which we are separated like He is separated.

Separation from the world is not something that you or I have accomplished. Separation from the world on our part is something that is exclusively God’s work. I do not separate you from the world, but it is God Himself who has separated all of us, His people, from that world which He hates. He spoke of that separation already in the opening chapters of the Bible, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed.” That separation was realized at the Cross of Christ. That separation becomes an actual reality through the work of the new birth; for in that new birth, when God calls us irresistibly into fellowship and consecration to Him, at the very same moment, He calls us into separation from the world. None of us maintains himself in that separation from the world. That again is God’s work so that you see that our holiness, the goal of election, may be to the praise and the glory of His grace, not to the enhancing and the boasting of
men. But we may not take the wrong point of view. Our reaction, often to such a statement is that we become rebellious, as if God dares to derive us of all of the pleasures in this life. That work of separation both in its origin and in its maintenance is a work of grace. He keeps us from returning to wallowing in the muck of the licentiousness from which He has called us. It is easy to see that that is a gracious work because the verdict is written upon the muck of the world from which we are separated, that world and all that is of the world perishes.

When we apply those ideas to those two solutions mentioned a little while ago, the solutions of Simon the pillar climber and Lot the Sodom dweller, then it is not difficult to see that the maneuver of Lot, who entered into Sodom, is condemned out of hand. I do not have reference now to the practical sins in the life of the children of God when they slipped and fell by their sin into the camp of the Sodom world, but I refer to the bold-faced theories which propagate that it is our calling to come as near to the world as we possibly can for any reason imaginable. I have reference to that which is preached in churches, that there is a common terrain on which the world and Church may stand together, a common basis on which worldlings and believers may go forward in certain programs or accomplish certain cooperative ventures. There are no bridges between the world and the Church. There is no common terrain upon which we can stand. Any discoveries of such common ground, whether it be God’s common love, God’s common purpose with us, or God’s common grace to us, are to characterized as sheer inventions, which make it difficult, and in the process of time, impossible for us to heed the word of Peter, “Be Ye Holy – In The World.” You probably ask, “If that is so, are you not driving us to the other alternative, the alternative of those who attempt to flee out of the world altogether?” But before that objection is answered, it must be insisted upon that any man, any organization, any deed, any venture, which has as its motivating and ruling principle the power of sin, is a man, is a venture, is an organization in which and with which a child of God has no part. This does not, however, drive us to the other alternative. We do not flee the world. Notice the theme is “Be Ye Holy – In The World” and the implication is that God, who has called us unto holiness, has not taken us out of the world and does not deem it good for us to go out of the world at all. The separation which He has established, which He has maintained, and in the maintaining, of which He comes to His rational, moral creatures, with the urgent word, “Be Ye Holy.” It is in that world that the child of God is called to a spiritual separation – as Scripture states elsewhere, “Ye are in the world but ye are not of the world.” It is precisely that fact, the fact that God does not take us out of the world, that constitutes the real urgency this evening as it always has in the history of the Church when this exhortation “Be Ye Holy” is given. You are surrounded with filth, you are surrounded by a crooked and perverse generation, and you are going to be as long as God gives breath in your nostrils. You are surrounded by perversity and crookedness, you are surrounded by darkness; and in the midst of that filth and darkness and perversity, you are to shine as lights, you are to keep yourselves unspotted from that filth, you are to keep yourselves clean from that corruption, and it is impossible to go out of the world. When the Roman Catholic monk runs to his monastery, he carries the world with him, for he carries with him his own old nature where the principle and power of sin still rages. Not only does God, in his making of us holy, take us out of the world but He does not remove altogether the world from us. You have heard before, and I may only underscore this truth, that “Be Ye Holy” does not mean, first of all, that we who hear that word begin to search into the manifested life of the ones around us or even the ones sitting next to us. It does not mean that each of us begins to examine what he did today or what he said today. It does not examine even though it implies separation from the world, that we gird up ourselves to battle against the world as it takes form all around us.

The finger of the Apostle Peter and the direction of the Holy Spirit points, first of all, to the battle ground of the inner self of each one of us, where the most fierce, the most uncompromising, the most intense, and the most continual struggle is carried out. The struggle of the principle of the
new man, which is holiness, rages against the power of the old nature, putting down, as Peter implies in the text which you have chosen, the old lusts that still are there although they do not rule anymore. We neither flee the world nor do we join ourselves to the world, but in the world, we are holy. To imagine your thoughts still further, I propose that you say, "But how does this find application in everyday concrete life? How does this total, uncompromising separation from the world find its application when I eat, when I work, when I play, when I read, and when I speak with the men with whom I come into contact?" In answer to that question, I would propose that the spiritual separation established by God, maintained by God, and to which you are called has its application in very physical, tangible, and actual separation in your daily life.

In the last election, we were told repeatedly that religion and politics were separate and that when you went to the polls, you had better keep your religious convictions at home. In many cases, that implied that holiness will be given a certain special and very narrowly restricted niche in some corner of our life, maybe on Sunday. That is just as far from the meaning of the Apostle Peter as anything can be. Holiness is not restricted to any one particular aspect of our life. Holiness is to permeate, to fill, to determine, and to regulate every single thought, word, desire, and action that we perform in our life here below; and when the question arises how this separation takes form, I recall what was said in a book by a certain British author, C. S. Lewis. In that book, he made the point somewhere that that in which we are least endanger of falling into is that against which we raise the loudest and fiercest warnings. He used the example, if I recall, that when the boat is tilting to the right side in the water, then everybody rushes to the right side of the boat. But to apply this in terms of what we have said this evening, it is true in the church world of today that, when the Church is most endanger of going under in the direction of amalgamation with the world, then it is that everyone raises the hue and the cry that world flight is erroneous. There is little, if any, danger today that the Church goes wrong in the direction of climbing the pillar of Simon the Stylite. Yet, the whole Church is anomalous in condemning that flight from the world, while the real danger, the danger which has destroyed most of the Church, that of union and fellowship and amalgamation with the world, goes unheralded. As Protestant Reformed Churches and as Protestant Reformed Young People, we are not in danger of fleeing the world. We are not in danger of entering our monastery. We are not in danger of that which Paul condemns in 1st Corinthians 5 that we go out of the world, but we are in danger of amalgamation with the world.

There are many examples which could be used but since you know them and since you agree to the gravity of their danger, and I think now, for example, of the movies, I will not spend any time with them because the first battle ground of the struggle to be holy is found in the inner man. I would rather take time this evening to examine with you the threat to you and to me and to our churches of such a thing as Materialism. We are quite adept at discovering heresies and that is something for which we ought to be thankful. But we ought never to forget that when Christ leveled his most rallying accusation against the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he did not condemn them for their sexual perversity but he condemned them for their earthly mindedness, for their materialism—for the fact that they ate and drank and were merry, farmed and bought and sold, and never got their eyes off this present earthly sphere—the grasping, money-loving, pleasure-embracing principles of the world that God hates and from which God is separated.

I consider it a very great evil that young men and young women in the Protestant Reformed Churches fail to contribute to the causes of our churches in a matter corresponding to their great income and slight expenditure as far as families are concerned. Budgets in their minds are for their parents who are least able to afford to pay those budgets while the money which young people gain for themselves trickle out in dimes and in quarters when collections for the Church, for Beacon Lights, for Standard Bearer, and for the program of radio missions is gathered. When we begin to ponder on what jobs and what occupations we will have, the matter of holiness very little influences us either in our choice or the reason
for our choice. If you have heard many times that you must consider the ministry and the teaching professions, perhaps, you have not heard quite so often the fact that when you are not called to those professions, you have not escaped the calling to be holy in your labors. Why make money? Why work? and if that answer excludes the possibility of your being able to enhance the Kingdom of God financially, then you have desecrated your calling to be holy in the world. If any man would object that too much emphasis is placed upon holiness and that, after all, we ought only to consider the Cross of Christ, that man really mutilates the Gospel and all that we must do is point to him this solemn truth as contained in Hebrews 12:14, I believe, "Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see God." That is one thing, the matter of the use, stewardship, if you will, of the money which young people can and do make in abundance in our time. There is no reason why our schools, why our magazines, and why our radio mission work must go begging in an affluent society in which we share.

There is another attitude of the inner man, an attitude which is relevant to the struggle of the principle of holiness within — against the principle of filth of this world — that is our love for one another. The world is cruel and even in their tender mercies, the wicked are cruel. The child of God alone can love, especially his brother. Now it is possible that friendships be used, just as it is possible that marriages be used, for one's own selfish interests. That is even possible to do at conventions, where we limit ourselves in our expressions of friendship and manifestations of love just to a certain few and very deliberately and consciously avoid and shunt aside others who are less appealing both to us and to our fellow conventioners. If it is true that after this Convention is over, there is one person who experiences the bitterness in his soul or her soul that he has been avoided, that he has been ignored, that manifestations of hatred have been shown to him or to her because of dress or whatever it may be, then this Convention has not realized the fellowship and the calling to which it has been called by God Himself. That is an attitude of the world, an attitude of the grasping, selfish, self-centered world, to love those who do you good, who can enhance your reputation, who can make your prestige greater and to tread upon those who are of little account when those matters come up.

In the second chapter of the Book of Philippians, that essential nature and characteristic of holiness is described for us. Remember Christ who humbled Himself for those who were not worthy to be loved and who did that because God is holy, because He was consecrated to God, because He was separated from all the cruel and hateful principles of the world, and who humbled Himself so much for those towards whom He was friend though they were His enemies that He walked the way of the Cross. Nothing is more bitter, more destructive of the holiness of the people of God than the absence and the perversion of the love of friendship for God's sake and to name no other practical matter in which the spiritual separation of the sons and daughters of God comes to concrete manifestation.

I would mention with you the matter of our relationships in schools to which we necessarily must go now, that are perhaps our public schools or even our schools that are not Protestant Reformed. Perhaps when this theme was given, and I experienced that myself, my first thought was "O what a glorious concept, 'Be Ye Holy.' What a great challenge. Now we will all go forward with holiness and everything will be rosy and fine." But then this thought came and that thought impressed me with the question, "Do I really want to be holy?" When you do this, when you are holy for God's sake, from within and from without, with separation from all that is opposed to God, then you will find that the world will separate herself from you because when you are holy, you not only keep yourselves apart from the world, you battle the world with the Word of God wherever the world manifests itself in sin. When you battle that world, the world will respond. The world will bring upon you that misery of isolation, of taking away job, taking away name, and finally of taking away your life. That may not be forgotten. I believe that by the grace of God, this theme will be written upon the hearts and minds of the young people gathered here; and that by God's grace, they will be holy. But then, they should be only in the consciousness and awareness that that means in the future, a road of persecution.
and oppression. In the schools where we necessarily must go, where again, we are in the world but not of the world, where the various programs, foolish venturers, and godless sidelights are attempted to be foisted upon us, then that concrete, actual separation must again characterize us. The battle with the Word of God must go on. Life is too broad for a thousand and a million rules to cover every possible experience that you have or that I have. In the final instance, this theme cannot be explained in rules—this theme has to be lived.

You, Be Holy, wherever you go, whatever you do, whatever you say. There is a motive for being holy. Thank God for that. If the rules for holiness were never so clearly and explicitly stated, if there were no motive for holiness within you and me, this theme would fall to the ground, absolutely, without positive affect. Your motive must be that God is holy; and still more, the motive for being holy is an over-whelming, inexhaustible awareness of gratitude. The life of holiness is the life of obedience to God because you know that God as the One who planted the Cross on Calvary, and you know that God as the one who with His Son Jesus Christ went all the way to the depths in order to lift you into that state of holiness in which He has placed you and me. It is that sense of gratitude that motivates and inspires those to whom Peter speaks with the living Word of God to respond, “I will be holy.”

In the world, which sees the glory of God when you are holy, that is God’s purpose for making you and me holy and for calling us to that holiness; that the world may see the amazing glory of God, that those who were filthy now are consecrated to Him. Then as the Catechism also expresses it, it may very well be, and that may also be your conscious purpose, that you be, when you walk in holiness, an instrument in God’s hand to bring some to the preaching of the Word, and thus, to Jesus Christ. “Be Ye Holy,” the great goal of divine election. The great achievement of the new creation. The great calling that which there is none higher for you and me.

Saint Augustine said once, “Love God and do what you please.” That is a dangerous statement and it has been dangerously used; but when properly explained, there is a wealth of truth in that statement. I would rather re-phrase that statement this way, “Love God, the God of Jesus Christ, whom you know, and walk in everyone of His Commandments which He graciously has given you so that your swelling tide of gratitude may be fulfilled here below.”

“Be Ye Holy” with that love, in the way of a struggle, in the way of a struggle of repentance, in the way of a struggle of sorrow for sin, in the way of the struggle of renewed, resolve to please Him. Then, there will be that reality in you and in me of a growth in holiness until that day when we all together are made perfect, holy saints with a fullness of the obedience of love, with a perfectly realized separation from the world in the Kingdom of our Holy God.

Open Forum

SOBER DISCERNMENT

In the February issue of our Beacon Lights, the associate editor of this magazine, H. W. Kuiper, wrote an editorial entitled: The Need For Protestant Reformed High Schools. This article has been criticized in subsequent issues of our Beacon Lights. And that part of the editorial which has been the principal target of this criticism
reads as follows: “But there is one treacherous difference: that group yet wants to claim the title of one whom they don’t know, even Christ. Oh, I am not speaking head for head, but confessionally they deny Him . . . how then can they know Him?”—unquote.

I fear that the associate editor would maintain the one-church-true and all-other-churches-false view. As associate editor he occupies a very responsible position. This is especially true in the light of the fact that he writes to the youth of our churches. And I fear that it is this view which he wishes to inculcate into the minds of our youth.

I base this fear, first of all, upon that statement in his editorial of the February Beacon Lights. I realize that he writes: “Oh, I am not speaking head for head.” But he also writes that that group does not know Christ, that it confessionally denies Him, and therefore cannot know Him. I believe I may say that he is also speaking of the Christian Reformed Church. Christ, then, they do not know. Mind you, that Church is not even entitled to the name of God or of Christ. And I base this fear, in the second place, upon the June-July issue of Beacon Lights. In this latter issue we have an article by Thys Feenstra and an answer to it by H. W. Kuiper. If the associate editor do not believe in the one-church-true, all-other-churches-false view, the article of T. Feenstra surely gave him a splendid opportunity to make this plain. Fact is, however, that H. W. Kuiper completely ignores the article of T. Feenstra as far as its main and fundamental argumentation is concerned. I refer to the reasoning that the Voice of Christ is heard in the Christian Reformed Church and that, therefore, that church cannot be viewed as wholly false. With this argument of T. Feenstra I agree completely.

I do wish to observe that I appreciate the associate editor’s condemnation of the Three Points of 1924. These Three Points certainly are a denial of the Christ. And I certainly believe that we must never weary of emphasizing this as we instruct our youth, On this point, however, we are all agreed. That the Christian Reformed Church, in these Three Points, denies the Christ we must understand. However, does this mean that there is no knowledge of Christ in the Christian Reformed Church in connection with and through the preaching of the Word?

This position I would never care to endorse. Does this mean that it then makes no difference whether I belong to the Christian Reformed Church or not? Of course not! The departure of that Church from the truth makes it impossible for us to belong to it. We must confess the truth as we know it to be in Christ Jesus and according to the Scriptures.

There are people of God, sheep in the Christian Reformed Church. Brother Kuiper affirms this. They surely hear the Voice of their Shepherd. If not, they would never know themselves to be sheep. And they must receive food. Otherwise, they could never live. However, this hearing of the Voice of their Shepherd surely takes place through His Spirit and Word. The associate editor of Beacon Lights must answer this argumentation. He does not even touch upon it in his answer to T. Feenstra in the June-July Beacon Lights.

Brother Kuiper refers his readers to Art. 29 of our Confession of Faith. I also endorse this article. I also endorse Articles 27 and 28 of the same Confession. And, I would also call the attention of brother Kuiper to Lord’s Day 21, Question and Answer 54 of our Heidelberg Catechism. It is the experience of the undersigned that the advocates of a one-church-true, all-other-churches-false view never refer to Lord’s Day 21. Several pertinent questions can be asked. What is the Church, according to our Confessions? Who constitute the Church? How is that church gathered? Can any church be wholly false and yet constitute a part of this Church? Can any church be wholly false where the Son of God operates by His Spirit and Word?

I write this for the sake of our youth. I want them to be sober in their view. I do not know of any minister in our churches who believes that the Christian Reformed Church is wholly false. The father of H. W. Kuiper, the late Rev. H. H. Kuiper, did not believe this either, as is evident from his article in Vol. 34 of the Standard Bearer, pages 261-264. We must always be careful, especially when we instruct the youth.

II. VELDMAN.

To escape criticism do nothing, say nothing, be nothing.

BEACON LIGHTS
Since it is several months that an article appeared in this rubric on this subject, we shall have to try to pick up the thread of the story.

We were discussing in general the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands between the end of the Synod of Dort and the Secession of 1834.

More particularly we were discussing the doctrinal developments of that period with special emphasis upon all the theological deviations which made the Secession a necessity.

More particularly yet, we were discussing the influence of “pietism” during this period. We have already noticed that pietism has as its chief characteristic strong emphasis on the necessity of inward spiritual experience. This, in itself, can never be wrong. But in the pietistic movements of that day it led to many evils in the Church: the assurance of salvation could only be based upon a clearly definable experience in which a man heard the voice of God; a dangerous experientialism which led to placing inner light above the authority of Scripture; a false subjectivism which led to all kinds of spiritual and moral excesses in the Church; etc. You can find the rest in the May issue of Beacon Lights.

To continue with the story, there are several remarks that should be made in this connection:

1) First, this pietism was very popular during the period between Dort and the Secession. It had tremendous influence in the Netherlands. It had powerful effects on all future developments of the Reformed Churches. In fact, even today, both in the Netherlands, and in this country, one does not have to travel far to find these people who place religious experience above the Word of God.

2) Secondly, the question of participation at the Lord’s Supper also entered into the whole question. Only those could come to the table of the Lord who were able to prove their assurance of salvation by some dramatic religious experience. The result was that the majority of the members of these Churches were barred from the sacrament of communion; only an elite group which became the object of veneration, could come to the Lord’s table. This wrong custom is still retained today in the churches that follow this tradition.

3) Thirdly, various questions of doctrine were also affected. The whole movement, you must understand, did not put much stock in doctrine. Sound doctrinal preaching pretty much went by the board. Instruction in doctrine was considered to be dangerous, leading only to dead orthodoxy; and was consequently abandoned. All the emphasis in the preaching and teaching was on experience.

Nevertheless, unavoidably, doctrinal questions entered in. Some of these were questions that would arise again and again in the Church.

There was, for one thing, the question of the relation between faith and justification: whether faith was before justification, or whether justification was prior to faith. As I said, these questions were subjects for
extended debate all the way into our century.

Secondly, questions arose concerning the Baptism Form. When the question of the Form was put to these “experience-alists,” “Whether you acknowledge that although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of his Church ought to be baptized?” you can understand that with some sort of subjective experience being the criterion of the Christian life, this question could hardly be answered with a “Yes.” Parents could not believe their children were “sanctified in Christ” until they had some religious experience to substantiate this.

Naturally, this involved all the entire doctrine of the covenant and of infant baptism. And these are questions also which continued to arise in the Church up till today. These questions are still disputed and occasions for disagreements in the Reformed Churches. Yet the question is: “On what grounds are infants to be baptized?” And this question has received, and still receives all kinds of answers in the Reformed Churches.

In close connection also with the pietistic movement, there was a return to revivals. These revivals were in many instances similar to the Wesleyan revivals in England. Often they would become very emotional affairs and highly disorganized meetings where people “moved by the Spirit” made such a racket that the police had to be called to preserve the peace.

Still another series of doctrinal controversies arose with the growing influence of rationalism in the Low Countries. France was living through the terrors of the French Revolution. Reason was enthroned; man was exalted above God; the Scriptures were discarded. These rationalistic influences were felt also in the Netherlands and corrupted especially the Universities.

Also the devastating effect of higher criticism as developed in Germany came across the borders into Holland.

No wonder really that there was a growing tendency to ignore the studies of the original languages of the Bible, and a decline of serious exegetical studies. The result of all this was that theology was divorced from the exegesis and exposition of Scripture. Often the cry was heard that theology could be justified sufficiently on the basis of human reason.

You can imagine what happened. All the cardinal truths of Scripture were called into question. Many times they were openly denied in the universities, in the pulpits and in the published literature of the day. The truth concerning the trinity was attacked. The divinity of Christ was denied. The fall of man, eternal punishment, the atonement of Christ were flaunted. There were liberals and modernists in the Church. And, although they did enormous damage to the Church, they were retained in positions of influence. Every attempt to censure them and apply discipline was stymied by the State. And this was all because human reason was set up as a higher standard than the Word of God. Men no longer bowed in humility before God’s revelation; they bowed before their own reason and worshipped the mind of man as the ultimate standard of truth. Heresies that had been condemned by the Church as early as 325 A. D. in Nicea and 451 A. D. in Chalcedon were publicly taught. The truths of Luther and Calvin were openly mocked.

Finally, there is an interesting deviation from the truth that is of particular concern to us. It is sometimes claimed in our day that some aspects of the theory of common grace are new developments of doctrine, new insights into Scripture, new contributions to the body of the truth and the confession of the Church.

But the fact of the matter is that these errors already appeared in the Churches of the Netherlands during this period we are discussing. And they not only appeared, but they were, strikingly enough, condemned by the faithful in the Church.

For example, there were those that taught that God’s grace is only in the preaching of the gospel and not in the operation of the Holy Spirit. The result was, of course, that the gospel became a general grace to all that heard it. From this point of departure, there were several jumps made. Some taught that there is a decree of God calling all men to salvation apart from the decree of election. God does not simply call the elect; He calls all men with an earnest desire. And He does this through (and this was the term used) “an offer of the gospel that was well-meant” on the part of God in the sense.
that God desired the salvation of all. Others jumped another way and a general de-emphasis on the doctrine of predestination was the result. Election and especially reprobation were pushed into the background as being part of God's hidden will with which we have nothing to do. And all this so soon after Dordt!

History indeed repeats itself.

In all these controversies there were always those who tried to defend the truth and who fought bitterly to keep the Church pure. But discipline was stymied and the State reached its long ugly arm into the affairs of the Church foiling every attempt of the faithful. There was often talk of the need for secession from the State Church, but usually the argument prevailed that faithfulness to Christ demanded that the Church remain intact.

Yet, secession was really the only possible solution. Not only to purify the Church, but also to escape the crushing hand of the State. It became a spiritual necessity that the faithful people of God leave the State Church and establish once again the Church of Christ faithful in doctrine and life.

And this is what happened.

1834 was the year of secession.

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**NEWS**

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

**KARLENE OOMKES**

According to all written and oral reports, the 1964 Convention will long be remembered as "one of the best ever held." Congratulations are certainly in order to the host society for all their efforts and to all the young people who helped to make this convention an overwhelming success!

Chester Haveman (Hudsonville) and Dale Bartelds (First) have just recently left for the armed forces.

Art Stellinga, of Doon, left for the service on July 27 for a period of six months. His address is as follows:

Pvt. Arthur Stellinga  
N.C. 27801118  
Co. 85th Bn. 3 D.T.R.B.  
Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri 65475

Ken Haak, of Oaklawn, enjoyed a two-week leave during the month of August and now has returned to Fort Dix. His address is as follows:

Pvt. Kenneth Haak, U.S. 55-793-968  
Co. C 5th Tng. Regt.  
Fort Dix, New Jersey 08640

We also have received the address of David Tamminga, a serviceman from Randolph. It is:

David P. Tamminga, MRFP 77-38910  
U.S.S. Tidewater, R-2 Div.  
c/o F.P.O. New York, New York

**Twenty-seven**
Confession of Faith
was made recently by the following young people:
From Randolph: Judy Alsun, Frank De Vries, Ted De Vries, Maurice De Vries, Al Huizenga and Curt Tamminga.
From Doon: Mr. and Mrs. Walter Fair Jr.
From Southeast: Kenneth Teitsma.

Congratulations to
Mr. and Mrs. John L. Westra (Randolph) who celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on July 25; Mrs. H. Zylstra (Doon) who was 91 years old on July 18; and Mr. Louis Bergman (First) who celebrated his 84th birthday on July 23.

Membership changes:
Miss Agatha Lubbers transferred her membership from Hope to Southwest; Mr. and Mrs. Ray Ezinga transferred their membership from Hope to Loveland; Mrs. Harry Langerak (nee Evelyn Kamps) transferred from First to Hope; and First Church welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Richard Moore from Ebenezer Protestant Reformed Church.

Future Conventioners:
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Harold Langeland (Kalamazoo)
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Ted Miedema Jr. (Hudsonville)
A daughter adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Schuitema (Hudsonville)
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. L. Huiskens (Redlands)
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. William Oonkes (First)
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Dick Van Uffelen (Redlands)
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. I. Quenga (First)
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Newhof Jr. (First)
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Jake Kuiper Jr. (Hope)
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Roger King (Hope)
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Huizenga (Hope)
A son born to Mr. and Mrs. John Kuiper (Hope)
A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Elmer VandenTop (Doon)
A son born to Dr. and Mrs. Dwight Monsma (First)

Items of General Interest:
Rev. G. Vos is well on the way to recovery and is looking forward to begin laboring in his congregation in the near future.

The Lord has granted such a degree of recovery to Rev. H. Hoekema so that he was able to celebrate the Lord's Supper with his congregation on September 20.

Once again the doors of our various Protestant Reformed Christian Schools have been opened and another year's work begun. In the Oaklawn school, the new first graders began their year earlier than all the others. Since they have no kindergarten, Miss H. Kuiper held pre-school sessions for the newcomers during the last two weeks of August.
RULES OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS

These are Bullinger's Rules of Conduct for his son who was going away to Vienna to continue his theological studies. Let us who are attending college or High School attempt to make these rules our own, especially if we leave the protecting care and guidance of our parents.

1. Fear God at all times, and remember that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

2. Humble yourself before God, and pray to Him alone through Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate.

3. Believe firmly that God has done all for our salvation through His Son.

4. Pray above all things for strong faith active in love.

5. Pray that God may protect your good name and keep thee from sin, sickness, and bad company.

6. Pray for the fatherland, for your dear parents, benefactors, friends, and all men, for the spread of the Word of God; conclude always with the Lord's Prayer...

7. Be reticent, be always more willing to hear than to speak, and do not meddle with things which you do not understand.

8. Study diligently... history, philosophy, and the sciences but especially the New Testament, and read daily three chapters in the Bible, beginning with Genesis.

9. Keep your body clean and unspotted, be neat in your dress, and avoid above all things intemperance in eating and drinking.

10. Let your conversation be decent, cheerful, moderate, and free from all uncharitableness.

PHILIP SCHAFF
History of the Christian Church

Twenty-nine
"This Is Your BEACON LIGHTS" film available

The Public Relations Staff has the film shown at the convention, "This is Your Beacon Lights." The narration has been recorded and both the tape and the film are available for any society or group that would like to show it (perhaps for an after-recess program). It takes twenty-five minutes to show. These reels can be mailed anywhere in the United States. If you are interested, contact or write Edward Langerak, 1335 Tamarack N.W., Grand Rapids 4, Michigan.

Let's all attend the

**REFORMATION DAY MASS MEETING**

- Speaker
- Special Numbers
- European Travelogue
- Refreshments

- Tuesday, October 27
- Begins at 8 P.M.
- Southwest Church
- Sponsored for Scholarship Fund