BEACON LIGHTS
for
PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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Reproached by the Enemy
The Basis of Our Darology
What's Right With It?
Catch the Vision!
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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REPROACHED BY THE ENEMY

The nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing, when has this not been the case? The sea rages in the storm and the mire is cast up, at which time has this not been the case? Wars plague the continents, and rumors of war cause all men to faint in their exertions for earthly peace, how much more this will be the case in the latter days! Young people, look around yourselves at the activities of men on the face of the earth — it is all movement today. And examine the anarchy that is in our immediate situation (the TV tubes are full of it) for we live in a country which has endless ambitions for a world peace, this is a dream that grows almost daily. The United States government has a great desire to spread "democracy" to all nations. It also desires to control not only people generally but also their goods, their education, their propagation, their finances, the sciences so that the elements of the earth are at their command. Consider the educational structures with their tenets of uniformitarian philosophy and its evolutionary principles. And briefly view the church which is so full of the dead strikers of the breed of Esau, who hate the truth and those who propagate it.

Young people, forget your job for a few minutes, the car, that movie, that party and those plans which you have for increasing your position in the world and study that world through the eyes which are enlightened that you may know what is the hope of your calling. That is the only way you will see that these things are the revelation of the counsel of God. We know that all these things tend to the end which God has set; that is, the glory of His NAME and the vindication of His covenant. And in this situation which exists now: what is your confession? Is it silence; or is it compromise; or is it contradiction and judgment? We hope that it is the confession of the Psalmist who wrote, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" (Psalm 42:1-3) So we read of the experiences of one who understood that the living God was his portion and, therefore, to know Him was to him life. Young people, if this is indeed our experience and delight, then we shall suffer the afflictions of Christ in the present age. And that is our desire according to the new man.

We read in the above that this Psalmist even though he sought to be faithful to God was certainly not received as one of the representatives of God in the world. Indeed, to our amazement, it is just the contrary! They say to him in their gross haughtiness and stubborn pride, "Where is thy God?" And we read in verse 10 that that reproach entered the bones of the Psalmist as a sword. (This is centrally the subjective experience of Jesus Christ and as His people are created in His image they suffer the same reproach.) And as a result of this particular reproach the Psalmist was so pricked that in verse 2 of the next Psalm that he asks the Lord, "Why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" Is this the case, that the Lord has indeed cast off his people? The apostle asks the same question in Rom. 11:1 and answers it thus, "God forbid! . . . God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." This is also the case today when it seems that truth is vanquished for the main part and that God apparently continues to sleep even though his people flee from the battle. One can scarcely open his mouth and he is criticized by the nominal people of God with words such as these: "Oh, you have a monopoly of the truth-heh?," "Such a God I cannot conceive of!," "We will see how long you last!," "Oh you know so much about this God, why does He not deal with the gross social injustices and the wars?" All these and many more are perpetually on the lips of our enemies. If you do not believe it tell those around you once that we are the people who confess that God is not only Sovereign but that HE causes these things to come about and that the only purpose
is to glorify his own NAME in effectually gathering his people. The elect only, and that that is the purpose of preaching the gospel from a positive viewpoint. Ah! then you will see how ready the world and the modern church is to receive the Christ and to crown him Lord of all. You will begin to see plainly that even though man in their eyes is always developing, he still hates the God of our fathers and is not ready to leave his life of corruption at all.

But why are there these two warring factions on the earth? Only for one real purpose and that is that the people of God may learn to say in the midst of the spiritual battle, "When shall I see God, the living God?" When? That is the question. So grieved is the man of God by these things that he can no longer find any satisfaction in the present life. Further, every day and night his tears become his meat so disconsolate is he. His soul groans from the spiritual battle of life and groans for the final deliverance. He can think of one thing only: "When shall I appear before the living God?"

When shall I see Him who is my very life? When shall that God, my God, vindicate me in the face of all his and my enemies? And that young people is our experience in the world. And how well we know that in this place where it seems that all men go mad in their pursuit of the ungodly mammon, which shall surely perish. Yet, in spite of all this, we say with the Psalmist, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." A.N.

FEATURES

THE BASIS OF OUR DOXOLOGY, Soli Deo Gloria

This speech was given by Rev. D. H. Kuiper at the 1967 Young People’s Convention Outing at Newton Hills, South Dakota.

Why should young people praise God, and God alone? Why should theology, and especially Protestant Reformed theology, concern itself with the honor and glory of God? Why do you as young people devote an entire convention to this subject? In the answering of these questions, we will at once produce the ground or basis for our doxology. There are, I think, primarily two.

In the first place, it is incumbent upon us to praise God, our Creator, due to our very creation. To see this clearly we better go back 6000 years to Paradise. Adam and Eve, in the state of rectitude, made in the image of God, possessing and enjoying true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, did nothing but raise one continuous anthem of praise to God. That was altogether proper for them. God placed Adam in Paradise to rule, and to be servant. Standing at the acme of creation, he was the mouthpiece through which the entire creation expressed the praise of its Maker. To this task he was totally consecrated in the perfect service of love. That was his task, his mandate. All this because of the position in which he, the creature, stood in respect to God the Creator. This applies to us of course. Sin and the fall did not change that. We as well as all rational, moral creatures must serve, and laud, and adore the one Almighty God of heaven and earth. We are His creatures; it is His prerogative to determine what we shall do. And according to all Scripture, He had determined that the works of His hands shall praise Him. So it is the very purpose of our existence to be vessels of praise unto God.

In the second place, and for us tonight, much more to the point, the basis for the ascription of praise to God is the work of the God of all grace, that is, the work of God through Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly it is the work of God in Christ that Peter has in mind in verse ten. And it is the consideration of that work which causes him to end
on the high note of verse eleven, which Rev. Vanden Berg called to our attention last night. Further, it is exactly the work of Christ as He preserves us that we must notice tonight. Hence in the consideration of our preservation as the basis for our doxology, I call to your attention: Our Frightening Adversary, Our Gracious Preservation, Its Glorious Purpose.

I want to begin with a quote from Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis, a book that many of you have read. Screwtape and old experienced devil, is writing to Wormwood, a rookie devil, instructing him in the skills and intricacies of swerving a Christian from the faith. He is making the point that it is of great advantage to the devil if the Christian be not too convinced of the reality of devils. So he writes to Wormwood: “If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and then persuade him that since he cannot believe in that, he therefore cannot believe in devils either.” So the idea of this advice is that if the Christian is not convinced of the personal reality of Satan and his devils, then Satan’s battle is more than half won. Do you believe in devils, young people? Are you convinced that you are just as real as you are? Or the person sitting next to you? Are you accustomed to think of him in very concrete terms? You should be, and you must be! The text speaks of the devil as something very real. And so does all of Scripture (recall the temptations of Adam and Eve, of Job, of Jesus Himself). A rather well established legend has it that Martin Luther once threw a bottle of ink at the devil in his study. Now, I don’t recommend that we start throwing things around, but Luther was greatly concerned about devils, sin, and the matter of justification. And so must we be! Remember, the devil is personally real.

Secondly, I want to point out briefly that our adversary is powerful. He is a spirit which gives him great advantage over us. He can come and go without detection. He can approach us without our knowledge. And not only can he approach us, but he can even enter into us. Because he is a spirit he has access to our hearts. He can penetrate our thoughts, and even control them to a great extent. Furthermore, he is not alone, but Satan the Adversary is captain of legions of devils. When he fell from heaven, he took with him a large number of fallen angels. These he directs as a master general. He sends his troops where the battle is the hottest. And where is that? At the United Nations, the World Council of Churches, at the universities and public schools of our land? In Hollywood and Paris, perhaps? Don’t you ever think it. In all these places things are well in hand—he needs only to look in from time to time to check the regress and the development of sin. But as Satan well knows, the battle is the hottest and the most difficult where the Truth is to be found. And there he sends his devil hosts. I shudder to say this, but it’s true and needs saying, you find the greatest concentration of devils in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and in its seminary and schools. And at this convention! I would even say that there has been assigned to each one of you for the duration of the convention a special devil. All because the adversary hates the Truth.

Thirdly, our adversary is pernicious and diabolical. The name Satan means slanderer; all he does is lie and falsely accuse. He slanders the church before the world, and he accuses us before our own consciences. He loves to remind us of our sins. To tell us that we are no better than anyone else; that we have no right to be saved. He wants to turn our eyes from the cross, don’t you see? And once we lose sight of the cross, of course, we’re miserable. Then his accusations seem to contain truth.

Fourthly, he is practiced. Practice and experience make quite a difference in most every area. In driving a car, playing various sports, dealing with people, doing our work, it is experience that separates the beginner from the expert. We are up against an expert who has practiced for 6000 years. He has made an extensive study of human nature. Generally, he knows all the quirks and idiosyncrasies and weaknesses of the human race; specifically, he knows you and your weaknesses. He knows when to be subtle, when to be bold. When to flatter and when to seek compromise. He is like a giant computer who has stored up all this information and has it all at his finger tips, ready for immediate use. So the devil as such is personally real, is terribly powerful,

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is thoroughly pernicious, and is well practiced.

This adversary Peter calls "a roaring lion who goes about seeking whom he may devour." What a fitting picture! The king of the beasts, covered with sinew and muscle, strong of tooth and claw! The lion whose roar is enough to stop the heart, who is filled with cunning, and who is able to do pretty much as he pleases. And notice he roars. That roar indicates both fierce anger and enormous appetite. He is angry because he has been cast out of heaven and must now limit his nefarious work to the sphere of this earth. He has suffered one defeat after another - his massive pride is hurt. He is roaring mad! And hungry! His appetite will not be satisfied until he has devoured all the sheep of Christ. Oh, I know, the devil will eat most anything he can get his hands on, but over the years he has developed a special appetite for spiritually healthy, Christian young people, for young people such as you. You he seeks to devour.

You know, it wouldn't be so bad yet if Satan always roared. The text does not mean to say that his method is always that of a roaring lion. The Dutch have a saying something like this: the devil doesn't come on wooden shoes. You don't always hear him chomping up to you. He also knows how to tip-toe. He knows, does this devil, how to appear as a lamb. Imagine! The father of the lie can appear as truth; the prince of darkness as the light. But nevertheless, the overall effect and net result is that he is a roaring lion.

The question that we must now face is: why is he our adversary? That question takes on added significance when we remember that he is the prince of this world, and we are of this world. Due to the fall and our sin, we are his rightful and loyal subjects. As you and I are by nature, we are of our father the devil. Don't forget that. But why then is he our adversary, and why should he seek to devour us? The text says, "But the God of all grace Who has called you. . . ." That calling has established the adversity between the devil and us. As we were by nature, we were in the dark jungle with the roaring lion, we ran with him and delighted in his strength. We swallowed in the dark, miry swamps of sin. That was our natural habitat, and we loved it. But the God of all grace called us! Out of that jungle of sin and death, He called us into His eternal glory. That is, by His Word, out of pure grace. and through Jesus Christ, He actually moved us; He called us into His marvellous light. Do you see the picture? The picture is that of a great, dark, dense jungle. In the midst of the jungle is a little clearing, and that tiny clearing is bathed in light. In the beautiful, dazzling light of God's eternal glory! In the light of Truth, and of His revelation and fellowship! In that bright circle of light stand you and I. The calling has placed us there. And all around us? Darkness, and the roaring of the lion. That is always the picture of the church in the midst of the world. Therefore it is because of the calling, that gracious act of God in Christ that illuminates our hearts and minds and places us in the light of God's presence - it is because God has set His love upon us - because He has formed us for His peculiar people - that the devil esteems us as most delectable food.

He is our adversary because he hates God, and he hates Christ, and because he sees in you the life of Christ.

That's the enemy. Certainly nothing that we can take lightly. A roaring lion is not something that you play around with, not if you have an ounce of sense. Lions, and devils, play for keeps. For the devil knows that he has but a little while to win you over. He knows that the end is near when his defeat shall be total and absolute. I have purposely sketched this dreadful picture of the adversary at length in order that we might see our gracious preservation for what it is. It is from that enemy that we are kept safe! What does that mean?

Does it mean that the roaring lion has no access to us? That he cannot touch us at all? Don't you ever believe that! It is certainly the experience of every child of God, and of young people especially, that the devil is able to touch us and affect us. To continue in the language of the figure, the lion is able to claw us a bit, to put his teeth marks on us. He is able to tempt us, and to cause us to fall into sin temporarily. That's just what he wants you to do here at Hull. He doesn't want this convention to be a spiritual mile-post in your lives, but rather a time of empty fun. So he places in your minds the idea that now that we're

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away from Mom and Dad we can kick up our heels a bit. Those thoughts are of the devil! He doesn’t want this convention to be a demonstration of the unity of faith and love which we possess together, but rather he is working in you to cause division and heartache and pain. He wants you to shun certain people, to be a respecter of persons, to make a few feel like outsiders. That too is of the devil! Just let me remark here that if there is one person that comes to this convention and is left out in the cold, is ignored, is not caught up in all the activity and joy and fun, then this convention is a failure. And Satan’s purpose will have been accomplished.

Further, that devil may be able to cause our faith to waver in its consciousness. He might even be so successful that we begin to ask ourselves the questions: Do I have faith? Am I in Christ? Do I belong to Him? Have you ever asked those questions? I have. That devil can touch us.

But, young people, that’s as far as he can go! Oh, he is powerful, but he is not omnipotent. There is one infinitely greater than he. That is the God of all grace and all glory! All power and dominion is His! By Him kings rule and princes decree! And by Him the devil roars and seeks to devour! The God of our text, our God is in sovereign control of every person and event. And thus Satan himself, unwilling servant though he be, can only serve the purpose of our Father’s will. What frustration that must cause the devil — no matter what he does or what stratagem he tries — he fails, and he serves God’s purpose. No wonder he roars! And what blessed comfort this truth presents us! Our Father Who loves us controls the roaring devil!

How does this preservation come about? In order to reveal His grace, God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Thus it is Christ that sustains us in the faith and keeps us. He is the Lord from heaven. He is greater than every foe. He dwells in us with His mighty Spirit so that our faith in its essence never fails; we are not devoured. And that Spirit is never taken away from us! So we never plunge ourselves to everlasting destruction, as surely would be the case if we had to meet the accuser alone. We never commit the sin unto death. But rather, time and time again, we are renewed unto repentance and sorrow over sin. And finally, because that Spirit of Christ is in us, the roaring and the attacks of the devil can only serve to drive us closer to Christ and closer to God! The more the devil seeks to swallow us up, the more we are driven into the arms of Jehovah! Jehovah, who is a strong tower into which the righteous may run and be safe! What a blessed truth that is! I thrill every time I think of it! God uses Satan to bring us close to Himself. That’s His grace and His wisdom... and His glory!

To us that might seem like a strange way to work. But that’s because we don’t understand God’s thoughts — they are too high for us. Nevertheless, God uses the devil, temptations, all these bloody encounters, in order to perfect the work which He has begun in us. He uses all these to beat down our pride, for we are proud, until finally and at long last it has been reduced to nothing. Then we cry out: the God of all grace is All and I am nothing! When we ourselves are weak, and when we see ourselves to be nothing, then is our faith strong! And then is God glorified!

Which is, of course, the glorious purpose. The purpose of our whole lives, of everything. Every step of the way through which God leads us affords us abundant reason to glorify Him. He has called us into His eternal glory and caused us to taste the blessedness of His covenant. He works in us to perfect us, to establish, strengthen, settle us. Even the devil himself must serve that work. Again and again we are made to see that we cannot stand on our own two feet, but that we need Him! Every experience of life is designed to teach us that.

As we see that, and as we learn that, then the doxology Soli Deo Gloria becomes our doxology. For then we see that God is God, that He has done and is doing wondrous things! For even though we must suffer for a while, yet in the way of that suffering He is leading His church into the perfection of His covenant. What then is the basis for our doxology? The grace of God, as it is revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord! He is worthy of all praise both now and forever more!

I thank you.
WHAT'S RIGHT WITH IT?
By MISS DIANNE HAUCK

What's wrong with the world today? More specifically, what's wrong with this generation of Young People? I'm sure we've all heard this many times, "We would never have thought of doing the things these kids do when we were that age." I had heard it so many times that I stopped listening until suddenly I discovered they were partly right. No one can deny that the world we live in today moves at a much faster pace or that the people, young or old, have more freedom than ever before. Therein lies part of the reason for this trend. Notice I didn't say excuse, because there is none; I said reason. We are still commanded to live according to God's guide for us, His Word.

Since I've come to know at least in part what it means to be chosen by God, there have been many times when it would be much easier if I didn't have to face another day, knowing I couldn't begin to do what I was commanded. However this is a despairing outlook and my object is not to depress you but to tell how wonderful it can be to make a conscious effort to live in harmony with our Father's will.

What's wrong with it? This is the question foremost in our minds when we are told we cannot participate in or do a particular thing we would like to do. "No," say our parents, "you must not do those things for they are of the world."

"Well, what's wrong with them," is too often our question. Usually our parents give us reasons we have heard many times before and therefore we don't really listen, or we say, "But that doesn't apply to us. We are not going for the same reason as those of the world. We see all of this through a Christian viewpoint." I surely cannot argue whether one individual really believes this, but participation in this way seems near to impossible to me. This is the negative attitude.

It is true that the Bible does not say specifically, in regard to modern entertainment and life, that you cannot do this or that. This is my whole point. It does not tell you what is wrong with something. On the contrary it emphasizes the positive by telling us how we are to live. Proverbs is a book rich in practical texts to be applied to life. How often have we sung Psalter No. 322 which is so plainly made for us.

With God's Word as your guide to life, then ask not what's wrong with my doing that, but what's right with it? In what way will it increase my knowledge of God? In what way will it strengthen my faith? What will I gain from this experience? Remember, God is with His people wherever they are. Would we want God to see us purposely going against His Word? Many of these things we would never even want our parents to know or find out about. How much worse that God knows. He does you know.

Lest I sound like a hypocrite or give you the idea that I'm judging, please note; the only reason I dare to say this about us is that I am part of today's youth and know too well what happens when a friend says, "Want to go to the play with me?" Right away I start rationalizing the situation to make it okay in my own mind. It takes a while to realize what I'm doing and stop. Many times I'm too weak and cannot resist.

Don't do this for me or anyone else, but for yourself. The next time you're faced with a situation like this, look for your answer in God's Word and pray that He will show you the way. Ask yourself what's right with my doing this. If you can answer that question truthfully, I feel you will find a peace one cannot describe.
CATCH THE VISION!
By MR. VERNON GREASOR

The Berlin Sportpalast (Sports Palace) is packed to capacity. From thousands of voices rises a constant din. There is an air of excitement, expectancy and eagerness. People of every age and class are here, the young, the old, the middle aged, the factory worker, the office girl, the doctor, the student, the nurse and many more. In short, this is a cross section of the German people in 1933. The hall lights darken and everyone becomes silent. From the front of the Sportpalast a spot light throws a narrow beam of brilliant light down to the rear entrance. Trumpets blare as a small man with a little mustache appears. Illuminated by the spotlight he walks slowly down the aisle to mount the platform. At first, scarcely audible, one begins to hear a chant, then louder, ever louder until the whole Sports Palace thunders! "Sieg Heil!" "Sieg Heil!" "Sieg Heil!" (Hail to victory.) The people become hysterical and some women faint. Mounting the platform, facing the endless sea of faces, the little man bows and smiles. He holds up his hand, the roof shaking. "Sieg Heil!" stops us though by magic. He begins to speak in a slow tenor voice. The treaty of Versailles is an outrage, the misery of the German people is unbearable. Germany never lost the war on the battlefield, the fatherland was stabbed in the back by the Jews and socialists. It is the Jew who is behind every plot to enslave our people. His voice slowly rises to a high pitch. Now he shouts and screams, his voice becomes hoarse and passionate. "Down with the international socialist! Down with the international bankers! Down with the dirty Jew! Deutschland Erwache! (Germany wake up!)" He does not reason with them—he appeals to their hate, their desire for revenge and their national pride. But he doesn't stop here on a negative note. Words like Fatherland, honor, loyalty, devotion, sacrifice come pouring out of his throat. Germany must resume her rightful place in the world. Only a strong Germany will be respected. He drives his points home with frantic gestures, waving his right arm, hacking the air, unconsciously and repeatedly brushing back his unruly lock of hair as he rants and raves. "Germany will awake from her long sleep and strike down all her oppressors! We are the Herren Volk! (Master race) and will take our rightful dominate place in the world! Sieg Heil!"

Hypnotized, the audience drinks in every word. What he thinks, they think, what he believes, they believe. one heart, one mind! Said one of the audience, years later, "Something I couldn't understand swept over me—I was exalted—I gave him my soul. This was the evil genius Adolf Hitler, and the German people—caught the vision—and they gave him their soul.

Less than 600 miles away in another city, time and place, large numbers of citizens have gathered. The public hall of a certain small city is packed to capacity. Here too voices are raised, angry voices, heated arguments are heard. The city council is under attack for enforcing certain detested laws. What laws? Each family must attend church regularly except for sickness or other valid reasons. All servants and help must be sent to church when ever possible and no citizen may neglect divine worship. All children must receive instruction in catechism regularly. Taverns are to be closed during public worship. Drunkenness is forbidden. Penalties include fines, imprisonment, placement in the stocks in the public square etc. Blasphemy and cursing carry a stiffer penalty, nine days on bread and water, repeated offenders can even be whipped, and the incorrigible can be banished from the city or put to death. Nine days in jail on bread and water for adultery, repeated offenders could be beheaded and some were. Laughing during the sermon could mean three days in jail. To make a long matter short not only were the citizens of this small city compelled to learn the Bible from cover to cover, but they were compelled to live what they were taught or else! This little city was a republic, they had elected its officials, agreed to its ordinances, and swore their allegiance to the magistrates.

Little did they suspect that the officials actually would enforce these laws, that is some of them did not. The Libertines and Patriots confused freedom with license. Freedom to them meant, to be able to
gambles, to fornicate, to drink, to engage in all the lusts of the flesh. Were they not saved by grace, so that they were no longer under the law! Away then with this legalism, how dare the authorities imprison Madame Perrin for dancing and revelry! The city of 200 were split into two factions, the Reformers seeking to establish a God-centered community and the Patriots and Libertines seeking to live the life of the flesh while paying only lip service to God. They argued back and forth. "Repeal the laws!" cried the Libertines, "we are tired of tyranny!" "Retain the laws," insisted the Reformers, "Honor God!" They argued back and forth, neither party giving and inch. Finally some one cried — "An appeal to arms!" Scabbards rattled, swords were drawn. Never had any session of the city council been more tumultuous, the parties weary of speaking began to appeal to arms. Suddenly out of nowhere appears a thin slight figure of a man. He is pale and one can see at a glance he is in feeble health. He has a finely chiselled face, a well-formed mouth, pointed beard, black hair, a prominent nose, a lofty forehead and flaming eyes. Some one cries "Kill him!" He folds his arms and looks his agitators fixedly in the face. Not one of them dares to strike him. Then advancing thru the midst of the group, he tears open his shirt exposing his boney chest and cries "If you want blood, there are still a few drops here, strike them!" Not an arm is raised. He slowly ascends the stairway to the council of 200.

The hall was on the point of being drenched with blood, swords were flashing. Now the weapons are lowered. Taking the arm of one of the councilors, he descends the stairs and cries out to the people that he wishes to address them. He speaks with feeling and love, he tells them of the eternal city whose builder and maker is God. He tells them of the mercy of God who gave his only begotten Son to die for their sins. He exhorts them to live a life of gratitude to God for all his benefits and to love their neighbors as themselves. Are we not of the household of faith, how can brother kill brother? If one cannot love his neighbor whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? The people look at one another, they blush with shame, some one starts crying, soon they are all weeping. Tears flow from their eyes, weapons are put aside, they embrace each other.

The little sickly Frenchman was John Calvin, the city—the Republic of Geneva. They caught the vision—and gave God their soul.

"Evangelicalism is called to maintain a pure testimony. It must insist that it is impossible to sustain the sola scriptura principle without infallibility. Denial of it brings into serious jeopardy the entire epistemological base of Christianity. Tertullian spoke truly: 'credunt sine scripturis, ut credent adversus scripturas.' Standing outside the umbrella of Scripture is not a privilege of Christian freedom: it is the fool's paradise of rationalism. For it does not place one in the clearer light of direct revelation, but in the inky murky blackness of no revelation at all. This darkness in the end reduces the whole universe to an inhuman machine without personal origins, and condemns human life to tragic futility. A Gospel modulated to the pitch of twentieth century thought will not in the end ease the problem of communication. It will only mute the sound of revelation itself and end up in total silence. The 'death of God' movement is only another witness to the tragic effects now being experienced in the wake of a denial of Biblical infallibility."

(From A Defense of Biblical Infallibility, by Clark H. Pinnock, p. 32)
ASSURANCE: Nurtured and Maintained

The gift and grace of assurance is received, nurtured and maintained through a holy, godly and righteous life, and not otherwise. It is an outright gift and blessing of God’s unconditional covenant. And, “whereas in all covenants, there are contained two parts,” God’s part in this case being the settling of assurance in the heart by the gift of true faith, and man’s part being the obligation “to new obedience, namely that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life” (Form of Baptism). This shows that assurance is the effect of righteousness. The meaning is that assurance is maintained in the way of righteousness. “The effect of righteousness (shall be) quietness and assurance forever” (Isa. 32:17). Righteousness requires the keeping of the “heart with all diligence” (Prov. 4:23), watching and praying, “lest ye enter into temptation” (Mark 14:38), taking “heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb. 3:12).

All this is easy to put down in writing. The practice of it is another thing, a very strenuous task. To illustrate: a man who had calmed his nerves and greatly improved his general health with proper progressive weight exercise wished to attain according to his capacity to massive muscular size. Physically incapable of doing “squats,” the next best exercise was prescribed—parallel bar dips. To do these properly, every ounce of will and vigor would have to be mustered, and that would have to be the outlook and practice, or abandon the whole idea. The plan called for working up to fifteen sets of dips, using heavy weights tied around the waist, advancing to one hundred pounds, and trying for two hundred. “Begin with a moderate weight for five repetitions. Add weight and do five more reps. Then proceed to your best weight for three sets of five repetitions. Keep forcing the poundage; add weight every workout. Grit your teeth and make it at the moment the most important thing in your life.” Now perhaps you may appreciate more what is involved in the practice of man’s part in the covenant, viz., the cutting off of the right hand, and the plucking out of the right eye (Matt. 5:29). Absence from every form of evil is required (I Th. 5:22). “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away” (Prov. 4:14). “Fight the good fight of faith” (I Tim. 6:12) is literally, agonize the good agony of the faith.

The Christian ought to be living above doubts and slavish fears. You say, the one lacking assurance does not fear death, but only that after death one will not be received into Glory. What does such a one
fear? that God will make him to err from His ways, and harden his heart from His fear? (Isa. 63:17). Then let him forget such foolishness. Does he not already fear the Lord with loving, godly fear? (Phil. 2:12). Then is not the secret of the Lord shared with him (Ps. 25:14)? Will the Lord so sovereignly harden one who fears Him? Banish the thought! Will He not rather fulfill His Word, “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go. I will guide thee with Mine eye” (32:8)? Does He not guide thee now? Or think you that He allows those who fear Him to grope their own way through life? Can you pray, “Our Father who art in heaven, lead us!” and then go on to pray “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps. 73:24)? Can you pray, truly pray, the former and not the latter? Impossible! Furthermore, why should all sorts of fears rob you of the joy of assurance? “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba! Father!” (Rom. 8:15). Does not the Spirit dwell with you? shall He not be in you (John 14:17)? Then can you not rejoice in the Lord? Can you not earnestly determine. “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation” (Isa. 61:10). Can you say “my soul” and be so self-centered as never to say “my God”? Saying it, and that in truth, you really know the heart of the covenant relation. Isn’t that something you know in yourself? And the thought, does it not enable you to be patient in tribulation? What enables you to exert that endurance but the contemplation of a better and more enduring substance? The persecuted Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they have exactly that in heaven (Heb. 10:34).

This writer, upon becoming Protestant Reformed, came out of circles where the doctrine of assurance was such an utterly simple matter that that which has been written so far in this series would there be regarded as a case of complicating simplicity. There it is assumed that no pains need be taken to discover whether a person is saved: one, merely on believing God’s Word, may be sure in a moment. But this is to assume too much as to what it is to believe. For the Jews of Jesus’ day believed the prophets, and the divine inspiration and authorship of the scriptures. Simon Magus believed. The Russellites claim to believe the Bible, yet they reject the truine God. The devil and his apostate host also believe.

Still it is often insisted that I have believed and therefore I am saved! In proof of this claim, any one of a number of texts are quoted, such as John 3:16, John 5:24 or Acts 16:31. Let us turn to John 5:24. There, the one who hath eternal life, who hath passed out of death into life, is first of all identified to us as, “he that heareth My Word.” That is often thought to be simple enough; nothing more than to hear with the external ear is meant. “Hear” means “hear,” just as “Jew” means “Jew” and “Israel” means “Israel.” But Jesus did not agree with this opinion. He said to the Jews, “He that is of God heareth God’s words. Ye therefore hear them not (despite the fact that they were hearing him with the physical ear at the moment), because ye are not of God! Why do ye not understand My speech? because ye cannot hear My Word!” (John 8:47, 43). Notice, they did not hear, nor were they able to hear His Word. They “hearing” hear not. So with many today who hear the word of Christ. They are frequently talking of it. They say to one another, “Come and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee . . . and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness . . . thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not!” (Ezekiel 33:30ff). Hearing is the spiritual act of one who “has (already) passed out of death into life.”

When John 3:16 is appealed to, the “whosoever believeth” is first underscored, then it is confidently affirmed, I have believed in Him; therefore I have the assurance of eternal life. However, it should be understood that in this same Gospel, a half dozen times it is stated that “many believed on Him,” yet were not saved by Him, as a comparison of 12:36-40 with vv. 42, 43 will
show! There is a believing in Christ which saves (Heb. 10:39), and a believing in Him which does not save. For "many were trusting in His name . . . but Jesus was not trusting Himself to them" (John 2:23f, Gk.). The latter is the faith of Judas, of Magus, of many! Therefore take nothing for granted, but be sure you have the faith of God's elect.

To this end we may again insist, "Examine yourselves whether ye lie in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5). The Christian is exhorted, know your own self, that, Jesus Christ is in you, not, "believe that Christ died for you." The Christian can know that he has faith of God's elect by discerning God's law written upon his heart (Heb. 10:16) and by his delight in that law (Rom. 7:22). So he can know that Christ died for him only in ascertaining whether "Christ liveth in me," whether He has made me a new creature in Him, whether I come to Him, bow in His sceptre (one of righteousness), take His yoke, and forsake all to follow Him.

But let us go back to the one who wants to be able to say "my God," yet feels it would be lying to do so. It is plain to him that "your Father" and "your brethren" in Matt. 5:45, 47 do not mean that God is the Father of all alike, the evil and the good, of both the just and the unjust; and that all men are brethren. He wants to say, "my Father," but he can hardly see beyond the fact that by nature he is a child of wrath. He wants the good and the honest heart of the good ground hearer, but he has learned that his heart is deceitful above all things. He prayed for a holy life, but immediately after, his conduct revealed that he did not mean what he said. He has thanked God for mercies and blessings, yet has complained when the providence of God was not to his liking. When it is said of the new creature that old things have passed away, he finds a mass of corruption in himself. He can truly say, "For that which I do I understand not (Gk.); for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I!" (Rom. 7:15). Here is one who believes that "the work of (Christ's) righteousness is peace" (Isa. 32:17), yet has no peace, for although he would heed the command "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10), he has not yet found the comfort of the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). Yet although these many inadequacies are not to be condoned, they are not incompatible with the regenerate state. Abraham knew he was but dust and ashes (Gen. 18:27), Solomon the "plague of his own heart" (1 Kings 8:38), Isaiah that he was a man of unclean lips (6:5), Daniel lamented that his comeliness was turned into corruption (10:8) and Paul the chief of sinners confessed, "O wretched man that I am!" Still Abraham was the friend of God (James 2:23), Solomon was beloved of his God (Neh. 13:26), Isaiah was purified (6:7), Daniel was a man greatly beloved (10:19) and Paul "labored more abundantly than they all" and in nothing was he behind the very chiefest of apostles (1 Cor. 15:10; 12:11; 11:5). Some speak of having attained "the victorious life," having gotten out of Romans 7 into Romans 8! But not only does the Christian in Romans 7 groan, the Christian in Romans 8 groans, too. For ourselves also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves (v. 23). Read the same in 11 Cor. 5:4, 5. This is the Spirit's evidence that we are the children of God.

OPEN FORUM

Dear Mark,

In answer to an article written by Roger Kamphuis in the August-September issue of Beacon Lights, I would like to present a few suggestions on the subject of the war in Vietnam.

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formed doctrine either supporting or condemning the war in Vietnam. I would also emphasize, however, that the church institution has no calling in the matter. The calling of the church is to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and exercise Christian discipline.

It was also presented as an argument by the writer that there "are too many problems in our own country to do something about." Let us assume that one of the things to which the writer refers to is riots, since he mentions them in two different places in his article. I will concede that riots in the United States cities are a major problem today. But I would ask, which came first, the big riots or the big war in Vietnam? And even if I should concede that riots should be tended to first, along with other internal problems, how could the United States get out of Vietnam quickly enough without making a mess of the situation? This could not be an abrupt pull-out but a very slow, gradual process.

Mr. Kamphuis also mentioned that the war in Vietnam "is why there are so many riots going on today." This is perfectly true, but this is no reason to condemn the war in Vietnam. Rather we should condemn the rioters who rebel against the authority placed over them by God by protesting the war through violence.

Finally, I would like to say that this war directly affects us as individuals because of the fact that many of our friends are fighting in Vietnam and we, too, may soon be fighting there. However we must not get so involved in our opinions that we become troubled as Christians and forget that these things must surely happen before Christ comes again.

Yours in Christ,
CHARLES E. KREGEL, Jr.

CRITIQUE
AGATHA LUBBERS

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING BIBLE (cont.)
The students in Protestant Reformed Christian schools who are to be disciplined by and in the truths of the Scriptures are members of God's Church, and Covenant. They are those who have been ingrafted into the Christian Church by work of the Holy Spirit. Of this baptism is an undoubted sign and seal. The children that attend the Protestant Reformed Christian schools are distinguished from the children of unbelievers. It is true that not everyone who is of Israel is an Israelite but the approach of the teacher toward the children of the covenant is a vastly different approach from that of the infidel toward his children. The approach of the teacher to the children of the covenant is not dictated by those who are not ingrafted by a true faith into Christ (the teacher cannot do anything in and of himself about these) but the approach is always dictated by those who are ingrafted into Christ and His church as living members. The attitude toward these children is never that they are potential candidates for heaven or hell! They are sinners but they are nevertheless saints who are sincerely
Sorry for their sins, who must be reminded to be sorry for they are sinners, who confess their sins, and must be reminded to confess their sins. Therefore, the Christian virtue of confession must not be neglected in the school but must always be cultivated.

The Heidelberg Catechism in speaking of the reasons for the baptism of infants gives spiritual directives for the attitudes of teachers toward the child of the covenant as this relates to the instruction of the Bible. "... since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian church; and be distinguished from the children of unbelievers as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision. . . ."1

John Calvin in his incomparable *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Chapter XVI. paragraphs 6, 7, 8, and 9, is very convincing in his arguments concerning the baptism of infants. I submit that it is the calling of Christian teachers to be constantly very aware of the fact that the students who they teach each day are members of God's covenant; this being signified and sealed by the sacrament of holy baptism which is upon their foreheads. Such an awareness will elicit from the teacher a methodology which is wholly distinctive and thoroughly Scriptural. I also suggest that children in Protestant Reformed Christian schools are those who be taught not simply from the principle, "I believe there is a God" — but "I believe in God, the covenant God, who is the same Jehovah that gave and kept his covenant promises to the Old Testament saints." The pupil is not merely approached as one who knows that there is a Creator but as one who knows who is his Creator.

The child in the Protestant Reformed Christian school needs a pedagogue—one who understands the measure of intelligence, maturity and nature of a child. A child does not have an integrated nor complete knowledge of the two books in which God can be known. The child is not simply a miniature adult. The child does not have a complete knowledge of the creation or of the holy divine Word of God. He is one who needs to be led because of his limited experience. Even though he can't fit all the parts together he can be led to see that all the parts fit, and that they all tell one grand story. Gradually, as the child matures intellectually and spiritually the pieces begin to fit: he begins to see the trees as so many parts of one grand and beautiful forest. The child is one who can understand in an ever increasing measure the unfolding of the whole counsel and promise of God as this appears in the Word of God in all its successive stages. As a flower is opened by the warm rays of the sun and the dew that falls; so the mind of the child is gradually opened by the Holy Spirit to know the meaning and intent of the Scriptures. He can grasp and put together the events as so many parts of the puzzle which combine to make one meaningful picture.

The subject matter to be taught in a Bible course is the Word of God. The source book for study of sacred history, prophecy, and literature is the holy, infallible, divinely inspired Word which was delivered to holy men of old who were inspired by the Spirit of God to write things relating to the eternal joy of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven and to reveal what shall be the eternal reward of those who have turned their faces against the Lord of heaven and earth.

We confess that this Word of God was not sent, nor delivered by the will of man but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, as the apostle Peter saith. And that afterwards God, from a special care, which he has for us and our salvation, commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit his revealed word to writing; and he himself wrote with his own finger, the two tables of the law. Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures.2

The holy, canonical books of the inspired Scriptures are declared by Paul to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

This Scripture which is able to "make one wise unto salvation" when applied to the believer's heart by the Spirit of God is the subject matter in the Bible course of Protestant Reformed Christian schools. It is a record of God's working in time, redeeming

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fallen men from sin, revealing Himself as a God who is righteous and gracious. As a just God he punishes all transgressors of his commandments but he is also truly merciful and gracious in the salvation which he initiates and completes in those whom he has elected unto everlasting life. It is a record of the creation of all things by God. This story of the whole creation which was absolutely perfect at its inception but fell into sin because of the fall and disobedience of Adam, the legal and representative head of the whole creation, is contained in the Word of God. The Word of God contains a record of all things from Genesis (beginning) to the Revelation concerning the last things. The Word of God presents the history of the covenant God made with his people and the pronouncement of the laws from Mt. Sinai. He continues to establish this covenant by making the Israelites a nation, a Theocracy, after having led them, a conglomerate, grumbling group out of the land of bondage and sin, Egypt. He symbolized this covenant by coming to live among them in the Shekinah. The cloud and pillar of the fire of God's presence centralized itself in, around and above the tabernacle. He protected His people even though they were not satisfied with His plan for them. There was always a remnant according to the election of grace even though they fell into sin as a nation and as a nation they were carried away into captivity. They were the chosen people of God. God revealed himself as a God of mercy for he remembered His people in the fulness of times and sent His only begotten Son into the world to save that elect race of people. He it is that carried the sword of division. To some His name means death and to others it means eternal life.

1. Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XXVII, Question and Answer 74.
2. The Belgic Confession of Faith, Article III.
3. II Timothy 3:16.

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

In The Young Calvinist of November, 1967, there appeared an article giving the results of a survey taken at the Calvinist convention held last August. The article said, "When asked about their favorite vocal group, (and) the most popular secular song . . . they listed 41 vocal groups, 62 popular songs. . . . The top ranking vocal groups were (in order):

1. The Monkees
2. Herman and the Hermits
3. Peter, Paul and Mary
4. The Beach Boys
5. The Associations

Among the top songs listed were “Silence Is Golden,” the theme song of the movie “Born Free,” along with others.

Did this part of the survey have a part in the survey as a whole? It evidently did, otherwise it would not have been included. These secular groups and songs must play a part in the lives of the Christian Reformed young people. Such interests, however, have no place in the Christian's life, and if they do, it should be pointed out that this is not living the antithesis. I do not condone these "tastes,” as The Young Calvinist calls them; there should be no need for such a survey even to be taken because these things should have no place in the Christian's life.

We are often so quick to criticize and point out the faults of others, particularly those of the Christian Reformed Church. This is not necessarily wrong or harmful. But I wonder, are Protestant Reformed youth guilty of this, too? Shouldn't we take out the beam from our own eye before we pick out the mote in somebody else's? Are WE guilty?

A recent Associated Press article appearing in the Grand Rapids Press portrayed Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, leader of the Orthodox Churches, as embracing at the entrance to St. Peter's basilica in Rome. The occasion was the first visit made by an Orthodox Patriarch to a Roman Catholic Pope since 1504, "a milestone meeting on the road to Christian unity.” It was indeed a step toward unity, but not toward Christian unity. Besides being hypocritical
exhibitionism, the sentimental carryings-on of these two leaders are symbolic of the kind of unity for which they are working. It is the increasingly-common outward unity so prevalent today in the ecumenical movement. It is just another step on the road toward the coming of anti-Christ.

A group of 16 Calvin College students, sponsored by the school newspaper Chimes and led by Joel R. Brouwer, took part in the recent anti-Vietnam war peace march on the Pentagon. Among other comments, Brouwer had this to say to the Grand Rapids Press: "It's the first time I know of that people marched out of purely idealistic motives. There was no practical purpose, such as you saw in the civil rights marches of a few years ago."

It is easy to speak in platitudes, but what are these "idealistic motives"? Do they arise from a Christian desire for true peace, the desire for the realization of God's kingdom, or is this a desire for a worldly pseudo-peace? The phrase has a pleasant ring, but what does it mean? An idealistic person, by the meaning of the word, is one who has ideas. According to Webster, an idea can be "a standard or perfection, a plan for action, whatever is known or supposed regarding an object, or an indefinite or uniformed conception." In this case, the last meaning fits. These "idealistic motives," supported by at least nominal Calvinists, are nothing more than indefinite or uniformed conceptions.

Or perhaps "misconceptions" is a more appropriate word.

MARK HOEKSEMA

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

by JUDY LUBBERS

Miscellaneous

On Monday evening, October 2, 1967, Doon's congregation surprised their minister and family with a special program honoring their pastor on his second anniversary as a minister of God's Word and as Doon's pastor.

On Friday, October 6, 1967, the North-west Iowa Prot. Ref. School was dedicated with a special program in the Doon Church. Members of the Doon and Hull congregations with visitors from Edgerton heard Rev. Decker speak on Deut. 6:7. Special numbers were presented by the 39 students of the new school. After the program, opportunity was given to visit the school. Mrs. Ed Van Egdom and Mr. Fred Hanko are the teachers.

Adams Street Christian School began its classes on Wednesday, September 6. The Ladies' Circle met Sept. 7 at the school.

Convocation exercises of the Edgerton Prot. Ref. Chr. School were held on Tues-

day evening September 5 and classes began on Tuesday morning of September 6. The Ladies' Circle met on September 8 at the school.

Catchism classes have begun meeting for another year along with the various societies.

Oak Lawn is beginning an Adult Bible Class to replace the Men's and Ladies' Societies.

The Beacon Lights sponsored a sing-spiration at Hudsonville on September 24. Mr. Arnold Dykstra led the singing of an enthusiastic audience which filled the church to capacity.

The Young People of Oak Lawn held a special program on Sunday, October 29, for the adult members of their congregation to celebrate the 450th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.
Membership

Miss Sharon Kulper has transferred from Edgerton to Hope.

Mrs. Leon Kamps (nee Williams) has transferred from Southeast to Hudsonville.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Vandenberg have transferred from Holland to Hope.

The baptismal certificate of William C. Klein has been received by Hudsonville from Doon.

A membership certificate was sent to Mrs. Howard Verhage (nee Darlene Mench) from Hudsonville upon her request.

Edgerton has received the membership papers of Mrs. Rodney Slise (nee Sharon Dyke) from the Bethel Reformed Church of Leota, Minnesota.

Holland has received the membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. David Dykstra and one baptized child and Mr. and Mrs. Philip Dykstra and one baptized child from the Ninth Street Christian Reformed Church, Holland.

Public confession of faith has been made by Miss Jane Schipper of Holland on October 29.

On September 10, Mrs. Terry Velting of First made public confession of faith and was also baptized.

South Holland has received the membership papers of Mrs. Steve Poortinga (nee Phelps) from the United Church of Christ.

Miss Christine Faber and Miss Karlene Oomkes have transferred from First to South Holland.

Mrs. Janice Kuiper (nee Lottermann) has transferred from Southwest to Hope.

Servicemen

Bob Miedema of Hope was home for a week and then left again for eventual duty in Vietnam.

The current address of Neal Buiter of Oak Lawn is:

Pfc. C. Buiter
U.S. 548-14-592
225th AVN Co.
APO San Francisco, California 96316

Births

A son, Michael John, to Mr. and Mrs. Roger King of Hope.

Twin boys, Daniel George and David Benjamin, to Mr. and Mrs. Dick Eerdemans of Hope.

Marriages

Miss Sandra Garvelink and Mr. Richard Honholt on September 29.

Miss Kathy Lubbers and Mr. Roger Berens on November 3.

“...the principle — quod non est scripturum, non est theologicum — which formerly gave theology its rational, is now felt to be too constraining. This shift is an attempt to make peace with the philosophical mood of the twentieth century. But having forfeited its right to appeal to Scripture for truth, modern theology has surrendered its right to speak at all. The ‘death of God’ theology is the legitimate offspring of its liberal parents who fed upon the fodder of a non-objective divine revelation. The ‘potent cause of modern unbelief’ (Hebert) is not belief in Biblical infallibility, but a century of disbelieving it.”

(From A DEFENCE OF BIBLICAL IN-FAILLIBILITY, by Clark H. Pinnock, p. 7)