BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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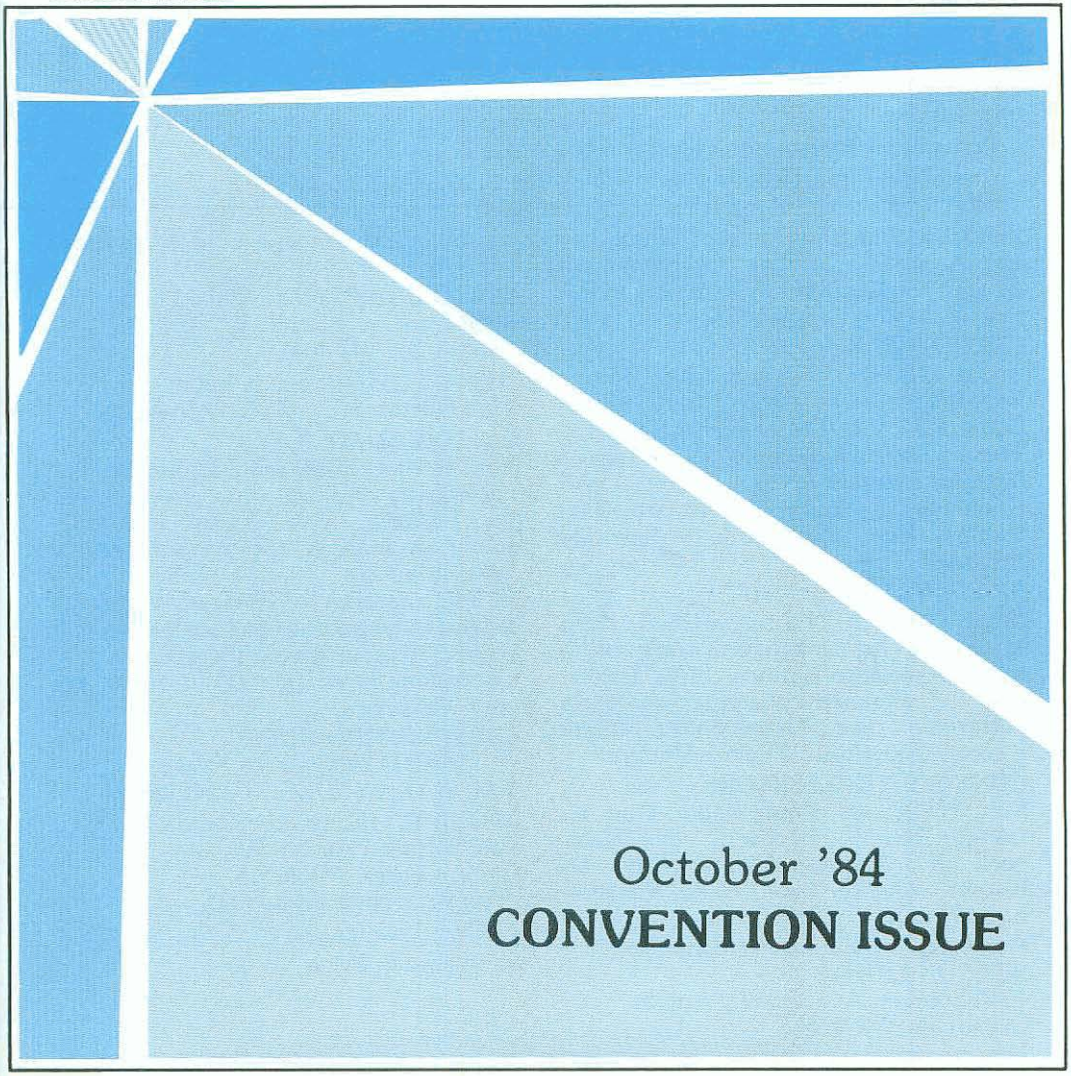

October '84

CONVENTION ISSUE

BEACON LIGHTS

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

by David Harbach

The October Convention Issue, 1984 of the Beacon Lights will be sent to those conventioneers who request this issue by contacting Grace Faber, 949-0812 or Vonda Klamer 878-1172. The list of conventioneers was dispatched into the circular file before our mailing department could obtain a copy. Those of you who request a copy will cherish the fond memories when you read the speeches, reflections, and comments. You also have the opportunity to be a regular subscriber to the Beacon Lights if you are not already a member.

Read and enjoy!

"Frequently the question is asked: does prayer change things? It is very popular to answer this question in the affirmative. I can agree with this, provided you mean that it pleases God to execute His own unchangeable counsel and to cause His own kingdom to come in the way of the prayers of His saints, prayers which He Himself works in their hearts by His Spirit and instructs them to pray by His Word. But if you should mean that by our prayers we change the will and mind of the absolute Sovereign of all the universe, so that through our prayers not His will, but our will is done, I make bold to state not only that I must utterly disagree with such a view of prayer, but also that I abhor it with all my soul. If ever I felt as if by my prayer I changed the mind of the everlasting God, never would I have the courage to utter another petition! We do not approach the overflowing fount of all good in order to pour anything of ourselves into it and add to its sparkling goodness, but with the empty cups of our existence, that they may be filled by Him!"

p. 13, 14, **In the Sanctuary**, Rev. H. Hoeksema

"The inhabitants of Galilee had essentially forsaken Him and rejected Him as their Messiah. His work there must now be brought to its conclusion. Parables are the means which the Lord uses to bring His work to an end."

p. 2, **Mysteries of the Kingdom**, Prof. H. Hanko

Walking in Newness of Life

THE IDEA

by Rev. James Slopsema

Are you careful about the way you live? Are you concerned that you live a godly life, that your life meets with God's approval? Or are you somewhat careless about these things, perhaps even a bit reckless?

There is a great deal of worldliness in the church today. Worldliness in the church means that the members of the church live like the world. More and more it is becoming true that the daily life of the members of the church differs very little from the life of the world. This is true also of the young people in the church. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this is **especially** true of the young people in the church today. From that viewpoint the theme of this year's convention - Living in Newness of Life - is a very good one.

This theme is taken from Romans 6:4. In this particular passage the apostle Paul is answering an objection to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In the preceeding chapters Paul has demonstrated that we are not saved by our works. Our good works merit nothing. Our salvation is based solely on the meritorious work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Consequently, we are justified not by works which we have done but by faith alone in Jesus Christ. To that an objection was being raised. The objection was that this doctrine of justification by faith alone makes good works unimportant. If we are not saved by our good works, it doesn't make any difference how we live. We can live any way we want. In fact, let us sin that grace may abound.

In response to this the apostle Paul points out that those who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ can not live in sin. No, if we are justified in the cross, the result will inevitably be that we will walk in newness of life. And on that basis Paul admonishes the saints to walk in newness of life.

We must now also apply this to ourselves. Did Christ die for you? Did He earn salvation for you? Do you believe in Him? We claim that these things are true of us, don't we? Then the call to us is that in the power of the cross of Jesus Christ we also must walk in newness of life.

I want to call your attention therefore to:

WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

I. THE MEANING

II. THE POSSIBILITY

III. THE CALLING

I. THE MEANING

Our convention theme speaks of "newness of life". That's the same as saying "a new life". The Bible uses the expression "newness of life" to emphasize the idea of newness. "Newness of life" therefore simply means "a life that is new" or "a new life".

Now a new life is a life that is radically different from what one has experienced before and a life that is far better. This can be illustrated by

someone who has overcome the horrors of alcoholism or drug addiction. The life of the alcoholic is horrible. The result of the alcoholic's continual drunkeness is that eventually his life falls to pieces. He loses his self-respect, his job, his friends, his health and many times even his family. The same is true of the drug addict. However, when a person is able in one way or another to overcome these things, it may be said of him that he has a new life — a life that is far different and far better than that previous life. In fact, many a former alcoholic or drug addict will use exactly that expression. As he is restored to his friends and family and finds that life is worth living again, he will often claim to have a new life.

In like manner we also are speaking of a new life. Although now we are talking about our spiritual life — our life viewed from the viewpoint of its spiritual direction and content. A new life is a life that is radically different not necessarily from the life that we have been living so far — although in some instances that may be the case — but a life that is radically different from the life of the world.

We need not go into detail describing the life of the world. The world had developed a certain life style. We see this life style of the world on the TV. We hear of it on the radio. We read of it in the newspaper and in books. It's all around us. And it's all characterized by sin! The life of the world is a life of wickedness. The thoughts and desires of the world are evil. Its goals and aspirations are an abomination to God. Its songs, its entertainment, its recreation, its speech, its dress are all evil. All that the world does is contrary to the holy will and law of God.

This is the way it's been since the beginning of history. At the very dawn of history man fell into sin and became wicked and depraved. The result is that down through history man has lived a life of sin. This life of man we may call the old life.

But now the Word of God speaks of a new life. This new life is a life that is radically different from that old life of sin. It is a life that is diametrically opposed to the life of this world. From a spiritual point of view it bears absolutely no resemblance at all to the life of this world. And it is a life that is far better. It is a life of obedience to God, a life of godliness, a holy life, a life of service to the living God.

The theme of our convention speaks of **walking** in this newness of life.

To walk in something means to give yourself over to something so completely that it characterizes the whole of your life and conduct. I think we all know what it means when we say that someone walks in drunkenness. It means that a person has given himself over completely to the bottle. His life is ruled and controlled by alcohol. He is constantly drunk. There is one thing that especially characterizes him and which everyone recognizes him for — he is a drunk.

In like manner we must understand the idea of walking in newness of life. To walk in newness of life means that you give yourself over completely to living a new life of obedience to God. It means that you give yourself over so completely to living a new life that your whole life is characterized by the newness of obedience and godliness.

Walking in newness of life has both a negative and a positive side.

Negatively, to walk in newness of life means that you make a complete break with the sinful lifestyle of this world. Everyone more or less conforms himself to some sort of pattern or example. This is especially true of children and also young people. It's common to speak of role models that young people follow. Many of the people that you are acquainted with conform their lives to the pattern of this world. They think the evil thoughts of this world. Their goals and aspirations are the godless goals and aspirations of this world. They entertain themselves with the wicked entertainments of this world. One, however, who walks in newness of life doesn't do that. He repudiates the life of this world. He refuses to conform his life to the life of this world. He turns his back on the world.

Rather, and this is the positive element of walking in newness of life, he dedicates himself to living a new life of obedience and service to God. The person who walks in newness of life also patterns his life after something. He patterns his life after the Scriptures. With the Scriptures before him he seeks to conform his whole life to the commandments that God has set before us. He gives himself over to living a life of obedience to God. In fact, so devoted is he to this new life that everyone around him can notice that he is different. He doesn't live like everyone else. He's different. And the one thing that is so different about him is his devotion to his God.

Do you walk in newness of life? We ought to examine ourselves in this respect. Are we still clinging to the life of this world? Do we find the lifestyle of this world attractive, so attractive perhaps that we can not turn away from it? Is there any real difference between the way we live and the way the world lives? And what do others say of us? Do they see any difference in the way we live? We often fall short, don't we? All too often we walk not in newness of life but in the oldness of this world!

II. THE POSSIBILITY

Is it possible to walk in newness of life? This is a very important question to consider.

Of ourselves it is impossible to walk in newness of life. This is because we are by nature no different than the world. When Adam fell into sin at the dawn of history we fell with him. And so we along with the rest of mankind became spiritually dead, depraved and corrupt. As such all we are able to do is to conform our lives to the sinful pattern of this world. And that also explains why we are so much inclined to walk in the old way of sin. By nature we can do nothing else.

However, in Jesus Christ we are able to walk in this newness of life.

If we turn to Romans 6 where the theme of our convention is taken we find that mention is made of Christ's birth, His burial and His resurrection. Not only that, but we read that when Christ died, we died with Him. And when Christ was buried as a seal upon His death, we were buried with Him. And so also when Christ arose again the third day, we also arose with Him. And this, we are told, is what enables us to walk in newness of life.

Let's examine this more carefully.

When Christ died on the cross, we died with Him. This is to be understood in the light of verse 6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him (i.e. Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we

should not serve sin''. We died with Christ therefore in the sense that our old man was crucified with Christ. Our old man is our old sinful self. It's the whole of our being as it became corrupt and depraved through the fall and is capable only of sin. That old man was crucified at the cross. The death of Christ means the crucifixion and destruction of our old man. And that is a figurative way of saying that on the basis of the cross, Christ works within our hearts and lives to deliver us from the power of sin so that it can no longer control us. Without this work of Christ we are depraved and under the dominion of sin. Without this work of Christ we are bound to the old life of sin that the world has been living down through the ages. But being crucified with Christ, sin no longer has dominion over us, no longer can control us. We are freed from the old life of sin!

But there is more. We must not only be freed from the old way of sin; we must also be enabled to walk in a new and holy way. And so we are also risen with Christ. And this too is figurative language. It means that in the power of His own resurrection Christ works a spiritual resurrection in our hearts and lives. This spiritual resurrection is called regeneration or being born again. In this spiritual rebirth or resurrection we are made spiritually alive from the dead. We receive the life which is from above. And that new life is the power to serve God, to keep His commandments. It is in the power of this spiritual resurrection that we are able to walk in newness of life.

III. THE CALLING

It is important that we understand all this. For then we can see clearly our calling.

It is our calling to walk in newness of life. We may not live just any way we desire. Nor may we live the old life of this world. The Scriptures everywhere call us to live a life of obedience to God, a life that is new.

And that is especially true of us who belong to Jesus Christ. For we have the ability in Christ to walk in newness of life. Not everyone has that ability. The ungodly outside of Christ do not have the ability to walk in newness of life. Nevertheless, that is still their obligation. No one has the right to live in sin. Everyone is called to walk in newness of life. But especially to us does that calling come. For we have the ability to meet the obligation in Christ. God sent His only Son to the horrors of the cross and raised Him up again the third day exactly that we may be delivered from the old life of sin and be enabled to walk in newness of life. It is a shame when the world which can do none else walk and live in sin. And for such a life they shall be judged one day. How much more a shame if we who belong to Jesus Christ continue in that old way of sin and fail to walk in newness of life!

Let us cling to Jesus Christ our Saviour by faith that we may find the power of His death and resurrection to transform our lives into new and holy lives. We do that by making good and diligent use of His Word both in the house of God and in our homes. We do that also through diligent prayer. Through both the Word and prayer we are able to lay hold of the power of Christ to walk in newness of life.

Let us not neglect these things! Let us take heed to our walk! And let us walk in newness of life!

Walking in Newness of Life
YIELDING OURSELVES TO GOD

by Prof. Robert D. Decker

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:12-14

What are we doing with our bodies? A great deal of attention is paid to the human body in our day. There is much emphasis on physical fitness, proper exercise, and diet. There are many warnings against drug and alcohol abuse and smoking. This is all well and good. We certainly ought to take good care of our bodies. There is also a great deal of emphasis on human sexuality, a euphemism for lust. Publishers of magazines like **Playboy** and **Penthouse** make millions displaying nude women. Prostitution, homosexuality, sex outside of the bond of marriage are all common and accepted. One half of the marriages in the United States ends in divorce. The blatant, overt lust and passion of our day make Sodom and Gomorrah appear as child's play. This is the world in which we live and are called in newness of life. There are two things that need to be said about this. We are affected. We do not live in isolation. We are tempted by the lusts of the world. God is not mocked. God is coming in fiery judgment and holy wrath to destroy this sin-cursed world and make all things new. The question is urgent: what are we doing with our bodies? Are we using them as instruments of unrighteousness, obeying sin and lust? or are we yielding ourselves and our bodies to God?

This passage begins with the word, "therefore." This means that this text follows upon what Paul wrote before. We are in Christ, dead to sin and alive to God. For this reason we must not let sin reign in our bodies. This is precisely how our walking in newness of life becomes manifest. We do not let sin rule. We do not obey sin by allowing our lusts to run wild. We do not yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness. Positively, we yield ourselves to God and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. We are able to do this because we are not under the law but under grace. By grace alone sin shall not have dominion over us.

What does it mean to yield ourselves to God? This means that we are alive from the dead. By nature we are dead in sin. This does not mean that we are merely sinners with a natural tendency to sin or merely have developed sinful habits or even that we do a great deal of sinning. It means this too but so much more. We are dead in sin. We are dead to God. A dead

person cannot speak or act. All fellowship is lost. This is the way we are spiritually by nature. We are dead in sin so that all we can do is sin. It is impossible to please God. This is what the Bible teaches in Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This means we cannot please God, we cannot come to Jesus, we cannot do one thing to save ourselves. All we can do is to increase our guilt and add to our condemnation. By nature we are worthy of eternal death and hell.

But we have been made alive. This is what God did for us in Christ. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. God sent Christ into the world to suffer and die for us and be raised again from the dead. God poured out His Spirit into our hearts with all the blessings of salvation. Now we are alive from the dead. Christ has given us life out of the death of our sin and depravity. We have but a beginning of that life. Daily we must struggle with sin. But we are alive. Now then, the Scripture is saying to us, act that way. Live as those who are alive from the dead. This does not mean that we can sin all we wish because we're saved by grace. As those alive from the dead we must yield ourselves to God.

What does this mean? To yield means to present or give ourselves over to God. The text says: keep on yielding yourselves to God. This is an ongoing activity. We must yield **ourselves** to God. God does not want some of our time, some of our abilities and gifts. God doesn't want most of these. God wants our very selves. And again: God doesn't want part of us, not even a large part of ourselves. God wants all of ourselves. All that we are and all that we have been given are of God and must be given over to God. Jesus put the same truth a little differently when He said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) We must press our very selves, all that we are and have, into the service of God. All of the time. And this is either-or. Either we yield ourselves to God all of the time or we are yielding ourselves to the service, or better, the slavery of sin. Either-or. There is no place in between. Our calling is plain. Keep on yielding yourselves to God.

How must this come to expression? Not by yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness. By "members" the text means the parts of the body, organs, limbs of our body. "Instruments" is better translated "weapons". "Unrighteousness" is very simply all of that which is not right with God, all evil and sin. That which is opposed to the will of God as revealed in His Holy Word is unrighteousness. Doing this we live and walk in sin. We are not to yield the members of our bodies as weapons of unrighteousness to sin. When we do that we are using our bodies in the service of sin and as weapons with which to fight against God. This is very serious! very foolish! Fighting against God we cannot win. We will surely go down to destruction.

What are we doing with the members of our bodies? What do we do with our eyes? God gave us eyes to use in His service and for His glory. Are our eyes ever toward the Lord as the Psalmist of Psalm 141 confesses? Or are they blind to God, Christ, and His Word? Do we use them to satisfy our evil lusts? Do we use our eyes to look at a young woman or a young man to lust

after her or him? That's how the ungodly use their eyes. As Proverbs 16:30 teaches: they shut their eyes to God in order to devise froward things. What about our hands? Do we use them to work the thing which is good so as to be able to give to the needy? (Eph. 4:28) Or do we use our hands to steal, to work evil, as weapons to fight against God? How about our mouths? Do we use them to speak evil, to backbite, slander, to lie, to curse and swear, to spue filthy jokes. Or do we use those mouths to speak good, to edify one another, to speak God's truth to His praise? These same questions may be asked concerning all the members of our body. Do we use them as instruments or tools to produce unrighteousness and sin, as weapons against God? That can only mean we are still dead in sin and not walking in newness of life.

This has devastating results. Then sin reigns in our mortal body. We are obeying our lusts and they run wild and we are consumed by them. Sin is our ruler. Sin rules and dominates us. We become slave to sin. To walk in sin is to be its slave. The devil likes to present the way of sin as good, as the way to be free from the restrictions of the Christian faith. The devil wants us to think that the way of lust is to be free and happy. That's the lie! Don't believe it! Walking in sin and lust is to be the slave of sin. Sin rules and sin is cruel. It's a horrible slavery. Whatever the particular sin or lust, alcohol or sex or love of money, makes no difference. Sin becomes our master and it drives a person right into hell. That's the judgment of God. The wages of sin is death.

Positively, we are called to yield our members as weapons of righteousness. To be righteous is to be right with God. It's to be in harmony with God's will and law. It's to speak and do and think and will that which is right in God's sight. Yield your members as weapons of righteousness. This means we yield our hands, eyes, ears, all the members of our bodies as weapons to fight sin. We hate sin. We say no to the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. In this way we give ourselves into God's service and we are to His glory.

And in this way, only in this way we are truly free. We are free from the terrible power and lordship of sin, free from the power of death. We are free to love God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. We are free to love the neighbour as ourselves. And that, only that is blessed. That spells happiness for us, a joy which can never be taken from us.

How is this possible? Verse 14 has the answer. We are not under the law but under grace. That we are not under the law does not mean we can just ignore God's law. It does not mean we can disobey the law and live as we please. Never! God's law stands forever. It reveals His will for us and it demands that we love God and the neighbour. But we are not under the law in this sense: we are not under obligation to do the law in order to be saved. If that were the case we would be damned forever.

We are under grace. God's grace! Salvation is never by works. Salvation is always by grace. By grace, God's free, unmerited favour and blessing in Christ, God's almighty power to save us from sin and death. By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. (Eph. 2:8) By grace we yield ourselves to God. That's why we need to go to

Church and come under the preaching of the Word. Preaching is the means of grace by which God bestows His saving grace upon us.

Because we are under grace, sin shall not have lordship over us. God's grace is infinitely more powerful than sin and the devil. By grace God instructs, guides, comforts, and preserves us in His service. By grace we are free. By grace we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Have you been touched by God's wonderful grace in Christ? Then you are alive from the dead and your calling is to use your bodies as weapons of righteousness in God's service. God says to you in His word: Give yourselves over to God.

Walking in Newness of Life

THE FRUIT

by Rev. M. Joostens

Conventioneers, parents and Christian friends, I count it a great privilege to be able to address you this evening. I want to thank my young people's society for counting me worthy to speak on this occasion.

I am the third and final speaker of this convention. There are two things I dislike about that. First, I prefer to speak before the banquet so I can take full advantage of it. I cannot eat well before I speak. In the second place, I have to take what is left in this passage. I am thankful that my colleagues have been gracious in not dealing with my material.

There would have to be a weighty reason for me to forego speaking to you as Protestant Reformed young people. You are very much on my mind and in my prayers. As young people you are in a unique position. You are at an age when the hand of Father and Mother must begin to let you go. You are struggling to apply all the things you were taught as covenant children to some very important questions in your life. Spiritually, you are starting to stand on your own feet. That is why you are so much in my prayers and thoughts. That is why I gladly accept the challenge to speak to you this evening and to apply the Word of God to your life.

The former speakers spoke to you of the "Idea" and "Manifestation" of the concept of the "newness of life." I have to speak to you this evening on the "Fruit" of the new life of the child of God. You are going to hear some things repeated. I am not going to avoid this. In fact, I do it with a particular purpose in mind. You realize that your previous speakers could not avoid, in some way, speaking to you of the fruit of a Christian life. They made some application of the principle they explained. It is good for us to have these fundamental principles indelibly imprinted upon our minds. So I want to draw together the things before mentioned and place an exclamation mark

behind some of these truths.

Paul asks the Romans to reach back in time and consider their pre-conversion days. I know that most of us cannot do this. We have been brought up in the sphere of the covenant. That, by the way, is no shame as some would have it. We cannot point to or recall a certain specific time in our life when we came to know the Lord. These things come upon us gradually through the working of the Spirit. But we can still benefit from the antithesis which the Apostle points out. In those days, that is in their pre-conversion days, they did those things whereof they are now ashamed. In other words, they lived in ungodliness and unrighteousness. They were in the world and of the world. Paul asks them, "What fruit did you have in those things?" That is a rhetorical question. The answer is implied. There is no fruit in the ways of ungodliness. Instead, there are wages attached to sin! The unbeliever may not bring forth anything worthwhile but he receives the just reward of death upon his sin. No one sins against God with impunity! Sin earns. Sin has wages. Just ask Christ about that! He accepted those wages for us on the cross. There is no good fruit that can come of the ungodly heart and manifest itself in the life of the ungodly. He is totally depraved. He is incapable of doing any good. Don't let anyone talk you out of this first point of Calvinism! And know what you are by nature. We are corrupt. We are conceived and born in sin! By nature we draw the wages of God's eternal displeasure. This is death!!

Fruit is born out of the freedom that belongs to the child of God as he is in Christ Jesus. Notice this in verse 22, "But now being made free from sin. . . you have your fruit. . ." This is a gift of God. This is God's sovereign grace unto us in Jesus Christ. There is no medicine of man that can infuse spiritual life into a man who is by nature totally dead! I can't do it for you and you can't do it for me. You can't buy it or work for it! It is the irresistible working of the Spirit alone Who can do this. That is what Christ told Nicodemus, you have to be born again or better, from above. It is the Spirit of God through regeneration, Who ingrafts you into Christ. Following that working of the Spirit of God, you share in Christ's death and resurrection. Rev. Slopsema explained this to you in great detail. We are planted in the likeness of His death. This means that we are free from the wages of sin because Christ died for us. We are partakers of His righteousness. And even as we died with Christ so we are raised with Him. These two go together. You may never separate them! There is an inseparable connection between justification and sanctification!! This means, that Christ now lives within us! He produces fruit in us by the working of the Holy Spirit. These are the things which we do that come forth out of true faith and are in harmony with the law of God.

It is here, that we experience a tremendous struggle. I don't have to tell you that. You already know it. But let me explain to you a moment what goes on. We are the children of God according to regeneration. This means that the heart is changed from death into the life of Christ. But we must understand that this change takes place only in the spiritual, ethical center of our being - that is the heart. Out of that heart are all the issues of life. But I am

still in the body of this flesh! I am still in this earthly body. This has not changed. All the forces of corruption, disease and decay are still there. More important, the members of the flesh still seek the things that are carnal and against the will of God. You and I know this, if we let our members go they serve the flesh! Our eyes seek after adultery. Our feet are swift to shed blood. Our lips slander and backbite. But you are free from the dominion of sin! The Spirit gives us the ability to keep the flesh in subjection. We are no longer the servants of the flesh but the servants of God. Paul tells them, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are. . . But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin. . ." But listen, "Being made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness " We no longer have to yield our members the servants of sin but we can sacrifice our bodies a living sacrifice unto God. That is a struggle! It is the life-long process of sanctification. These are the fruits of a new life.

Let us take a look at these fruits of the new life of the child of God. How does this sanctification manifest itself? Paul makes clear what they are not! They are not those things which you used to do and now are ashamed of. These were not the fruits of the new life but the sins that bear the wages of death. It seems today that the emotion of shame is almost lost. People don't blush anymore because of sin! I hope this is not the case with us and never will be the case. Shame is a painful feeling of guilt. It is for us the spiritual sensitivity that we have offended the Most High. Sin indicts the world unto condemnation and death. They flagrantly transgress the commands and precepts of the Lord. Those who are not under grace have little real sensitivity to the offending God. Only we can feel this! Only we have the tremendous struggle. I want to impress upon you this idea of being ashamed of sin! We must be ashamed before God because of our sin! There are things that you and I do that stand in the servitude of the flesh. We use the members of our bodies, not in the service of God, nor to His glory, but we give in to satisfy the flesh. The world, of course, thinks nothing of this. They are not able to be ashamed before God. We know them to be wrong. We know them to be sin. They may be of a private nature of just between the two of you, it makes no difference. We stand naked before the face of God with Whom we have to do. When we walk in these ways we do not dare to lift our eyes to heaven but would shut the Lord out of our life for the moment. These things are not the fruit of the new life! They are the result of not crucifying the flesh. When we do these things we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. It is our calling not to let the old man dominate the new but the other way around.

Your fruit, positively, has to be unto holiness. In the text, here, you read, you "are having " your fruit! Even as you were having, that is in your preconverted life, works of unrighteousness unto death. That inveighs against the error that we know as antinomianism. That is the burden of the sixth chapter of Romans. This is the philosophy, let us sin that grace may more and more abound. That is, of course, impossible! The argument that we should sin in order that the grace of God may abound towards us is nothing but a straw man. A good tree brings forth good fruit and a brackish

fountain brings forth non-potable water. So, those who are ingrafted into Christ by a true and living faith bear good fruit out of that new life. Young people, it is impossible for you to say let us sin just a little for the grace of God in Jesus covers all my sins anyway! You may say that, but the Spirit will tell you differently. No, you must bring forth good works unto holiness. This is the process of daily conversion and continual growing in grace. On this side of the grave we cannot arrive at perfection but we do more and more learn to know our sins and conquer the old man of the flesh.

This exercise of the new life shows itself in two ways. It shows itself in a deepening relationship with God. You will increasingly grow toward Him in prayer and meditation. Don't cheat yourself here! I know that the flesh and especially the Devil will do all within their power to occupy you with other things. We have this problem especially in our day. Our lives are busy, too busy, so that there is no personal time that we can spend with our God. There is no time for prayer and there is no time for meditation. Take time to grow in the awareness of your God and take time to pray! You must grow in grace!! This will, in the second place, show itself in all the remainder of the relationships of your life. We read in Gal. 5 about the fruits of the Spirit. This is the Spirit of adoption and regeneration. This is the Spirit of Christ Who lives within you. These fruits are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Paul tells us that against these there is no law. There is no law against these because they come forth out of the freedom we have in Christ. The love of God in Christ shows itself through us. According to the new life within us, we delight in the good pleasure of God. This is our joy. To us belongs the serenity of the Christian, for we have the peace that passes all understanding in Christ. Knowing the boundless mercy of God, we are able to suffer long with our fellows and are not easily provoked to anger. We are gentle with one another and full of compassion. We live lives of fidelity for we will not let the lie be ours. We prefer one another in the love of meekness. We know how to control our bodies in all things and live in such temperance before God and man. Once again, in short, we render our bodies to God a living sacrifice to His pleasure.

The end of such a life is everlasting life. That assurance you have in the life of sanctification. We're talking about heaven here. I can't describe that to you. I often wonder about the reality of heaven but even my fondest imagination cannot attain to it. When I watch the saints of God take their last breath, I know they open their eyes in glory. There they see the Captain of their salvation. But even the Scripture cannot find words sufficient to describe this surpassing beauty. For eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of any man. But you say to me, that is such a long ways away. Must I think about those things already? Young people, we live in the midst of death. Glory is but one breath, one moment away! You have to make your calling and election sure! You cannot sit on your laurels and say to yourself but I am Protestant Reformed and I go to church.

There is a relationship between the fruits you produce in this life and your eternal destiny. Don't misunderstand me. I am not speaking here of some

kind of work righteousness. Not that what you do in this life determines where you will spend the life hereafter. But this, do you see your life as a pursuit after ungodliness and you don't care? The wages of sin is death! That means that you pass from this continuing death into eternal death. The end of a sanctified life is the glory of heaven. As you now have the beginning of this life, it produces fruit unto holiness. That is the fruit of the "newness of life".

I want to ask you, is there any fruit in your life? Do you see and experience the working of the Spirit? Do you have shame for your sin and are you motivated to flee from sin? Do you strive against your flesh to do good works? Then you can be sure that as you strive after holiness you will open your eyes in perfection of holiness when you die.

"We hold to the fact, . . . that there is throughout all history one covenant which God establishes with His people in Christ; that there is but one people with whom that covenant is established throughout all ages; that there is but one promise of the covenant whether to the church in the old dispensation or in the new; that there is but one basis for the covenant, one means of entering that covenant, one 'qualification' for covenant membership.

We do not deny by this that this one covenant was administered under different dispensations. We do not blur the differences between the two dispensations, nor do we read the new into the old, or make the old identical with the new. This is far from the case. Nevertheless, the difference lies not in the essential idea either of the covenant, of the covenant people, or of the promise of the covenant. The difference lies in the **administration** of the covenant. God administered His covenant differently in the old dispensation from the manner of administration in the new dispensation. And this difference of administration centers in the coming of Christ. p. 21, **We and Our Children**, Prof. H. Hanko

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"There is indeed a certain manifestation of the kingdom of heaven in this world. This is because God's people are made citizens of the kingdom of heaven while they live here below. Christ sets up His throne within their hearts. And they must walk as citizens of the kingdom of heaven even while they are in the world. Hence, in the walk of the people of God there is a certain earthly manifestation of this heavenly and spiritual kingdom."

p. 5, **Mysteries of the Kingdom**, Prof. H. Hanko

Discussion Group Summary

Christian Involvement in Moral Action Movements

by Rich Reitsma

The introduction, given by Dr. Monsma, raised several questions concerning moral action movements and the problem which they create for Christians. First, there often are no Biblical bases for their defense. Second, can achievements be the same whether performed by a Christian or not? And third, can we, as Christians, join and/or support moral action groups?

Biblical examples of a Christian's responsibility in the world were then given, e.g.: Jonah in Ninevah, Joseph in Egypt, Abraham in Sodom, Christ in Jerusalem, and Paul in Rome. The difference of the Old and New Testaments' effect on moral movements was brought up. The point was made that the Old Testament dealt exclusively with the government and nation of Israel, whereas the New Testament involved Christians throughout the world. Christ also was involved in a "moral action" when he replied to the Pharisees "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22:21) It was emphasized that discussion focus on Art. 36 of the Netherlands Confession.

Our discussion group began by giving a few examples of moral problems (e.g. abortion, nuclear war, drugs, alcohol). We then discussed what our responsibilities to these problems were: We have an obligation to let our light shine; therefore, we should take a stand and show our light. The problem of our monetary responsibilities as it related to the support of moral problems such as abortion and nuclear arms through taxes was debated. We have an obligation to pay taxes, and the use of it is beyond our control. But, it is our money, given us by God, and our responsibility: therefore, because we obey God, not man, we cannot pay taxes. However, we look to Paul who wrote in Rom. 13:6 "For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers. . ." Our responsibility is to answer to God what we, as stewards, have dealt with the government, our neighbor. Paul tells the Romans to pay taxes, money from which supported the evils of the Empire and persecution of Christians! The government, too, must answer to God. However, as Christians, we can combat and balance moral abuses by letting our light shine, and working to oppose such activities.

The discussion then led to what, and how much we should do. We agreed that involvement should strictly be by the individual, not by the Church as a group. We discussed why the world organizes and concluded that some were for evil purposes (e.g. Unions) whereas others had sound moral goals (e.g. Right to Life). But, can we join just because we agree with their goals, and not necessarily their reasons? We decided that we can agree, but only because we believe in the Bible; and that is the difference

between them and us.

We cannot have an indifferent attitude: We must do something, for it is our responsibility to speak the Word. This must be a personal, individual activity, not necessarily in big things nor in protest against the law, but fulfillment individually through ourselves, our children, and in our action towards friends and neighbors. We must understand the times and the world we live in and act accordingly as the Bible and Holy Spirit guide us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Matt. 5:16.

Discussion Group Summary
Education: A Preparation for Life

by Myrna Westra

Seminarian Chuck Terpstra introduced this topic for us. He pointed out that our calling is a spiritual calling. Whether it be as a homemaker, banker, business man, minister, or any kind of job that a child of God feels he/she should do.

We must put a lot of thought into what we decide to become. After all, we as children of God must do all to the glory of God.

We are also held responsible for our talents: we must use them to the best of our ability.

How do we know what our calling is? We must talk and be open with parents, teachers, ministers, and even friends, to help us see what God has chosen for us. We should direct the choice of our high-school classes in the field that we feel called.

During our discussion after the speech I realized how serious we must be about our future. It's embarrassing to think of all of the time I've wasted thinking about what I wanted to do, or what I thought would be an interesting occupation. How quickly we forget that we are different from the world. The world seeks his/her life's job on the basis of how much money they can get with as little work as possible, or on what **they** want.

How then should we prepare ourselves? Proverbs 1:7-9 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the laws of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck."

What a privilege it is to be able to attend a Christian school where my teachers are concerned about my future, where I can have Christian fellowship with my classmates. My teachers don't try to brainwash me with false ideas. In each of my classes I am constantly brought back to the Bible, and God's perfect plan for His chosen people.

As part of His perfect plan we should be careful, giving thought and spending much time in prayer to the Giver and Sustainer of Life.

Discussion Group Summary
Brotherly Love

by Jane Pastoor

In this article, I would like to share with you what was examined in the third and final discussion we had at the 1984 Convention. Steve Key addressed himself to the topic of Brotherly Love by first examining who the brother is.

What is the meaning of brother? First of all we think of brothers as being of the same mother, as in Cain and Abel, Gen. 4:2. This is true from a mere physical standpoint, but rather than to limit ourselves to this one definition we need to understand the spiritual meaning of the brother. Steve Key pointed out in both his outline and introduction that the term "brethren" was instituted by Christ in reference to those who are elect in Him, see Matt. 18:50. True brothers do not have in common only superficial concerns, but rather, they are united in an intimate bond of friendship.

What is it that true friends, spiritual brothers have in common? We have already said that they do not have in common only superficial concerns. This can only serve to harm the brother and it is very displeasing to God. Rather, it is important to be convicted of the fact that spiritual brothers are born from above by the Spirit of God. Spiritual brothers bear the same image confess the same faith and share the same calling.

Now, knowing that the brother is one who is elect in Christ, let us go on to the question: What is brotherly love? Just as the term "spiritual brethren" was instituted by Christ, so also the standard of brotherly love is revealed to us by Christ. John 13:34 says to us: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." This manifestation of love, then, is only in proportion to our love for the Lord Himself.

What does Romans 12:10 say about loving one another? If we do what this verse commands us, won't we also be kind to one another? Willing to be of service? forgiving always? edifying one another?

Let us always realize that Christian fellowship with the brother is not something we earn. It is a gift; a blessing from God.

Ecclesiasties 4:9-10

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."

CONVENTION MINUTES

by Jane Pastoor

Minutes of the 44th annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention held at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI, August 6 - 10, 1984.

Host: First, Grand Rapids, MI

Theme: "Newness of Life" Romans 6:4

Speech Topics:
"Idea" Romans 6:4 - 10
"Manifestation" Romans 6:11 - 14
"Fruit" Romans 6:21 - 23

Monday, August 6

The 1984 Convention began as all conventions have, with registration. At this time, everyone had an opportunity to find a dorm room, look through their information packet, and greet friends, old and new. The conventioneers also had an opportunity to explore Calvin's Campus. We met shortly in the Commons Building later in the afternoon. Todd Terpstra welcomed the young people and chaperones and also explained the rules.

After dinner everyone attended the First Speech in the Gezon Auditorium. Rev. Slopsema spoke on Romans 6:4-10, the Idea of Walking in Newness of Life.

The rest of the evening everyone had an opportunity to make new friends and renew old friendships. Some people played bingo in the Commons meeting room, others played basketball, card games, ping-pong, and of course there was a water fight.

Before "lights-out" at 12:30, our chaperones led us in devotions. By this time most were ready for a good night's rest.

Tuesday, August 7

At 8:00 our day began with breakfast in the dining hall. Afterward Chuck Terpstra introduced the morning's discussion topic "Education, a preparation for life." We broke up into smaller groups of about 12 and held discussion groups in various areas of the campus.

After the discussions were finished, all the conventioneers attended the first delegate board meeting. The meeting was conducted as Follows:

I. Bruce Klamer read from I Corinthians 10:1-10 and opened with prayer.

II Roll was taken. The following societies were not properly represented: Edgerton, Hope Senior, Hudsonville Senior, Hull, Kalamazoo, Redlands, South Holland, Southwest Junior and Senior, Holland, Faith Senior, Lynden and Loveland.

III The Financial Report of the Federation Board was read by Todd Terpstra. The balance on hand as of April 30, 1984 is $18,851.11. The balance was discussed. Todd also submitted a supplement report to assist

future societies and their treasurers.

IV Minutes of last year's business meeting were read and approved.

V Bruce introduced the nominees for the Federation Board Offices.

VI Bruce read and explained the three proposals.

VII A motion was made, supported and passed to adjourn.

VIII Jon Bol closed with prayer.

After the delegate board meeting, lunch was served. At 1:30 we all headed out to the field to compete in the Olympics. The churches raced against each other on crutches, in long underwear, potato sacks and so much more. We all had fun, both watching and participating. Afterward, some cooled off by joining in a water fight, while others enjoyed swimming in the pool and using the gym's facilities.

By 5:00 we were all more than ready for dinner. We had some free time, and then boarded the buses to go rollerskating.

Although Woodland Skating Rink was very warm inside, everyone enjoyed himself.

Wednesday, August 8

We were all rather disappointed to wake up and find it raining Wednesday morning because we had planned to go to the beach that day. Fortunately things worked out quite well. Rather than cancel going to the beach entirely, we decided to do what we had planned for Thursday on Wednesday, and go to the beach on Thursday. This worked out very well.

After breakfast Dr. Monsma introduced the discussion topic: "Christian involvement in moral action movements" Again we divided into groups to discuss the topic.

At about 11:00 everyone again met in the commons meeting room for our second and final Delegate Board meeting. The meeting proceeded as follows: I Todd Terpstra read from Psalm 15 and opened the meeting with prayer.

II Roll was taken. The following societies were not properly represented: Edgerton, Hope Senior, Hudsonville Senior, Hull, Kalamazoo, Redlands, Southwest Junior and Senior, Lynden and Loveland.

III Minutes of the last Business Meeting were read and approved.

IV Todd introduced the three proposals.

V The floor was opened to discussion. The function of the Scholarship Fund was discussed.

VI A motion was made, supported and passed to accept all three proposals respectively.

VII The list of nominees was again read. Nominations were closed.

VIII The delegates voted on the nominees.

IX The new Federation Board Officers were announced as follows:

Vice President: Mike Rau
Vice Treasurer: Dave Ondersma
Vice Secretary: Karen Dykstra
Librarian: Brenda Langerak
Youth Coordinator: Doug Kooienga
Spiritual Advisor West: Rev. Kamps

X A motion was made, supported and passed to adjourn.

Immediately following lunch, everyone went to the gym to compete in the Aqua Olympics. The churches again divided into teams which participated in various races. This was followed by an East/West water polo match. At 3:00 volleyball competition began. The competition lasted about 2

hours. Afterwards some people decided to go back to the pool again while others relaxed and waited for dinner to begin.

After dinner and a short free time, everyone headed for the Fine Arts Center for the 2nd speech of the week. Prof. Decker spoke on Romans 6:21-23 "The Fruit of Walking in Newness of Life".

Immediately following the speech, both the conventioneers and family and friends were invited to an Ice Cream Social in the Commons Dining Hall. Everyone had a wonderful time listening to a quartet consisting of Dan Monsma, Jim Noorman, Randy Schipper and Todd Terpstra perform. Afterwards the gym was again open for use.

Thursday, August 9

Thursday morning the weather was beautiful. We all looked forward to spending the day at Grand Haven State Park, but there was plenty of time before we left to have a very good discussion. Steve Key introduced the topic "Brotherly Love." Then we divided into smaller groups to discuss the outline.

At 10:00, everyone boarded the buses. We arrived about an hour later and had lunch. The rest of the afternoon was our free time. Some relaxed in the sun, while others enjoyed the water. Before boarding the buses to return to Calvin there was watermelon and pop for those who wanted it.

After returning to Calvin there was some time for everyone to prepare for the banquet. The Punchbowl was at 7:30 and the banquet began at 8:00. Although all the meals were good, the banquet was especially nice.

The final speech was given by Rev. Joostens. He spoke on Romans 6:11-14, "The Manifestation of Walking in Newness of Life".

Then it was again time to board the buses. Everyone had a great time at Arnie's Funland. To some it was a very new experience. The activities at Arnie's included: Waterslides, go-carts and mini golf. We stayed at Arnie's till 1:00 a.m. and by the time we returned to our dorms, we were all very tired. But before we went to sleep, our chaperones led us in devotions one final time.

Friday, August 10

We had our final meal together at 8:00. Although no one had gotten much sleep the night before, most everyone made it to breakfast.

Then it was time to say our farewells. We all hoped to see each other again soon, possibly at the next convention.

I would personally like to thank the Young People of First Church, Grand Rapids for putting together a very special week of fellowship and growth in Christ. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Pastoor
Federation Board, Secretary

"Thus, in general, the purpose of parables is revelation: they are intended to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

p. 4, **Mysteries of the Kingdom**, Prof. H. Hanko

Impressions
Convention Reflections

by Mrs. Jack [Judie] Feenstra

Chaperoning a convention can be a most rewarding experience. By rewarding I do not mean outward praise but rewarding in the sense of personal and spiritual growth. Relationships were made with some of our young people which we feel are beneficial to them and to us. Some have kept in contact with us from our first time chaperoning in 1981. Spiritual growth is another major benefit of chaperoning. The time spent in preparation for leading discussion groups and the imput from the young people both contribute to our (and their) spiritual growth. Sometimes the spiritual depth our young people have is amazing!

Lest I paint a picture that is too rosy I must add that sometimes we are disappointed in the amount of time some of our young people spend in preparation. At one of our discussion groups this year only four out of ten young people had even read the outlines provided for them in the Beacon Lights. We feel that so much more could be learned with proper preparation. If families would read the outlines together and discuss them at home, the young people could bring so much more to the discussion groups.

Now let's bring the pendulum back to the positive side. On Wednesday morning (the day we planned to go to the beach) we woke up to a pouring rain. After much scuttering about all the plans were shifted around and we had Thursday's activities on Wednesday. At our first meeting that day the young man who led the meeting thanked God for directing all things, even the rain, so that they are used for our good. Our young people do acknowledge the Lord in all things.

To smoothly run a successful convention, cooperation and a willingness to work hard are essential. I don't think many of us truly appreciate the amount of work our young people perform. It is so easy just to say "thank you" to them for a job well done but we would like them to know that we realize that they put hundreds of hours of work into making the convention a success and we are grateful to them.

We are looking forward to chaperoning again sometime (but please let us get some sleep!).

"And when the church came of age, then the fulness of time was come and God sent forth His Son. Then the church become, in the fullest sense of the word, sons and heirs of God through Christ."

p. 24, **We and Our Children**, Prof. H. Hanko

Impressions

Convention Impressions

by Kathy De Vries

The 44th Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention has ended, and as I remember what has happened there I will share my impressions.

A convention is not only a place to make friends and have a good time, but it is a place where one can grow spiritually. This convention gave us as young people many opportunities to do that. The theme "Walking in Newness of Life," applied very well to our lives today. We do not want to appear strange to others so we go along with the old, worldly way of life. But it is our calling and obligation to walk in that new life through the grace of Christ. This new life is manifested in being made free from sin so that we become servants to God. We then have our fruit unto holiness and in the end, everlasting life.

The discussions were a time of fellowship and learning. They were interesting and practical, and this was especially true on the discussion, "Education, a Preparation for Life." For it is as young people when we begin to think of how we can best serve God through our calling in life.

Every day we had time for some fun activities. On Tuesday and Wednesday we took part in Olympics and Aqua-Olympics. We also enjoyed: a skating party, volleyball tournaments, and our own water fights once in awhile. On Thursday we headed over to Grand Haven Beach which was a welcome relief from the humidity in our dorm rooms. After the banquet and speech we went to Arnie's for some more wet fun.

It is a good experience for any young person to come to a convention and be with others of the same faith. A convention gives a spiritual atmosphere where we can enjoy fellowship with one another. We should be thankful to God for making it possible for all of us to be together again this year.

"The one central point is taught in Scripture that there is only one covenant through all the ages and there are only the same covenant promises. . . . the covenant is one and the promises of the covenant are one; but that they were differently **administered**." p. 36, **We and Our Children**, Prof. H. Hanko

"The error of dispensationalism is not only the error of separating the Old and New Testaments so that God's dealings with Israel have no principle connection with and are in no way a part of God's dealings with the church in the new dispensation; but the error of dispensationalism is also the error of denying the unity of Scripture. Dispensationalists separate Israel and the church, the nation of Israel and the Gentiles, the dispensation of types and shadows and the dispensation of the reality. But they also separate the two testaments of Scripture so that there is no essential relation between them. The Scriptures are really two books. And the unity of Scripture is denied. The principle of **Scripture Interprets Scripture** cannot be applied, and the organic unity of Scripture is lost in Baptist apologetic." p. 17, **We and Our Children**, Prof. H. Hanko

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