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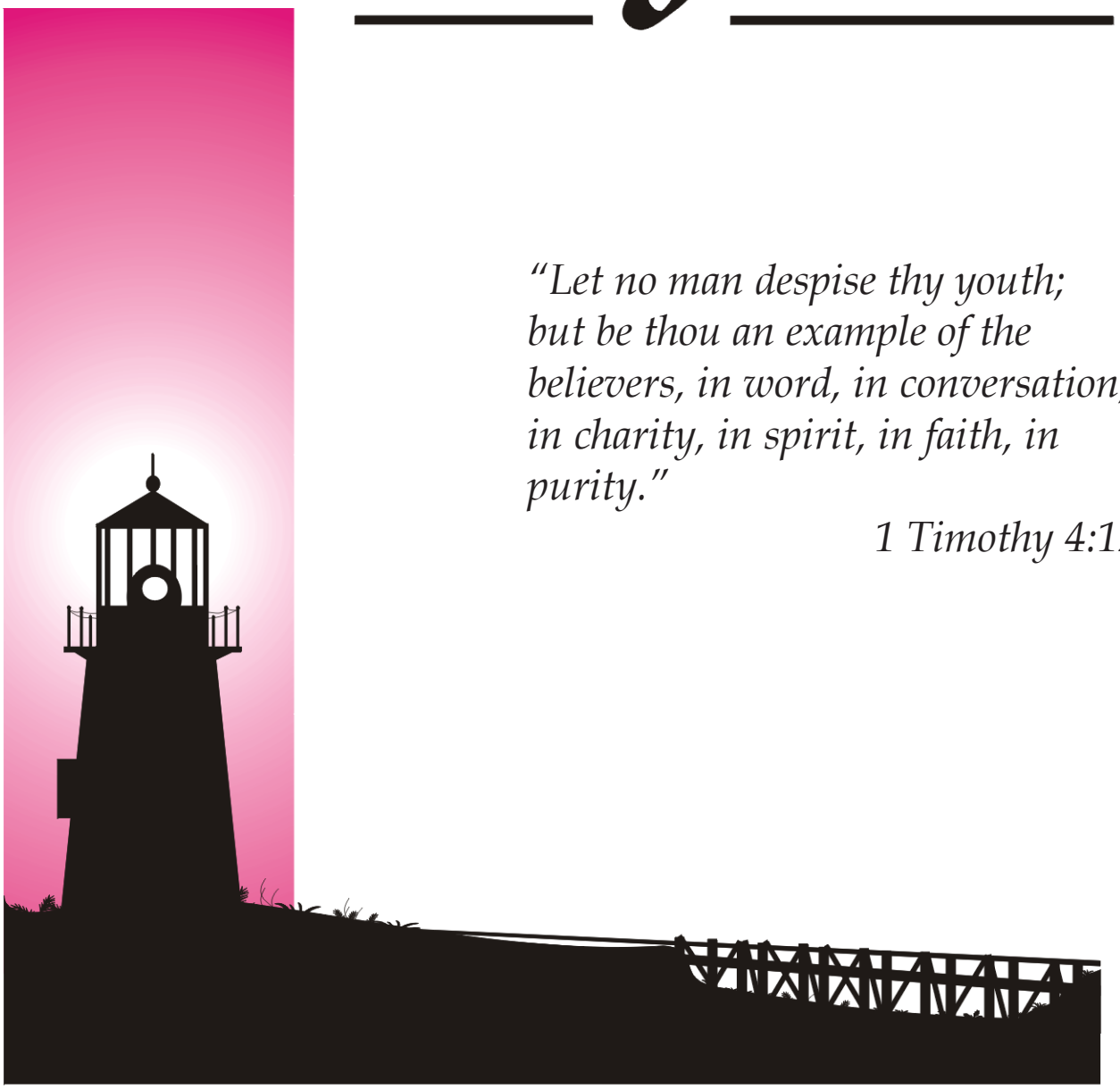

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

1 Timothy 4:12

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The *Beacon Lights* encourages its readers to contact the business office with any questions or comments. Letters may be edited for printing. We will not publish anonymous letters, but will withhold names upon request.

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Editor on the Move

by John Huizenga

It has now been 13 years since I left the Grand Rapids area to serve at the new Faith Christian School in my hometown Randolph. I had served as editor of *Beacon Lights* for about a year before moving to Wisconsin and taking up teaching grades 1-4. Developments with the internet made it possible for me to continue my work as editor from Wisconsin. Since then, the Lord has blessed me with a wonderful wife and 5 delightful children. Faith Christian School has grown and developed, and I enjoyed the privilege of teaching at the various grade levels through 8th grade and serving for a time as principal.

The Lord has now led me to serve at another young school, Trinity High School of Hull, Iowa. Trinity began two years ago with a freshmen class, and has now completed its second year having added the sophomore class. The Lord has blessed this school and I now look forward to joining in with the work and growth of covenant education at the high school level.

With this move I am thankful that I am able to continue serving as editor of *Beacon Lights* with my wife, Jeanine, managing the subscriptions and other business. The work has been a blessing to us, and I anticipate that the experience will help with my teaching of high school students; and the work with these students will inspire new ideas and growth for *Beacon Lights*.

Last year the Federation of Young People's Societies helped to reorganize the *Beacon Lights* staff somewhat so that a local staff in the Grand Rapids area could meet together face to face and help provide support for soliciting articles. Ryan Barnhill has organized meetings with a support staff which has been of great help with the work of *Beacon Lights*. I am very thankful for the work they do looking for writers for articles. I would like to encourage any readers who have suggestions, topics, or ideas for articles to contact either me or Ryan. We would love to hear from you.

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Timothy: Too Young?

by Joshua D. Engelsma

"You're too young."
"Maybe when you get a little older."
"Go outside and play while the adults talk."

We have all heard these words at some time or another in our lives, have we not, young people? Most often they have come to us from our concerned and protective parents. And usually they are right. There are some things that children and young people should not know or do until they grow more mature. There are certain things that require a level of maturity and sensitivity

sometimes lacking in young people. As we grow older we tire of hearing our parents tell us we are too young, but in most instances our parents are correct. They have our best interests at heart.

However, young men and young women, there is one area in particular in which we as young people are not too young. We are not too young in things pertaining to salvation. We are not too young to be active members in the church of Jesus Christ. Our Baptism Form makes abundantly clear that both young and old, gray-haired saint and newborn babe are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. "Infants," we read, "are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant." In the Prayer of Thanksgiving at the end of the Form we pray, "Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee that Thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins…received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be Thy children." One of the many blessed truths that we as Protestant Reformed Churches maintain is that children as well as parents are members of Christ's church and co-heirs of eternal life.

In this article and a few others to come, D.V., we will look at how God has worked mightily in the lives of young people like ourselves. At certain times in history God has been pleased to use young men and women to preserve and build up his church. God often uses wise old men and women for such important work, but he uses young people as well. It is quite astounding to read of what these young people were able to do by the grace of God while only in their twenties. It is my hope that these articles will instill in us thankfulness for the work of God in these young people and embolden us to do the work of the Lord even at a young age.

We begin with Timothy. Timothy was the young pastor to whom the apostle Paul wrote two books of the Bible (I & II Timothy). The New Testament Scriptures tell us a bit about the background of young Timothy. We know from Acts 16:1 that Timothy's mother was a Jew, but his father was a Greek. This verse also makes special mention of the fact that Timothy's mother was a believer. His father was most likely not. From II Timothy 1:5 we know that Timothy's mother's name was Eunice and his grandmother's name was Lois. In this verse Paul says that he is filled with joy "when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee [Timothy], which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." Later in the same letter Paul writes that "from a child thou hast know the holy scriptures" (II Tim. 3:15). Timothy was reared in the truth by his God-fearing mother and grandmother. They taught him the Scriptures already when he was a child. God used these faithful mothers to prepare Timothy for his work in the church.

This is encouragement to you, young women. While this and subsequent articles speak of the work of God in young men, they are not intended only for the young men of the church. They are intended for you young women also. You too have a place in the church. An important place! An absolutely crucial place! Without you there is no future for the church. You must aspire to be like Lois and Eunice. You must rear and teach the next generation of believing children. That unfeigned faith that rests within you must be imparted to the next generation. Without Eunice and Lois there can be no Timothy. And the church needs more Timothys.

We know from several passages in the two letters that Paul wrote to Timothy that, at the time of his work with Paul, Timothy was a young man. Paul addresses both letters to "my own son" (I Tim. 1:2) and "my dearly beloved son" (II Tim. 1:2). In I Timothy 4:12, Paul makes reference to Timothy's youth. He exhorts, "Let no man despise thy youth." A little later Paul writes, "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren" (I Tim. 5:1). Clearly Timothy was still just a young man. How young? The Bible does not tell us. Many scholars speculate that he was between 25 and 35 years old, but these are merely educated guesses. All that we know for certain from the Word of God is that Timothy was quite young, especially for the work which he was called to perform.

For Timothy was called to do important work, work that from an earthly point of view would seem to be reserved only for older, more experienced men. But young Timothy was qualified for this work by God. We see evidence of this already when we first encounter Timothy in the Word of God. We first read of him while Paul was traveling on his second missionary journey. Soon after leaving Antioch, Paul stopped in the cities of Derbe and Lystra (in present-day Turkey) were he met young Timothy (Acts 16:1-3). Paul must have immediately recognized what an exceptional young man he had before him. He no doubt saw the work of God in this boy's life. Here was a young man of God! Here was a young man who "was well reported of by the brethren!" Paul could not leave without this exceptional young man. "Him would Paul have to go forth with him." This young man must be used in the service of God's kingdom. And Timothy selflessly agreed. He even allowed himself to be circumcised (vs. 3) so that he might not be an offense

or a hindrance to the spread of the gospel.

From this point forward Timothy was a faithful and tireless laborer under Paul. Apart from all of the places where he worked with Paul, the Scriptures tell us that Timothy went, often on his own, to many places throughout the Mediterranean establishing churches and building up the faith of the believers. He remained in Berea after Paul was forced to leave by the ungodly mobs (Acts 17:14). He was sent by Paul into Macedonia to preach the gospel among the people there (Acts 19:22). We also are told that Timothy probably went by himself to the Philippians (Phil. 2:19), to the Thessalonians (I Thess. 3:2, 6), and to the Ephesians (I Tim. 1:3). Paul, rather than going to the Corinthians himself, sent Timothy "who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ" (I Cor. 4:17). Later in the same letter Paul says that Timothy "worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do" (16:10). All this from the mouth of the great apostle Paul! What a remarkable young man Timothy must have been! Here was a twenty-something year old man traveling throughout the ancient Roman world instituting churches and preaching the gospel to the saints. God was working in him mightily, even at such a young age.

Paul was not oblivious to Timothy's age and the difficulties this might cause. In that well-known passage (I Tim. 4:12), Paul says, "Let no man despise thy youth." Timothy's youth should not be a hindrance to the reception of the gospel. The Word preached cannot be denied because of the youthfulness of the one bringing it. Age makes no difference. The Word of God is not changed. We too must remember this, young men and women. Yes, we are young. Yes, we still have much to learn. But this does not mean that we cannot be active members of our churches. This does not exclude us from bringing God's Word to our fellow saints, even those who are older than us. While not eligible to hold a special office in the church, we do hold the office of believer, and we must faithfully carry out the duties of this office.

But we must also heed what Paul writes to Timothy in the rest of this verse. "Let no man despise thy youth; But be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Paul is making a strong contrast here. No man may despise our youth, young people, *but* we must not give them a reason to despise it either. We may not think, "No man may despise my youth, so I can go and do as I please." Paul is not giving Timothy or us an excuse to sin and do whatever we want. We must be an example in every aspect of our life. The call to live a godly life does not wait until we think we are ready. It does not wait until we are older and ready to settle down. It is the calling of every child of God, no matter what age. Do you want no man to despise your youth? Then be an example. Timothy was an example. Yes, he was a sinner just like you and I, but he was an example to the believers in his youth.

His example is one which we must follow, young people. And by God's grace we are able to do so. Just like Timothy, each one of us "from a child…hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:15). Timothy was not too young. Neither are we. ❖

Joshua is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

Gem of the Month

To Die is Gain

Often in this earthly life,
We feel the touch of death.

It brings to our remembrance
How man is but a breath.

When one we love is taken
From their place here in this life,

We feel the pain of sorrow
Which cuts us like a knife.

But when we think on our Savior,
We can through faith be glad,

For we know the one we lost
Will never again be sad.

Though to us it seems they're gone forever,
Their real life has just begun;

For they're rejoicing in the fellow-ship
Of Father, Spirit, and Son.

–Anna Van Egdom
–Freshman English - Trinity

Receiving the Love of the Truth In the Last Days

I. Receiving "the love of the truth" (II Th. 2:10)

1. II Th. 2:10 speaks of those who do not receive "the love of the truth." Instead of saying that they do not receive the truth, it says they do not receive the love of the truth. What does this mean?
2. What does loving the truth have to do with loving God? If loving God is what is important (and, of course, it is), then why does Scripture place such a stress upon loving the truth?
3. What are some ways that we show that we really are loving the truth? How does it manifest itself in our worship, in what we read, in our daily prayers, in our walk of life?
4. Christ said the truth will make you free (John 8:32). If someone is sincerely holding to the truths set forth in our confessions, how will these truths make him free? Free from what?
5. Is it possible for us to grow in our love for the truth? If not, why not? Is so, what can we do that would promote growth in a love for the truth?

II. The Importance of Holding to Truth

1. What are some common views that people in other denominations have of creeds?
2. How should we view our creeds? How important is it that we all really hold to the doctrines set forth in our confessions?
3. Below is a list of a few specific truths that we as churches confess. Go through each statement, and ask this question, "How significant is it if someone denies this truth?"
   - God desires to save only some people.
   - God created all things in six literal days.
   - There is no remarriage after a divorce (i.e. As long as one's original spouse is still living).
   - There is no condition that we have to fulfill to get into the covenant or to stay in the covenant.
4. Some people who deny these truths have never been shown from Scripture their error. But if a person has been often brotherly admonished concerning his error, and he still holds to it, is this a sin?
5. Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13; John 15:26)? If the Spirit of Truth is in us, how will this manifest itself(I John 4:6; John 14:17)?

III. Challenges in the Last Days

1. What are some ways in which the devil in these last days is trying to get us to be unconcerned about the truth?
2. Do you find the internet to be helpful in your spiritual studies and discussions? Do you find it difficult to use the internet profitably? What are some ways it can be used profitably?
3. What do you think it means that God "sends" delusion in the last days to those who refuse to receive the love of the truth? Can you give examples of this? Is there a warning here for us as well?
4. None of us can say that we spend enough time searching the Scriptures as we ought. What are some things that tend to get in the way, and what should we do about this?
5. Besides the Bible, what kind of spiritual reading do you do? What kind of material (books, articles, pamphlets) do you tend to read?
6. How can we encourage one another to grow in our love for the truth? What are some things we can do together that will help promote this? ❖

The Freedom of Being Bound to the Truth In Our Teenage Years

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

I. The world's freedom is actually bondage.

No Truth! –This is the world's cry right now. The world says there is no truth, one can do what he wants and decide what is true for himself. To claim that there is Truth that is normative for everyone puts us in bondage. We must be free to do what we want. As a recent bumper sticker put it: "There is no right or wrong—only fun or boring."

1. How is this teaching that there is no Truth reflected in the media and culture of our day?
2. Discuss how this "freedom" that the world desires has actually put the world in bondage to sin.
3. What are the consequences of this bondage to sin? (Temporal and eternal)

II. The Christian's "bondage" is actually freedom.

The Christian joys in being bound to Jesus Christ who is the Truth. He understands that true freedom is knowing the Truth and living according to the Truth.

1. In what way is the Christian "bound"?
2. How does this Christian bondage really set one free?
3. Jesus says this freedom comes by continuing in his Word. His Word sets us free because it releases us more and more from the heartfelt desire for sin. Ultimately it is a heart issue. How does continuing in Jesus' Word release us from the desire for sin? What does this say about the importance of catechism, and preaching, and Bible study?

III. Do PRC youth realize the freedom of being bound to God's Word? Do they realize the bondage of the world's freedom?

1. Is there a culture of drinking among our youth?
2. How do you think God reacts to such sins amongst us youth? Does God chastise us?
3. Is there an assumption among us that we live like the world when we are young and then when we get married mature spiritually?
4. How can we help each other realize the "freedom" of the world is actually bondage and live according to God's Word? ❖

The Antithesis

I. The Idea of the Antithesis — The antithesis refers to the separation and opposition between darkness and light, believer and unbeliever, church and world.

A. Look up and meditate on the following verses. How do these verses bring out the truth of the antithesis?
   1. Amos 3:3
   2. Ephesians 5:11
   3. James 1:27
   4. I Cor. 5:9-11
   5. I John 2:14-17 (which applies to young women as well).

B. One of the clearest passages in Scripture that refers to the antithesis is II Corinthians 6:14-18.
   1. Is it possible to be neutral? That is, not to be "righteous" or "unrighteous"? Not to be "light" or "darkness"?
   2. Vs. 17 states "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate." What kind of separation is being referred to here? Why is this separation necessary?
   3. What will happen in our lives if we are unequally yoked together with unbelievers?

II. Living the Antithesis — In light of the above Scripture passages, let's discuss how this should show itself in our lives. Keep in mind that the truth of the antithesis says "Don't do this" but the antithesis also says "This is what you must do!"

A. In Our Personal Relationships
   1. [Don't Do This]
      a. When we live antithetically what kind of people will NOT be our friends? (Use the above Scriptures in your answer).
      b. What is to be our relationship with co-workers who show in their lives that they are ungodly?
   2. [Do This]
      a. When we live antithetically what kind of friends will we seek?
      b. When we live antithetically what kind of a husband/wife will we seek?
      c. When we live antithetically what kind of a church will we seek to be a member of?

B. In Our Entertainment
   1. [Don't Do This]
      a. Living antithetically, what kind of entertainment will we definitely NOT seek and engage in? (See Galatians 5:19-21). What's so wrong with it? What are the spiritual snares prevalent in popular entertainment?
      b. Do you think it is becoming easier or more difficult for the Christian to entertain himself living in this world?
   2. [Do This] The Christian may entertain himself. But it must be proper entertainment!
      a. What are some practical guidelines for determining the sorts of entertainment that the Christian may enjoy, and which would mean that he is living antithetically? (Incorporate into your answer the following Scriptures: Philippians 4:8-9, Ephesians 5:6-9, Galatians 5:22-26).
      b. In light of the above guidelines and Scripture passages, make a list of activities that could definitely be classified as "Christian entertainment."

III. Other Questions For Consideration

A. What does our love for God have to do with the antithesis? Do you think it would be possible to live the antithesis without the grace of God in our hearts?

B. What are some of the ways to overcome the difficulties of antithetical living?

C. How can we encourage each other as young people to live antithetically?

D. How does the teaching of common grace lead to a breakdown of the antithesis?

E. What is our calling when we see that our friends/family members are not walking an antithetical lifestyle? ❖

As retiring president and retiring editor of the Federation's publication, he was asked to give the address at the second annual convention of the Federation of Young Men's Societies. This speech was published in the January, 1922 issue of The Young Calvinist under the eye-catching title of…

Lost – A Thinking-Cap

by Rev. H. Hoeksema

If you ask me what, in our time, our people need above all in the first place, my answer is: Doctrine! If you ask me what they need in the second place, I say: Doctrine! If you ask me what they need in the third place, I say: Doctrine!

You say, that's a bold statement. You tell me that I won't find a ready ear for such a statement in our age which is intensely practical. And I am fully aware of it. Doctrine is not popular. Principles, fundamental truths are contraband. Most people say: we have had too much doctrine. We need practical stuff. Service is the watchword. Others say, more reservedly: we need truth, all right, but a re-statement of the truth. The tendency and the result of the latter is the same as that of the former. Doctrine is not popular.

Naturally, one asks himself the question: How must this doctrinal indigestion, this apathy, this positive aversion to fundamental principles, be explained? There are various causes. One tremendous cause is the spirit of the age. That powerful, undefinable but very real influence that imbues the general populace, invades literature and pulpits and finds a very ready response at a certain period, which we designate as the spirit of the times for want of a better expression. The spirit of the time is against doctrine. The leaders of the people are against doctrine. The air we inhale is against doctrine. We cannot help but be under the influence of the spirit of the age before we are fully aware of it. And so, we gradually wean away from doctrine and begin to speak as the spirit of the age speaks: No more doctrine, let us be up and doing!

But I want to be more concrete and stay nearer at home. It is not this difficult-to-describe spirit of the age which I want to blame today. There is another reason. Surely, there are many causes that combine to account for this miserable apathy to doctrine. But one of the causes is the loss of the thinking-cap. To this cause I want to call your attention a few moments:

I. The Reality of this Loss
II. The Deplorable Nature of this Loss
III. What to do to Regain it

I. You may be surprised to hear that the cap, such an insignificant thing as a cap, has always had great symbolical significance in popular language. Yet, this is a fact. To wear one's cap on one ear, for instance, has always been symbolic of extreme nonchalance and indifference. To come with cap in hand expressed an attitude of respect and politeness over against superiors. The expression: "to set one's cap" meant the same as to make a fool of somebody. And thus examples might be multiplied to show that in the language of the people the cap always had great symbolical meaning.

And so the language of the people coined the term: thinking-cap. The exact origin of the term we failed to find. But the meaning of the expression is quite generally known. And though I have no authorities to show for it, I venture to guess that the expression finds its origin in the custom to put on a certain peculiarly shaped, plain, round black cap, when one would sit down to do some serious thinking.

If this guess is at all right, you will find no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the expression. It does not symbolize the brains, it does not point to thinking capacity as such, for to put off the thinking-cap did not mean to lose one's mind. If this were the case, the loss of the thinking-cap would signify something irretrievable. It would mean that our people, that especially our young people, that still more particularly our young men, had lost their ability to think. That, of course, would be deplorable in the extreme. One might, then, probably deliver a funeral oration on the thinking-cap. But it would be a loss that was decisive as death. It could never be restored. And I did not exactly mean to be so pessimistic today. I did not come to deliver funeral orations. No, I do not believe that our young men, and that more or less in

general, our people are inferior to a former age in thinking capacity. If anything the contrary is true. There are bright and quick minds among our young people. Many indications there are of this fact. If there is only something that interests them, they are sufficiently bright-minded and quick-witted to grasp a thing. But the thinking-cap symbolizes rather the exercise of our thinking capacity than the capacity itself. If one wears his thinking-cap it signifies that he sets himself to do some serious, quiet, sound, deep, continuous thinking, to solve some problem, or to listen to the exposition of that solution by some one else. If one is without his thinking-cap, it signifies that he has no desire to exercise his brains, that he is mentally lazy, that the exponent of some difficult problem finds nobody home. And the loss of the thinking-cap stands for a general mental laziness. Now, I maintain that I have reason to think that the thinking-cap is lost especially among our young people. They are averse to do some straight and sound, some real and continuous thinking. They dislike to exercise their thinking capacity, especially in regard to subjects the acquiring of which does not yield immediate practical results in dollars and cents. Our young people are loath to think!

You want evidence? I think I can produce it. Let me point you to some undeniable facts.

In the first place, there is the subject of reading. You pass thru our homes with the inquiry: what do our young people read? You will obtain various answers. Very few will answer you that they actually are interested in reading books that require some study. Religious books, doctrinal works, are hardly read at all. A good many will tell you that they read novels. Stories, preferably some very snappy detective story, they will read. And they read these without any critical judgment, merely for the sake of the temporary enjoyment they get out of it. And then, there is a large group that do not read at all. They have no time, they find no interest whatever in reading. And if you turn from the homes to our church and Sunday school libraries, you will obtain the same result. The vast majority of the books that are drawn are novels and romances. Books of a more substantial nature enjoy the solemn peace of oblivion. I find in this an evidence that our young people have lost the thinking-cap.

Let me call your attention in the second place, to the character of the various programs that will "draw the crowd." It has happened, that in the heat of the school fight last year, a well known speaker had prepared an address on the detestable school amendment, and had to return home without having delivered the lecture because there was no audience. You say that I am pointing to extreme cases? I beg to differ. The lecture course that is annually prepared by the Young Men's League of Grand Rapids has degenerated into a course of entertainment. Short, snappy, twenty-minute speeches could be tolerated. But the main part of the program was of an entertaining rather than of an educational nature. And why was this course changed? Because the lectures drew no crowd! And why did they draw no crowd? Because the thinking-cap is lost!

Let me call your attention to the condition of our Young Men's Societies. It is a general complaint that they do not flourish. Surely, for a social evening you can generally draw a full attendance and more. But for the regular meetings there is little or no interest. You can prepare programs, you may assign to each member his work weeks in advance. But generally, you find that the society decreases in membership in proportion as it lays more stress on the necessity of study and preparation. Why? Because the thinking-cap cannot be found!

I could continue for a while. I could call your attention to the things that do interest many of our young people. And it would be easy to show that they are generally things that require no wearing of the thinking-cap. But I will take for granted that I will meet with little serious opposition when I say that our time is characterized by a deplorable absence of the thinking-cap. Happily, there are others. There are happy exceptions. But I am speaking none too strongly when I say that the absence of the thinking-cap among the coming generations is rather general.

II. Now, I said, that this loss of the thinking-cap is a deplorable loss. It is not a good riddance. It is not a loss that we can afford to forget. It is a deplorable loss. And I am going to tell you some of the reasons why particularly the loss of this cap is to be deplored.

The first reason I want to mention in this connection is that the thinking-cap and sound doctrine are most intimately connected. Doctrinal knowledge cannot be expected to flourish where the thinking-cap is wanting. I know that not all would agree with me today, when I emphasize that the loss of doctrinal knowledge is most deplorable. The cry that we must become less doctrinal and more practical is very loud in our time. And besides, there are a goodly number who identify in their minds doctrine and narrow-mindedness and who take pride in preaching the gospel of broad-mindedness. But in the first place, I would call your attention to the fact that to despise doctrine is to despise the work of God himself. Our God did not deem it sufficient to reveal to us a little gospel you might write on your thumb-nail, but gave us

the entire Word, full of wisdom and knowledge, in order that we might know the whole counsel of God. And that Word emphasizes again and again that the church of Christ in the world must be founded in doctrine. In the second place, I deny the antithesis sometimes, in our day so often, postulated between doctrine and practical life. Surely, I admit that the church can and often did divorce its doctrine from life, so that it fell into the error of dead orthodoxy and cold intellectualism. But this is not to be blamed to doctrine as such, but rather to a wrong conception and defective application of it. Sound doctrine lies at the basis of life. It is indispensable to sound practice. Practical life soon runs wild if it is weaned from doctrine. And therefore, it is a mistake to cry: Less doctrine, more life. I would rather maintain that we must have both: more doctrine and more life, or that we will lose both life and doctrine. And as far as this so-called broad-mindedness is concerned, I have little respect for it. It generally signifies but little more than an obliteration of all lines of distinction, an aversion to positive and definite truth. And many of these broad-mindedness advocates are so narrow-minded that you could not crowd the narrow Reformed doctrine into their minds if they would want to receive it. And, therefore, I maintain that our need is not less, but more doctrine. But it is more than accident, that doctrinal knowledge and the thinking-cap go together. If the coming generation refuses to read, to study, to think, they will soon be strangers to the main principles of our Reformed faith. Our hour in catechetical instruction, a little instruction in the Sunday school, and the instruction in the sermon is not sufficient, will prove altogether inefficient if our young men do not set themselves to study and investigate. And, therefore, the loss of the thinking-cap is deplorable because it involves a loss of doctrinal knowledge.

But there is more. This becoming estranged from sound Reformed doctrine among our young people will ultimately have to reflect upon the church as such. It will lower its doctrinal standard. It will cause a condition in which doctrinal instruction and doctrinal preaching will become gradually more difficult, ultimately impossible. For with the loss of the thinking-cap the element will be growing in the church that have lost their hold upon doctrine. It is not only that they dislike doctrine but they actually understand no more. When the preaching is doctrinal they fail to grasp it. They have no hold upon a doctrinal sermon. They leave the church without having been edified, for the simple reason that they have not understood the preaching of the Word. Their cry is for a different type of preaching. They like, they gradually demand topical rather than doctrinal and exegetical sermons. When the minister preaches on a live topic they can grasp it. When he expounds the Word to them they neither understand nor enjoy it. They begin to characterize the preaching as dry, intellectual, dead, impractical. And the minister will ultimately have to fall for this demand, for the simple reason that he must come down to the level of his audience. You may see the beginning of this tendency today, even in our own church. And, therefore, not only will doctrinal knowledge be lost among an ever-growing element in the church, but the preaching itself, the doctrinal standard of the church will have to be lowered to meet the wants of the people. The loss of the thinking-cap is, indeed, a deplorable loss.

In the third place, this loss will lead us back into the hierarchy of Roman Catholicism, in which the clergy know it all, and rule with undisputed sway, and the laity are the accursed mass that know not the law. This may seem strange at first, for it is exactly what we do not want. We are rather democratic in spirit. But the hard fact is no different. If our people wean away, too, from even a general knowledge of church government, the only element in the church that can judge about things ecclesiastical and doctrinal is the educated clergy. Even now you may hear it every once in a while that the people cannot judge about a certain matter. They are told that they must be silent. And this condition will grow upon us according as it becomes actually more true that the common laity have no knowledge of doctrine. If, however, they would have knowledge, so that they can take an active part and not let others do all the thinking and judging for them, they will need the thinking-cap. The loss of the thinking-cap leads to ecclesiastical hierarchy. Even as education is deemed indispensable for the democratic form of government, so sound knowledge is an indispensable requisite for the maintenance of the presbyterian form of government in the church. The loss of the thinking-cap is indeed deplorable.

And, lastly, this loss of the thinking-cap will weaken us in our fight against downright unbelief in the world. And we may expect that this fight is coming upon us more and more in the future. There was a time that the battle was one between protagonists of different doctrines within the church itself. It was a battle between Arminianism and Calvinism, between supra and infra. But the more the lines are drawn distinctly and sharply, the more these little battles will give way to the great battle that is coming between the world and God's people, between faith and infidelity, between light and darkness. It will be a battle, not for this or that minor principle, but for

the Word of God, for the very faith itself. But a mistake he makes who would now draw the conclusion that for this very reason we must cease to emphasize distinctive and minor principles, and only keep the large principles of Christianity in the broad sense. On the contrary, it is more than ever necessary that we emphasize and keep the truth in all its specific nature. We must not become less Reformed and more Christian, but more Reformed and stronger Christians. Otherwise we will be but poorly prepared and armored to defend ourselves against the oncoming tide of unbelief, and before we know it we will be swept off our feet by it. The loss of the thinking-cap is deplorable, because it will weaken the church in its battle with the forces of darkness.

III. But the question that is of prime importance is still to be answered. It is: What can be done to restore that valuable thinking-cap?

In answer to this question, I would say in the first place: our young men must simply put that cap on again. In connection with this first point, the remark must be repeated which Prof. Kuiper made in *The Banner* years ago, when he discussed the necessity of Americanizing our churches: The only way to do it is to do it. And to urge you to do it, I have attempted to show you the importance of the thinking-cap and the deplorableness of its absence. You must fight the battle against the desire and tendency to spend all your spare time in seeking enjoyment rather than education. You must begin to read, to read more than novels, to study books of a more substantial nature. You must patronize with your presence programs of an intellectual and educational character rather than socials and banquets. They must become possible again. And they will become possible once more if you show your interest. This may, at first, be a difficult battle to fight. The lost interest will naturally only gradually return. But the longer you fight the battle, the more the old interest will be quickened. The more you study, the more intimately you will become acquainted with the doctrine of the church, the finer your hold will become upon that doctrine, the deeper and livelier your interest will be. And, therefore, if you must admit the importance of the thinking-cap, put it on again. The only way to do it is to do it!

In the second place, our leaders, ministers and otherwise, that would lead our young men in the right direction, must not too easily lend their ear to the cry for less doctrine. Rather must they emphasize the necessity of doctrine, and, therefore, the necessity of the thinking-cap. We must have doctrinal preaching. We must continue to emphasize the necessity of catechetical instruction. We must continue to emphasize the necessity of preparing for catechism. We must urge our young people to read, to investigate. In short, they that would lead our young men must not be carried away with the stream and follow the line of least resistance. But they must lead them in the direction of sound and full doctrinal knowledge.

In the third place, our societies and leagues must not be allured to follow the tendency of the time. Too often this is done. In order to increase or maintain the membership of the society the programs are often spoiled. Members that are not prepared when they should be, and when they have no legal excuse to offer, are excused and tolerated nevertheless. The result is, that the programs are frequently not carried out or are carried out very defectively. This must not be done. It is for the interest of the very life of the society that every member takes an active interest. It is better to have a smaller and stronger society in which every member is prepared in time, than to have the entire society degenerate because of the negligence of some members. The same is true of the League. The course pursued last winter is detrimental. Because lectures and educational programs attracted no crowd, it was decided to change the programs and offer programs chiefly of an entertaining nature. This catering to a wrong tendency is fatal. For those that do like something more substantial receive nothing, and those that absolutely refuse to put on the thinking-cap were followed. If our young people are to regain the thinking-cap, if they are to set themselves to serious study and investigation once more, it is necessary that we offer them something that necessitates its use.

There are other things that might be mentioned in this connection. But my time is more than taken. I will close with returning to my first remark: the only way to do it is to do it. Ultimately, all will depend upon the attitude of our young men themselves. Read, study, investigate, get away from that craving for amusement and nothing but enjoyment. For, your position in the church, the position of the church itself in the world, the establishment of God's covenant, the glory of our covenant God are at stake! Let us wake up to the importance of sound doctrine, to the realization of putting on our thinking-caps again, and let us stand shoulder to shoulder in our battle for clear, definite, strong and full Reformed truth!

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Watching Daily At My Gates

by Chester Hunter

June 14 Read Proverbs 3:1-6

Notice verses 5 and 6. Here we are commanded to trust only in God. We are not to think that we can live our lives on our own. If this is our thought, we will surely fail. When we read through the Bible, we might wonder why we would place our trust in anything or anyone other than Jehovah. But we must remember that we have our old nature inside of us. That nature wants to be number one. That nature wants credit for the way that we live. We need to have complete trust in God. When we do, he will give to us the peace that we need. He will give to us the confidence to live a life pleasing to him. One of the ways that we do this is to live out of God's law. May this be our goal throughout all of our lives. Sing Psalter 73.

June 15 Read Proverbs 3:7-12

The book of Proverbs is full of little gems to which we would do well to pay heed. In verse 9, Solomon gives to his son and the church instruction about giving. We need this instruction. We are inclined to think that our money is ours to do with as we please. Like everything else, money is God's good gift to us. With it we need to honor him. We do this with our first fruits, not the leftovers. We can be assured that if we do not honor God in this way, he will not honor us. The words of the final two verses of this section are for all believers. We are all chastened, and that is good, because by that chastening we know that he loves us. Sing Psalter 137.

June 16 Read Proverbs 3:13-20

There are two thoughts in today's passage of Scripture. First of all, we see the value that Solomon places on wisdom. He compares it to any of the riches that are valued in the world and can find nothing with which it compares. Do we find such a conclusion in our lives? Are we able to place the wisdom of Jehovah above anything that we value in this life, even life itself? Secondly, we see that by this wisdom all things happen in this world. This "all things" includes the elements of weather. How many times do we say, "It's raining, snowing, cold, etc." God, by his wisdom, which is essentially Christ, brings all weather to us. How great our God is! Let us value his wisdom far above any other. Sing Psalter 40.

June 17 Read Proverbs 3:21-26

The words of Christ are our guide in all situations. This is the testimony of the Psalmist in Psalms 19 and 119, and this is the testimony of Solomon in this book. With true wisdom leading us, we will not fear any situation that may occur in our lives. The last verse of this section shows to us that we must trust in Jehovah at all times. Self-confidence will not lead us very far. Confidence in a sinful man or in some creature will not preserve us. The confidence we must have must be found in Jehovah, our strength and our redeemer. When he is our confidence, we can be assured that we will have nothing to fear. Sing Psalter 120.

June 18 Read Proverbs 3:27-35

Solomon makes a few comments on how, by using wisdom correctly, we should live with our neighbors. The second of the "great" commandments is to love our neighbor as ourselves. We see some practical applications of this principle in these verses. Do we show that we love our neighbor? Are we ready to help him at any time with anything? We should not be asking the question, "What is in it for me?" We should be asking the question, "How do I glorify God?" When we seek our neighbor's good, we seek God's glory, and as our beloved Heidelberg Catechism puts it, "by our godly walk others may be led to him." Sing Psalter 24.

June 19 Read Proverbs 4:1-9

In this chapter Solomon sums up many of the thoughts found earlier in the book of Proverbs as well as later on in the book. His admonition to his son, which should be all fathers' admonition to their children, is to get the wisdom of Jehovah. That wisdom is

the means that will carry them through all of their lives. Solomon had much worldly wisdom. As the Bible tells us, he was the wisest man that ever lived. The most valuable wisdom given to him by God was, however, the wisdom that was the principal thing. May all the elect young people seek God's wisdom. In this way God will be glorified and the church will be blessed. Sing Psalter 322.

June 20 Read Proverbs 4:10-18

Solomon continues to give his son and us instruction concerning the right path for us to follow. This is the path of wisdom, which is the path that is lit by the Word of God. Many times in Scripture we can find allusions to that path. All that we know about roads on this earth and traveling on such roads can be applied to the path that leads us to heaven. There are good roads on this earth, and there are bad roads. There is a good road on which the righteous must travel, and there is an evil road that we must avoid at all costs. That good road has as its end the perfect day. That day is the one when Christ will return on the clouds of heaven to lead us to our eternal destination. Let us walk, people of God, in the way of wisdom. Sing Psalter 333.

June 21 Read Proverbs 4:19-27

In contrast to the way of the righteous is the way of the wicked. This is according to the antithesis that God has placed before us. In walking on the correct path, we must be antithetical in our lives. We must daily say yes to the things of God and no to the things of the world. This means that when we are on the path that leads to eternal glory, we may not step off of that path. We must look ahead to the new Jerusalem and ignore any sinful pleasures of this earth. This must be done with our whole beings as evidenced by the number of body parts Solomon uses to describe our necessary walk. May God grant to us the grace needed to walk the antithetical walk on our journey in this life. Sing Psalter 70.

June 22 Read Proverbs 5:1-6

Another analogy that Solomon uses to explain to God's people about true wisdom is that of a woman. A wise woman is a prize that should be eagerly sought after. The woman who portrays foolishness is one from whom we should vigorously flee. When we examine Solomon's portrayal of her, we should shudder. She is grotesque. Nevertheless, she has charms that would entice the staunchest of Christians. Our defense must be the knowledge of God's Word and complete reliance upon our Savior. Let us seek him with all our energies and flee from the wisdom of the world. Sing Psalter 64.

June 23 Read Proverbs 5:7-14

Solomon continues with his instruction on following the wisdom of Jehovah and fleeing from the wisdom of the wickedness of this world. He shows how following the wicked wisdom will lead to all kinds of evils on this earth. Solomon is not just worried about earthly troubles; he looks ahead to life after death. Those who do not walk the right path will not end in heaven. We need this admonition, and we need it daily. We are prone to wickedness. It is only by God's grace that we walk on the path that leads to glory. Let us strive to live a sanctified life of thankfulness to our God every day. Sing Psalter 33.

June 24 Read Proverbs 5:15-23

Notice verse 21. We may think that we are acting in secret sometimes, but in actuality all of our actions are open to the eyes of the all-seeing God. As we are under his gaze, what does he see? Does he see his covenant people walking in ways to glorify him, or does he see those who seek to glorify Satan? Our sins, as the Psalmist says, "rise up against us, prevailing day by day." What a wonderful thing it is to know that our God is a merciful God, and even though he sees us as we are, he sees us through the blood of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us walk in a way pleasing to our merciful God. Sing Psalter 170.

June 25 Read Proverbs 6:1-11

One of Solomon's well-known proverbs is found in verse 6, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." God has provided for us in his creation many examples and means of instruction in how we must live. Even the tiniest of creatures can teach us and can put us to shame. Each of us, from the very young to the very old, has work on this earth. It may be the work of school, of an occupation, in the home, or especially in the church. Are we diligent in that work or are we lazy? Do we glorify God in our work or not? These are the questions that we must answer now so that we can give an answer in the day of judgment. Sing Psalter 305.

June 26 Read Proverbs 6:12-19

Among the sins examined in the book of Proverbs are sins of the tongue. There are many ways in which we can use our tongues sinfully. Three of them are found

in the seven things that are an abomination to Jehovah. In these verses we find a lying tongue, a false witness, and he that soweth discord among the brethren. Any of them by themselves can cause havoc in God's church. Take them together and the trouble multiplies. We must struggle daily to control our tongues. We must work on using our tongue to glorify God and him alone. This takes grace, and for it we must come to our God in prayer. Let us do this often and seek to use our tongue in a right way. Sing Psalter 105.

June 27 Read Proverbs 6:20-35

Among the commandments given to God's people is the seventh "Thou shalt not commit adultery." This commandment is not heeded very well today. Whether it be broken in its basest form or, as practiced throughout the world, including the church, in divorce, we act as if God does not care if we break this commandment. God has given to us the institution of marriage as a symbol of the relationship between Christ and his church. As with all earthly pictures, it is tainted by sin; but yet it is God-given, and it is our responsibility to keep it. As we look for the new Jerusalem where we can participate in the one great wedding feast, let us live pure lives on this earth. Sing Psalter 360.

June 28 Read Proverbs 7:1-10

In this chapter we have a comparison between the wisdom which comes from God and the wisdom of the world. One leads unto life and the other unto death. God's wisdom is found in the keeping of his commandments that are the sure pathway to eternal joy. The other is the breaking of every commandment and the pathway to eternal destruction. While one may appear more appealing, that is all that it is-appearances. People of God, let us follow the pathway to life that is highlighted by the fear of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 32.

June 29 Read Proverbs 7:11-20

Does God see all things? The evil woman in this passage thinks not or cares not. She will do her evil because the master of the house is gone. She will use that enticement to tempt the child of God to sin. Then we must go back to the question, "Does God see all things?" The answer is, of course, "Yes, he does." Our God is an all-knowing God who sees every action of those on earth. We must walk a holy life before the eyes of the all-seeing God. We must be holy before him who is thrice holy. Let us pray often each day to walk in holiness. Sing Psalter 61.

June 30 Read Proverbs 7:21-27

Solomon becomes very direct with his admonition to his children. He describes the evil way in which the world wishes us to walk, and not only the temporal effects of continuing on that way, but also the eternal effects. Parents and other adults, we must point out to our children the evil present in this world, and we must do so, sometimes, with a very graphic explanation. Children and young people, those older than you have been placed in authority for just this purpose. Let us pray for the grace to walk in the way ordained by Jehovah. Sing Psalter 278.

July 1 Read Proverbs 8:1-11

From a lurid description of the world's folly come the beautiful words of chapter 8. In it we find words describing the wisdom which comes from above. As we read these words, we find that wisdom here is personified, and the person shown is none other than Christ. Verses 10 and 11 should give to us the goal of education and work ambitions. That goal should not be the gathering of riches, but rather the amassing of the knowledge from on high. That knowledge is a plain not incomprehensible knowledge. It is the knowledge that leads to a blessed end. Students and people of God of all ages must train their minds and hearts to seek after this wisdom. May this be our goal; may this be our prayer. Sing Psalter 53.

July 2 Read Proverbs 8:12-21

The benefits of having and using true wisdom are espoused in this section of Proverbs 8. As we walk in this world, we need to walk a walk of sanctification. How may this be done? Only by having and using the wisdom described here. As you compare the effects of true wisdom and the evil described in the preceding chapter, you can see the extreme difference. While one seems "fun" for the moment, the effects of both are long lasting. Let us seek this wisdom early, and by God's grace we will find a way that will keep us from the evil one. Sing Psalter 355.

July 3 Read Proverbs 8:22-31

Here again we have another text that shows God to be the creator of the world. Many in the world would remove the first chapters of Genesis from our Bibles. If they would really study Scripture they would find that they would have to remove much more than that. Christ was the Word that was spoken to cause all things to come into being. Christ was the Word who was

made flesh and was crucified for our sakes. You cannot have one without the other. This chapter makes that plain. Let us rejoice in Christ our Creator and Savior every day of our lives. Let us live those lives in the consciousness of how wonderful he is. Sing Psalter 85.

July 4 Read Proverbs 8:32-36

Solomon finishes up this beautiful chapter with admonition for children. Those who say that it is not important for children and young people to be taught the ways of the Lord or that they must have time to "sow wild oats" are very mistaken. Elsewhere in this book of wisdom, Solomon exhorts us to "Train up a child…" Children and young people must be taught wisdom and must learn to seek after it. The Holy Spirit through Solomon gives to us the reason in verse 35. Let us work hard at helping our children and young people to find wisdom and to stay on its paths. In doing this both they and we will be blessed. Sing Psalter 425.

July 5 Read Proverbs 9:1-9

Wisdom also is portrayed as a woman. She uses similar methods as the evil woman, but her goal is not the same. Her goal is to help those whom God has chosen to walk in that wisdom. In the remainder of the book of Proverbs we are instructed in how we must walk in that true wisdom which comes from above. The first admonition is to forsake those who are fools. We cannot change them; they will only hinder or endanger us. Let us heed Solomon's wisdom to forsake the foolish and to go in the way of understanding. Sing Psalter 391.

July 6 Read Proverbs 9:10-18

It is so important that we walk in the right way. Solomon shows to us this importance as he reiterates some of the thoughts that we have encountered earlier in the book of Proverbs. You have here the difference between the right way-the way of Jehovah, and the wrong way-the way of Satan. Each of these ways has an end. That end is for eternity. The end of the way of wisdom is life everlasting in sweet communion with God. The end of the way of folly is a place in the depths of hell far from God. Young people, you must look for the right way. Parents and other adults, you must help the young people find that way by direction and example. Let us seek the wisdom of God and impress it upon all those comprehended in the covenant. Sing Psalter 384.

July 7 Read Proverbs 10:1-10

We begin a different section of the book of Proverbs. While each of these verses may look as if it is unconnected to the rest, we must see that it is Solomon's admonition to his son and God's admonition to us. Each of these verses are Hebrew poetical device-antithetical parallelism. Notice the word *but* that is found in each one. By understanding this device, we can understand more clearly the verse's teaching. The second half of the verse is the opposite of the first. They give to us the positive and negative teaching about a similar thought. May we be as the wise son who gathereth in the summer. May we glean from God's Word all the nuggets of wisdom found in it. Sing Psalter 336.

July 8 Read Proverbs 10:11-21

A main thought in this section of Proverbs is wise use of the tongue. In the Ten Commandments there are two commandments that govern our tongues-the third and the ninth. Our beloved Heidelberg Catechism also includes the tongue in its exposition of others of the commandments such as the sixth. James, in his epistle to the church, also speaks of the sins of the tongue. We need, first of all, to guard our tongue. We must make sure that we love God and the neighbor with every word that we say. Secondly, we need to use our tongue to promote the glory of God at all times. Read through these verses over and over, and see all the ways that we can do these things. Then work hard at using the tongue in right ways. Sing Psalter 313.

July 9 Read Proverbs 10:22-32

All around us in nature are evidences of God's will for the world. As we watch the wind we not only see a picture of the Holy Spirit, but we also see the emptiness of those who walk in wicked ways. They exist, they die, and they are gone. The righteous, however, are for ever because, like the rock, God has established them. Christ is the sure cornerstone upon which all the other stones of the church are set. The wicked cannot be part of that foundation because there is no strength in their ways. Read through these verses once more and see what morsels of delicious food you can glean. Sing Psalter 285.

The Gift (13)

by Tom Cammenga

The room, though a bit smaller, was not much different than most every other hospital room. Neutral colors adorned the walls and floor giving the room a false sense of warmth, at least as far as the patient was concerned. She was cold.

Ruth lay in the bed with the blankets pulled up to her chin, slightly elevated so that she could watch the television in the corner if she so chose. Her mother Janet sat in a chair to her left reading a book. They had played cards for a while but the lack of sleep the night before had caught up with her and she had decided to try to rest.

She had been quite successful at putting the thoughts of today aside in her mind the previous day as she had been busy with homework, supper, and chores. But once she had finally lain down in bed and closed her eyes she couldn't stop thinking about it. At her appointment three days before with the specialist to whom their family doctor had referred them it had all seemed so abstract and detached, but now, knowing that her treatments would begin the next day and the effects those treatments would have on her body brought her fears to the fore once again.

It wasn't even so much the possibility that she could die from the disease that bothered her. That was partly because this didn't seem to be the immediate concern of the doctor and partly because that was a reality that she just had not attempted to wrap her mind around yet. Sure, she knew it was a possibility but in her mind that was something to be dealt with down the road. There were other more immediate concerns that occupied her mind at present.

First there were the treatments and how they would affect her. When would her hair begin to fall out? How would it grow back? How would her friends at school react? How much school would she miss?

Then there was the surgery that would follow a couple of weeks later and what the outcome of that would be. Would she lose her leg? Would they be able to save it? How much therapy would she need? Would she be able to play softball in the spring? Would she be able to walk down the aisle at her wedding someday?

Each time she closed her eyes all of these thoughts seemed to rush at her out of the dark and assail her mind one after another. She tossed and turned for some time until she finally got up and made her way downstairs to see if her parents were still up.

She found them sitting on the couch in the family room watching the news. This in itself surprised her somewhat because very seldom were they ever up this late. Apparently she was not the only one having trouble sleeping.

Her father noticed her shadow and turned to face her. He was not at all surprised and in fact looked almost as if he had expected her.

"Can't sleep, huh?" he asked as he slid over and patted the couch in between him and Janet. "Have a seat."

Walking past her father Ruth sat down on the couch, sat back, and sighed. Looking down at her hands folded on her lap she said, "I've been tossing and turning ever since I went to bed…but I just can't sleep. All these thoughts keep going through my mind and I can't make them stop."

Her father put his arm around her and her mother took one of her hands in her own. "Well, it isn't like you have anything on your mind, right?" her father said with a smile. "Cancer, chemotherapy, surgery, school; I can't imagine why you would have trouble falling asleep."

"Boy, when you put it that way it all sounds so petty, doesn't it?" Ruth giggled as she playfully slapped her father's leg. "Last time I come to you for sympathy," she said smiling the smile that said just the opposite.

Laughing along with her husband and daughter, Janet had to put in her two cents worth. "So, now you know what I have to put up with every day!"

"Oh, come on you two," Jack said in mock dismay. "No fair to gang up on me! If you keep it up I am going to go upstairs and get the boys out of bed so I have someone on my side."

"Jack VanVleet, you most certainly will not!" Janet said sternly. "As riled up as you had them earlier I didn't think they would ever fall asleep!"

They all laughed then remembering the wrestling match that had taken center stage in the family room only a couple of hours before.

After a moment of silence Ruth stood up, turned, and sat on the floor in front of her parents. "It's not that

I am really scared," she said as she picked at the carpeting. "But there are just so many unknowns. There are so many questions that I don't have the answers to. It's so hard to wait."

"Oh honey, I know it is," said Janet as she sat down next to Ruth and hugged her. "You know, Mr. Michealson said something to me the day that your dad and I went to see the doctor and it has stuck in my mind." Janet moved over to the couch next to where Jack sat and snuggled up against his legs so that she could face Ruth. "He told me that what the doctor had to say at the appointment was a bridge that would have to be crossed. That made me wonder just how many bridges lay out there that we would have to cross but it also put things into perspective for me. The fact is that there are a lot of bridges that we will come to. Some of them will be in good condition and will be easy to cross; others will hardly be bridges at all and will take a gigantic leap of faith to walk over." Looking into the questioning face of her daughter she continued. "I guess I realized that all those bridges that we can't see yet aren't worth worrying about. We will take them one at a time and by God's grace we will cross them together."

"I know mom," said Ruth looking from her mother to her father, a bit of irritation in her voice. "I know that God will give me and all of us the grace we need when we need it. But knowing that doesn't take away the unanswered questions. They are always there ready to pounce when I let my guard down." Laying back on the floor of the family room she stretched out and let out a long sigh. "I just wish that everything could go back to the way it was."

Not knowing it, Ruth had just put into words the thoughts that each of them had been thinking. If only everything could go back to the way it was. If only life could go merrily on. If only there was another way to cross this river, another bridge they could walk across.

Now, laying in the bed and watching as the IV slowly dripped, she knew that would be impossible. For the first time she realized with great clarity that her life would never be the same again. Closing her eyes she prayed silently that God would give her the grace to be content in the way he was leading her and the grace also to face each bridge she came to with faith and the assurance that God was in control. And then she fell asleep. ❖

Tom is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

Poem

Complete in Thee

Complete in Thee! no work of mine
May take, dear Lord, the place of Thine;
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And I am now complete in Thee.

Refrain:
Yea, justified! O blessed thought!
And sanctified! Salvation wrought!
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And glorified, I too, shall be!

Complete in Thee! no more shall sin,
Thy grace hath conquered, reign within;
Thy voice shall bid the tempter flee,
And I shall stand complete in Thee.

Complete in Thee each want supplied,
And no good thing to me denied;
Since Thou my portion, Lord, wilt be,
I ask no more, complete in Thee.

Dear Saviour! when before Thy bar
All tribes and tongues assembled are,
Among Thy chosen will I be,
At Thy right hand, complete in Thee.

—Aaron R. Wolfe, 1821-1902

—Refrain, James M. Gray, 1851-1935

The Fifth Century of His-Story: A Vile Attack Upon the Institution of Marriage

by John Huizenga

"And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold" (Genesis 4:23-24).

A man who would likely be very popular on the movie screen today burst onto the stage of the fifth century with a song and a dance. He was muscular and handsome. He boasted of murder and revenge. His life was a game of power and sex. Not one, but two beautiful, proud women fawned upon him; and he did not hesitate to take them both for the satisfaction of his lust, and trophies of his manly success. He trampled upon the institution of marriage and defied anyone to get in his way. He was a mighty man of renown. He became the man everyone talked about.

For Lamech, the mark upon Cain, his great-great-great grandfather who likely was alive and well yet at this time, was an admirable badge of rebellion. When the men gathered under the stars to talk and tell stories of former years, young Lamech loved to listen in, especially when it came to the stories of Cain. Yes, Cain…Cain was the man with The Mark. With his own hands he had dared to take on the insult to his own dignity and pride, and he destroyed the life of his own brother, opening the door wide for a new life apart from God. He had defied the will of God, and not only did he survive to tell about it, his family was multiplying and thriving in every way. Lamech listened eagerly to the stories of old and vowed to surpass the boldness of his hero. His days were filled with excitement and held a future of boundless glory.

One day an opportunity came for Lamech to test his resolve. Another man had touched his pride and released in him the desire for revenge. This man had wounded him, and Lamech struck back. With a crushing blow, he put himself on par with Cain himself. Both shared the thrill of murder, but Lamech would go further. This time it was a young man; perhaps an equal to him in power and pride. Again an injury, and Lamech demanded payment. Again Lamech walked away with a man's blood upon his hands and a triumphant smirk upon his lips. Kill or fail, he would lead the way for the surviving, no, thriving of the fittest.

Nobody was willing to resist Lamech; he openly boasted of his achievements. He composed a mocking song and a poem for the women who shared with him his pride of life: "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold" (Gen 4:23 & 24). Adah and Zillah were kindred spirits of Lamech. As Lamech, these women understood and took pride in the power within themselves. They had the beauty, charm, and confidence to get attention. Lamech was a powerful man, but Adah and Zillah knew the power of their sensuality and impact upon a man's desires.

United now in the common goal of human pride, lust, and power, they redefined marriage as a bond for maximum human fulfillment. If it makes you happy, feel fulfilled, and you have the ability to do it, then do it. If it doesn't, then get a divorce. These two women define themselves and what they view as true womanhood, in terms of one's ability to get the attention of a man sexually. Even the meaning of their names suggest this: Adah "the pretty one," and Zillah "shadow," "the lustful one." These were the heroes and models for the good life. The pleasure of man reigned supreme in their city.

God does not reveal the exact date of Lamech's birth. In fact, we are not given any dates for the line of Cain. Both Lamech and the Enoch who walked with God are the seventh generation from Adam, so we could conclude that they were contemporaries. Enoch was born in the 7th century, but given the fact that Cain was the oldest, and killed his brother, one would anticipate that the 7th generation of Cain's line would have a good lead and Lamech could very well have been born as early as the 5th century. At any rate, I want to use the next century to explore the technological, agricultural, and artistic revolution brought on by Lamech's sons. In doing so we will be able to understand the world in which Enoch

lived, as well as the world in which we live today. We will better understand why Enoch was taken by God early from this earth directly to heaven.

At the time of Lamech's birth the population may well have reached 1000 souls. This figure is based on a very conservative estimate of 6 children being born each generation of 90 years, and therefore 3 couples who in turn would bear 6 children each, etc. By the time Noah was born, population levels would be in the hundreds of thousands. The accompanying graph helps us to get some idea about how this population compares to the population at the time of the flood. Note that Lamech is only the 6th generation from Adam. One hundred thousand people only just begins to register on the graph. If we can think of the development of sin in terms of the exponential growth of population, we can see that Lamech's ungodly activity is only the beginning sprout of a mighty oak of iniquity. The robust and vigorous growth of this young seed of the serpent will have a thousand years to grow into the sprawling uncontrolled monster it becomes at the time of the flood, ready to swallow the last 8 souls of the church.

God spoke through his minister Jude to reveal the essence of the life and attitudes of men that developed from Cain through Lamech and directs our attention to the fact that sin develops in the same way from the time of Christ's birth to his return again in judgment. We read,

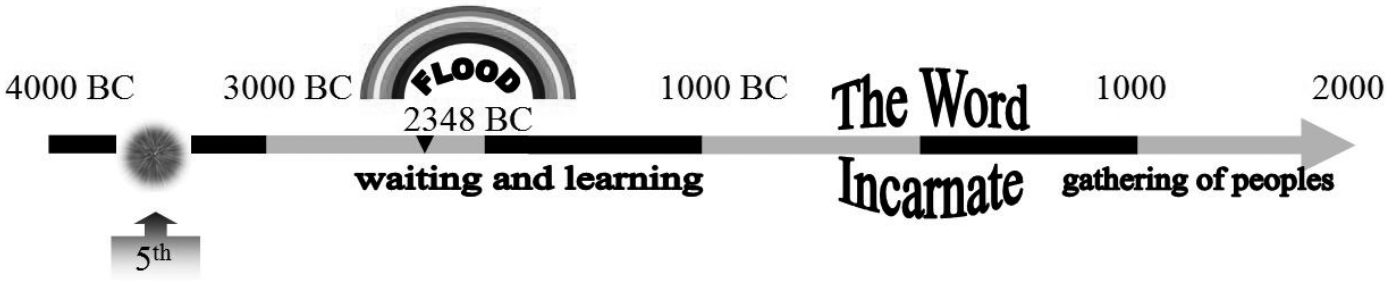
Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage (Jude 1:11-16).

The century ends with the growing up of Lamech's three famous boys and their lovely sister Naamah. Lamech must have been thrilled to see the budding genius of his sons. As the church gathered for worship and ate bread by the sweat of their brow, Adam, Seth, and their children would begin to hear of, if not see the trend of Cain's line. With the Psalmist and the child of God today, they cried to God:

For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches (Psa 73:3-12).

…until they went into the sanctuary of God and understood their end: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction" (Psa 73:18). By faith they looked 1000 years into the future, but would be unable to fathom how small the church would become, nor how great the judgment would be. ❖

John is a member of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin and is Editor of Beacon Lights.



Herman Hoeksema: Editor of *The Young Calvinist*

by John Huizenga

A reader of *Beacon Lights*, after having stumbled upon some material pertinent to the history of young people in the church, suggested it would be profitable for our readers. "I have just been rereading *Therefore Have I Spoken*, the biography of Herman Hoeksema. In there, (pages 113-124), it speaks of Hoeksema as the first editor of the CRC's *Young Calvinist*, and quotes some of his editorials and speeches. What about reprinting some of those? They are still pretty powerful and timely, in my humble opinion. They would be coming on the heels of Prof. Engelsma's writings regarding Herman Hoeksema." I did a little research, and found that one of these editorials ("Lost – A Thinking Cap" printed again in this issue) had been published earlier in the April 1996 *Beacon Lights*. Some further searching on the internet found nothing about *The Young Calvinist* but did net some information on the American Federation of Reformed Young Men's Societies of which Herman Hoeksema was nominated and elected to be its first president and also editor of its monthly magazine, *The Young Calvinist*. In fact, this federation is now called "Youth Unlimited" and its history is described on their website. Interestingly, no mention is made of the *The Young Calvinist* or the fact that Herman Hoeksema was its first president. I don't think he would recognize it as anything that grew from the seed that was planted in 1919.

Youth Unlimited was established in 1919 as the American Federation of Reformed Young Men's Society and has since evolved and grown into being what Youth Unlimited is today, serving churches with junior and senior high youth groups across North America. Listed below is a brief look at our history.

September, 1919 – American Federation of Reformed Young Men's Society (AFRYMS) founded
December, 1920 – The first Convention – 26 societies present
May, 1932 – American Federation of Reformed Young Women's Society (AFRYWS) organized
August, 1938 – Richard Postma becomes part-time director
December 1955 – Merger of Young Men's and Young Women's Federations ratified to become the Young Calvinist Federation (YCF)
August, 1959 – First co-ed Convention in Edmonton, Alberta
August, 1960 – First Summer Worship in Missions (SWIM) – Salt Lake City, Utah
October, 1962 – James Lont becomes YCF director
September, 1966 – YCF, Calvinettes (now GEMS) and the Calvinist Cadet Corps merge to form United Calvinist Youth (UCY) (now Dynamic Youth Ministries or DYM)
March, 1980 – Robert Hough becomes YCF's director
Summer, 1989 – Brian Bosscher is hired as executive director
1989 – SERVE begins with 3 mission sites
1992 – Youth Unlimited (YU) is chosen as the new name for the Young Calvinist Federation
1999 – Compass 21 is developed as a youth ministry assessment tool
June, 2000 – Barry Foster is promoted from Programs Manager to Executive Director.
Summer, 2001 – ENCOUNTER replaces SWIM as YU's long-term missions program
Winter/Spring 2004 – One Week spiritual renewal weeks are offered to Christian Schools across the United States and Canada
July 2004 – Rachael Cooley is hired as Executive Director
September 2005 – SERVE and ENCOUNTER merge into a unified Missions Program
Spring 2006 – Youth Unlimited partners with area urban youth network to offer the Where U At? urban youth conference
July 2007 – Jeff Kruithof is hired as the current Executive Director
http://www.youthunlimited.org/generalyu/about_history.html

Regarding this early history, Gertrude Hoeksema writes in her biography of Herman Hoeksema, *Therefore Have I Spoken* about his work as editor and quotes from a number of articles he wrote to point out how his writing for the young people served to alienate him from those who were in favor of the idea of common grace. The following is from pages 114-122.

> "On the evenings of September 18 and 19, while Rev. Hoeksema was still serving his pastorate in Holland, Michigan, he was asked by Mr. R. Postma of Grand Rapids to be present at an organizational meeting of the League of Young Men's Societies. Representatives from the areas of Grand Rapids, Holland, and Chicago were to meet at the Pantlind

Hotel to discuss possibilities of forming a federation.

Mr. Postma presided at the first meeting, having first schemed with one of the young members present to nominate H. Hoeksema as first president of the newly-formed American Federation of Reformed Young Men's Societies. After Hoeksema was elected president, the Federation decided to publish a monthly publication, to be called The Young Calvinist. The newly elected president was also chosen to be the first editor of the paper.

The first issue was printed in January of 1920, just about the time the pastor of Fourteenth Street Church accepted the call to Eastern Avenue Church in Grand Rapids. A few quotations will illustrate the new editor's vigorous, concise editorial style and will furnish a commentary on the thoughts and subjects of interest in church life in the early twenties.

The February issue had an editorial titled, "That Wayne County Civic Association." Editor Hoeksema wrote that this association had a "petition to amend the Constitution of the State of Michigan to require all residents between the ages of five and sixteen years to attend the Public School…."

And he commented:

Young men, you are strong! Perhaps most of you are not qualified voters and will not receive the petition. But you can fight it. Discuss the matter in your societies till it is very clear to you all that this petition opposes both our religious convictions and our love of liberty. Then witness against the movement. Reveal the danger of the thing. Expose its evil. Be strong!

The title of the March issue editorial, "About Those Jongeren," was explained by the editor:

…let me briefly inform you that they are a group of younger men in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands that are dissatisfied with their own church and the way in which the Reformed faith was presented in the past.

…these young-reformed rebel against the antithesis between God's people and the world, between the regenerate and the non-regenerate….

Complaints were brought in against too much doctrine, cold dogma. Not enough gospel, you see! Again I say, characteristic!

Still more. The doctrine of predestination was publicly denied….

I write this as a warning. Let us be on our guard against it if we still love the good old Calvinism. What we must have is not less, but more, principle.

"The Normal School" was the subject of the April editorial of *The Young Calvinist*, and the question was asked:

What is a normal school? It is an institution for the purpose of training young men and young women for the teaching profession. It is with a view to the teaching profession what a seminary is for the ministry. Now, we all agree that we must not expect competent ministers in our church without a good seminary. But just as little right we have to expect competent teachers in our Christian schools without a good normal school.

Calvin never had a normal course. It has no normal course today.

The attempt to do this is being made today.

We need your help. Do not stand outside and watch to see what will become of that Normal School without your help. Normal Schools do not grow like Jonah's gourd. They can only be established by united effort.

In "Principles or Conditions" in the June, 1920 issue, the editor said:

If you ask the world of the present time what is more important, principle or practice, truth or reality, the general answer will be: the former is of less importance than the latter, reality is greater than truth, life is more than principle.

Again they say, "We must not emphasize principle all the time!

"It is time we were doing something!

"Let us stop quarreling about the truth. Let us rather see the needs of the world and with all our might apply ourselves to remedy its evils, to alleviate its suffering, to lift it to a higher level of existence and life!… Let us sacrifice a little principle for reality!"

"Is this true?" the editor asked.

Is this a safe stand to take? Is reality greater than truth? May the former ever dominate the latter? Our unequivocal answer is: No, never!

Mark, I do not wish to be misunderstood. I know very well that faith will necessarily show itself in works. I do not mean to defend the proposition that we must shut ourselves up in isolation with our principles and refuse to put forth any effort to enforce them in the world. By no means. The Christian surely will want to realize his life-view. He will strive to materialize his principles.

But I do mean that we must be spiritual idealists.

Alert to problems of youth, Editor Hoeksema devoted the editorial of the July issue to "The City, Amusements, Our Young People," and said:

> Personally I like the city. The city still offers many advantages and opportunities the country can never offer….
>
> But the city has its dangers, too….
>
> Take, for instance, the movie.
>
> If we frequent the movies we do not merely look at the particular pictures we like to select, but we are supporting the movie as a whole.
>
> In the second place, it naturally offers very cheap enjoyment…. The lower emotions and desires are brought into play, are aroused into action.
>
> The movie is a means to destroy our home life…. the habit of being constantly away from home is fostered. A very bad habit, indeed. The home is the very basis of society. It is the very center of our covenant-life as members of God's church.
>
> The movie is detrimental, too, to our young men's societies. The facts show plainly that our young men that frequent the movie generally are not the best members of the society. Very often they are not members at all…
>
> It tends to draw us away from the church and to lead us right into the midst of the world in the evil sense of the word….
>
> Let us, as young men that belong to God's church, that are baptized in the name of God Triune, that are called to be God's party in the midst of the world, also in this respect fight the battle of faith, and overcome the evil one.

In the same issue there was "A Suggestion."

> Just recently the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church held its session in the large auditorium of the Calvin College building.
>
> I attended a few of its meetings.
>
> And then I had a vision that set my heart aglow.
>
> The vision was of some such assembly as gathered in Calvin, but the members were all young men of Reformed persuasion. They were not ministers and elders, but they were delegates and members of our Young Men's Societies from all over the United States….
>
> Is not the vision possibly to be realized?…
>
> I think it is….
>
> Would it not be a great event?
>
> Are you interested in it?

The December issue carried the "Impressions."

> It was a complete success!
>
> It was good beyond all expectations!
>
> It was great!
>
> What?
>
> Why, the first annual meeting of our American Federation of Reformed Young Men's Societies….
>
> Was there nothing to criticize?
>
> Undoubtedly there was. It must be a poor affair that is beyond all criticism. And they must be poor creatures who imagine that there is no room for improvement in their work.
>
> But just now I cannot think of anything. Perhaps in future days, when "distance lends enchantment to the view," but also clearness, and our first joy and enthusiasm has somewhat subsided, we shall be able to pass a more correct judgment upon this first convention.

These were the days of Prohibition, and in the January 1, 1921 issue he wrote on "Crime and Prohibition."

> The enthusiastic advocates of prohibition never tired to assure us a few years ago, that as prohibition spread its wings over the country, the number of crimes would surely diminish. To work for prohibition meant to labor for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Then the editor cited evidence of the rising crime rate and reasoned, "Small wonder that some are baffled…"

> Of course, if you deny that the root of sin and crime is in man's heart, if you have an idea that a sober sinner is nearer the Kingdom of God than a drunken one; if you seek the cause of sin really in anything outside of man's heart, we can understand that these facts are rather confusing… We hear… too little of the real truth that unless a man is regenerated by the Spirit of God, he cannot even see the Kingdom of God!

In the March, 1921 issue Editor Hoeksema, under the title, "Irenical Reformed," acquainted the reader with *De Reformatie*, a weekly paper published in the Netherlands. He described an article by Dr. Hepp, who defined an irenic person "to be a lover of peace, to assume a conciliatory attitude." The editor enlarged on the idea

by saying that the term "has come to describe people who are always sweet, want to cover up differences that actually exist." Dr. Hepp condemned this and so did Editor Hoeksema. Dr. Hepp gave some guides to be followed in all controversy, which Hoeksema endorsed:

> In the first place, in criticizing, the critic ought to practice self-control and self-restraint.
>
> In the second place, as to the form of our criticism, …it must be characterized by courtesy. Even though we may have serious objections against the views of anyone, a discussion in public must be free from personalities, must remain polite.
>
> In the third place, negative, destructive criticism may never predominate. The chief element in anyone's work must be positive and constructive.

The editor noted that:

> There seems to be a certain fear of controversy, of public discussion in our circles…. One would hardly get an inkling of an idea that there were any important questions among us at all. And if the ghost of controversy nevertheless appears on the scene, it so scares many people that they immediately cry out for peace.

There was unrest in many areas in 1921, also in the Christian Reformed Church life. Calvin College was in the throes of the Janssen Case, of which the editor of The Young Calvinist had considerable knowledge, and with which the church papers were filled to bursting.

This occasioned the last editorial which Rev. Hoeksema wrote for *The Young Calvinist*, the one in the September issue, "Out of Sympathy With Us?"

The editor wrote:

> In the last few issues of our paper our Young Calvinist was the subject of an interesting discussion and at the same time the object of severe criticism….
>
> And now I am referring specifically to the articles of Mr. H. Ballast.
>
> They breathe a wrong spirit.
>
> And they are purely destructive….
>
> It is the welfare of our Young Calvinist we have at heart….
>
> The keynote of what Mr. Ballast wrote, it seems to me, is that our paper wants to be too specific. It wants to be too Reformed. It wants to be too Calvinistic. It emphasizes principle too much. He would have it more general, Christian!
>
> I have emphasized it more than once, and I wish to repeat it now, that our danger does not lie in the direction of becoming too narrowly Reformed and Calvinistic…. The danger lies in the opposite direction…. What we must emphasize is not a would-be broadminded Christianity, colorless and tasteless, but the specific principle of our Reformed faith.
>
> To do this, Mr. Ballast, is the very purpose of our paper.
>
> Our paper never meant to be anything else than Reformed.
>
> And, therefore, if the criticism of Mr. Ballast would have us change this, we flatly refuse. We will not give other than strictly Reformed leadership. Of the silly spirit of broadmindedness we will have nothing. It is perfectly nauseating to us.
>
> We will give leadership in a Reformed direction, or no leadership at all!

When one examines the issues of this magazine for youth in the unsettled years just after World War I, one sees evidences of the instability and the lack of firm conviction among the young men, which substantiate the fears and admonishings of the editor. Reaction to the tension of war led to a certain superficiality, a persistent pleasure-madness, also in the sphere of the church. Small wonder it is, then, that the editor felt that his Reformed readers needed some jolts.

In letters to the Department "Voice of All," complaints were voiced and dissatisfaction was expressed with the editor's comments on the issues of the day or his hammering on the prevailing laxity in doctrine and practice. Objections were raised that this was not the purpose of *The Young Calvinist*.

Editor Hoeksema took note of these opinions. He also surveyed his host of other duties and the increasing pressure of his work, and in this issue of September, 1921, he submitted his resignation as editor. Some said that it was a good thing, for he was a harsh man, ruled only by reason. Others said that they had lost a strong Reformed leader. As retiring president and retiring editor of the Federation's publication, he was asked to give the address at the second annual convention of the Federation of Young Men's Societies. This speech was published in the January, 1922 issue of *The Young Calvinist* under the eye-catching title of "Lost — A Thinking Cap." (pages 114-122) ❖

John is a member of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin and is Editor of Beacon Lights.

Covenant Courtship: (8) With a View to Marriage

by Aaron Lim

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph 5:31-32).

The covenant God who establishes the institution of marriage purposed it to be a reflection of the marriage between Christ and the church. As he binds two believers with body and soul in the union of marriage, he testifies to them of the unbreakable bond that he shares with them. His covenant with his people is unbreakable because he maintains it. He has given his only begotten Son as proof of his sovereign power and love for his church. He is her husband, a covenant friend who establishes, maintains and perfects her salvation in the cross of Christ.

As discussed in the early chapters, covenant courtship is to be approached with all seriousness because it is the necessary platform to marriage. It is oftentimes tempting to enter into relationships rashly with somebody we fancy. God made us as emotional beings with the desire to love and to be loved. Our emotions are powerful sources of energy that affect our thinking and actions. Courtship is a time where strong feelings and emotions are very active. Covenant young people risk bearing emotional scars and painful experiences when they treat courtship lightly. Without understanding the responsibilities and implications of courtship, those who rush into it do so to their hurt.

In truth covenant courtship prepares a couple to leave their parents and cleave to each other as one flesh. As they grow in an intimate knowledge and love for each other, they must prepare themselves for a lifelong commitment. God ordained marriage to cure man of his loneliness. He gave man a woman to make him complete. For this reason God demands an inseparable union between husband and wife throughout their lifetime.

The form for marriage insists that each spouse "faithfully assist the other in all things that belong to this life and a better". Courtship demands responsibility. It demands faithfulness to care exclusively for each other's needs as brother and sister in Christ. It is a constant giving of oneself for the other's benefit as Christ gave himself for the church. A man of God promises, according to the form for marriage, "never to forsake her, to love her faithfully, to maintain her, as a faithful and pious husband is bound to do to his lawful wife."

As covenant couples commit themselves to a lifelong bond, they must be profoundly aware of all the dangers that threaten this commitment. These dangers sometimes appear in the form of false doctrines that creep into the church. False doctrines have their source in the devil whose interest is to defile the institution of marriage and to hurt the cause of God's covenant in this world. It is deeply grievous that even in Reformed circles there are churches who deny the lifelong permanency of the marriage bond. They falsely assert that the Scriptures allow divorce to destroy the marriage bond. This is nothing more than a sinful convenience out of a broken marriage. This evil doctrine cheapens the grace of God that always sustains a covenant couple's relationship through all its ups and downs.

Another danger that threatens a couple's lifelong commitment is the sinful tendency to take each other for granted. How often we fail to appreciate the friendships we have around us. It is all the more saddening that in marriage, the best of friends can fail to love and appreciate each other adequately. They are constantly arguing and picking on each other's faults, refusing to surrender to each other as God calls them to. The lack of God's love in their relationship becomes increasingly apparent.

A couple who is truly committed to the God-ordained institution of marriage will understand that God is the One who binds them in true love and faithfulness. Marriage counselor Dr. Ed Wheat writes accurately that "it is God's will in every marriage that the couple love each other with an absorbing spiritual, emotional and physical attraction that continues to grow throughout their lifetime together". It is nothing less than amazing that an old couple, having been together for so many years, can still find so much to be attracted to in each other. I think of Prof. and Mrs. Hanko, whose loving and godly marriage ought to be an example for our young people to follow.

A covenant couple prizes the grace of God because they know that without it, their relationship will give way to the dangers that threaten it. We need his grace to prepare for marriage. More so when we enter into marriage and live in it. Marriage implies faithfulness. Only a God who is faithful can enable his children to be faithful to each other. May the Lord help us to be faithful in our courtships and marriages. ❖

Aaron is a member of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore.

Church News

BAPTISMS

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Act 2:39

The sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered to:

Patience Rose, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Chesebro—Byron Center, MI

Joshua Edward, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jared Hekstra—Byron Center, MI

Salem Joy, daughter of Rev. & Mrs. Cory Griess—Calvary, IA

Eli James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Brummel—Faith, MI

Olivia Mae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Uittenbogaard—Faith, MI

Ella Kaye, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad Butler—Hudsonville, MI

Paige Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David DeBoer—Hudsonville, MI

Brielle Makaya, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Stefan Griess—Hudsonville, MI

Gavin Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tomm Heyboer—Providence, MI

Kaylee Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ben Zandstra—Southwest, MI

Madison Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chad VanOverloop—Trinity, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Proverbs 4:26

Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

Leanne Miedema—Georgetown, MI

Justin Regnerus—Hull, IA

Kevin VanMaanen—Hull, IA

Brent Zandstra—Hull, IA

Edward Hanko—Lynden, WA

MARRIAGES

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3: 5 & 6

United in the bond of Holy Matrimony were:

Mr. Cory VanOverloop and Miss Rachel Penninga—Grace, MI

Mr. Jared Wesorick and Miss Ashley Perr—Grace, MI

Mr. Joseph Joostens and Miss Emily Kregel—Grandville, MI

The Bush

"Be careful! Don't touch that bush," said Grandma as she brushed the snow off the path in front of them. Robert was careful to walk far around the bush his grandmother pointed to. His younger sister Rachel did the same. Long, sharp thorns grew out of every branch. Robert looked at the bush and shook his head.

"Grandma, why do you grow such an awful bush by your house?" he asked.

"Oh, it's not awful!" Grandma exclaimed. "It's a good bush, even if it looks pretty bad right now. Come in and I'll show you."

Robert and Rachel took off their hats and gloves inside Grandma's kitchen. They heard the clink of metal and china as Grandma set cups and spoons on the table. Soon her teakettle was whistling.

"Here, you have some hot cocoa, and I'll look for my photo albums."

Robert and Rachel held their steaming cups and sipped the warm, sweet drinks.

Grandma came back with an armful of albums. "Let's look at this one first." She paged through a number of photographs. "Yes, here's the one I was looking for." It was a picture of her house in early summer.

"Wow. Sure looks different when all the flowers are in bloom," Robert said. "Did you plant all these?"

"I did. And look at this bush by the door."

"O-o-h-h-h. That's pretty," Rachel pointed at the bush. "It's covered with red flowers!"

Robert looked at Grandma and smiled. "That's that awful bush, isn't it?"

"Sure is. It's a rose bush. Not so awful, is it?"

Rachel shook her head. "No, it's still awful. But pretty too."

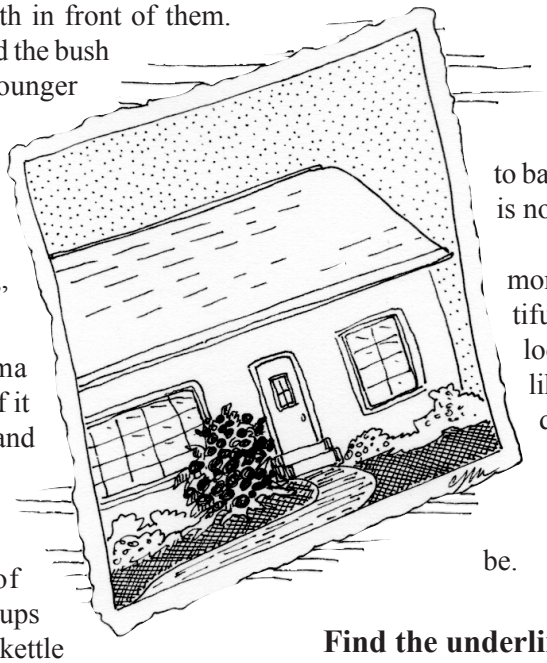
Grandma fingered her chin. "You may be right, Rachel. The thorns are always there, and very sharp. But when the roses come out—it's gorgeous."

"How can something be so good and so bad at the same time?" Robert asked.

Grandma thought a moment. "Well, we are!"

"We're good and bad?" said Rachel.

"Yes," Grandma explained. "We have an old man and a new man in us. We're new creatures in Christ, but we still have to battle the old thorns of sin in us. So this is not so strange."



Robert studied the photograph some more. The rose bush was indeed beautiful, but those thorns he saw outside looked mean. Hmm…. He'd rather be like the bush in bloom when the thorns didn't show so much. And maybe—in heaven—those thorns would be all gone.

Yes, he thought, they surely would be.

"LITTLE LIGHTS" . . . let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

Find the underlined words in the puzzle below:

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing…. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Romans 7:18-25

M	H	G	U	O	R	H	T	W	L	W	L
O	T	W	S	R	E	B	M	E	M	A	A
R	E	D	E	H	C	T	E	R	W	L	W
F	L	E	S	H	A	S	D	E	C	G	O
M	L	K	T	H	P	L	M	V	N	W	N
D	E	A	T	H	T	V	L	I	A	G	K
O	W	A	R	R	I	N	G	L	N	B	M
O	D	G	T	D	V	N	Y	E	O	D	E
G	M	A	N	L	I	F	G	D	T	W	M
T	H	I	F	R	T	L	Y	W	H	O	B
T	M	N	B	H	Y	E	V	R	E	S	E
M	Y	S	E	L	F	S	I	N	R	V	R
E	B	T	K	N	A	H	T	N	N	I	S

Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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John 8:32

2010 Young People's Convention
August 16-20, 2010

Don't forget to read through the discussion outlines inside this magazine!

Also, be sure to check online at www.prcconvention.com for
A schedule of events
The rules
A list of what to bring
The banquet theme (A Night in Paris)

Hosted by Hudsonville PRC

See You There!