JEHOVAH IS OUR LIGHT AND OUR SALVATION

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BEACON LIGHTS

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The Convention — Pro and Con

By REV. WALTER HOFMAN — Holland, Michigan

Although this heading might leave the impression that we will discuss the advisability or inadvisability of holding a Young People's Convention, that is definitely not our purpose. The several past conventions have already proved their worth and desirability. And the Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation has strengthened us in the belief that they are, and should be, here to stay. Rather is it our purpose to turn our thoughts back to this Sixth Convention and in our reminiscences add a few critical remarks, pro and con.

It would be difficult to give one general, comprehensive reflection which would do justice, and at the same time, give a correct and true evaluation of it all. The activities were much too varied to properly review in one or two sentences. And even a rather detailed report is bound to be the biased opinion of one individual. So we begin our task with many misgivings.

Perhaps, it is best to start at the beginning. The Convention was formally opened with an afternoon business session preceded by devotionals and a song service. Among the interesting bits of business was the acceptance of a new member society into the Federation—the Esther Society (a group of younger young ladies) of the First Church in Grand Rapids. We heartily welcome them to the roll of membership in the Federation and believe they are a worthy addition to our roster. The election of new officers also took place at this meeting. To them all we extend our congratulations and urge them to "give of the strength of their youth" to the large task of guiding the affairs of the Federation. We would say with Saul, but mean it: "Go, and the Lord be with you".

Apart from this, the opening session was not spectacular; in fact, it was rather dull. The small crowd present lacked enthusiasm and interest. The singing was listless: we were just aching for a song leader to put some spirit into it. There was very little interest and discussion of the various business matters that were presented.

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At times the issues were not clear and few delegates seemed informed of what was to be discussed. We wondered if it is just impossible to have an interesting business meeting. Would it help any if the material were sent to the societies for information and discussion so that the delegates come prepared and informed?

The fact that there were only two ministers present at this opening meeting is a definite reflection on our clergy. It is not difficult to get our Young People to attend pancake breakfasts and outings at the beach but it is a task to get them to attend a formal meeting of any kind. If our leaders show no interest it's strange to expect that their followers will.

By way of suggestion, we would like to see our Conventions opened with a brief inspirational meeting on the evening before any formal sessions are held. Such a meeting could consist of a short "inspirational" address, a lively song service, and perhaps, a few miscellaneous numbers. Ample time should be given for our young people to renew old, and make new acquaintances among the delegates and visiting members. We feel that this would encourage attendance at ALL meetings and make for fellowship and friendship among our youth from near and far.

In the evening the customary Inspirational Mass Meeting was held. A fairly large audience attended; most of our Churches in this vicinity being represented. Some, notably the Grand Rapids Churches, could have done much better. If they had turned out as the outlying Churches did the auditorium would have been well filled. Once again we felt that this was another occasion in which our Young People needed encouragement to attend. It would have been heartening to see many more families present: thus revealing that we as parents are vitally interested in our youth. We may decry juvenile delinquency and speak with concern of the careless and carefree youth of our day but if we do nothing to lead, guide, and encourage them our sighing is hopeless and meaningless. It is also true that if we, as parents, show no interest we cannot expect that our children will.

The speaker, the Rev. H. Hoeksema, was, as usual "in good form". While listening the thought struck us again that from a formal point of view his speeches on these occasions are among his best. He developed his subject exhaustively and with clarity besides applying the material to the occasion. So doing he again revealed his ability as a speaker and lecturer together with the theologian. The address was long, which may have accounted for the waning interest, especially on the part of the young peo-
ple, towards the close of the address. Perhaps, it is impossible to say something worthwhile with fewer words. We wondered whether the speaker's "normal covenant youth" wasn't rather an "ideal" covenant youth. Isn't it true that if we look around, such "normal covenant youth" as the speaker described, are few and far between? That they should be so is, no doubt, true, but even as we are always abnormal, according to the norm of Scripture, it is not likely that we would find a "normal covenant youth".

Thursday, the second day of the Convention, was taken up with a pancake breakfast at Hughes Park and an outing at Lake Michigan. Both events were well attended and highly enjoyable. The Committee is to be commended for the clock-like precision and order which marked this day and the whole Convention. The organization of these meetings is one of the most difficult tasks and Hudsonville proved to us that things can be run on schedule and with regularity.

The Rev. J. De Jong spoke a few well-chosen words of welcome to the returned veterans and applied his message to our society life. We were surprised and disappointed that there were so few returned service-men present. Are they all married, so soon?

The Convention closed with a banquet on Thursday evening. This was by far the largest group of young people of any of the meetings. We received the impression that, generally, the age range at the banquet, as at other sessions, was younger than in previous years. This may be a good sign or an ill-omen. It may be that our younger youth are becoming interested earlier and foretoken a bright future of activity. On the other hand, it may indicate that after the novelty was worn off our youth lose their interest and concern and reveal it by staying away.

Once again, that evening, we were struck with the orderliness and organization of affairs. A delicious meal was well-served; smoothly and without confusion and waiting. We heard some of the guests remark that it was the best organized banquet they had ever attended, and that, coming from the ladies, is a real compliment. To the Host Society and the entire congregation at Hudsonville—hearty congratulations and thanks for a large task well done!

A well worked out program followed: with plenty of variety to retain interest.

So closed the Sixth Annual Convention. To appreciate it fully one must have attended all its sessions. Undoubtedly, those that were present look forward to next years' gathering. Let's ALL attend ALL the time!
Christian Living . . .
Its Spiritual Necessity

What is "Christian Living"? What, in broad outline, has Scripture to say about it? What is its prime requisite? And what is the standard according to which man's entire conduct must be judged? These and other questions, essential to a somewhat adequate understanding of the subject have been answered.

Before we proceed to the more specific phases of our general subject and to the more practical, concrete matters involved, there is one more question that should be answered. Why is "Christian Living" necessary? Why must a Christian lead a Christian life, and why is it absolutely impossible for one who does not do the latter ever to call himself a child of God? In short, why is the subject of "Christian Living" anything with which we should concern ourselves at all?

This question arises because we happen to be Reformed. In many other circles this is no problem at all. Frequently the accusation is cast into our teeth: on the basis of what you Reformed people believe there is no need of doing good. In the Reformed system there is simply no room for the subject of sanctification and Christian living. All it produces is careless and profane people, members who are all for doctrine but dead to everything that pertains to practical Christianity.

The specific Reformed doctrine that has always proved a stumbling block to these uninformed objectors is that most comforting and wholly Scriptural truth of salvation only by grace without the works of the law. As Christians we believe and confess that we are saved, in Christ. It is not so that we are being saved, or that we shall certainly be saved, or that salvation is now possible. No, but we are delivered. Nothing or no one can take this away from us. By nature we are lost in sin because of our wilful disobedience in Paradise. Because of that rebel-
lion against the living God we became guilty, liable to eternal punishment, corrupt to the innermost recesses of our souls, children of wrath and damnation. But now, our debts are paid, our guilt is blotted out, we are reconciled with the eternal God, and we may sing, and that in truth: "There is therefore now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus." Furthermore, we believe and confess that all this is "merely of grace, without any merit of ours." Nothing that we do has anything at all to do with our righteousness before God, either objective or subjective. No desire or need on our part, no prayer or pious resolution or good work in any way persuaded God to distinguish us from others. Pure, unadulterated, sovereign grace saved us, nothing else. Christ alone is our salvation. He alone paid for all our sins and fulfilled for us all righteousness. And all His righteousness is reckoned unto us, not of works, but by faith. And that faith is not our work, it is the gift of God.

In the light of all this, why must we still do good works. In such a system how can there be room for a subject like "Christian Living"?

* * *

With respect to this question there have always been two extremes, equally godless and mistaken. Both have this one thing in common: they proceed from the assumption that if good works are necessary at all it must be for external and ulterior reasons. Both are blind to the truth, that the deep reason for Christian living does not lie outside of us, but within. Both see it this way: either we do good works to merit something thereby, or we don't have to do them at all.

On the one hand we find those people who deny that living a Christian life is necessary at all, because we are not saved by works. The law has no place at all in the life of the child of God. Hence their name — Antinomians, from anti (against) and nomos (law). These Antinomians speak only of what Christ did for us, but they have no eye whatever for what He does in us. Jesus, they say, has accomplished everything for His own: He paid the debt; He fulfilled the entire law: in a word, He gave the perfect answer to the entire law. What more do we need? There simply is nothing left for us to do. In the light of the perfect work of Christ the whole question of how we should live is out of order. In the first place, the flesh cannot do good anyway: that simply is out of the question. Secondly, it is not necessary for us to do good. Thirdly, we may not talk about doing good. It's definitely evil. It's an insult to Christ and belittles His redemptive work.
Now we agree, of course, with much of what the Antinomian predicates. All is of grace. Redemption is in Christ alone. Good works have no meritorious value. However, what the Antinomian does not see is the nature, the essential character of the new life, the spiritual and living power of faith. Where there is life good works must follow. The living Christian and Christian living go together. Wherefore Antinomianism is rooted in pure wickedness and actually it is nothing but an insidious attempt to use the truth in order to defend the lie and to excuse a life of sin and licentiousness.

On the other extreme we find the equally wicked and foolish Pelagian, who teaches that we must do good works because we must thereby earn our own salvation. We shall not waste another moment on this wicked heresy. Pelagianism, which teaches that man can save himself simply places the creature on the throne and makes all salvation depend on human ill and endeavor.

However, it might be well in this connection to warn against one other error, a sort of semi-Pelagianism, which teaches that we must strive to live Christian lives, because we must thereby remunerate God for all His benefits bestowed on us. Indeed, salvation itself is of and in Christ alone. To it man himself can add nothing. However, in sanctification we get the opportunity to do something for God. "Christian Living" is man's sphere. God contributed His salvation in Christ; we in turn, contribute a Christian life. In the former God works for us; in the latter we work for God. Christian friends, beware of this dangerous error. Once in this way we shall stray farther and farther from the truth. In this way something of man is introduced into the work of salvation and the eternal God is robbed of the honor and the glory which should be His alone.

Plainly, all these heresies have this one thing in common: they try to explain the necessity of a Christian life from ulterior motives.

Only the pure, Reformed conception gives the correct answer to our question: Why is a Christian life necessary at all? Next time, D.V., we shall give that answer.

— COVER —

The permanent cover design which you see on this issue of Beacon Lights was selected from several designs gratuitously submitted by one of our subscribers, Mr. MARTIN LA MAIRE, of Cicero, Illinois. The staff of Beacon Lights hereby wishes to sincerely thank Mr. La Maire, not only for his interest in our paper but also for his willing services in our behalf.
Palestine in the News.

During the period of World War II and of the present time, considerable strife and violence has flared up in the British-mandated land of Palestine. According to current press accounts, there has been a number of attempts to bring contingents of European Jews into what Christendom has called the Holy Land. These efforts have been strongly opposed by the large Arab population which now owns or controls most of the land area of Palestine. The Arabs, fearing encroachment upon their lands and holding a bitter traditional hatred for all of Jewry, have resorted to force of arms to gain their end. This situation has caused the British authorities no small discomfort. A comparatively large garrison of British troops must be maintained in that area in order to prevent an outbreak of open warfare between the Jews and the Arabs.

Of late the situation has been aggravated by the extreme belligerence of the Jewish people themselves. The British army units stationed in Palestine have uncovered numerous secret arms deposits in various Jewish sections. The determination of the Jews to enter Palestine is further evidenced by the interception by British naval units of small gunboats, corvettes, landing craft and other small vessels loaded to the gun-whales with hopeful Jewish emigrants.

The British themselves are in somewhat of a dilemma. They are under considerable pressure from various groups and movements in their home islands as well as in America to allow the Jews access to Palestine, yet they are certain that such action will alienate the native Arab population of the Middle East. British foreign policy will not allow this to happen because this will mean that the Arabs will fall under Soviet Russia's influence. The British must keep the Arab population placated, for failure to do so means the loss of their valuable oil deposits and water access to the Indian Ocean and the far-flung outposts of the British Empire.

To understand why the Jews are so determined to enter Palestine,
one must see more than merely a desire to leave Europe which for centuries has been the scene of many bitter persecutions and pogroms at the hands of those who failed to understand their Christian obligations. Behind the scene of bloodshed and turmoil unfolding itself in Palestine today, lie deep religious convictions. The Jewish people are still laboring under the illusion that Christ must still come and that He must be born in Jerusalem. Not only are they misled in expecting a Messiah but they also believe that there shall be a literal re-establishment of the throne of David and the restoration of the temporal kingdom of Israel. There are many variations and elaborations of these notions and perhaps the best known of these in English-speaking society is the Zionist movement. That the Jews show such tenacity can only be explained by the fact that they believe that they have a holy cause.

The return of the Jews to Palestine is looked upon by many Protestant Fundamentalist groups as a prerequisite for the second coming of Christ. The Biblical basis for this notion is found in many prophetic passages of the Old Testament as well as certain passages in the New Testament, particularly in the book of Revelation. A misleading literal interpretation is given to passages where often the language of the author is obviously figurative. As a result there are numerous Gentile Christians who are actively agitating for the political leaders both in the U. S. and Britain to let down the immigration barriers in Palestine.

Those who march under the banner of the Reformed faith have always been reluctant to attach any special significance to the activities of the Jewish people. Reformed leaders have emphasized that there is only ONE people of God, those who know and recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and have been brought to a conscious knowledge of their salvation thru the sovereign grace of God.

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(IS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION DUE?)
"The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer."
Proverbs 30:25.

A familiar scene to all of you is the small mound of sand with diligent workers rushing to and fro in organized activity — some excavating, some searching for food, some tending her Majesty — the queen, some nursing the sick and wounded, while still others are guarding the portals. Let us investigate a few of these interesting phases of ant life.

Ants inhabit all the regions of the earth except the polar zones and places of high altitude. Approximately 6000 different species have been classified; all of these are social. (It might be well to note that bees are not primarily a social insect for only about 5 percent live in colonies). It is, indeed, amazing how complicated the life of the ant is. One author has said, "The ant colony has a complex system of civilization, lacking little except written laws and constitution. They certainly have laws, strict and impartial, which are rigidly enforced."

Occasionally, we observe winged ants flying about. Are they, perhaps, representatives of special species? Careful examination will reveal that only males and females (not the workers) possess wings — these are very essential in the life cycle of the ant for they enable the mature members to perform their nuptial flight — tragedy in disguise, for, as Maeterlinch aptly remarks, "Love wears the face of death." After the fertilization takes place the male immediately succumbs, while the female looses her wings, digs a hole in the earth and there entombs herself. In this condition she spends several weeks subsisting on a little store of honey-dew and the tissues and muscles of her own body. The wing muscles which are now no longer useful are completely reabsorbed. During this process of entombment she lays a small number of eggs periodically. When finally the eggs hatch into larvae, the mother ravenously hungry, proceeds to devour her own young. Then again she has sufficient strength to lay more eggs. This vicious circle frequently continues several months until a few larvae escape, breaking open the tomb and obtaining food for themselves and the mother. Prosperity has come! No longer is it necessary to maintain her existence by consuming her offspring. Now all of her time and energy can be spent laying eggs night and day,
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until her death. In spite of her sacrifice and hardships she outlives the males and workers, the latter of whom live for five or six years, while the female sometimes exceeds the age of fifteen.

One of the most interesting aspects of this order of social insects is their method of communication and orientation. In spite of the fact that these creatures possess several eyes, they, nevertheless, have very poor vision. How is it possible, then, to distinguish friend or foe? After several years of painstaking research and experimentation with ants, Miss Field arrived at the conclusion that their sense of smell is very keen and is located in the last seven segments of their hairlike antennae (feelers). According to her, each segment is adapted to perceive a different odor. The last segment discerns the smell of the nest, the sixth the age of its workers, the fifth the scent of her own trail, while another the secretion of the queen. If the last segment is amputated it will be unable to distinguish its own nest, and, consequently, will be killed. If the fifth segment of the antennae is removed it would be impossible to recover its own trail.

Not only do the antennae take the place of eyes, but they also function as organs of speech—a silent language it is but a forceful one. Invariably, when ants meet they may be seen tapping one another rapidly with their antennae. When anger or fear are to be communicated ants strike their heads against neighboring members of the colony, and, they in turn, pass on the message to those ants nearest to them. This continues until the message is conveyed to all, and immediately measures are taken to protect the group from impending danger and the stalwart soldiers form their line for action.

To prove that ants have a definite means of communication, permit me to cite one of Sir John Lubbach's experiments. He placed two small saucers equally distant from the formicary (nest) and placed four larvae in one saucer and fifty larvae in the other saucer. An ant was placed in each saucer. Both carried a larva to the nest and returned for another. However, the ant returning to the dish containing fifty larvae had approximately four times as many helpers to assist it.

In its intricate mode of life—
The aspect a picture does portray.
The greatness of the Mastermind,
Who providentially guides its way.

(To be continued)
Convention Reflections

This is the first Convention I attended. I think Hudsonville did a fine job planning it. I enjoyed it very much. The speeches were instructive and edifying. The day was filled with Christian fellowship. I think we as young people should be very thankful for the leaders God has given us to deliver such wonderful speeches. I pray that the Lord will sanctify these words to our hearts and lives. I hope by next year Grand Haven will join the Federation.

Ralph Vander Lee
Grand Haven, Mich.

* * *

It isn’t difficult for me to give a few remarks concerning the Convention. The best of compliments are due the Hudsonville Y. P. S. for their excellent efforts put forth making the convention so worth while. Everything worked out so remarkably well and according to schedule. It was good to meet again with all the young people from various societies, to renew acquaintances and make new friends with those who are one in the faith.

Audrey Flikkema.
Manhattan, Mont.

* * *

I have attended every one of our PRYPSF Conventions, and the one in Hudsonville topped them all. This convention was very well organized, smoothly run, and the programs kept everyone occupied at the right time.

The speeches were outstanding, with the one delivered at the banquet, outstanding above all for its practical and up-to-date fitness, nicely delivered. The banquet program was good, except the movie. Personally I disapprove of movies at our conventions. I could produce good scriptural reasons for my disapproval, if anyone wanted them.

The outstanding feature of the convention was the genuine spirit of good-will and friendliness noticeable among the future parents of our churches. We felt the warmth of Christian fellowship. May God continue to bless our young People’s Societies.

Rev. L. Vermeer, Pella, Iowa.

* * *

The convention was certainly enjoyed and as to the schedule every event was exactly on time and the entire two days were very well managed. Nothing was missing, it was all complete. The food was delicious, just right. Also spiritually, the food had all the nutritious value it could possibly have contained and as a result we Protestant Reformed youth, in those two days, have eaten and digested food which most surely cause us to grow in strength and beauty.

Jean Dykstra, Grand Rapids.
Iowa Group.


Below: Waiters and Waitresses at the Banquet.
BEACON LIGHTS

This was our first convention and we looked forward to attending for a long time with high expectations, and now that it is over we recall these two days of conventioning with pleasure and enthusiasm. We had an unusually good time and this was largely due to the well planned entertainment and christian spirit of all those attending.

Jane Reitsma, Grand Rapids.

Pleasant memories of a delicious pancake breakfast, of the theme song echoing from the buses on the way to Tunnel Park, of a good time at the beach, climaxed by the banquet and Rev. Hofman’s inspirational address to “the most beautiful audience in the world”, linger with those who attended the convention this year.

Gertrude Yonker.
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Opening my Convention Souvenir Booklet brings back a flood of happy recollections. It reminds me of two days packed with happenings which gives me joy to think back upon. Music, triumphant music, a theme song to warm a Christian’s heart, addresses by our ministers that reminded us that strength to bear, endure, suffer and resist is not found in us but in Jesus. That we must be touched with the brush of God’s grace dipped in the blood of Christ. A taste of God’s creation in the shade of beautiful trees and the sparkling blue waters of Lake Michigan.

To me they were two days of Christian fellowship, hope and inspiration.

Harriet Schipper, Redlands.

The Convention is past but its many memories will long remain with me. Hudsonville did a wonderful job of making this convention such a success. It was a great privilege that we, as young people, might spend two days of Christian fellowship together. I enjoyed every part of the convention from the business meeting to the speeches through the tour and ending with the wonderful banquet. Everything was well planned so as to give every one an enjoyable time of friendship with one another.

Thanks to the Host Committee and to all those who made this year’s convention a success. Right now we look forward to our next convention at Fuller. See you there!

Willametta Van Baren.
South Holland, Ill.

As a delegate of the sixth Convention but the first I have attended, I thoroughly enjoyed it and I think it was very well planned.

Our places of lodging were excellent and the hospitality of those who opened their homes will not be forgotten. The meetings were well directed and the speakers were
Partial View of Banquet.

Above: Busses which took the young people from Grand Rapids to Hudsonville and Tunnel Park.

Below: Another View of Banquet.
very interesting. The banquet also was excellent.

Jennie Toewater,  
Kalamazoo, Mich.  

* * *

In my opinion the 1946 Convention was grand from start to finish. I believe Hudsonville should receive much credit for the great work they did. I enjoyed the speeches and believe all those that listened have certainly derived much spiritual benefit from them. The banquet climaxed both days and could not have been better. It has been wonderful to once more get together with all those who hold the same principles, and we can all say—it was good to have been there. I'm sure we're all looking forward with enthusiasm to our next convention.

Josie Lanting, S. Holland.  

* * *

I enjoyed this year's convention more than any other I have ever had the privilege to attend. The convention was held in a spirit of rejoicing, which was developed by the excellent speeches given by the various ministers on the theme, "The Strength and Beauty of Youth." The lectures were practical, interesting and beneficial to everyone who heard them. The outstanding feature of the convention was that each activity was scheduled according to time and place. There was no confusion. A strong sense of unity prevailed, and the bond of Christian fellowship was not broken. Our congratulations to you, our Host Society, for the way in which you organized these days in convention.

Carl Reitsma, Grand Rapids.  

* * *

On behalf of the delegates, parents and friends of the Fourth Protestant Reformed Church we wish to thank you for the splendid time at the convention.

Are Yonker, Grand Rapids.  

* * *

The convention was wonderful! I had the pleasure of attending the Sixth Annual Convention at Hudsonville. Its many memories will long remain with me. Having been asked to give my impressions it is quite hard for me to begin as I could perhaps fill a dozen pages. The Young People's Society of Hudsonville should be congratulated for making this convention such a grand success. The convention was well planned. I especially enjoyed the three addresses given on the well-chosen theme, "The Strength and Beauty of Youth." Especially do we wish to thank the families of Hudsonville for their kind hospitality shown to us. So in the name of South Holland, I can, with assurance say, "Thanks, Hudsonville," and now we look forward to the next convention at Fuller. So get ready, we're coming!

Agnes Van Baren.  
South Holland, Ill.
Activities of the 6th Annual PRYP Convention

The Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation commenced their two convention days with registration and assignment of lodging on the morning of August 21 at the Hudsonville Church. A busy committee set to work getting details in order—and delegates and visitors got acquainted, autographing each other's souvenir booklets. We saw many new faces—and were especially glad to see some of our returned servicemen at our first peacetime convention in four years.

In the afternoon of that day, Mr. J. Howerzyl, our Federation president presided at our usual business meeting. A suggestion was brought by the Manhattan society to change the convention dates to the first part of August, as their harvest season comes the latter part of August. Each delegate was instructed to inform their society to this effect and let the Federation Board know of their decision. Other matters pertaining to delegates traveling expenses, secretary and treasurer's reports, and Beacon Lights financial report, were discussed and decided upon. Esther Society of Fuller Ave. was welcomed as a new member of the Federation. Ed Knott asked for the floor and gave a “boost for Beacon Lights”. Subscriptions have fallen off considerably, and the financial report revealed that many subscriptions were unpaid. It will be necessary for agents in all societies to do some soliciting but, of course, each society member should do his part.

The Federation Board was again appointed to complete the revision of the Constitution. After the election of officers our Federation Board consisted of the following members:—Edward J. Knott, Pres. Homer Hoeksema, Vice-Pres., Tillie Nobel, Sec’y. Gerald Vanden Berg. Treas., and Wilma Pastoor, Vice-Sec’y-Treas.

In the evening of the first convention day an inspirational mass meeting was held at Hughes Park. Our speaker was Rev. H. Hoeksema, who spoke on the topic: “The Strength of Youth”. This was a very enjoyable speech and we were entertained with musical selections by the Hudsonville Christian School Band and the Sjoerdzma quartet.

On Thursday morning the delegates and visitors enjoyed an excursion to Hughes Park for a pancake breakfast and to Tunnel Park by bus for lunch. Our after lunch speaker, Rev. J. De Jong addressed us on the topic: “Veterans in the Truth.”

A banquet on the evening of August 22 climaxed the 1946 Convention. Rev. W. Hofman gave a very interesting speech on the topic “The Beauty of Youth”, and Don
Group from California and Montana

Above: South Holland and Oaklawn group.
Below: Lunch being served at Tunnel Park.
Convention Committee Report

Past again! and the 6th convention already!

Indeed it has been a pleasure as host society to have you all as our guests at this last convention. Sure, it was work, but this work was fun, too.

According to the minutes our committee started meeting in February. At this first meeting officers were elected and various committees were appointed: such as lodging, catering, program and patron committees. They all did their part willingly and all through the other meetings more committees were appointed to do that which came along.

For patron's money the committee of four boys visited all the families of the congregation. We received a very liberal boost for which we want to thank everyone of them—also the business men.

Names of the delegates and alternates were received by sending blanks to the secretary of each society. Tickets were also sent to each secretary to sell, so we could get a little idea of how many were coming. They all returned the blanks, ticket money, and unsold tickets very promptly for which the committee is very grateful.

The last committee meeting was held the Monday before convention just to talk things over and get the last touches finished. Motion was made to adjourn when a knock came at the door. Three visitors had already arrived from Hull, Ia. So the societies that gave a convention before can imagine how we all felt.

Everything ran off smoothly both days, especially the pancake breakfast with our very able cook* who really knows how to make pancakes. I think everyone agreed on that. And not to be forgotten is the willing help all the ladies of the congregation gave us. The committee wishes to thank all the ladies who prepared the meals we had at the church and the beach; those who worked in the kitchen and all the couples that served at the banquet.

Last, but not least, we want to thank the speakers for their messages in making clear what is according to the Word of God the true “Strength and Beauty of Youth”, for this is after all the main purpose of the Young People's Convention.

In closing we hope to see you again D. V. at Fuller Ave. next year.

The Committee,
Freda Miedema, Sec'y.

(* See page 21 for picture.—Ed.)
Knoper and Jim Kok favored us with musical numbers. Moving pictures were shown—we sang our theme song—and Rev. Hoeksema closed with prayer.

All in all, the convention was very successful—and we look forward to the 1947 convention at Fuller Ave., Church, Grand Rapids.

Wilma Pastor.

Vice-Secretary.

PICTURE

Tunis Dykstra, Navy Cook, who prepared the pancake breakfast for 170 hungry conventioners.

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The Strength Of Youth

A summary of the address delivered by Rev. H. Hoeksema on the evening of Aug. 21 at the Convention of the Protestant Reformed Young People’s Societies.

(Summary by Harriet Schipper)

"World War II is over. War, however, is not over. The anti-Christian power will be destroyed by the breath of the mouth of our Lord. Therefore, we need to be strong. Our subject is based on the presupposition that youth is strong." These were the opening words of Rev. Hoeksema’s speech on “The Strength of Youth” at our inspirational meeting in Hughes Park, in Hudsonville, Michigan.

The speaker went on to say that there is something peculiar about the strength of youth distinguishing it from the strength of the adult. From the Old Testament we learn that the beauty of the young man is his strength. John writes to the young men because the word of God abides in them.

What does the strength of youth consist of? Why is it needed? How can it be cultivated?

There are different types of strength and scripture speaks of it in various terms. In the passive sense there is strength to bear, endure, suffer. It is also used in the sense of living energy, such as the electric current in a wire or ray, and brute animal strength con-
trolled by mere animal instinct. But the climax of the types of power is the strength found only in man. Man has skill and ability. You find skill in all about you. In the airplane, edifice, sculpture, atom bomb. Brutal skill and strength are combined in man who stands at the pinnacle of God's creation. We may also speak of different aspects of strength from the point of view of the man who bears it. There is the physical strength of a strong heart, supple limb, clear intellect, the power to grasp problems and find solutions. Man has psychological, natural strength.

There is also another distinction. That is, between natural and spiritual strength. Man is not only soul and body who lives a life in connection with the present world but he is also spirit, related to God, adapted to dwell in covenant friendship with Him. Sin has changed this relation not into weakness but into just the opposite of friendship. Through Christ, not through us, this relationship has been restored by the power of grace.

We do not belittle youth's physical strength. We do not like to see young men and women without natural strength, listless. Rather we rejoice when they lift up their heads and walk with life, hope, and courage shining from their eyes. But the point is this—all that strength means nothing if it were not for that other power, spiritual strength. Natural power has no meaning if it is not sustained by spiritual power. If there is no grace of God all strength is pressed into the service of the devil. Youth is a period of development in natural strength of soul and body. In this connection we mention three characteristics: Youth is abounding, youth is impetuous, youth is not mature. Also from a spiritual aspect life is characterized by this three fold view.

Youth is abounding. Energy develops faster than it can be used. There is always a surplus. We cannot make up the time wasted in childhood or adolescence. "Remember thy creator in the days of thy YOUTH".

Youth is impetuous. It is not suffering or enduring, but wants to be active in societies, radio, Sunday School. Youth wants to fight rather than suffer.

Youth is not mature or stable. Reality teaches us that the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil are very frequently peculiarly adapted to overcome the youthful Christian.

We must be instructed in spiritual knowledge. Societies serve a very important purpose. In society we give ourselves in mutual instruction. Our societies should never become mere social clubs. Physically, mentally, spiritually we must be trained in practical war-
fare and use that strength in the world, in spiritual warfare. Our strength is sustained and supplied through the channel of constant prayer. That strength is not in us but in Christ. God will give His spirit and grace to such as ask of Him. A young man or woman thus trained will be strong and remain unmoved. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Veterans In The Truth

A summary of the address delivered by Rev. J. D. De Jong on August 22 at the Convention of the Protestant Refomed Young People’s Societies.

(Summary by Tillie Nobel)

A word of welcome was first of all addressed to our veterans. By veteran we do not necessarily make the implication that one is old, but that one has had long experience or practice in some particular service. This term is used especially in regard to soldiers.

There is the common soldier; but also the soldier in the Kingdom of Christ. We, as Protestant Reformed youth, must be soldiers in that Kingdom, and our battle is therefore a spiritual battle. In order to wage that battle we, like the common soldier, must have armor and our armor must be the Word of Truth.

We, as youth, are still in basic training. This basic training is extremely important. There are various places where we can receive this basic training, and our society (to which we will soon return) is one of them. We must train in order that we may learn to know the truth. What are we doing to become soldiers founded in the truth? Is the primary purpose of our society to study the Word of God? It should be, and this we should do diligently, faithfully, and consistently. Are we?

Our weakness today is our lack of knowledge of the truth and lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of the truth. We, the young people, are the future of our Protestant Reformed homes and Churches. We must take our places, we must be prepared! Now is the time for our preparation, while we are young and still single. By the time we become married, we should be veterans of the truth.

It is true, we may have a good leader, a fine minister, but we must remember that we are the ones who must do the studying—we must love the truth and make ourselves ready and able to defend it.

Certainly we need help and guidance but do not forget we need exercising. Let us then study that we may become veterans in the truth that no one take our crown.
The sixth annual Young People's Convention is now an event of the past, and for every one who attended, it was two days filled with Christian fellowship, spiritual edification, and new and renewed friendships. On the final night of the Convention the Rev. Walter Hofman of Holland, Michigan addressed the delegates and visitors gathered in the gymnasium of the Hudsonville High School. He had been asked to further develop the convention theme by speaking on "The Beauty of Youth".

In the first place he stated that we as Protestant Reformed youth were the most potentially beautiful audience ever gathered. But also on the other hand that we were very ugly—we need only to look in a mirror to see our scars and blemishes: we need only to look in the mirror of God's Word to see the filth of sin that marks us and covers us. If we first can truly see how ugly we are, then only are we beautiful. Very characteristically the speech was divided into the customary three parts and in the first place he pictured to us that beauty is found alone in Christ Jesus. We of ourselves cannot find it, buy it, or make it, but must be washed in the blood of Christ, be renewed by His Spirit, and then we will receive that beauty from God which He gives us freely in His Son. In the second place it was explained what true beauty really is. Never can we buy it such as cosmetics or other artificial beautifications, but it must consist of our daily walk in life. We reflect beauty when we walk in the way of God's will and are in perfect harmony with it. That walk of beauty will lead us to that house of many mansions where we will be His jewels and shine in beauty forever. And in the third place, beauty is revealed by God in Christ Jesus His Son. He is the only source of beauty and reveals it in His perfect Goodness and Grace to His people.

Hosea compares the beauty of Israel to the purity of the lilies, to the strength of the cedars of Lebanon and to the fruitfulness of the olive tree. We as Protestant Reformed young people also have that beauty: pure beauty when we respect ourselves in body and soul as being the temples of God; strength of beauty when we say NO to the ugliness of this world—to shows and dances. and say YES to God, to church attendance, to catechism and society. Also the
strength of beauty is reflected when we say yes to the truth—to the truth as we Protestant Reformed churches have it and to know it so that we love it. And lastly, that fruitfulness of beauty is revealed in us when we use our God-given talents to His glory and honor, confess His name, take part in the church, pray without ceasing and particularly to choose a vocation in His service.

God created man the most beautiful thing in all creation and man returned all that beauty to God in the way of service to God. But man fell, his beauty was marred, and scarred and he took upon himself the ugly image of the devil so that he was completely and totally ugly. But God in His infinite mercy incorporated His chosen and elect people in Christ Jesus. His Son and washed them in His precious blood so that they emerged beautiful and unspotted. We stand at the end of the ages—in the center of the brushmark of God’s grace. We have the complete and perfect revelation of God Who is our beauty and Who will some day take us to that heavenly home to shine for Him forever. Dare to be beautiful, desire to be beautiful, shun the ugliness of this world and your reward will be eternal life and joy in the presence of Him Who is the Source of all beauty.

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

Tertullian


One of the great if not the greatest of the Latin Apologists was Tertullian. You will recall that as we pointed out before, the Apologists were men in the New Testament church who defended Christianity against the attacks hurled at it by its enemies in the early years of the New Testament church when Christianity was a relatively new doctrine.

Tertullian was born in Carthage in 150 A.D. and is reported to have died between the years 220 and 240 A.D. Little is known of his early life. This much is plain that he received an excellent education. His conversion to Christianity was sudden and decisive. In the year 207 he was ordained as a presbyter in the church in Carthage. Later in life he broke away from the established church and joined the sect of the Montanists. In one of our next installments we will have occasion to speak more of this Mon-
tanism which Tertullian championed and Gnosticism which he attacked with all the power that was in him.

Tertullian, without a doubt, was a very talented man. His works, which are still in existence, number thirty-seven and show great ability. There are other books which were written by him, but they have become lost and it cannot be determined exactly how many books he did write. His writing is very powerful and shows him to be a man who is not easily frightened by his enemies. When he wrote, he did not beg for attention. So powerful is his writing that by its power he commands attention.

In his work “Ad Nationem” he defended the Christians over against various evil accusations which were heaped upon them in his days. In this work he proved that these accusations were based on unreasoning hatred only. There was, for example, the accusation that the Christians were the cause of earthquakes. This accusation, by the way, reveals how foolish the carnal mind is, full of superstition and evil intent. In answer to this particular accusation Tertullian pointed out the fact that there were many earthquakes before Christianity ever made its appearance in the history of the world. He also pointed out in regard to an other accusation hurled at God’s people that there are no witnesses to the crimes of which the Christians were accused.

A few of the fundamental truths that you and I believe and which Tertullian taught may be found in the seventeenth chapter of his book “Apologeticus”. He declared that there is one God who is Creator, Invisible and Infinite. He maintained that we have a testimony older than anything the heathen can produce. This testimony is the “Sacred Book”, the Bible which is of divine origin. The fulfillment of prophecy, he maintained, is proof that it is of divine origin. Of Christ he said that He was God, the Word of God and was born of a virgin. One interesting point that he makes is that the epistle to the Hebrews was written by Barnabas. Most commentators ascribe it to the apostle Paul, but who its author is cannot be determined. Tertullian insisted that it was written by Barnabas.

Beginning in our next installment we will consider more closely a few of the heresies that were prevalent in these early years of the New Testament church together with the defense the church presented against these false doctrines.

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INTRODUCTION

After a recess of several months it is well that we introduce our readers once again to the study of the Book of Job. By this time we realize that the study of the Scriptures is not popular,—especially the study of the book of Job. It seems more suitable to many to confine their labors to the most simple and to a discussion of themes which result in the expression of worn out platitudes. It always remains the work of the diligent few to persevere in the study of the Word of God. That is true in the churches in general and it is true in every society as well. Nevertheless the work of the Gideon's band must be continued.

For our own encouragement we ought to review the values and the benefits of the study of the book of Job. We can postulate, first of all, without any contradiction that this book is valuable for a special study for the child of God. This means we merely assume this because it is the Word of God. Such is the sweeping statement made by the apostle Paul to Timothy in II Tim. 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

It follows from this that this book ought to be placed on the agenda of books for study for youth. If it is voiced that such is too difficult for youth, we ought to see that the consequence of such opinion is that later in life no more effort is put forth to ever master the difficult studies of the Word. It is exactly the time of life, in youth, before the evil days draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them. Youth, furthermore, is especially adapted by God to tackle such problems of life. They do not have the wisdom and judgment of the elders, yet it is the ripe age to begin their task. Besides the apostle Paul had in mind the instruction of youth in II Tim. 3:16 for vs. 17 speaks of the purpose, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." From this it follows that we never ought to omit any portion of the Word of God.

Let us consider a list of the benefits derived from a study of the
book of Job.

1. It gives us a glimpse into the soul struggles as well as physical suffering of an individual child of God. Job, under inspiration, gives us to know of his inmost doubts and fears, his intense soul agony and prayers. 2. It teaches us about the attitude and arguments of mistaken Christians as they are represented by the three friends. If there is any argument in the Scripture for the common grace theory it is the arguments of the three friends and the arguments further, are clearly defeated in this book of Job. 3. It opens to us the whole problem of suffering and evil. It tells us of the occasion, the course, the benefit and the outcome of the suffering of the righteous. It reveals to us something of the theodicy, with the deepest reason for suffering. 4. The Book of Job typifies for us the sufferings of Christ and leads us to see the need for the Redeemer from our own point of view, as well as from God’s point of view. It makes the Christ and faith in Him, a historical reality in the faith of Job. 5. It does all this for us in a most beautiful, poetical, and penetrating style. We should linger over it.

We cannot review the outlines and material that has been studied. Nevertheless, it may be profitable that we pause a moment to recall some of the outstanding passages of the book that we have encountered so far. We would list the following: Job 1:20, 21; 2:10; 8:20, 21; 13:15; 14:13, 14; 16:21; 19:25-27. Besides there are many long and beautiful descriptions of reality that are worth remembering. You may have found many such words which you will be inclined to quote often.

CHAPTER 25

"No Way Out"

The above theme seems to me to characterize the conclusion we must draw from this speech of Bildad in chapter 25.

1. It expresses my impression because it is the last reply of the three friends, and it leaves them without an answer to Job.

2. In the second place, it expresses, "no way out", because this last word of Bildad, amounts to just that conclusion for all mankind.

1. In this chapter Bildad briefly points to the power and holiness of God. He does this when he says, "dominion and fear are with him." God has all dominion and also commands all to fear Him. He also has power to make peace in heaven, if there is war in heaven. To be sure therefore, He maketh wars to cease on earth. He has, moreover, hosts of armies to do His bidding. Angels are His ministers that do His good pleasure. And His light is given to all. Light is the symbol of all life and good things. Every good gift cometh from the Father of lights. To emphasize the holi-
ness of God, Bildad compares it to the stars. "The stars are not pure in His sight." From this correct view of God, Bildad, and therefore, the other friends, draw the conclusion that man cannot be justified with God. This conclusion is found in vs. 4: "How then can man be justified with God? This is his conclusion because he also admits that man is totally depraved. Notice this also in vs. 4: "or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?": and also in vs. 6: "How much less man, that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?"

Clearly Bildad comes to the conclusion that there is no way out for mankind because man is corrupt and God is most holy and almighty.

II. A question arises in this connection. How is this last conclusion of Bildad consistent with the view three friends? Job had maintained his integrity, even though he was beset by many doubts and fears and affections towards God. While the three friends had maintained in an ever increasing intensity, (which was very interesting to follow) that Job was wicked. Yet these men had proposed almost in a Pelagian way that it was possible for Job in the way of confession and change of life to gain the favor of God. They were Pelagian, materialistic at times, confused and cruel, yet that seemed to be their point. Their comfort was that in their way there was a way out. Hence the question, is this not inconsistent?

Our answer is, in the course of the arguments there is a change on both sides, both of Job and the three friends. The change of Job is a continual progress toward the light. The three friends shift their position to maintain their stand against Job. That is often the case with the opposition to the truth. The opposition is not as much interested in establishing a case so much as to break down the truth. For that reason within limits it will easily shift position. Here, in the debate the friends as a final despairing thrust now assume some of the self evident points and draw the conclusion which they think Job comes to, there is no hope. They mean to give this blow to Job. that there is no hope for him: but they have proved too much. They have said that which was not right of God and have shut off hope for all mankind. They point to God's holiness and power and fail to see any hope of mercy and salvation.

III. Remarks: 1. This point of Bildad and the three friends, which they express almost in their bitterness is, in spite of themselves, their best contribution yet in the debate. It is the point we all are first of all confronted with in our desire for salvation. It is the point of the first part of the Heidelberg Catechism: Considering our sins and miseries, there is no way out. How real is the problem of the Catechism.
is the same problem not merely discussed by a theologian, an instructor, but by a real individual tossed to and fro in the deepest darkness of the problem.

2. This point although at first seemingly adding to our problem and suffering, is a contribution and a solution. It leads us to the way of God's justification and salvation in the Redeemer.

3. This point is an appropriate beginning for our further study of the book of Job. It is the beginning of the solution to the problems.

CHAPTER 26

A Doxology.

This twenty-sixth chapter is the introduction of Job's last speech, and we have called it a doxology. It is this because Job begins his parable with praise of the infinite greatness of God.

1. Job first criticizes the friends and especially the last speaker, Bildad. (vss. 2-4). 1. They have, he accuses, failed to help him who is helpless and without strength to help himself. 2. They failed also to counsel him who was without wisdom. 3. And they instead have given a detailed description of the reality as they saw it, which amounted to an impossible, pessimistic picture of reality. They could only point to the things of this life, "the thing as it is", and their best pictures were only vanity as they finally had to admit in the speech of Bildad. 4. Finally Job is very critical of Bildad in vs. 4. He, in effect, says that his speech suffered from poverty of thought,—"to whom hast thou uttered words." And further he accuses Bildad of borrowing his thoughts from others,—"whose spirit came from thee?"

II. His doxology excels in praise and understanding of God's glory. (vss. 5-13). 1. To understand the fifth verse we should read the Revised Version. Job is speaking about the inhabitants of the deep, or of the deceased, and of them he says that God's power reaches them, so that they tremble. 2. Deeper than the depths of the sea, or the shades of death, Job mentions that hell is naked to God. Nothing is hid from Him. (vs. 6). 3. More beautiful and accurate than any Copernicus ever could express it Job describes how the earth is upheld by God. (vs. 7). 4. In vs. 8 Job speaks of the firmament, the waters above the clouds. 5. The throne of God is hid from us, it is the heaven of heavens. (vs. 9). This corresponds to all the other passages of Scripture which speak of God's dwelling place, and how that a cloud separates us from it. 6. God has bound the waters in their limits with such a perfect boundary as that which divides the night from the day. 7. The pillars of heaven are usually understood as the mountains of the earth,
which reach to the heavens and therefore are called the pillars of heaven. These mighty mountains are even shaken at the voice of God. 8. In vs. 12 we are called to mind how that the power of God controls the mighty sea. He divides the sea and this reminds us of his dividing of the Red Sea. And He dashes to pieces the proud who oppose Him. 9. In vs. 13 we are taken to behold the works of God in the heavens. By His spirit He has garnished or made beautiful the heavens with stars. By the crooked serpent we must think of the dragon constellation in the northern group of stars which circles between the two bears.

In this doxology we are taken from the depths to the heights, from earth and under the earth to the heavens to see how God rules over all. He is the sovereign Lord for Job. Job excels Bildad and the three friends in his observations of God's wonders. These observations should come into the range of our meditations. Rather than stay within the four walls of a society social, we should be led to contemplate these great things of the universe, the works of God in their mysterious majesty and awesome power.

III. A fitting conclusion. Vs. 14. After Job has described the glorious works of God, he concludes by say that this is only part of His ways! We only have the extreme edge of His great work and hear only the whisperings of His world, says Job. (Cf. Revised Version). The great things, the thunder of His power, we cannot understand. This is always a fitting conclusion to our doxologies.

CHAPTER 27

Job's Parable.

His speech is thus called in the first verse. By this we must understand a proverb, or oracle, a speech of deep thought in an elevated tone.

I. His position maintained. With strong language Job reiterates his stand that he is innocent and that the charge of the friends is not true. (vss. 1-6). In this we can see the error of Job. It was continued to the very last and suffered rebuke from Elihu and from God. It is not so much that Job was wicked, but Job is charging God with an injustice. Vs. 2: "Who hath taken away my judgment".

II. He next states his position as to the lot of the ungodly.

1. The lot of the ungodly is considered now as undesirable. (vs 7). This is the idea of "let my enemy be as the wicked". 2. This is further expressed in vs. 8. There is no hope or gain for the unrighteous. 3. The awfulness of the lot of the wicked is that in their distress their cries are never heard by God. (Vs. 9). 4. The ungodly will never serve the Lord. (Vs. 10). 5. In vs. 11, Job emphasizes that
he will give the truth concerning the lot of the wicked, after it has been a subject of debate between them. 6. In vs. 12 Job reproves them for not seeing that which is so evident. 7. From vss. 13-23 he once more goes into a detailed description about the lot of the wicked. a) It is the portion of the wicked as they really receive it from the hand of God. They who are here in this life oppressors shall in the day of judgment receive their just reward. (Vs. 13). The children of the ungodly also shall suffer. (Vs. 14). We are reminded of the judgment of God unto the third and fourth generation. We can see, too, how that the children of warlike nations must perish with the sword of those who rise up in inevitable revolt. c) The judgments of the wicked shall be so awful that the widows of those slain shall not weep. Their grief is too shocking. (Vs. 15). The riches of the wicked are not for his enjoyment. If he thinks that when he lies down to rest he shall rise again for another day, he shall be disappointed in death. And his death is a terror. e) In vss. 20-22 the final fate of the ungodly is described as complete and awful destruction. Notice the expressions used. “A tempest stealth him away in the night.” This is sudden and inevitable death. “The east wind carrieth him away.” The east wind is the most violent of all winds, in western Asia. Finally notice how that Job finishes the pictures of awful judgment by saying, “For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand.” We are reminded of the word of the apostle to the Hebrews. “It is terrible to fall into the hands of the living God”. Also of the words of Jesus, “Then shall they say to the mountains, fall on us.” f) Finally men also shall despise him. (Vs. 23). God and men are against the wicked.

III. The question is, does Job change his position here from his former position in which he described the wicked as having a prosperous life, in which he expressed himself similar to Asaph? The answer is that apparently he changes his position. But fundamentally it is the same. Before it was the view apparent to us often, which view he desired his friends to consider in their mistaken view. He here gives the real lot of the wicked.

--- NOTICE ---

There will be a meeting of the complete staff of Beacon Lights, editors and contributors, together with the Federation Board in the Fuller Ave. church basement, October 17 at 8:00.

Please Be Present!

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