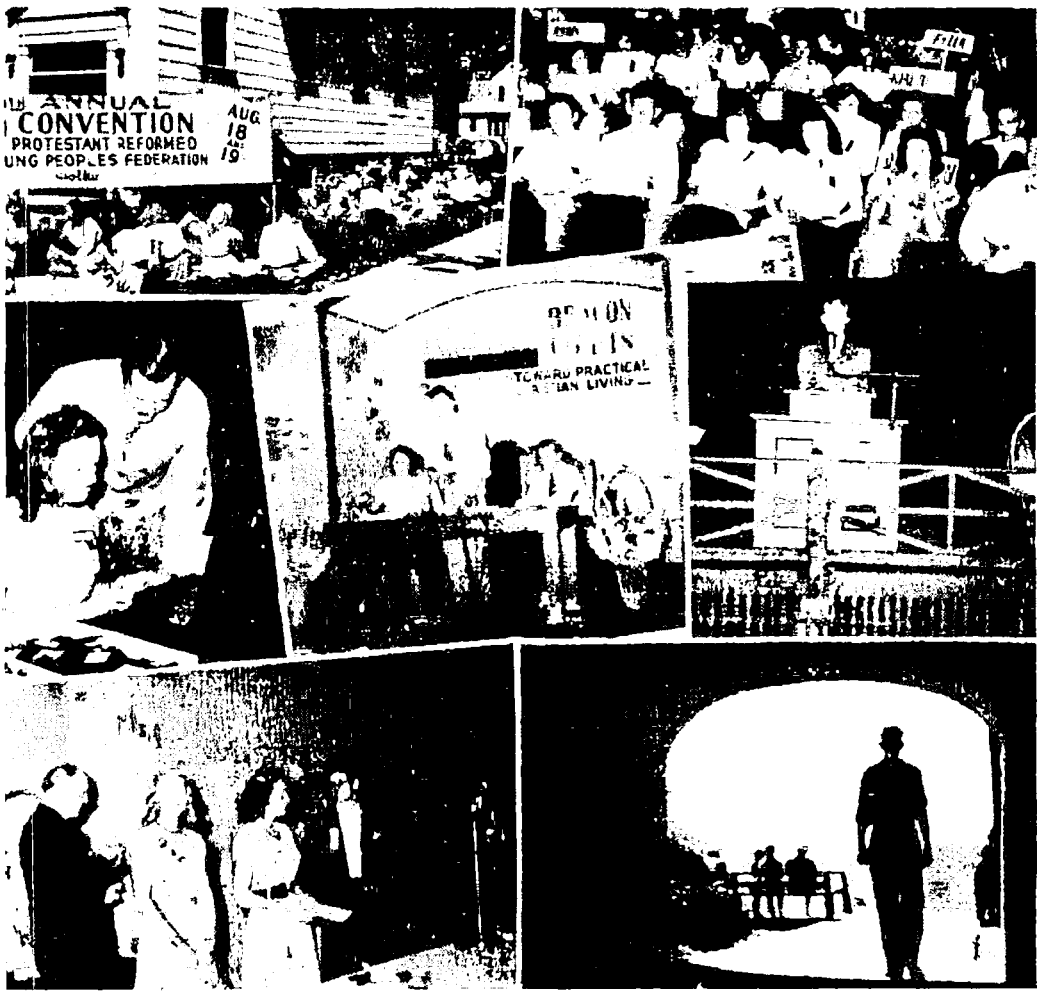
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



OCTOBER 1948

BEACON LIGHTS

Beacon Lights is published Monthly except July and September.
Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.
(Subscription Price $1.50 Per Year)

Beacon Lights is published by the Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation, 354 Diamond Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids.

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Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME IX | OCTOBER — 1948 | NUMBER 1

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS . . .
"A Glorious Heritage"

INSPIRATIONAL ADDRESS BY REV. H. HOEKSEMA
P. R. Y. P. CONVENTION, HOLLAND, MICH.

Summary by Chas. H. Westra

"Delegates, friends, and visitors, I am very thankful to be here with you. Last year I was with the convention in spirit, and through the facilities of a loud speaker, I tuned in on the first session. But now I am able to be here, and address this P. R. Y. P. Convention," were the speaker's opening words.

Rev. Hoeksema went on to state that the theme: "Faith Of Our Fathers" is worth our most serious consideration. It refers, not only to the faith which our fathers had in God, but also to that which our fathers believed, confessed, and held to. As in the song, faith of our fathers means the faith of our Reformed fathers, and so we view it tonight.

We live in an age which is very much adverse to the Reformed faith of our fathers. The church of today says: "We must do away with the differences in Creed, Liturgy, etc., and become one!" We all cherish this idea of a really united church. We truly do. This one united church would have a united front against the powers of the world. But the unity which is taught today is not a true unity. It would be a unity of concessions, and Christ did not mean anything like that when He said: "Let us be One". Of this unity we as Protestant Reformed people must have no part! It means the weakening and breaking down of the TRUTH!

The speaker called our attention to the fact that a church is strong, regardless of the number of its members, only if it possesses the true Gospel. Where THE TRUTH is, there is the TRUE CHURCH. Because of this, we have a calling —a calling to *"be specific"*. In connection with this we may ask three questions.

I. *In what respect must we be specific?*

The modern church takes its stand against miracles, inspiration of the Scriptures, Divinity of Christ, Total Depravity of man,

etc. In a word, against the faith of our Reformed Fathers. Over against them we must be specific, and hold fast to the truths of the Reformed doctrine which they deny.

We must be specific, even in the midst of the Orthodox Church, of which there are many shades. For instance the Arminian, which believes in no Sovereign Grace, and the Baptist, which holds to the conviction of no Covenant. And even more, we must be specific in the matter of "Common Grace". It is astounding that a Reformed Church can teach this doctrine, and not be ashamed. God's grace is never common like rain, etc. It is particular to His people forever. Does God ever restrain sin in a special internal working in the heart of the ungodly? We say "NO!" Is not the sinner restrained by circumstances, talent, etc., and his sinning used to God's own purpose? The sinner do good? Remember, ALL THAT IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN.

II. *Why must we be specific?*

It is our calling to maintain the Truth, clearly and sharply. We must never say: "The difference will not keep anyone out of heaven". Remember: Salvation is up to God! It is not our concern! We are here for one purpose, and that is—*to glorify God.* That IS our concern! We must be faithful to the truth of God! We must proclaim it to His Glory!

For this purpose we were separated in 1924. Study the History of Our Churches, therein you will find our calling. In 1924 the "Three Points", of false doctrine were formulated. That church showed herself to be the false church, even to the extent of casting out minis-

ters and persecuting them.

We must never take these things lightly! NEVER! Never may we take the guilt of that church upon ourselves! Many might do that in order to gain a wife or husband! God forbid!

III. *How can we accomplish this purpose?*

The speaker emphasized that this purpose can be accomplished by the faithful ministry of the Word; by the attendance of the congregation at church services, catechism classes, congregational meetings, and Young People's Societies, and by instructing our children in "*The Faith*". We must work till all Protestant Reformed children are educated in the Protestant Reformed truth.

We must let our light shine in this world of darkness, by being specific in the "Faith of our Fathers", to the realization of our one great, glorious and all-important goal—the Glory and Honor of our Heavenly Father.

"Its Vindication"

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE P.R.Y.P. CONVENTION BY REV. G. VOS.

Summary by Grace Theule

After a very delicious lunch, prepared by the committee, beneath the shady trees at Tunnel Park, the young people were requested to leave the tables and sit on the white sand at the foot of a sloping hill, which made a very impressive scene, as the Rev. G. Vos delivered his address, speaking on the theme of the convention, namely, "Faith of our Fathers — It's Vindication".

The speaker said that the young people had chosen a very popular theme. Entire Christendom, the Catholics included, do sing this song "Faith of our Fathers". Every sect and denomination profess this but it makes a vast difference what content you give both to "faith" and "fathers". What faith do you mean? What content do you give to faith? Whom have you in mind when you speak and sing of the fathers?

We speak of faith both in the objective and the subjective sense. Objectively, we have in mind the body of truth such as we confess it as churches. And, subjectively, as we have that truth by God's grace in our inmost heart and live it in the midst of the world. In the broadest sense of the word, our faith is the entire content of Holy Writ, revealed by God, given by inspiration of the Spirit, dwelling in the midst of the church of God, filling the hearts and minds of God's people.

But, even when we sing the song "Faith of our Fathers", we are and must be very particular and specific. You can sing even of

absolute predestination and still be beside the point. The same holds true of the Covenant of Grace. Every church speaks of that Covenant, but they deny the true interpretation of that doctrine, and therefore, I would like to say something about these two very specific doctrines which we have in mind when we speak of the "Faith of our Fathers".

First, then, of election.

Let us make this very practical. God had you, His elect, in mind from all eternity. Before the very foundation of the earth was laid, your name was written in heaven. And this doctrine is a very living and ever present doctrine. From the cradle to the grave, you are the elect of God. The dynamo of His love is ever upon you. He moves all the creatures of the earth and of the heavens, and all the host of hell to serve His purpose, to preserve His people, as you will see in the day of His judgment. All things in the heavens and on the earth move toward their eternal predestination. It is a very living thing. The elective love of God and His eternal grace and loving-kindness are over you and under you in the most ideal sense of the word. Please apply it to yourselves and you will see the beauty of such a wonderful doctrine. His everlasting arms are under you: He went to hell to find you in order to make you partaker of His wondrous grace.

And thus it is with that other very specific doctrine: His eternal Covenant of Grace. The very essence of that Covenant is friendship. Well, a friend tells all his heart to his friend. And that is exactly what our Divine Friend in that Covenant has done and does now. He has told you and is telling you all His mind and heart. All the beauty of the Godhead is shown to you in His beloved Son, and you

have that heart of God in the Bible. And we also give Him our heart. Eternally we empty our heart to Him in reverence, devotion, prayer and supplication, adoration and worship and praise of God.

This is the fundamental theme of the phrase "Faith of our Fathers". It is more than my poor voice can tell you. It lifts up our hearts to the everlasting heights. Such is the Gospel of which we are not ashamed.

And our fathers professed it. What do we mean with "Fathers"?

There are many of them mentioned in Hebrews 11. But I will take just one of them: the boy Abel. He believed the "Faith" of his "father", Adam. You can tell it by his specific sacrifice: the bleeding Lamb. Yes, he confessed it to his brother, Cain, and was killed for it. And thus it happened to all the fathers. They were killed for the faith that was in them and which they lived in the evil world.

Another is Jesus Christ, the Lord. Certainly the "Faith" of His Father was in Him, and He confessed it. All the angels and the celestial beings in heaven proclaim this and shall proclaim it in the beautiful music of heaven. In the midst of this world, inspired by the devil, think of the confessing Jesus who went to the cross. And if you are filled with the "Faith of our Fathers", the precious truth of the crucified Christ lives in you, and then you are hated. All through history those people are hated and persecuted. Their faith is ever assailed. Your own flesh is against you. The holy Apostle Paul said: "For Thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Rom. 8:36.

Today we laugh and joke, and I also enjoy that, but let us remember, life is serious. We are hated in the world; that is our portion. But, I am happy to say: You are vindicated!

Of all the saints who were vindicated I will mention again the boy Abel. Yes, he was clubbed to death, but the very moment he died, God took him up to heaven. All the saints were hated for the faith they professed so that they were stoned, sawn asunder, were tempted, and slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy:), they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and dens and caves of the earth. But they had the love of God in their heart, and were vindicated in that love. They were vindicated in their heart. Second, they were vindicated in the heart of the world and the devils. They know that they are better than themselves. And, third, they shall be publicly vindicated in the day of judgment. Then we shall see a wondrous spectacle:

(cont. on page 9

"A Mighty Challenge"

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE P.R.Y.P. CONVENTION BY REV. C. HANKO.

Summary by Frances Vanden Berg

In the closing speech of the recent convention, we were privileged to hear the Rev. C. Hanko present us with the challenge of being faithful to the "Faith of our Fathers". The speaker began by defining our convention theme, "The Faith of our Fathers". He explained that *faith* as the faith that is revealed in the Scriptures, and which lives in the hearts of the believers of all ages, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. By our *fathers*, of course, we as covenant youth, have in mind the true members of the church of Jesus Christ. They loved, cherished, developed, and maintained that faith and by the grace of God were faithful even unto death, so that glorious heritage might be passed on to us. This glorious heritage God entrusts unto us with the admonition: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man may take thy crown." Rev. 3:11.

The Rev. Hanko then called our attention to "The Challenge of the Faith of our Fathers;" first, because it is a glorious heritage; second, because of our peculiar place in the midst of this world; and third, because of the crown that is involved.

To help us understand how that glorious heritage was entrusted to us by God in His infinite wisdom, the speaker used as an example, an album containing portraits of the saints who lived and died in the faith of our fathers. We saw in this album Abel, the first martyr, who gave his life for what we now call the "faith of our fathers". We cannot begin to mention all of them but we know there were many such as Noah, the preacher of righteousness; and Enoch, who walked with God; faithful until God removed them from the midst of this wicked world. Then, too, we saw the men of the Reformation: Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. God has set up these witnesses to spur us on

that we too may consistently walk in the "faith of our fathers".

Rev. Hanko also pointed out that just as God gathers His church in the line of continued generations, so also God willed to pass the truth of His revelation on in the line of His covenant through believers. The true church loves, cherishes and maintains it through all weakness and sin. That is our peculiar treasure. It is our challenge to "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man may take thy crown".

To maintain a good confession in the midst of this evil world has always been difficult for the church of Jesus Christ. Today this is even more difficult than ever before. The times in which we are living are very peculiar, first of all because history develops faster than ever before. We are rushing toward the end of time. Secondly, we are standing on the threshold of an atomic age. Thirdly, we are living in an age of apostacy. Never was there a time when men were more religious, when it was more definitely an honor to belong to some church. True it is, we are an educated people, yet religion is more superficial than ever before. Finally, we are very small. We can never boast of numbers, or trust in the arm of flesh. Nevertheless, it is our privilege, dear friends, that we may be counted among the *few*, who have the "faith of our fathers". Because that glorious heritage was passed on to us, it is our challenge to defend it and pass it on to generations to come. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man may take thy crown".

Your crown is certainly involved! Most people will try to tell you today that it really doesn't make so much difference what church you belong to. But it certainly does. If we are so careless about the faith of our fathers that we can ignore it for a girl or boy friend, we cannot say that we love the truth, or that we are walking in the steps of our fathers. If we continue in that way, we never had a *crown*. Someone once said, "I wish we had more Daniels in our church who would dare to have faith in God and not look at fleshly interest. They could be an influence for good to the weaker ones."

Finally, Rev. Hanko suggested that we go home with a determination to make our society life different. He suggested that in our Bible study each one of us take more interest. We should discuss our own peculiar Christian walk and life. Our discussions should be based on the Word of God in order that we grow in grace. Only in that way can we "hold that fast which we have" and say that we have run the race, and fought the good fight for that which is laid up for us, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord shall give unto all that love His appearing.

Your Society

Are you satisfied with your society? If you are, you need not read further, for the things we wish to discuss are intended for those who are not satisfied with the Young People's Society of their church. If you feel that the ultimate has been achieved in the activities of your society and that no changes ought to be made in your society, we feel that this is a good indication that your society is becoming stagnant and lifeless.

In many respects a young peoples society is similar to the church of God. Although we should never think of our societies as a sort of church within the church, nevertheless our societies have a calling, a duty, a purpose, a proper place within the church of Jesus Christ. It is our intention to look at our young people's society life to see if there is room for improvement, to see if constructive criticism is necessary.

First of all, what is the membership that your society has? When we raise this question, it is not our intention to suggest that numerical strength is a good standard in itself by which to judge a society but we do mean to say that if an appreciable group of young people in your church do not belong to your society certainly you ought to do something about it. There are several things that should be done. First a membership committee should be appointed; secondly, each society member should conduct himself in such a manner as to attract membership. Thirdly, use your personal influence among your friends in the church in order that prospective members will feel that they are among friends.

Does your society have an objective or goal? Do you have something to work towards in your society? Any live organization has aims and purposes. So, too, your society should have some concrete goal or objective. This goal or objective should, of course, be in harmony with the best interests of the church in which the society is situated and should be governed by Scriptural principles. The range of things for which a society might work is very broad. It may be that your church has certain needs which the young people can supply. I am thinking of church furnish-

ings such as pulpit furniture, Psalters, Bibles for the pews, communion table or something of that nature. On the other hand, the society can seek to strengthen the witness of the church by exploiting the possibilities of the press and the radio. Particularly in this latter field much has been accomplished by our young people's societies. The extensive scope and program of the Protestant Reformed Witness Hour was and still is essentially an activity operated through the active co-operation of several young people's societies. More could be accomplished in this field. Why not investigate the possibilities of your society?

Does your society have interesting and profitable Bible discussions? Does the responsibility for the discussion fall on the president or is your membership willing and able to conduct a profitable Bible study? The secret of a good and edifying Bible discussion is preparation. If you come to society with little or no notion of what the Scripture passage will be, it is obvious that the contribution of such a member will be almost nothing. In preparing for the Bible study ask yourself as many questions as possible about the passage. If possible, look up a reference, read the context, compare with other Scripture passages. Seek to master the problems involved in every respect.

What about the after-recess program? Do you have to be coaxed or cajoled into a contribution to the program or are you willing to help as much as possible? Perhaps you feel uncertain and lack confidence to participate. Do your part regardless. Certainly mistakes will be made but bear in mind that such is the normal course of life. When you were a child, you took many tumbles before you were able to walk properly. So, too, as you participate in your society programs you will make mistakes but in time you will personally profit and so will your society.

There are many benefits, the group profits and the church as a whole will feel its influence, directly or indirectly. The society serves as a proving ground for the future church leadership. The active society members today are the backbone of the church tomorrow. Make your society a blessing to the church in which God has called you and given you a name and a place.

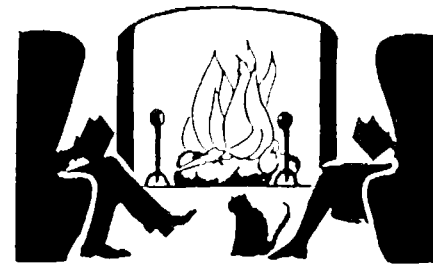
H. G. K.

ITS VINDICATION

(Cont. from page 6)

a glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle, adorned with all the virtues of the Godhead. And then the Lord will taunt the wicked, and they will have to admit and say that the Bride of Christ is without spot. And God's people will then be free from the bondage of corruption forever, in that day of days!

Christian Living. . .



REV. R. VELDMAN — Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Reformation.

Next to the holydays that commemorate the wonders of the grace of God in the fulness of time (Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost), the greatest holyday for the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is the one we celebrate on the last day of this month: Reformation Day. It was on this day, October 31, 1517, that the Reformation of all reformations of the church of Jesus Christ, wherein we were liberated from the hierarchy and heresy, the bondage and blindness of the Roman Catholic Church, had its beginning. Certainly, there were other Reformations, before the 16th century and after. In 1834 there was one in the Netherlands, when under the leadership of Henry De Koch the true Reformed Church was liberated from the doctrinally and practically corrupt State Church of that time. There was another, though far more limited in scope, in 1924, when the churches that cast us out began to depart from the faith of the fathers. However, the Reformation that we celebrate this month was the father of them all, for it affected the entire church of all lands and all succeeding ages.

What actually took place on this date in the year 1517 is common knowledge. That night (afternoon, perhaps), the eve of All Saints' Day, which the Catholics celebrate on the first of November and on which they pay their homage to all the saints and martyrs of the past, Dr. Martin Luther nailed his now famous 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The shot that was really heard around the world! It was customary in medieval universities for those who wished to express and defend their opinions to post up in some public place "theses", statements of their ideas, and invite all comers to debate on these issues.

In the main these theses, declarations, of the doctor of Wittenberg constituted a protest against certain vicious practices in the Catholic Church, especially the ungodly sale of indulgences as conducted in

those days. Originally, an indulgence offered mitigation of pains in purgatory. Gradually they became certificates, signed by the Pope himself, that certified the forgiveness of sins. For a certain sum of money one could purchase the forgiveness of any sin, even those still to be committed, and any soul could be liberated from purgatory. Luther realized the devastating implications of this carnal traffic, saw how they led the church farther and farther away from God, and thoroughly aroused, he determined to strike at this vice with heat and force. This he did in his 95 theses, which he posted on the door of the Wittenberg Church, and in which he declared that indulgences, even though signed by the "Holy Father" in person, were worthless to affect souls in purgatory or remove guilt, and that the penitent sinner had his forgiveness of sin directly from God without any indulgences of any kind. Nor could the aroused Luther have chosen a better time and place to air his views, for the festival of "All Saints" was an important one in the Catholic Church and on this day the people would be certain to swarm to church in droves.

These days, which precipitated the entire Reformation, were intended merely as a protest, no more. Nothing was farther from the mind of Luther at this time than to break with the "Holy Mother Church". Plainly, he did not begin to suspect what far-reaching effects this act of his would have. Who knows what even a fearless man like Luther would have done if he had realized the full import of his deed. Later, historians tell us, Luther was often amazed at himself and he could not understand how he had dared to do it. What he really had in mind was to defend and protect the church and the Pope himself against those that were making merchandise of the holy things. At best, he intended a reform within the Roman Catholic Church itself.

However, what Dr. Luther intended and did, by the grace and providence of God, were two things. He did not foresee that by his act the entire church in the world would be split right down the middle, yet,—that's precisely what he did. These 95 theses precipitated a world-wide reformation. They struck a mortal blow at the very heart of the power of the hierarchy and its head, the Pope. They contained all the germs of the Reformation. They were the beginning of the liberation of the church from Roman Catholic bondage. Permeating these declarations were the principles that would presently overthrow the entire papal edifice. They were truly, Luther's intentions notwithstanding, a Declaration of Independence for the church of Christ. By means of them the

church was led out of the darkness of that time and the lights went on again all over the world.

That is the real significance of October 31, 1517.

How pitiful, Christian friends, more enthusiastically and conscious that this great day is not celebrated more enthusiastically and consciously and that in its place we have such a vain and nonsensical thing as Halloween. Certainly, the devil has invented something to obscure the great event that we should commemorate on this day. I know, other holydays, too, have their worldly counterpart. Think of Christmas and Easter. Even so, what is sillier and more off-color than Halloween. Covenant young people, let's get away from this heathenish nonsense and return to to the real significance of this day. Let's celebrate Reformation Day, not Halloween. In all good conscience I ask: who have more right to do so than we of the Protestant Reformed Churches? Many in our day celebrate the Reformation and claim the reformers as their spiritual fathers, who have no right to do so at all. Even the modernists, who openly and vehemently trample under foot all the Reformers stood for, speak of the Reformation. They are like the Pharisees and others in Jesus' day, who even while they laid a wreath on the tombs of the prophets murdered them who professed the same truth. Others there are, whom we do not deny the right to celebrate this event, but who have nevertheless begun to depart from the faith of the fathers and the basic principles of the Reformation. It is my sincere conviction, and it should be yours, that none have more right to rejoice in and for the Reformation than we: that no church today is nearer than ours to the principles of the Reformation; and that also our far more limited reformation of 1924 was a maintaining of the basic principles of 1517.

Mark, then, what God has wrought! Well may we be exhorted with a view to the riches of His grace which God has imparted, also by means of this wonder of the Reformation, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Next time we discuss the question: Just what did the Reformation contribute to the church of the new dispensation?

NOTICE

All the Photographs in this issue of Beacon Lights were taken by Bernard Woudenberg and Seymour Beiboer, both of Fuller Ave.

To The Question

HOW WERE YOU IMPRESSED BY
THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION?

Rev. Schipper answers:

"The Young People's Convention of 1948 was really a Convention of our Young People. In contrast to other years our young married people were absent. This is as it ought to be—a strictly Young People's Convention. Holland is to be congratulated as Host Society—a big job well done. The theme of the convention was well chosen and on the whole well worked out in speech and song. In my opinion it would be folly to hold the next convention in Manhattan. Expense prohibits it. Our convention should be well attended."

* * * * *

Fred Woudenberg of Fuller Ave. writes:

"I could write a whole letter on my impressions of the convention, but I would only say the same thing everyone else says. The convention was excellent and showed a lot of preparation and hard work, for which the committee certainly deserves a hand. By far the most fascinating thing to me, however, was this. You know that in our doctrine there are seven steps in the work of Redemption: Calling, Regeneration, etc. One of these is Sanctification which is that act of God whereby the Christian becomes more and more confident of his salvation and this continues to the end of his life. At the convention one can see people in all stages of Sanctification and by attending repeated conventions one notices how people advance in the stages of Sanctification. For me this is one of the greatest sources of comfort and encouragement that a Christian has."

* * * * *

Beth De Boer, Minnesota, makes the following comment about the Business Sessions:

"I enjoyed the business meetings immensely. They were very well attended. Our vice-president conducted them nicely and in a way to make them interesting."

* * * * *

And Marilyn Kroondyk, Fuller Ave., says,

I enjoyed the business meetings very much. They were well conducted and very orderly. At the next convention I would like to see more visitors attend the meetings instead of going for walks, rides, etc., as they have been doing. They should show more interest in the business. After all, doesn't it concern them as well as the delegates?"

Regarding the Mass Meeting, Rev. Vanden Berg of Grand Haven answers:

"Although the message was inspiring and the ideal set forth therein, a goal toward which all but especially our covenant youth ought the more fervently to strive, we feel the occasion is not above criticism. Our Convention Youth should assemble in a body for occasions like this to prevent what was witnessed as a "drifting away" by some, and "group conversations" by others at the time of the address. Although we enjoy outdoor meetings, we feel they have their disadvantages. We missed especially the usual spirited community singing."

* * * * *

And Fran Dykstra, Fuller Ave., says:

"Rev. Hoeksema's speech given at the Inspirational Mass Meeting on the topic of "Our Calling to be Specific" was fundamental, forceful and thoroughly Reformed. Rev. Hoeksema focused our attention on the Reformed Faith as only we Protestant Reformed churches have it. He pointed out our distinct calling to preserve and develop this great heritage through Protestant Reformed schools and by reading Protestant Reformed literature.

The music at this meeting was especially adapted for an outdoor assembly but I think that we should have seen many more faces of our young people here at this meeting looking for spiritual food that were present the following night at the banquet looking for physical food."

Donna Kooienga and Eilene Engelsma, Hope Church, with the enthusiasm of First Year Conventioners, write:

"This is the first convention we have attended and we both enjoyed it. We think the banquet was outstanding. The food couldn't have been better. Everything was in perfect order. The speech given by Rev. Hanko was very instructive and edifying. We had the pleasure of meeting old friends and making new ones. We hope Manhattan may do as well."

* * * * *

Rev. Vermeer's answer to our question is:

"Congratulations to Holland's congregation and the energetic pastor (Rev. Kok) for such a well organized and swell convention. My impressions of the Outing? Well it could not have been arranged better. Rev. Vos at first thought a speech was psychologically out of place at the outing. He was wrong, as he found out. It was fitting and very well received. Then, too, the breakfast, and fine luncheon served, plus the games at the beach and the bridle paths, the ball-game, etc., all combined to make a great success of our outing-day. Such a day certainly also has a proper place in the activities of our annual convention. Its the only picnic day ALL our young people can enjoy together. We can truly be thankful to our Covenant God for these annual get-togethers of our young people."

* * * * *

From California, Bess De Vries writes:

"As I write this, back again in Cali-

fornia. the convention is a thing of the past. Two days that are now but memories; memories that I shall often think back on. To me they have meant spiritual upbuilding, enjoyment of being in Christian fellowship, seeing old friends and making new friends, all of which have "The Faith of our Fathers". Thanks to the Host Church and to those who worked so hard to make it two days not to be forgotten."

Seymour Beiboer, Fuller Ave., expresses himself in the following way:

"The 1948 convention was a grand success in every way and the Holland Young People's Society deserves a big hand for preparing those two wonderful days for us. Especially the theme, "Faith of our Fathers", which was brought out in the speeches by our ministers, strengthened us spiritually and gave us new courage as young people to be steadfast in that faith even if we should have to suffer for it."

Reformation Day

Mass Meeting!

TO BE HELD IN ALL LOCALITIES WHERE THERE ARE TWO OR MORE YOUNG PEOPLES' SOCIETIES THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 25

SPEECHES,

ROUND TABLES,

DEBATES,

MUSICAL NUMBERS.

and 2—Lining up for Breakfast.
and 4—Pancakes and Sausages, Umm!

5—What's wrong with Rev. Vos?
6 and 7—Upset the Fruit-basket!!!
8—The Dominees!

9—Rev. Kok has our attention.

10 and 11—Lunch at Tunnel Park.
12 and 13—Toastmaster De Wolf and Banqueters.

A Word From Our Federation Sec'y.

TILLIE NOBEL — Grand Rapids, Mich.

It is not our intention to go into a detailed account of the activities of this past convention, as the social side will undoubtedly be covered by "Impressions of the Convention", and summaries of the various speeches will also appear in this same issue of Beacon Lights. However, for the benefit of those who did not have the opportunity to attend the business sessions, we would like to acquaint you with the business carried on and the decisions made.

Two more of our Young People's Societies have joined the Federation, namely, Grand Haven and Bellflower. We heartily welcome these two societies into the Federation and we trust that they will derive benefit and pleasure from their membership. All of our societies are now members of the federation with the exception of Rock Valley, Orange City, Hull, Sioux Center, and Redlands. We hope these societies will also soon become members.

Delegates this past year have been paid 4 cents per mile for their traveling expenses. However, the Delegate Board has now decided to leave the matter of traveling expenses in the hands of the Executive Board and has empowered them to set the rate each year according to prevailing costs.

It was further decided by the Delegate Board that Mass meetings be held twice yearly in all localities where there are two or more Young Peoples Societies, the first meeting to be held during October, and the second to be held in the Spring of the year. The date for the first mass meeting this year has been set for the week of October 25. The theme will be centered around the Reformation. Each locality is privileged to arrange its own programs in any way which it sees fit, having speeches, round-tables, debates, musical numbers, etc. One of the societies in each locality is being contacted by the Federation Board, and we trust that you will all cooperate and make this venture a success.

The proposal from South Holland which appears in the August issue of Beacon Lights did not pass.

The proposal from Oak Lawn (see Aug. issue of Beacon Lights) was accepted for information, but no definite steps were taken. However, we suggest that each individual society study this proposal from Oak Lawn and send their reactions to the Executive Board or to the Open Forum Department in Beacon Lights.

Beginning with the Fall season, the Delegate Board has decided that Round Robin Letters shall be circulated throughout the societies. One of the societies will start the Round Robin by writing a letter and sending it to another society. This second society will read the letter, write one of their own, and send them both to a third society. This will continue until every society has seen all the letters and written one of its own, and then the entire lot of letters, some twenty in all, will be sent to the society which

started the letters. This first society will then withdraw its own letter and put a new one in its place. A sheet will be enclosed with the letters you receive indicating where they are to be sent next. Letters should be short, friendly, chatty, etc. The purpose of the Round Robin Letters is to promote interest and unity between the various societies. This idea is to be worked out for one year, and if successful may be continued.

Our business sessions always wind up with the election of officers. This year two new officers have been elected to serve on the Board. The Rev. B. Kok from Holland has become our new President, and Miss Fran Dykstra is our newly elected vice-secretary-treasurer. Fran is an active member from the Talitha Society of Fuller Church. We hope these new members will enjoy their work on the Federation Board. We also wish to express a word of appreciation to the two retiring board members, Rev. Edw. Knott and Grace Monsma Van Dyken. Although they were not present at this year's convention they have during the past year worked toward its success. The remaining officers, Carl Reitsma as Vice President, and myself as Secretary, with our newly elected members have already had our first board meeting, shouldering the responsibilities which we feel are ours in the interest of the young people of the Church we love.

Our Host Committee Comments

ISLA STEGINK — Holland, Michigan

I suppose the societies which have put on a Convention know what a big undertaking it is. We were quite excited about the whole matter and already had our committee appointed at the second meeting of our society last fall. At our first committee meeting we discussed the outline of the Convention. Our second meeting was held with the Rev. W. Hofman as advisor, who also suggested our theme, which we thought very fitting. It was not, however, until early last spring that we really got down to business. A committee for badges, and also a committee to obtain speakers was appointed. Our committee of eight members was divided into four teams to canvass the families of our church for donations. We also received many donations from patrons of our other churches, whose names are listed in our Souvenir Booklet.

(Since the Souvenir Booklet was published we also received donations from Mr. and Mrs. W. Brummel and Mr. and Mrs. H. Wustman).

As you may have noticed, we had first planned a three-day Convention, but after discussing this we came to the conclusion that a two-day Convention would be better. We figured that the greatest majority of young people coming to the Convention would be going back and forth evenings to Grand Rapids, Grandville, and Hudsonville, and if it would last three days, it might create the problem of transportation. We also thought

we would have a better representation during the two days than if it would be three days. I think after those two days were up, the committee was thankful that there wasn't a third day to take care of such a large group.

We held our last meeting about a week before the Convention. At this meeting a lodging and registration committee was appointed. We all felt that everything was well under control. Our badges had arrived after a long worried waiting. The Convention Booklets were printed, and the tickets were selling very well. But then came Tuesday, the day before the opening day of the Convention, and I was called to come to Rev. Kok's rescue. Upon arrival at his home, I thought every one west of the Mississippi had dropped in, but after a few pleasant hours we had everyone at his place of lodging.

We feel that the Convention was a great success. The business meetings were carried on very orderly under the able leadership of Mr. Carl Reitsma. The speeches were edifying and inspiring. The recreation was wonderful, as also the final banquet. Yes, Holland enjoyed putting on this Convention even though (as one person expressed himself) "we were dragging our tails behind us". I'll just mention one experience in connection with this. Remember the announcement at the Banquet? . . . .

> FOUND:—a valuable camera in the Church Wednesday morning. Owner, please contact Isla Stegink immediately after the Banquet.
>
> It took the Rev. Kok two days to find out that he was the owner!

We felt, after the Convention was over, that we had accomplished a big thing, and I'm sure that everyone who did his share of work, has a satisfied feeling.

Host Committee of our Eighth Annual Convention, held at Holland, Mich.

BIBLE OUTLINES

REV. JOHN BLANKESPOOR

Doon, Iowa

LESSON I.

(John 1:1-5)

The author of this well-known Gospel narrative is the apostle John, who in his own writings is often called the disciple whom Jesus loved. John probably was a cousin of Jesus (chapter 19:25) and was at first a disciple of the Baptist with his brother James. It was his personal contact with Jesus, "having seen and touched the Word of life," that later enabled him, through divine inspiration, to write this Gospel narrative in his own peculiar way.

It is probable that he wrote his narrative when an old man, perhaps between 80 and 90 years of age. From various recordings it is quite certain that he was in Ephesus at the time. The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) had undoubtedly already been written.

"Still waters run deep". This we also see in John. He was a quiet type of man, much different in character from Peter, but deep in thought. His Gospel writing is as profound in many ways as it is loved by God's people. John often goes deep, and therefore is not nearly as easy to understand in his writing as many may think him to be. The reason for this profoundness lies in the fact that throughout the narrative he shows that the historical Jesus is the eternal Son of God, yea God Himself. This is the very heart of this Gospel, and therefore the theme of it. This seems to have been the predominating thought in John's mind when he wrote about the doings of Jesus. He mentions only the greatest miracles of Jesus and the many conversations with the Jews that concentrate on that point. Having introduced Christ as the eternal Son of God, not making any mention of His birth, etc., like Matthew and Luke, John shows how this self-revelation of Jesus passes on to publicity (with Nicodemus, etc.). Then it meets great opposition in the unbelief of the Jews, but the more unbelief he encounters the greater becomes the manifestation of this marvelous self-revelation. Finally it reaches the climax (of Jesus' sojourn) in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Then He is crucified and the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God reaches its highest point in the victory of the resurrection.

Questions:—Why do we speak of the Gospel according to John, Matthew, Mark and Luke? Why is it so important to

believe that the Christ is God Himself?

The Prolog.

The Prolog (vss. 1-18) is more than a mere introduction, it sums up the contents of the entire Gospel, showing that it is the Word (the Logos) who is the very heart and center of all of God's works in time. Therefore it is Christ later (whose divine nature is the Logos) who is the Saviour of men, and the only one who possibly can give men the life of God. It is really plain stupidity to speak of Christ as a secondary measure or a repair man in the scheme of salvation.

Questions:—1. Why is it unscriptural to maintain that Christ merely restored that which Adam lost? 2. What does the "covenant of works" teach in re this matter?

The Word, vss. 1-2.

In the beginning was the Word. The Word here is the second Person of the Holy Trinity. But why called the Word? A word is a thought uttered or expressed. We need many words to convey our thoughts. But all the fullness that is in the Father, the first Person, is expressed in one mighty Word, the Son. He is the express image of the Father. Of this Word John says three things. He was there already in the beginning, when God created all things. He was also with God, in the original: to God; the Son faces the Father so that the Father always beholds Himself in the image of the Son. Finally, the Word is God Himself, and no one less than that.

The Significance of the Word, vss. 3-5.

All things were made through Him. In plain words this means that the Father created all things through the Son. All of God's thoughts, reflected in the Son, were taken out of the Son and realized in time. That is creation. Therefore creation is a reflection of God's thoughts, wisdom and glory and the heavens also declare the glory of God, Ps. 19. Cf. Rom. 1:20.

This same Word was the light and life of men. He possessed life, being God Himself. This implies a contrast with all living beings who came into existence by a creative act of the Logos. Now life and light are inseparably joined together, also in nature. We need light for life, and life to have light. Light emanates from life, which is fundamental. In nature the living, active sun radiates light which gives us life. So Christ is the life who gives light, and therefore life. He gives true, spiritual life, the life with God. The darkness (fallen men) comprehendeth it not. The light was not appropriated by the darkness, but rather rejected by it. Men do not want Him who is the very source of all true life, they prefer death.

Questions:—1. Mention some things in creation which are a revelation of God. 2. Is creation as rich in revelation now as before the fall? 3. Who was the source of life for Adam since Christ had not yet come? 4. When especially did the darkness manifest that it did not and would not comprehend the light of the Word?

LESSON II.

(Prolog Continued — Vss. 6-13)

The Witness of the Light, vss. 6-9.

The world must know the Light of the Logos. Therefore God sent a man to bear witness of Him, n.l., The Baptist. A witness was John and not a mere preacher of the Light, having beheld with his own eyes the Word, incarnated. His one work at all times was to show men the Son of God. Therefore he also became a mighty preacher. But the Jews who in general liked John, must not mistake John for the Christ, vs. 8. In his preaching he told them that the true Light had now come, it was here, the Light that lightens every man coming into the world. Every man coming into the world has the innate light of the Word. Through the testimony of the Spirit every man knows that God is. But now it is here, says John, with us, to give a complete testimony.

Questions:—How must we explan the last part of verse 9? Do the heathen also know that God is?

Reaction to the Light, vss. 10-11.

Take notice now how that men reject God and the Word even though they are dependent upon Him, made by Him and He in every way manifested Himself to them. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, but (not and) the world knew Him not. The horror and shame of it! But there is more. Within this greater circle of the world lies a lesser one in which the shame and rejection is even greater. The Logos came unto His own, but His own received Him not. He came to His own land, country and homeland. Canaan was God's own in a peculiar way, Israel was God's peculiar people. She belonged to no one else. If therefore anywhere in the world the incarnate Logos should have been received, it should have been by his people. But His own received Him not. It is plain that no one cares for God, but all reject Him.

Questions:—What is the deepest cause of this consistent rejection? In which way does the world know the Logos and in which way not? Does the expression "fulness of time", referring to the time when Christ came on earth, mean that Israel was waiting for Him?

Those Receiving Him, vss. 12-13.

But O how blessed are those who do receive (sometimes also translated accept) Him. They are called the sons of God and have the glorious right and privilege to receive that name. Being sons of God they are His image-bearers and heirs of all that God possesses. It implies eternal blessings and happiness. And who are they who so receive Him? All those who in the midst of this world believe in His name. But does not every man reject Him, even Israel? Yes all man by nature, except those who are born, not of blood, etc. vs. 13. Physically we are born of blood, of the will of man and of the flesh. But those who are born of God, regenerated, they receive Christ and believe, etc.

Questions:—Can we in any way speak of accepting Jesus? Is it Reformed to

sing: Ye must be born again? Who are they that are born again?

LESSON III.

(Vss. 14-18)

The Word Become Flesh, vss. 14-15.

This verse may well be called the climax of the entire Prolog, but the fact should not be overlooked that what is now recorded as the climax already lies in that which John wrote from vs. 4 on. The Word become flesh is the wonder of all wonders. God in our flesh, sin excepted, the Almighty united with dust, the Eternal One with creatures of time, the Infinite with the finite. Oh that Babe in the manger! This tabernacling with men (so in the original) is the very heart of all covenant fellowship of God with His people. The result of His appearing in the flesh on earth is that we behold His glory, as of the Only Begotten of the Father. We saw the Word of life, looked upon it, and even touched it, says John in his first epistle. It is marvelous to say the least. Through His flesh (the human nature) the Word (the Son of God) manifested all His marvelous glories. Men saw them in all the gracious words he uttered and the deeds He performed. It was most wonderful for He was full of grace and truth. Being full of grace means that in Him was manifested the love of God as it saves and beautifies His people, though dead in sins and miseries. Being the truth He was the true and full revelation of God over against all false presentations, as well as the faint types and shadows that had been given before. Vs. 15 shows that it was this testimony that John the Baptist gave, losing himself completely that Christ might be exalted.

Questions:—Did the Son leave heaven when He became flesh? Does the Son reveal more glory through His human nature now than when on earth?

Partaking of this Grace, vss. 16-17.

Vs. 16 takes up the thought again of vs. 14, to dwell on the riches that are in Christ Jesus, the Word become flesh. They are the riches of the Lamb, Rev. 5:12, the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph. 3:8. And Scripture abounds with similar expressions. In Him is the fulness which is inexhaustible. He never loses anything, no matter how much we draw, but remains the infinite fountain of all grace and truth: the more you draw from Him, the more abundantly He gives of the water that springs into eternal life. Just as the sun is not darkened by the whole world enjoying its light, so is Christ our Lord an infinite source of all grace. The fountain always runs over, full of grace. And we have received of Him, says the apostle, grace for grace, i.e. grace after grace. As the days come and go a new supply takes the place of the grace already bestowed, as wave follows wave upon the shore. It is grace for the child of God, new and ever greater. One measure of it assures another. It is like a stream flowing constantly, every day, every hour its banks are full, ever fresh volumes coming down

from above. (Lenski). This the law given by Moses could never give us. The law could bring nothing but condemnation and death with its strict and just demands. But in Christ is all our salvation. By His grace the law is fulfilled and in Him is the full truth over against all the "weak" revelations of God given in the O. T. types and shadows. In the Word become flesh is our all.

Questions:—If the law couldn't save, why did God give it? Gal. 3:24. Does the elect sinner also receive grace for grace when he lives in sin? Why is this fullness of grace in Christ such a comfort for the sinner?

Source of this Fulness, vs. 18.

In this capacity of being the fullness of grace and truth Christ revealed Himself when on earth and still does today. Therefore this revelation of Him is so blessed. And why is it so blessed, really? Because it is the revelation of God, who is the fountain and source of all that is good. No, no one ever saw God. And see Him we must to know Him. This is and forever will remain impossible for earthly creatures. But the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him unto us, i.e. set Him forth completely. From Him we have first-hand, complete and reliable information about God. Therefore all is in Christ, the Word become flesh. The entire Gospel according to John is written from this viewpoint.

Questions:—In which way does Christ declare the Father unto us today? Does He do it in more than one way? Will the saints actually see God face to face in heaven?

LESSON IV.

(Verses 18-28)

Jewish Enquiries, vss. 19-22.

With these verses we have the beginning of the attestation of Christ as the Son of God in His public ministry. First of all we have the testimony of the humble and therefore great Baptist.

It seems as if the apostle John takes for granted the general history of John the Baptist. This is possible since his Gospel narrative was written some time after the Synoptics had already made their appearance. But we must remember, to understand the setting of these words, that at this time the Baptist had reached the very height of his ministry and influence. The excitement he caused grew to huge proportions among the people. Thousands flocked to him. Therefore the central authorities at Jerusalem felt constrained to send out an official committee to make a firsthand investigation.

It is in this that we can also see the Divine purpose of John. God will have him prepare the way before Christ, which includes giving clear testimonies of Christ in his popularity. God would therefore have these Jews come in the presence of the multitudes to the famous John for information, in order that they might receive the testimony concerning His Son.

Priests and Levites are sent. The

emphasis in their first question falls on Thou. Thou, who art thou? The striking feature is the elaborate way in which John replies. It was a full and clear-cut confession, knowing that many considered him to be the Messiah. He will seek no honor for himself. I am not the Christ. Is he then possibly Elijah? The Jews expected Elijah to come again, literally from heaven, to prepare the way for Christ, basing their assumption on Mal. 4:5. Now the Elijah of whom Malachi is speaking is definitely John the Baptist. Yet John gives a negative answer because the Jews were looking for the literal, not the antitypical Elijah which he was. Then, too, Moses had spoken of another prophet to come, He would be the prophet. Deut. 18:15, Art thou then the prophet?

But an answer they must have, being a committee. No, they are not personally concerned about John's identity. They must bring more or receive heavy censure for having left the main part of their task undone. What sayest thou of thyself?

Questions:—Did John fully understand his position in connection with the Messiah? Why didn't John immediately point them to the Christ, instead of giving all these negative answers?

John Identifies Himself, vs. 23.

In his answer the entire stress is on his work and office, none on his person; he is merely a voice with a message. His answer is, of course, a quotation from Is. 40:3. It means that as a voice crying in the wilderness to the people, he will prepare the way of the Lord, by preparing the people for the coming Messiah. But again, why not give these men a plain clear-cut answer? Fact is that this is the best answer he could give them, the Scriptures themselves. John identitifies himself as the one about whom Isaiah is speaking. Do they believe the Scriptures? Then let them compare his work with this prophecy. But this they do not do, because genuine interest in his work is lacking.

Questions:—In which way did John prepare the way for Christ? What did he emphasize in his preaching? Did these Jews profess to believe the Scriptures?

The Question Regarding John's Baptism, vss. 23-28.

Now it is a question of baptism. It is generally agreed upon that the former questions and the last one are of a different nature. The former may have been put by the Sadducees, while the last one came from the Pharisees, who were vitally interested in rituals of worship, such as baptism. If John himself admitted that he was none of the persons mentioned, how then, dared he to baptize? A baptism of this nature, and with such proportions the Jews may have expected, but then by the Messiah. The answer is another unique one. I baptize with water. Sure, they all knew that. But Christ would pour out His Spirit and baptize with the Spirit. Of this the O. T. also spoke. "But", says John, "baptize only with water; it is only a water ceremony, and thence a means of grace". And the implication is that He whose forerunner I am, whose way I am making

straight, will baptize with more than water. And He is standing right in the midst of them. He is so great that John, great in the eyes of all the people, is not worthy of such menial service as loosening his shoe latchets. This was done in those days by the humblest slave. And this great One is right in their midst. This should have caused intense interest, but none of the kind. They cared not for the Christ, they always reject Him. Vs. 28 tells us about the place where these things took place. The author evidently considers it to be of great importance. By all means look it up on your map.

Questions:—Who were the Pharisees? The Sadducees? Why do you think they were so interested in John's person? How do you explain John's popularity in the light of Christ's unpopularity?

LESSON V.

(verses 29-51)

John's Testimony to the People, vss. 29-34

Day after day the Baptist witnesses of the Christ, and each time he comes closer to Him. On the day after the enquiry of the commitee of the Jews he gave a direct unmistakable testimony of Christ to the people. The setting very likely was similar to that of the previous day with a multitude of people around him. While Jesus is coming to him (not only being in the midst of the crowd) possibly to gather his disciples and to be testified of by John, John literally shows them who the Messiah is. Perhaps he even stretched out his hand to indicate the person he had in mind. Behold, the Lamb of God. God's Lamb is right in their midst. Thousands, yea tens of thousands had been sacrificed in the past, but now, behold God's Lamb.

This is he of whom he spake before. No, John didn't know him either as the Christ (he may have known Jesus personally for a long time, being a relative of Him) but God made known to him who Jesus was in order that John with his baptism would make Him manifest to Israel. Therefore the Lord gave him the signs with the baptism of Jesus which had already taken place. And having seen these signs, he bears record to the people: this is the Son of God. Israel, here before us is the Son of God, the promised Messiah! (Notice how the theme of the Gospel again is brought to the foreground).

Questions:—How did John make Jesus manifest to Israel with his baptism? Of what is the dove a symbol? Some say of purity and innocence, others of humility and meekness equipping Jesus for His work, and others that as the Spirit hovered over the waters with creation (Gen. 1:3) so He does in re the new creation. What do you think?

John Testifying to two of his Disciples, vss. 35-42.

The Baptist is willing to lose all for the sake of Christ, his own position as well as his disciples. Seeing Jesus walking the next day he once more says: behold the Lamb of God. The two disciples

understand him and leave him and follow Jesus, a stranger to them as yet. Seeing them coming to him Jesus takes the initiative, asking them what they are seeking? This question has tremendous implications, spiritually. What are they looking for? In answer they would like to know where Jesus lives that there they later or now may engage a private conversation with Him.

We are told who one of these was, Andrew. The other very likely was John, who never mentions his own name. Andrew finds his brother Peter. Notice the interest these men have in the Messiah. He tells Peter that he has found the Messiah, which implies a seeking in the past. True Israelites they were. And coming to Jesus, the Lord immediately tells Peter what he shall be in the future.

Questions:—Can the expression: "he first findeth" his own brother, in vs. 41 mean that the other disciples, John, also found his own brother? Why did Jesus change Simon's name? Would this also change his character?

Jesus Finds two more Disciples, vss. 43-51

The next day Jesus went to Galilee and finds Philip of Bethsaida. (Look upon your map). Notice how Philip, being keenly interested reports all to Nathanael. These men are acquainted with the Scriptures. But, asks Nathanael, can any good thing come out of Nazareth. Being from Galilee he must have known that Nazareth had a poor reputation, perhaps was morally degenerate. And then the Good One come from there? But Jesus soon wins him, by manifesting His exceptional powers. He portrays Nathanael's character but also tells him that he already saw him under the fig tree. Sure, then Jesus saw him and knew him already as a vessel meet for His use. Notice the response of faith on Nathanael's part. But he will see greater things, says Jesus: angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. This reminds us of Jacob. In short the meaning is that there will be perfect contact and communion between heaven and Christ here on earth. This will become plain to them in the marvelous works of Jesus.

Questions:—Was Jesus omniscient, like God? How many disciples does Jesus have by this time?

* * * * *

DETERMINATION

Consider the oyster: With a little grit it can produce a pearl of great value.

—Rollo C. Hester.

Great minds have purposes, others have wishes. Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortune; but great minds rise above them.—Washington Irving.

You should never be ashamed to own that you are wrong, for it is but another way of saying that you are wiser today than you were yesterday.—Selected.

Truth vs. Error

REV. J. HOWERZYL
Oskaloosa, Iowa

Whenever we begin any new venture, it matters not what the field may be, it is well to ask the meaning and see the value of that which we are about to do. This is true especially in the field of religious endeavour. No less true is this of that particular religious endeavour which occupies our attention at this stage of life unto which we have attained. At the present time, although we are perhaps more or less actively engaged in various church activities, our interest is first of all, after the regular services, occupied with our Young Peoples societies and in connection with them also in our Federation publication, Beacon Lights.

In this connection we must be careful, lest we make of these things, Societies, Beacon Lights, Federation, good as they are in themselves, an end, a goal. Rather we must learn to realize that all these things are but means, good means, I am convinced, yet simply means to the end, that we as covenant young people may be trained in and attain unto an ever increasing measure of the truth. Never may they become ends in themselves and in the measure that they do they destroy themselves as means to the one end, the acquisition and propogation of the truth.

As I was writing the paragraph above I thought seriously of underscoring the last two words. Maybe I'll go back and do it yet, you'll have to wait until this article is printed to determine which way I made up my mind. But whatever my decision may be we must be careful that we underscore in our own minds both words. Our search and our goal and aim is not simply truth considered abstractly. Rather we begin in all our life, in all our setting of goals and purposes, with the underlying, fundamental position and confession that there is but one truth—The Truth! And that truth even though it may be expressed in an infinitely varied form is yet essentially always the truth—the truth of God as He reveals Himself to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. And because that truth is always the truth concerning God who is the truth, it is always a matter of the revelation of God to us. Therefore also for us the only source of that truth is the Word of God to us—the Bible.

As soon as we have taken the above stand, however, we face the difficulty of determining the truth in all its application to life. And here also we find a host of conflicting opinions as to the particular teaching of the Word of God in every phase of life. Opinions are varied, doctrines are diverse from each other, creeds are at variance and nowhere do we find unanimity of opinion as to the exact teaching of the Word of God—the Truth. It is our hope in this series of articles to show the truth of the Word of God and to develop it along Reformed lines. For after all to be Reformed is to be Scriptural—this we shall endeavor to demonstrate. And in connection with this we must not forget that Reformed to us means Protestant Reformed. Not Protestant Reformed in distinction from that which is historically Reformed but Reformed in the historical sense, which

incidentally is seldom found anymore even in those groups still using the name Reformed, and therefore Protestant Reformed over against all that is not Reformed and Protestant Reformed as standing for and striving toward an ever clearer development of the Truth of Scripture—the Reformed faith.

That the search for and the development in the Truth of the Word of God is essential and to our well-being really does not require proof for us who are children of God. Scripture over and over emphasizes the necessity of the growth in truth and our calling to so grow. Let me cite just a few examples of this admonition from the Bible.

It is set before us as the goal and end of all revelation and unto this end all the helps and offices in the church are given unto us: Eph. 4:11-16, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we hencefortb be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." From this we see that the perfect man of God, grown up, mature in the faith, able to detect and withstand heresy, growing ever to the head, worthy members of the body, this perfect man of God must be the ideal of every child of God. It is not simply a matter of, "Are you saved"? nor is it simply a question of going to heaven, but as individuals and therefore also as churches it must be a question of the truth, the perfect revelation of the truth of God, and that only may be our goal. And incidentally we may remark that either we grow and develop and strive in the direction of that truth and then of the true church or as soon as we deviate even in the slightest from that search for the truth and from the truth of God's Word we work in the direction of the lie and in the service of the false church. This same complete spiritual knowledge of the truth and faith in it is also the idea of the whole armour of God which we are exhorted to put on in the sixth chapter of this same epistle.

In beginning therefore our present study it may be well once more to call to mind the fact that God is essentially the truth, and sin is always essentially the lie. And the lie, sin, is always present to contradict the truth. We must grow and develop in the truth but in doing so we cannot escape also exposing and contradicting the lie whatever form it may assume. So only shall we become strong children of God, faithful to our calling.

The Glory of God

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This is intended to be a short, introductory outline to a series of after-recess discussions in our Young People's Societies. I believe the idea is that the societies are invited to use one of these each month. Various writers will contribute to this column.

Perhaps it would be best to have two members of the society render each a paper concerning this subject, at least we'll set up the sketch that way.

One paper could be on the general theme:

God Reveals His Glory.

In this paper the writer could build his article around the following general hints:

1. That God makes a display of His glory in nature (Ps. 19:1). In the created things, each creature in its own way expressing something concerning God. The variety of creatures also expressing something. In ruling the affairs of men and of nations God shows His power, His wisdom, His wrath, His goodness, His mercy (Heid. Catechism, Qu. 122; Rom. 1:20 and Belgic Confession, art. 2).
2. That God makes a special revelation of His glory in the Scriptures. We see the glory of God in Christ (John 1:14), in Christ His glory comes close to us. Christ is in heaven but we have the mirror of His glory in the Bible. Every page of it sets forth His glory, power, majesty, wisdom, justice. His glory is set in contrast to our shame, our brevity of life (Ps. 103) our being dust, our corruption, etc.
3. Seeing this glory. Could anyone escape from, that is, shut his eyes so as not to see this glory? We see by faith, with enlightened eyes, with renewed minds. Do the wicked also see God's glory?

This could be followed by a second paper on the theme:

Glorifying God.

In this paper the following hints could be incorporated:

1. It is a capital sin not to glorify God (Rom. 1:21; Acts 12:23. Rev. 16:9). If God's purpose is Self-glorification, surely we are called to engage in this mighty task of glorifying God.
2. How all-embracing is this precept, for in 1 Cor. 10:31 we read "whether we eat or drink or

whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God". (In later outlines perhaps the matter will be treated of HOW we can glorify God in eating, in drinking, in laboring, etc.)

3. We must not be deceived to seek the glory of self. . . . this conflicts with the God-glorifying program, neither must we seek the glory of men, that is, to attract their praise to ourselves, neither may we glory in our shame (I Thess. 2:6, Matt. 6:2, and Phil. 3:19).

4. Christ glorified God on the earth. How? (John 17:4). His Spirit in us enables and inclines us to God-centered living and in John 15:8 we read "herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. . . ."

Around these two general themes a further discussion could be built when we consider:

1. What glory should Herod have given God, (Acts 12:23).

2. What different things lead us away from a God-centered and God-glorifying life?

3. Is any special legitimate occupation more God-glorifying than some other, e.g., is a christian missionary's occupation necessarily more God-glorifying than say, the occupation of a christian street-cleaner?

4. If a gentle breeze of a summer's day displays God's glory, how about a devastating cyclone? With what difference?

5. How can we glorify God before men. . . . if we are rich? poor? healthy? sick?

6. Why do we fail so miserably in glorifying God? What causes this and what ought we do to effect improvement?

NOTE:—This is the first in a series of articles to be used by our societies in after-recess discussions, on the general theme: **The Glory of God.** In the November issue the general theme will be further developed by Mr. A. Heemstra by means of an outline on The Glory of God and Politics.